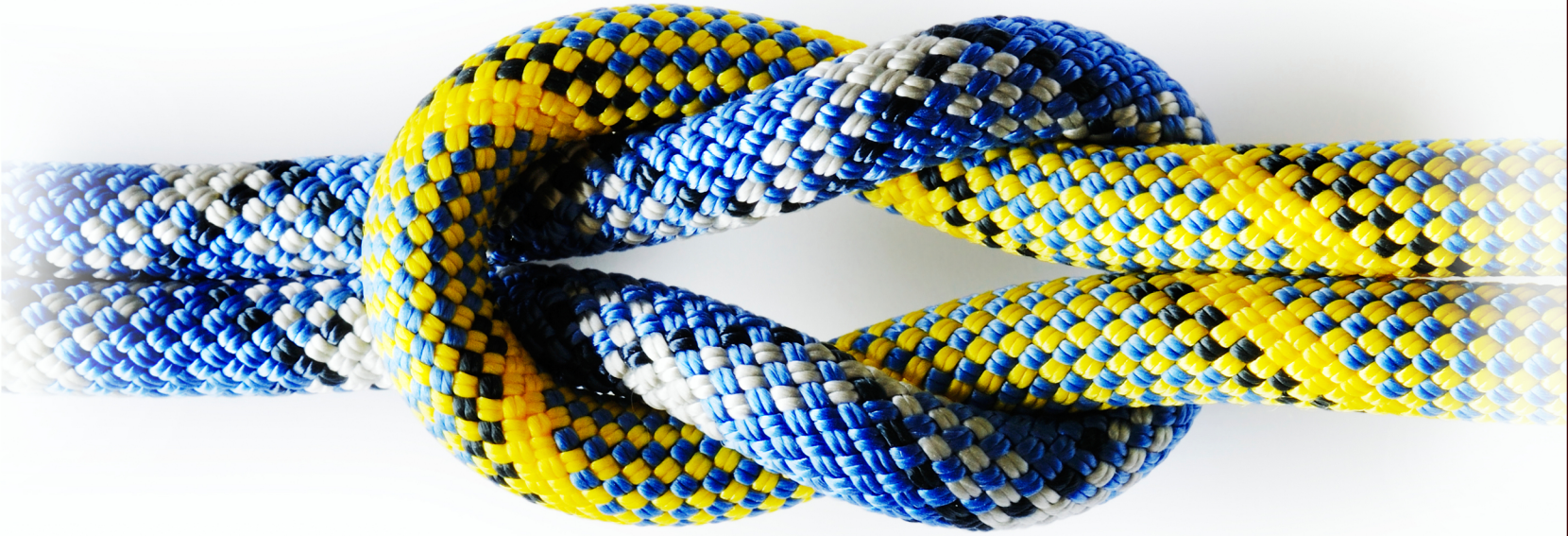
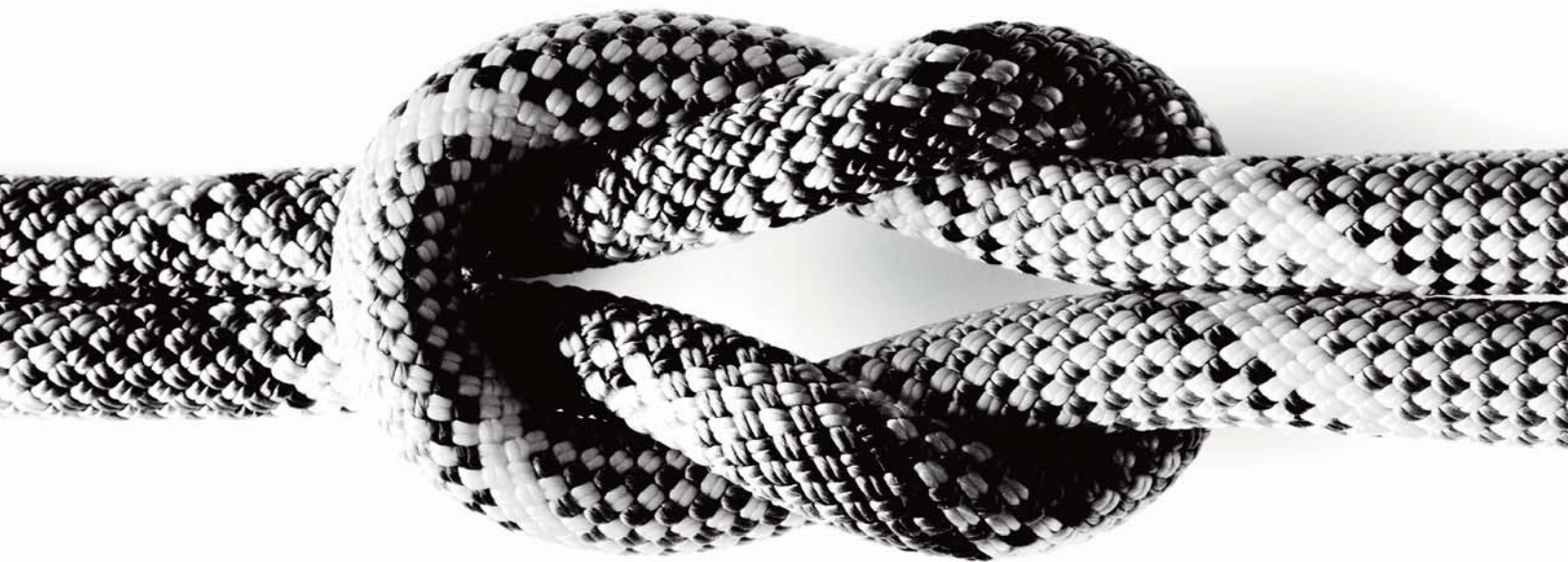


PRIORITIZING OUR MISSION TO AND THROUGH THOSE IN SCHOOLS



REACH  
YOUR  
CAMPUS  
REACH  
THE  
WORLD

A complete report on the 180° Symposium on Campus Ministry  
Edited by Steve Case



**REACH** YOUR **CH**  
**CAMPUS**  
**REACH** THE **CH**  
**WORLD**

PRIORITIZING OUR MISSION TO AND THROUGH THOSE IN SCHOOLS



## **Reach the Campus, Reach the World**

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## **Preface**

The 2010 Olympic Winter Games were in full swing as I prepared this preface. The fall and rise of an Olympic gold medalist like Lindsey Vonn who had crashed and failed in 2006 and now in 2010 took gold reminds me that in ministry we sometimes crash and burn quite miserably but that God gives us the strength and wisdom to pull through and fight for another day.

The Center for Youth Evangelism (CYE) launched the annual 180° Symposium as a gathering point for free thinking dialogue on matters critical to youth and young adult ministry. Intentionally inviting participants from within the Church structure, our expectation is that we will create smart networks that advocate and seek solutions. Ultimately our desire is that appropriate change will take place, that our Church's inquisitive and searching nature for present truth will lead us into new grounds for the sake of the Gospel, that as we deepen our theological reflection, we will engage the culture and follow our higher calling to ministry.

To that end, last October at our second gathering, we addressed the rising crisis in public campus ministry. Under the theme "Reach the Campus, Reach the World" we brought professionals proposing solutions in the primary, secondary and tertiary sectors of education. Conservative statistics indicate that in North America alone more than 70% of our Adventist youth and young adults are currently on public campuses. That statistic only accelerates upwards at alarming rates in other divisions.

Our research and report, edited by Steve Case, is in your hands as you read this preface. We hope it serves as a tangible resource for those passionate about reaching the throngs of youth and young adults desperately seeking authentic community. David Kinnaman in his acclaimed research and publication "UnChristian" suggests that like Jesus, it is through relationships that we are able to move people from UnChristian to Christian. There lies deep within youth and young adults a desire to find authentic community. We believe and teach that authentic community is in Christ and His Church, that the kingdom of God must be lived now and forever more.

As you wrestle with how best to reach those on the campuses around you, may this resource provide you extra insight and encouragement.

To share your thoughts or for information about joining the next 180° Symposium, please feel free to contact me at [japhet@andrews.edu](mailto:japhet@andrews.edu).

Japhet De Oliveira  
Director, 180° Symposium





## **Acknowledgment**

Special thanks:

To our editor Steve Case who synthesized and condensed all the data between these covers while resisting the warm Californian winter sunshine.

To Chris Blake who not only moderated the gathering but with his sharp wit and undeniable wisdom inspired us to bring honest conversation to a tricky subject.

To Rebecca Cross and Dana Rhynus for recording all the multiple conversations and supporting all our participants.

To all the participants whose unique perspectives shaped and honed us all. And for their honesty and freedom of expression that crossed all areas.

To the wonderful meals, words of support and counsel from Andrews University President, Niels-Erik Andreasen, Lake Union Conference President, Don Livesay and Andrews University Seminary Dean Denis Fortin.

To our sponsors E.L. Minchin Lectureship and *AdventSource*

And of course to God who is ever patient with our feeble attempts at solutions. May His wisdom be seen through our human expressions.





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Thanks to each participant who prepared a paper for the 180° Symposium held at Andrews University in October, 2009. These authors are listed below in alphabetical order by last names along with their current ministry role.

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# WHAT THIS IS ALL ABOUT

*by Steve Case*

## **A Neglected Ministry**

Churches exist for worship, fellowship, service, evangelism, as well as for instruction. For the most part, churches rely on volunteers. "Required worship" begs the question, as does "required fellowship," "required service," "required evangelism," and maybe even "required instruction." Those most invested in the church often have available time and resources in contrast to those with full time jobs, frenetic families, other commitments, or simply a desire to check out other options. As a result, churches tend to rely on church employees, recent converts, retirees, and those in crisis to carry out the ministry of the church. Such people seem to be available and committed, which enables the church to do its "work."

Schools frequently operate on a different paradigm. While volunteers might be welcomed, schools rely on full time, paid staff members to carry out their work. Instead of a once-a-week worship gathering, schools fill the full time "work" schedule for students throughout the week. And many school activities, both mandatory and optional, occur outside of regular school hours. Many find that school becomes the hub of a person's life more easily than church or even home. As young people transition from family towards independence, the school easily becomes the surrogate parent, excuse, or escape hatch for emancipation.

Schools blatantly exist to educate regarding content and citizenship. Its goals can merge in cooperation with a church, but more often these two institutions merely co-exist and occasionally compete or conflict. While education historically has had church roots, since the age of the Enlightenment it has moved away from the Church and into its own pathway in search of truth. Not surprisingly, some churches have created their own schools so that the mission of the church can more easily dovetail with closely aligned schools. While some claim radiant success for their church schools, many families have opted for schools away from the church (public schools or other private schools) or schools contained within one's family (home schooling).

For the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA or Adventist) Church in North America, attempts to maintain or bolster its own sagging educational system combined with the diffusion of students in many different educational settings exceeds what it can do. Whatever resources are available have been channeled to Adventist education. The desire to keep the church as the hub of life means those outside of Adventist education fall into the category of neglected ministry.

## **What Has Been Happening**

Individuals and a few groups have made attempts to minister to, through, and with those outside of Adventist schools, but that seems to be the exception more than the rule.

In the college and university setting, Ron Pickell functions as the dean of Adventist ministry for secular campuses. Ron's years of experience, his openness to others, his passion for experiencing and sharing Christ, and his persistence are qualities that show in his ministry. It's not surprising that the North American Division (NAD) Youth Ministry department recruited Ron to head up Adventist Christian Fellowship (ACF), an organization that provides a network for Adventist student groups on secular college and university campuses. (website [www.acflink.org](http://www.acflink.org)).

Ron Pickell's insights and experiences got put into print format thanks to Kirk King, another youth ministry professional who also has experience in secular campus ministry. Their combined efforts yielded *The Word on Campus: A Guide to Public College Ministry* published by AdventSource in 2008. For those who desire to start or re-start a campus ministry, here's your resource! For those wanting to broaden their understanding and networking in campus ministry, here's your resource!

Several individual, congregations, and even conferences have made forays into secular campus ministry. The “Models” section of the Word on Campus describes these in some detail and several of the leaders from these models provided chapters for this book.

The majority of the SDA Church’s resources for campus ministry has been invested in SDA campuses. Little has been done beyond that or in coordination with them. And SDA campuses seem consumed by their own mission, with little or no consideration given to network with students on secular campuses—whether those students are Adventists, other Christians, or simply “others.” But the gnawing sense that a majority of Adventist college students are not attending Adventist schools continues to arouse questions and actions. How accurate are those “statistics”? Without diminishing the Church’s mission on the Adventist campus, what about its mission to the secular campus? Could there be collaborative support and mission on the secular campus? Can we do something right where we are? Should we copy what has worked on another campus? Who will lead? What financial resources are available? What can/should/will we do?

## **The Gathering**

The Center for Youth Evangelism on the campus of Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Michigan, began an annual 180° Symposium in 2008. The topic in 2009 focused on secular campus ministry. Executive Director Ron Whitehead empowered the Center’s director, Japhet De Oliveira to create and develop this gathering to address issues in thoughtful reflection and positive action.

Each invitee needed to create a paper on the topic prior to the gathering in October, 2009. The first part of the symposium included dialogue about each paper. What you are reading now is the revised and edited version of those papers. Originally intended to be limited to 5-8 pages in length, some held to that criteria while others far exceeded it. An editorial board, composed of Japhet De Oliveira, Steve Case, Chris Blake, Ron Pickell, and Michaela Lawrence, deliberated for some time before deciding on an abbreviated version of each paper. This includes the abstract and a brief excerpt of that paper. The full version would be accessible online at [www.adventistyouth.org/180](http://www.adventistyouth.org/180). Others later decided to make the full version available in hard copy. Check the thickness of the book you’re holding for evidence of whether you have the short version or the long version.

## **What You’ll Find Here**

The following chapters served as a collection of input on the topic of “Reach the Campus, Reach the World” for the 180° Symposium in 2009. These have been divided into three “campus ministry” sections: models, networking, and resources. Here’s a quick overview.

### ***Campus Ministry Models***

Zane Yi (“Reach the Mind, Reach the World”) and Kenneth Bergland (“A Kind of Thought to Commune With”) emphasize the need for a cognitive challenge and interaction when it comes to faith on the secular campus.

Michaela Lawrence (“Please Sir, I Want Some More”) addresses cognitive challenge as well as a place of community, something Jiwan Moon (“The Three ‘Cs’ of Campus Ministry”) presents from a church community perspective for college students.

Alex Espana (“Ivy League Adventism”) acknowledges that Adventist students attend secular campuses and typically face loneliness and separation from a church community even though other Adventists might be in the hallways or across the street.

Sebastien Braxton (“Continue the Conversation”) challenges students to apply their theological understandings to secular topics in order to make evaluations while learning in the higher education milieu.

Samuel Koranteng-Pipim (“From Ministry to Movement”) shares the ministry model he has implemented for the Michigan conference. His presentation rings with enthusiasm and acronyms and salesmanship.

Andrew Perrin (“Re-Thinking Evangelism”) suggests targeting the heart rather than only the head, tapping into emotions for a more holistic approach to reaching people.

Paul Buckley (“Adventists in Non-Adventist Colleges and Universities”) questions the term “secular campus ministry” with some statistics comparing state schools with private and religious schools. He shares his own journey in higher education and church involvement.

Scott Ward (“Campus Based Youth Ministry”) and David Achata (“Schooled in Culture”) present models for youth ministry to students on public high school campuses, an area in which few Adventist youth ministries have ventured.

Andrea Jacobsons (“Standout Public School Retreat”) chronicles the development of a public high school retreat Andrews University provides for both recruitment and ministry.

Kevin Becker (“Adopting Your Local Public Elementary School”) tells his story of volunteering at a local elementary school and the tremendous openness for service without overtly religious strings attached.

### ***Campus Ministry Networking***

Kirk King (“Let’s Go Outside”) chides us for operating with a protectionistic mode and invites us to broaden our ministry outside of denominational structures as our students already have done.

Ron Whitehead (“The Local Church and Public Education”) evaluates church dropout rates from a business perspective and offers a new network called “Churches of Refuge” to network transitioning college students with local Adventist Churches.

Kirsten Oster-Lundqvist (“Social Networking in a Faith Based Community”) argues in favor of capitalizing on Facebook as a networking tool and as a manner of doing deeper and broader youth ministry.

Timothy Nixon (“The Obama Factor”) considers the strategy Barak Obama used in tapping into college age voters for his presidential election and suggests the Church should take note and utilize some similar methods.

Steve Case (“Lead the Way”) posits that leadership is the primary human key for campus ministry, regardless of which model gets implemented as well as the results that occur.

### ***Campus Ministry Resources***

Ron Pickell (“Supporting an Army of Youth”) identifies the need for ministry on public campuses and offers ideas for meeting that need with the students already present there. He appeals for church leaders to further empower college students for ministry.

Martin Weber (“When the Canaries Stop Singing”) zeroes in on judgmentalism as a systemic dysfunction within the Adventist Church that must be replaced with love in order for real progress to occur.

Mike Stevenson (“Taskforce Now”) makes his appeal to initiate a thrust for collegiate ministry by resurrecting a 1960s version of Taskforce in which college students had a mission focus rather than a maintenance function.

William Cork (“Ellen G. White and the Secular Campus”) delves into a historical perspective of early Adventism and Ellen White’s warnings as well as her recommendations for secular campus ministry.

Duane McBride et. al. present a collection of substance abuse research and the importance of resilience on both secular and religious school campuses.

## **And There's More!**

After discussing the papers, participants at the 180° Symposium spent two more days brainstorming what to do at this point. Chris Blake from Union College led the discussion. You'll find the results in the last chapter of this book.

Whatever your interest in reaching the campus and/or reaching the world, delve in, dialogue, and feel free to disagree, and also digest some of this material. The 180° Symposium doesn't claim to have the last word on the topic, but an intentional reflection and moving forward from this point. Join the movement!

# Reach the Mind, Reach the World

by Zane Yi

## Abstract

*A vital part of reaching students on campus is to engage and equip them intellectually. Students need resources that help them understand, articulate, and live out their Christian faith in a secular and pluralistic society. These are typically part of the curriculum and also campus options on public campuses. Currently students on Adventist campuses have markedly less exposure and understanding of faith issues in the public square. Here are practical suggestions for both Adventist and non-Adventist campuses in this regard. Of course there are differences, and ministry is important in both contexts. Rather than removing one's self from the discussion, engage in it. Helpful resources are available.*

## Introduction

Beyond addressing pastoral needs, honing the right theological message and emphasis, or developing the most relevant methods and programs, *intellectually engaging* and *equipping* students is an essential component of effectively ministering to college students on both the Adventist and non-Adventist campus. Instead of getting overly technical (and intellectual!), I will support this claim informally by sharing numerous personal experiences. I will also provide examples of how this can be done.<sup>1</sup>

## Reaching the Mind on the Non-Adventist Campus

There are many reasons a young person might leave the church during one's college years—social pressure, lifestyle choices that are seemingly incongruent with one's upbringing, negative personal interactions with church members, etc. For several of my friends that grew up with me in the church, however, the primary reasons were intellectual. Furthermore, the struggle was not with an aspect of Adventist doctrine, but with a basic teaching of the Christian faith. One friend from academy enrolled at a non-Adventist university and took a course in the Old Testament that challenged many of the things he had heard about the Bible as a child and teen. The other, also studying at that same university, had questions emerge over dinner with some friends. During the course of the

conversation, someone from a different religious tradition pointed out that the only reason my friend was a Christian was because she had been born into a Christian family. This comment opened the floodgates to many more questions.

The experiences of my friends are not unique; I believe having access to intellectual resources (books, lectures, a minister trained to address such issues, etc.) during this time would have kept both of my friends connected to the faith.

I currently serve as a volunteer to a student group at Columbia University. Last year we read a book on apologetics at our weekly meetings. The book addressed many of the questions the author has encountered while ministering to New Yorkers over the past fifteen years. Some basic questions are addressed in a thoughtful way, such as:

Why does God allow suffering in the world?

How can one religion be "right" and the others "wrong"?

Why have so many wars been fought in the name of God?<sup>2</sup>

The reaction to the book by the students has been interesting. Some want to come to meetings for a simple Bible study. It is disorienting for them to hear a Christian author that sounds so much like some of their non-religious teachers. Others become immediately engaged. "Hey, that's exactly what my professor/roommate said the other day!" a couple of



them have exclaimed. They begin to talk differently as the issues they are dealing with on campus seem to connect with their faith. Instead of sitting listless and repeating “safe,” religious-sounding clichés, they actively participate in the discussion.

Beyond retention, however, engaging students intellectually is vital for reaching non-Christian students. Last year we encouraged our students to attend a Veritas Forum when we found out another student organization on campus was organizing it.<sup>3</sup> I was able to join some of the undergraduate students on the second night. The speaker, William Lane Craig, gave a lecture on the historical reliability of the Gospels and the resurrection of Jesus. The students from our group were spell-bound by what some might have thought was a very dry (and long) lecture! The forum also included presentations addressing social issues like the sex trade and global poverty. Events like these are not only relevant to Christian students themselves, but ones that they could feel comfortable and confident inviting their non-Christian friends. I discovered that the previous evening, the presenter had debated a non-Christian philosophy professor on the question of “Can you be moral without God?”

Organizing an event like the Veritas Forum is no small task, and the possibility of partnering with other groups to organize such an event may not be feasible for all groups. With this in mind, I’d like to give another example of how intellectual engagement and resourcing might be done on a smaller scale.

A few years ago, when I served as a campus minister at the University of Tennessee, I continued to participate in and support something my predecessor, Ron Pickell, had started during his tenure. He had organized a book club called the Theist Club. Every week graduate students and campus ministers from other organizations would gather at the Adventist Student Center to discuss a book. The books we read in the two years I was a part of the group dealt with issues like post-modernism, the historical Jesus, and religious pluralism. Aside from the wonderful conversations and friendships that developed from this group, I believe the fact that this club was hosted at an Adventist Student Center did much to leave a positive impression in the minds of the thoughtful non-Adventists that gathered there.

These experiences, and others like them, have convinced me of the need to intellectually engage students and to provide them with adequate resources (books, studies, events, presenters, discussion venues, etc.) that encourage them to ask and grapple with serious questions. Of course, none of these substitutes for the campus minister who has wrestled personally with the questions and can address these questions in the context of student interactions.

## Reaching the Mind on the Adventist Campus

I am a product of Adventist higher-education. In this section, however, I want to use my experiences in non-Adventist educational settings to address ministry on Adventist ones. Realizing that many of the ideas in the previous section can be replicated on an Adventist campus, I want to focus on a deeper issue.

At Columbia University, all students are required to take classes from the core curriculum.<sup>4</sup> During one’s sophomore year, all students, regardless of major, take a year-long course entitled “Contemporary Civilization in the West” where they read and engage major philosophical and literary classics. Just this past semester, I was surprised to see one of the student leaders from our fellowship walking into the weekly meeting with copies of works by the philosophers Hegel and Nietzsche.

At Fordham University, where I’m currently a graduate student, and where I teach introductory classes in philosophy, all students, once again, regardless of major, during the freshman and sophomore years, are required to take an introduction to philosophy class and also one in philosophical ethics. In these classes, students read works by authors like Plato, Aquinas, Descartes and Hume and learn the basic skills needed for understanding and critically engaging ideas. They debate issues like abortion, gay marriage, the environment, and religion. In addition to these classes, they all take a course from the religion department called “Faith and Critical Reasoning.”<sup>5</sup> I was surprised that in some sections of the course, they are reading books like *The God Delusion* by Richard Dawkins.<sup>6</sup>

I can't help but reflect on my own undergraduate experience and compare it to that of my students. While I appreciate many aspects of the education I received, I realize now that I was woefully unprepared to engage the world of ideas. By the time I graduated from my Adventist college, I had not even heard of some of the authors my undergraduate students are required to read, let alone what they said. My students are reading works their freshmen and sophomore year that I, embarrassingly, did not read until I was in graduate school!

Beyond the basic issue of providing a quality liberal arts education that addresses basic questions any inquisitive college student is asking, our denomination faces serious challenges as graduates from our own institutions go out into society unprepared to dialogue intelligently on important social matters with peers who have been educated elsewhere. We are equally unprepared to discuss spiritual matters on the level of others.

Consider the challenges that will confront our denomination as more and more Adventist students receive their education at high-caliber non-Adventist institutions, and yet are ministered to by pastors that have been trained largely in Adventist ones.<sup>7</sup> Meeting these challenges will take more than offering a basic apologetics course. We need to revisit the core curriculum at our institutions of higher learning with the intent of providing courses that teach students the basic ideas of important figures, equip them to engage these ideas, and also challenge them to think critically about pressing issues that face our church and society at large.

The reticence to do this, I realize, is the fear of how some of these ideas might negatively impact the faith of students who are exposed to them. Some perceive Adventist colleges as a citadel of protection from the outside world. However, these fears, as well-intentioned as they are, betray a misunderstanding of the nature of faith (which is not synonymous with epistemological certainty) and also a lack of awareness of the resources within the Christian tradition to respond to serious intellectual inquiry.

Is it possible that, presently, instead of preparing our students to engage and even thrive in the real world, we are intellectually crippling them with

ignorance and fear, making it impossible for them to function outside the Adventist subculture? And what are the spiritual ramifications? We need to shift our focus to *preparing* students to engage the world, not just *protecting* them from it. Everyone must grapple with the world of ideas at some point in life. What better place to do this than at a Christian university, surrounded by instructors and peers that profess faith?

## Conclusion

Recently, I was surprised, actually shocked, to see someone at church. Just a few months ago a young man I hadn't seen in over five years walked through the doors. He had moved to New York after graduating from the University of Tennessee and through the internet had found the church I currently attend. Back then he was one of those students that I had to constantly call up and take out to eat, but one that never seemed too interested in participating in anything else.

A few weeks later I was surprised again when he apologized to me for never getting a book I had loaned him back to me. I had forgotten about it. He had read it and found it so helpful that he had given it to a friend. He pulled from his bag a new copy of the book and gave it to me. In this book, through a series of letters, a young man addresses the difficult questions his father has about Christianity.<sup>8</sup>

I realize there are many reasons this young man is in church today. The social and more directly "spiritual" components of campus ministry, along with the ministry of the local church, his family, and ultimately, the grace of God are all relevant factors to take into consideration. However, I like to think that the book that I handed him over lunch all those years ago played an important role in keeping him connected to his faith during his college years.

As we work with students we should encourage questions, critical thinking, and intellectual exploration. We would do well to show them how cultivating one's thought life is a part of faith and a service to God. We must provide them with relevant resources and encourage them to learn from others. In the long run, this can only enrich their lives, deepen their faith in God, and their witness for God in the world.

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup>There are two books that effectively address the issue of the intellectual life and Christian faith—Mark A. Noll, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*. Grand Rapids, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1994, and J.P. Moreland, *Love Your God with All Your Mind: The Role of Reason in the Life of the Soul*. Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1997.
- <sup>2</sup>Tim Keller. *The Reason for God: Belief in an Age of Skepticism*. New York: Dutton, 2008.
- <sup>3</sup>See <http://www.veritas.org> for more information about this organization. See also a book edited by the founder of Veritas, Kelly Monroe, *Finding God at Harvard: Spiritual Journeys of Thinking Christians*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008.
- <sup>4</sup>For more information about the core curriculum at Columbia University, see <http://www.college.columbia.edu/core>.
- <sup>5</sup>For information about the core curriculum at Fordham University, see [http://www.fordham.edu/academics/colleges\\_\\_graduate\\_s/undergraduate\\_colleg/fordham\\_college\\_at\\_r/core\\_curriculum/index.asp](http://www.fordham.edu/academics/colleges__graduate_s/undergraduate_colleg/fordham_college_at_r/core_curriculum/index.asp).
- <sup>6</sup>Richard Dawkins. *The God Delusion*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2006.
- <sup>7</sup>This is not to say that every minister in the Adventist church is one that has attended an Adventist undergraduate institution. This seems to be the general trend from my personal perspective. For the latest trends in Adventist education in North America, see Alita Byrd, "The Changing Landscape of Adventist Higher Education in North America", *Spectrum*, 37.2, (2009), 37-50. See also Jimmy Phillips, "The Invisible Majority," *Adventist Review*, (Sept. 20, 2007) 8-13.
- <sup>8</sup>Gregory Boyd and Edward Boyd, *Letters from a Skeptic: A Son Wrestles with His Father's Questions about Christianity*. Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2008. The book was originally printed in 1994 by a different publisher.

# A KIND OF MIND TO COMMUNE WITH

by Kenneth Bergland

## Abstract

*In Norway research on students and religion provides useful information for the church as it seeks to present the Gospel to a post-Christian culture and retain its own maturing young people. Erling Birkedal's longitudinal and qualitative study of faith among youth from age 13 to 25 could be considered the most significant piece of Norwegian research on this topic at this time. The information and insights gleaned yield challenges and possibilities we as a church are facing in communicating a mature SDA-faith among contemporary Norwegian students.*

## Recent Research on Norwegian Students

Research on students and religion in Norway provide important information for the church as it ministers to university students.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps the most important single researcher on this specific topic is Erling Birkedal.<sup>2</sup> According to Birkedal his informants are 'faithless' towards what they view as conventional and institutional religion, going in a more individual direction. They view their own self as the highest authority.<sup>3</sup>

For those who still call themselves Christian at age 25, it is typical to show a large degree of independence from religious authorities. There are traces of a conventional Christian faith, simultaneous with attempts to combine various concepts of God independent of any religious tradition. The majority of Birkedal's informants show a tendency towards a constructivist faith—faith that is not received but constructed independent from religious authorities.<sup>4</sup> It seems largely to be an unconscious syncretism in which people adopt elements they sympathize with from various sources, often unreflective of or indifferent to their incompatibility. Even if his informants show a high degree of independence from any religious authority or tradition, Birkedal still found a low degree of critical attitudes towards Christianity.<sup>5</sup> Holmquist claimed in a recent interview that there is a potential in this situation. He says that youth now more often come ignorant about Christianity, which also makes

them look upon it as more exotic. They therefore tend to be more open than before.<sup>6</sup>

Among those who have been able to retain some kind of faith through their student stage of life, Birkedal sees the process of altering their views of God from the concrete in the early teens to the more abstract at age 25 as a possible reason. He thinks those who have lost their former faith, or never had one, confirms this interpretation. This group typically retains a view of God with anthropomorphic, authoritarian and transcendent traits. These are the people who see God as most judging, retributive and limiting. However, they also reject the existence of such a god by holding atheistic or agnostic views of God. Birkedal therefore sees those who have lost their former faith as having stagnated and unable to develop views of God they can live with.<sup>7</sup>

As a characteristic of his informants Birkedal found that there is a general opposition against the view of an authoritarian and normative God, even among those who called themselves "certainly Christian."<sup>8</sup> They insist on a lifestyle independent of a divinely revealed ethical standard and retributive judgement. Interestingly enough, although 59% of Holmquist's informants considered themselves Christian, they did not view faith as an important part of life.<sup>9</sup> Among University students Fagermoen found that only 4% refer to God or the Bible as a source to determine right and wrong; 35% found the basis for ethical distinctions as inherent in the subjective consciousness; and 47% saw it as

culturally conditioned. Truth, and especially ethics, were considered as subjectively and culturally relative. Even approximately half of those who did say they believe in God think that truth is relative.<sup>10</sup> This indicates that divine revelation is largely absent from the mindset of the youth. Among those who do claim to believe, their beliefs have a limited influence upon their ethical and lifestyle choices. In the sense of an externally revealed standard for life and lifestyle issues, the students could seem to live “beyond good and evil,” to borrow one of Nietzsche’s titles.<sup>11</sup>

On the other hand, in a certain sense one does find a dualistic concept of good and evil in their worldview. Birkedal’s informants who believe in God tend to place prime emphasis upon God as a caring-person, one who supports in every way and is only good towards humans. They are less concerned about the cognitive-objective sides of God, being able to live with paradoxes and contradiction, and are more inclined towards the emotional-subjective relation to God.<sup>12</sup> As one of his informants said, God is “a kind of thought to commune with.”<sup>13</sup> The tendency is clearly away from dogmatic questions about who God is, towards questions about His function in one’s subjective life.<sup>14</sup> In the absence of objective truth, they still hold on to pragmatic truth—what works here and now. An interesting phenomenon is that even if they largely have a mystical concept of God, as the *Deus absconditus* who has not revealed Himself,<sup>15</sup> those who do believe appear to agree with the final stanza of *Brand*, written by the Norwegian poet Ibsen, that “He is the *Deus caritatis*” – the loving God.<sup>16</sup> They are certain about God’s essence at the same time as they doubt any sources claiming to reveal something about God.

Concerning the existence of evil, Holmquist’s research on teenagers shows that one-third believe that something called evil does exist. These teens were slightly more convinced about the existence of God than the existence of evil or Satan.<sup>17</sup> Even if this indicates what we might expect among older students, none of the surveys provide us with a basis to carry over the teen findings to older students. But it seems to provide a basis for concluding that among both teenagers and students the dualistic concept of good and evil is present in the outlook on spiritual beings and the cosmos,

especially in viewing God as only good. But this dualism is hardly seen as having any practical consequences for ethical choices in one’s personal life.

Birkedal concludes that an emotional subject-subject relation to God seems to be a good basis for retaining faith, while an ongoing cognitive conflict, a “cognitive dissonance” as he calls it, between faith and science tends to loss of faith.<sup>18</sup> Those with a mere cognitive approach are the ones that struggle the most with retaining faith.<sup>19</sup> More specifically, an experience of security, divine presence, good relations to other believers, combined with one’s own quest for meaning and a deeper understanding of faith contributes to sustaining faith.<sup>20</sup>

Studying the importance of the social dimension for retaining faith, Birkedal observes that the religious plurality the students live in probably explains the common trait of cultural relativism among his informants.<sup>21</sup> Still Birkedal sees the attachment to family and particular groups as explanatory for the individual variations.<sup>22</sup> To him it seems to be that non-faith is inherited easier from the parents than faith. Faith-communities seem to strengthen or weaken faith, depending on the individual’s experience with significant persons within these communities, and to what degree the individuals themselves meet the norms and expectations of the community.

Fjellhaug Bibelskole found that approximately 70% of the students reckoned themselves as belonging to a Christian denomination (60% to the state-church), and 47% said they participated in religious activities on a weekly basis. It can be assumed that institutional religion has some influence on the students’ faith, even if they want to construct faith subjectively. Since a defined lifestyle and specific moral and ethical views tend to define those inside and outside, an individual’s ability to conform to these have proven the most significant factor for whether youth continue in the community or not. At the same time some sustain and develop their faith outside such communities. It is here that dialogue with partners, friends and other believers can nurture their faith. While like-mindedness is important, it seems that openness and tolerance for other views are seen as the most important characteristics of dialogue.<sup>23</sup>



## Paradigmatic Challenges and Possibilities for SDA Student-Work

On the basis of the above survey, what challenges and possibilities are present for SDA work on the University campus. I will focus on three different areas.

First, there is the issue of spiritual authority. As SDAs we would not see a need to convince the students about the authority of the Church and its tradition. We can encourage the students in independent thinking and developing integrity in regard to human institutions and conventions.<sup>24</sup> But we do face a major challenge in helping them see the spiritual trustworthiness and authority of the Bible as God's Word. The *Deus absconditus* seems to be the One students at large believe in, if they believe. So how can we help them accept the *Deus revelatus*?

Even if the students, in their acceptance of relativism and pluralism, will easily classify convictions about the Bible as a subjective truth, a possible initial step can be to help them consciously reflect around the human epistemological limits, ontological relativity and pluralism's logical contradictions. By exploring our human limitations together with them, we might help them realize the need of something beyond the self. On the other hand the subjective domain needs to be acknowledged. As Zurcher has pointed out, "Truth is really known only when it becomes inner life."<sup>25</sup> And Douglas elaborates on this point by stating, "The self-authenticating experience of faith verifies the validity of the Holy Scriptures."<sup>26</sup> We must therefore not only speak of biblical truth as an objective and external reality, but assist them so the *Deus revelatus* and biblical truth can become experiential realities in their lives.

Second, there is the concept of good and evil. It is not as though a distinction between the two is absent among students. We can possibly start from their moral categories. We can affirm God's goodness in the subjective and immediate realm, but at the same time we need to find ways of communicating His goodness also in the more objective salvation history. The well-articulated concept of the great controversy and the sanctuary-service can meet this challenge. This seems to be especially important since some tend to lose their

faith in God as they lose sight of His goodness in the here and now.

Even if Birkedal found that those who alter their former views of God as authoritarian and normative tend to retain their faith, remaining faithful to the three angels' messages cannot reduce our message to a popular definition of the *Deus caritatis*. We need to help the students see more than a superficial statement of doctrinal beliefs. For example, we often lack a true expression of love (1 John 3:16); the fact that God's judgment has come does not compromise His love (Rev. 14:7); and keeping the commandments of God contributes to life rather than reducing it (Rev. 14:12). Further, we need to communicate that all life is sacred, a holistic spirituality that include cognitive, emotional and lifestyle-issues. Upholding a dualistic distinction between good and evil as it relates to lifestyle and the final judgment is possibly one of our major challenges, as the popular sentiment sees these ideas as extremely repulsive. But in upholding moral categories we must always be willing to scrutinize our own viewpoints by continually evaluating whether they are biblical standards and not merely subjective or cultural. We must also create environments where the students can raise their honest questions and express doubt in the process of adopting biblical standards.

Third, the issue of presence seems to be crucial in our work among students. The idea of presence needs to be addressed both from the perspective of the presence of God and presence of believers who live their faith. Many lose their faith when they experience the absence of the caring God. Churches have tended to communicate a static and one-dimensional view of God as always giving what is immediately experienced as good and secure. In this we might have done our youth and students a disfavor. Instead we should communicate a more biblical and realistic image of God as One who is with His people in a dynamic relationship. Yes, He might at times pedagogically lead His people by turning His back upon them without rejecting them, or allowing discomfort and insecurity to work for a higher good not experienced in the immediate. On the other hand, the above survey has also shown that our prime avenue to reaching students is in being dialogue-partners they can trust. Taking into consideration the inherent skepticism to institutional



religion, our individual SDA students are possibly the best instruments in reaching out into the university community as they live their faith among their fellow students.<sup>27</sup> Here we need to nurture and equip them in their task as witnesses on the university campus.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Tor Erling Fagermoen, "Hvor Postmoderne Er Universitetsstudentene I Oslo Anno 2005?" Kristiansand: Mediehøgskolen Gimlekollen, 2005; *Spørreundersøkelse Om Religion Og Verdensbilde*. Bergen: Bergen Kristelige Studentlag, 2009; *Livssynsundersøkelse Blant Studenter Ved Universitetet I Oslo*. Fjellhaug bibelskole, 2006; Morten Holmquist, *Jeg Tror Jeg Er Lykkelig ... Ung Tro Og Hverdag*. Oslo: Kloster Forlag, 2007.

<sup>2</sup>Erling Birkedal, "Kanskje Jeg Tror På En Gud, Men ..." *En Langtidsstudie Av Gudstro Hos Unge*. Oslo: IKO-Forlaget, 2008.

<sup>3</sup>Birkedal, 112.

<sup>4</sup>Birkedal, 146.

<sup>5</sup>Birkedal, 111.

<sup>6</sup>Cf. Turid Sylte, "Religion Engasjerer Nordmenn Mer Enn Før," *Vårt Land* 11.05.2009. Here Holmquist claims that 24% in the age between 18 and 34 say that they do not believe at all. Fagermoen found that of his informants, i.e. students at the University of Oslo, 37% would call themselves atheists and 27% agnostics (Fagermoen, 10).

<sup>7</sup>Birkedal, 105-6 and 09.

<sup>8</sup>Birkedal, 85 and 107.

<sup>9</sup>Holmquist, 84, 87 and 111. Cf. Birkedal, 43. Birkedal refers to Henriksen and Repstad who suggests a sacramentally-oriented Christianity, rather than a lifestyle-oriented Christianity (Birkedal, 137). Even if we can disagree with this, still it might help us understand why some students prefer other denominations compared to a more lifestyle-oriented adventism.

<sup>10</sup>Fagermoen, 11 and 13-14. Holmquist found that among the teenagers only 2% consulted a religious book to find out what was right and

wrong - preferring their own conscience, friends and parents (Holmquist, 91). Cf. Birkedal, 76, 80, 93 and 106. Fjellhaug Bibelskole found that over 40% read in the Bible now and then and that 14% viewed it as God's spoken word to us (Livssynsundersøkelse).

<sup>11</sup>Birkedal, 63 and 109.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid, 87-88, 91 and 111. Cf. Fagermoen, 15.

<sup>13</sup>Birkedal, 84. Cf. Fagermoen, 14.

<sup>14</sup>Birkedal, 50 and 154.

<sup>15</sup>Fagermoen found that 55% of the students have a feeling that "it is most likely something there, even if it is unclear" (Fagermoen, 12).

<sup>16</sup>Henrik Ibsen, "Brand," *Samlede Verker*, vol. 1. Oslo: Gyldendal Norsk Forlag, 2000, 549. Cf. Birkedal, 80, 85 and 137.

<sup>17</sup>Holmquist, 51.

<sup>18</sup>Birkedal, 115-16 and 50.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid, 126.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid, 117.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid, 147 and 51.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid, 112.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid, 63, 121-22, 24, 27, 30-31 and 35-36. Cf. Holmquist, 115-16.

<sup>24</sup>Ellen G. White, *Education*. Mountain View, Cal: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1903, 17.

<sup>25</sup>Jean Zurcher, *Goals and Spiritual Values of Existentialism*, Biblical Research Institute. (no date provided by author)

<sup>26</sup>Herbert E. Douglass, *Faith as an Existential Experience*, Biblical Research Institute. (no date provided by author)

<sup>27</sup>Cf. Birkedal, 98; Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages from the Writings of Ellen G. White*, vol. 3 Washington DC: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1958, 233-34.

# PLEASE SIR, I WANT SOME MORE: INTENTIONALLY BIBLICAL COMMUNITY AND THE PUBLIC CAMPUS

by Michaela Lawrence

## Abstract

*Students everywhere are crying out for more: more money, more freedom and oftentimes more knowledge. Those of us who lead them must find ways to satisfy that hunger especially when they desire spiritual food. But of course, for every desire there is a challenge. Those attending public universities must contend with the blatant secular nature of their environs—we should get to know those environs. Those attending public colleges don't have spiritual formation built into their curriculum—we should provide them with meaningful options. And then we should do even more. "Feed my sheep," Jesus says and he doesn't tell us to stop. He wants us to give our students the spiritual food that will satisfy and grow them. "More food" must be part of the mantra. The "more" is intentionally biblical community—be it a traditional local church, a contemporary house church, a weekly small group, or some other fellowship. However it looks, it must be a space in which the truths of God as revealed in Scripture are explored, wrestled with, questioned and possibly answered. Spiritual transformation needs continual and intentional spiritual food.*

Permit me to begin this discussion with an excerpt from an old novel. We find a group of orphan boys at the end of a meal but far from satisfied. And it's in this unfortunate state that one makes a daring move.

Child as he was, he was desperate with hunger, and reckless with misery. He rose from the table; and advancing to the master, basin and spoon in hand, said: somewhat alarmed at his own temerity:

"Please, sir, I want some more."

The master was a fat, healthy man; but he turned very pale. He gazed in stupefied astonishment on the small rebel for some seconds, and then clung for support to the copper. The assistants were paralyzed with wonder; the boys with fear.

"What!" said the master at length, in a faint voice.

"Please, sir," replied Oliver, "I want some more."

The master aimed a blow at Oliver's head with the ladle; pinioned him in his arms; and shrieked aloud for the beadle.

The board was sitting in solemn conclave, when Mr. Bumble rushed into the room in great excitement, and addressing the gentleman in the high chair, said,

"Mr. Limbkins, I beg your pardon, sir! Oliver Twist has asked for more!"

There was a general start. Horror was depicted on every countenance.

"For *more!*" said Mr. Limbkins. "Compose yourself, Bumble, and answer me distinctly. Do I understand that he asked for more, after he had eaten the supper allotted by the dietary?"

"He did, sir," replied Bumble.

"That boy will be hung," said the gentleman in the white waistcoat. "I know that boy will be hung."

Perhaps this is the first time you've been given the opportunity to compare the public campus students you minister to with Oliver Twist, the hungry child-thief who Charles Dickens uncovers in his nineteenth century novel. While we'd never admit to starving our students or treating them in any abusive manner, perhaps it's useful to see our students through the eyes of Oliver and his desperate companions, through the stomach that desires and deserves more. More what? More food. And for the purposes of this paper, more intentionally biblical community, a space in which the truths of God as revealed in Scripture are explored, wrestled with, questioned and possibly answered.

### What Intentionally Biblical Community Looks Like

Being intentionally biblical is challenging in part because it means showing how biblical truths speak to the whole person. We sometimes spend so much time event-planning and relationship-counseling that we run out of time spent wrestling with ways to help students better appreciate the beauty of the Bible in a holistic and jargon free manner that teaches them to connect the dots of their spiritual experience instead of living compartmentalized lives.

Even though a thorough understanding of the Bible is not necessary for salvation, doctrine shouldn't remain an isolated list of good ideas. Doctrine reveals the truths of God. One of those truths is God's communal nature, his desire to live with us and see us grow as a people not simply as individuals. The existence of churches speaks to this reality.

Consequently, our ministry to public campus students should reflect the value of community, a community that meets the real needs and grows in its understanding of its Savior. It is imperative that we promote spiritual communal growth particularly as we live within a very self-centered and pluralistic culture. We will discuss more on that later. For now, let's return to food.

### Supply and Demand

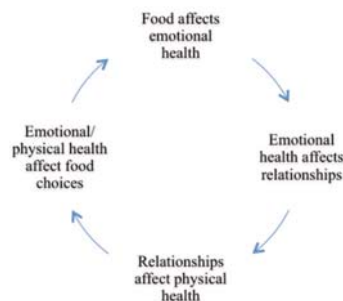
There's a point at which each of us finds our own food but initially, it must be given to us because we're too immature to know what we need to feed on. Left to our own devices, we'd likely starve or poison ourselves. So we must be fed and

gradually taught how to feed ourselves—and then others. If you have been fed, and perhaps fed for quite some time, it's time to move to the "feeding others" level. Our experience, gifts, skills, and varied careers have given us opportunities to do as Jesus tells Peter in John 21:17. "Feed my sheep." The Oxford Dictionary defines food as "any nutritious substance that people or animals eat or drink or that plants absorb to maintain life and growth" and in this paper, I'd like to focus on that idea of maintaining life and growth.<sup>1</sup>

So in other words, Christ is saying, "Peter, if you love me you will give my followers all they need to maintain life and growth." And then in verse 19 Jesus says, "Follow me." He gives no deadline for the feeding but instead says, "Do as I do." And as we have each experienced, Jesus never stops feeding us. Likewise, as those feeding others, our pots and pans should always be active.

Whether or not we've been able to recognize it as such, like Oliver we've experienced the ministry of food. In Oliver's case such nurture arrives in Chapter 11 when, after a sequence of dramatic events, the child becomes ill and is taken in by an old gentleman who provides him with the rest, comfort and nourishment he needs in order to live. Food moves Oliver from near death to life. Yet, we realize that in and of itself food does not minister to us. Calories are not spiritual. Rather, it is the hands that provide it, the heart that is willing to see loaves and fish multiplied, and the mouth that says "come on over" that work together to feed the hungry of which Jesus speaks. Food is an avenue for ministry. The food experience has the potential to minister to not only the physical body but to the emotions— one's very psyche is blessed. So when someone asks for more, we must not only pay attention, but seek ways to answer the request.

In his book *The Amazing Connection Between Food and Love*, Gary Smalley uses the following diagram.<sup>2</sup>



It proves an invaluable point: what we eat affects our whole person. And in his description of how food impacts our lives in this cyclical fashion, Smalley concludes that in order for us to achieve proper eating habits and enjoy a positive cycle we must each be in a relationship. One question quickly follows: How can I be in a relationship when I'm messed up? Smalley's answer is that the relationship we primarily need is a relationship with God. It is this relationship of prayer and Bible study that will enable us to be free from the negative cycle that is caused by poor eating habits.

As we talk about feeding others spiritually in a community setting, Smalley's diagram and conclusion aid our perspective. Most importantly, they point us to our ultimate need for God and when we think of spiritual food as something that's necessary to maintain life and growth, we see it in light of Smalley's diagram as essential to the whole person.

## Location

Since we're talking about community, let's talk briefly about the actual physical locale of this shared spiritual experience. It's not imperative that students attend an actual church service each week because many who do are simply benchwarmers. So going to church merely out of habit is not something we necessarily want to encourage. What is essential is that students are part of a very intentional spiritual community. Because the traditional church setting has deep roots, traditions and a fairly solid system of programming already in place, it is situated to be a reliable center within which to foster spiritual growth. But intentionally biblical community can exist almost anywhere.

I don't want to dismiss the importance of the local church during college and university years in particular. As Benson Hines writes in his eBook *Reaching the Campus Tribes*, students "often remain entirely unnoticed by churches during those years. We should not be surprised at reports that 70% or more of our 'good youth group kids' are no longer connected to a church after a few years."<sup>3</sup> So the local church does have a role to play in the spiritual nurture of our public campus students. However, I do want to speak in recognition of how church is being redefined. From small groups and coffee shops to simple church and other current spiritual

spaces, the fellowship of believers in worship is certainly a dynamic concept.<sup>4</sup> What was once thought of as just a social gathering may have very well become a place to intentionally meet God. And these more contemporary places can certainly be found on public campuses.

## The Time for More: Personal Testimony

So how do we know when it's time for more? Students will say so. They may not say it explicitly but they'll tell us—our job is to learn how to listen with both ears and eyes. They'll say things such as, "So Michaela, when are we coming over again? or "You know, I really miss my mum's baked macaroni."

Since when was my apartment so fabulous to look at for two hours? And since when did anyone love their mother's food just because it tastes good? Underlying each of these examples is the reality of fellowship. They had a good time with me and each other while at my place and they miss time spent with their family. Verbalizing these things to spiritual leaders is an often unconscious attempt to get more of the good experience. Community is desired. Encourage it!

And then there are the more complex questions and statements. "What does it really mean to be Adventist?" Many are making decisions based on their peer group. But many are truly looking for solid answers and making decisions based on the little they find wherever they find it. So we must pick up on their questions and find communal time during which to engage them. After all, one person's voiced question is often the silent question of three more.

While a graduate student at the University of Illinois at Chicago, I took a class called *The Bible as Literature* to fulfill my English Literature requirements. This was my first encounter with texts such as the Brown Driver Briggs Hebrew Lexicon and ideas such as the Documentary Hypothesis. My professor was a Jewish, John Milton scholar who impressed me greatly when he said during one of our first sessions, "Now you students see through a glass darkly but one day..." And I was quite proud of the fact that unlike most of my classmates, I actually knew that he was quoting Scripture. I felt a momentary bond with my teacher. But that moment and all my Bible knowledge gave me a fleeting high.

One day we were discussing Genesis 18 where Abraham pleads with the Lord to spare Sodom and the Lord intimates that he'll change his mind based on certain variables. The possibility of the Lord changing his mind puzzled one of my classmates. So she asked, "Does that mean that this god figure is fallible?" I almost lost my mind. "Did she just call my God fallible?" Too shy to actually verbalize my disbelief I sat quietly, allowing time for follow-up questions to race through my head.

I soon learned that my teacher, though Jewish, wasn't fazed by the question and that this wasn't the space in which to seek resolution. This was a literature class. We were analyzing the Bible the same way we analyzed *Paradise Lost*—line by line, skepticism in hand. This was not a theological discussion. No one in this room was concerned with my understanding of God in relation to my eternal salvation and that if the idea of God being fallible were true it would wipe out my faith. So what was I supposed to do? Call one of my former English professors at Andrews University? Complain to the non-denomination campus ministry staff whose weekly Bible studies I attended but wished were richer? I didn't like continually calling up my pastor dad long distance with biblical questions. I really wanted to be able to interface with someone who was in my environment, someone who could clearly recognize my quandary and speak wisely to it. Unfortunately none of my nearby outlets looked like viable options, not even my local church (and that's primarily because I only had a hi-bye relationship with the pastor).

If I had a nearby spiritual guide, I probably would have plopped down on her office couch and said, "So, what am I supposed to do when my classmate thinks God isn't perfect?"—the sort of question that doesn't lend itself to a quick answer. The instruction to pray would have been rejected because it wouldn't have made sense to me. I would have interpreted it as simplistic. But if I knew that the person listening to me was really interested in helping me resolve my frustration, I'd probably remain a bit open to almost anything she suggested. But she'd better make it good because I needed more than the words "God loves you" or a Bible study on Genesis 18—much more. I needed time and community within which to explore the significance of an infallible God and how to live fruitfully among those who beg to differ.

Our students' outlets for spiritual nurture are limited when compared to private Christian/Adventist campuses. It's very likely that they'll hear more spiritually challenging ideas in a public setting. So we must be available to not only listen but also help them establish a firmer foundation. One of my students wants to know how to make religion and spirituality more practical to the general masses. Another wants to know how to take his/her relationship with God to the next level. Yet another wonders what the separation or balance is between religion and spirituality. And as much as these students may attend Friday night vespers, if I don't spend time helping them create an intentionally biblical community, each week's gathering will soon become a non-transformational habit instead of an opportunity for growth, whether or not their questions are explicitly answered.

## **Why We Should Be Adamant About Serving Seconds**

Three reasons:

### **1. *Technology Often Trumps Tradition***

An extreme example took place on September 6, 2009 when two girls in Australia updated their Facebook status instead of using their phones to call the police when stuck in a stormwater drain. "For these kids, by the sounds of it, being on Facebook is just such a pervasive part of their lives that it seems the first line of response if they need to communicate a message to others," concludes Terry Flew, professor of Media and Communications at the Queensland University of Technology.<sup>5</sup> "Clearly it's not good enough to say 'well they should have rung emergency services', the point is that they didn't, and we need to think about why that's the case and what strategies can be used in the future," he adds.

In another case on May 15, 2009, Atlanta city councilman Kwanza Hall chose Twitter over 911 through which to get help for a woman having a seizure.<sup>6</sup> Earlier that month, emergency callers in a particular region of Atlanta had experienced a long hold time and the fire they called about ended up burning a house to the ground. Hall's cell phone battery was low and not wanting to chance long hold times, he tweeted and the woman received medical attention soon after, thanks to the calls made by those who had receive Hall's tweets.



From emergency calls to spiritual questions, we're now prone to find alternate aids. Technology has provided many more avenues for communication that have quickly become normative. And because tradition has often failed to satisfy, we feel comfortable trying alternatives. For better or for worse, our spiritual journeys are not exempt from these changes.

## 2. *Spiritual sources are numerous and varied*

As a nation, America no longer embraces orthodox Christianity over and above all other belief systems. That is a thing of the past. One of the Barna Group's national surveys on Christianity in America concludes the following:<sup>7</sup>

1. Americans are increasingly comfortable picking and choosing what they deem to be helpful and accurate theological views and have become comfortable discarding the rest of the teachings in the Bible.
2. Growing numbers of people now serve as their own theologian-in-residence. One consequence is that Americans are embracing an unpredictable and contradictory body of beliefs.
3. Today, Americans are more likely to pit a variety of non-Christian options against various Christian-based views. This has resulted in an abundance of unique worldviews based on personal combinations of theology drawn from a smattering of world religions such as Christianity, Buddhism, Judaism, Hinduism, and Islam as well as secularism.
4. With people spending less time reading the Bible, and becoming less engaged in activities that deepen their biblical literacy, faith views are more often adopted on the basis of dialogue, self-reflection, and observation than teaching.

Moreover, those who are Christians in America don't all believe in some of what we'd consider to be very fundamental components of the faith: the existence of Satan and the Holy Spirit.<sup>8</sup> Some find that 40% say Satan is a symbol of evil but not a living being while 58% agree that the Holy Spirit is a symbol of God's presence but isn't a living being.

And yet most self-proclaimed Christians admit that their faith significantly impacts their lives. Barna's research once again reveals the need for our spiritual communities to be intentionally biblical. When our public campus students are part of a Christian society that can't agree on fundamental issues and part of a nation that grounds its faith in a multiplicity of belief systems, we must be willing and able to nurture intentionally biblical spiritual communities.

## 3. *We're Adventist*

Of all places, the public campus sphere is not the place to shy away from being Adventist. This is not to say that we must teach our students to be outspoken apologists. It *is* to say that as long as we call ourselves Adventist and do campus ministry under the umbrella of Adventism, we must not move away from our biblical foundation as we grow toward a fuller understanding of all God has revealed in the present. As "old school" (or dare I say "conservative") as it may sound, we hope in the second coming of Christ. And wrapped up in that hope are various theological ideas, some of which are unique and some we share with the broader Christian community. We should find ways to embrace the shared ideas and celebrate common ground. However, we must find ways to help our Adventist students embrace the whole Bible, even the ideas unique to Adventism.

That of course begins with us. As leaders, have we embraced our uniqueness and can we talk about it comfortably within a post-modern, post-Christian context, or must we downplay it in an attempt to avoid possible opposition?

## **Methodology**

Here's where I tread more softly—not wishing to propose any absolutely successful actions I'll stick to three guiding principles (recognizing that like the last three foci there are certainly many more). These three act in tandem with the three aforementioned reasons for being adamant about serving seconds.

### 1. *God's salvation plan is paramount*

Both simple and complex, the theme of salvation is found throughout the work of God in the human race but it takes some effort to effectively contextualize that theme. When we do so, we'll

always implicitly or explicitly point our students to God no matter what our programming looks like. While not every encounter will be overtly spiritual such as a game night or corn roast, the atmosphere can still reflect the spirit of Godly community.

God's salvation plan is community oriented—it seeks the good of the whole not just the individual. Tied in with that plan is our understanding of Sabbath, for example. Based on what we know we'll help our students celebrate those hours. Also connected to the salvation plan is our understanding of our calling as disciples. So we'll help our students recognize the relationship between God's call to teach his Word and the students' various fields of study, talents and skills.

When we keep God's salvation plan in mind, we'll more naturally point students to God as the ultimate source for answers. This will, in turn, help develop our biblical focus and continually point us to the correct sources of spiritual understanding.

## **2. *Spiritual communities won't always agree***

One of the toughest things to do is engage in a debate in which resolution or understanding is not the goal. It's much easier to share common beliefs. However, many of our students don't agree with us or with the positions taken by the Adventist church, though grounded in the Bible. We have to create what Larry Osborne calls a "need-to-know or need-to-grow situation" in order to facilitate spiritual growth.<sup>9</sup> If that happens within the context of a program, so be it. But the program shouldn't be the main thrust—spiritual growth should.

When we foster community in which students know their voices will be listened to attentively no matter their opinion, we'll be more effective in sharing the Word of God as a spiritual authority. Some students will still find it difficult to agree with that assertion but when they are part of an encouraging community, they'll probably be more open to hearing alternate ideas.

The community is also necessary because many Christians believe spirituality is so deeply personal that to provide black and white answers is ineffective, removing the mystery of spirituality. And while there is much that remains a mystery, there are some clear answers. Community provides a healthier space in which to grow through many of

those answers especially since a communal testimony speaks volumes to the work of God.<sup>10</sup>

## **3. *Discipleship/mentoring leads to ownership***

Over the last decade, work on discipleship and mentoring has blossomed in the Christian community. No stranger to Adventism, many of our church leaders take advantage of the opportunities provided to learn and grow under the direct influence of a more seasoned pastor or administrator. However, our students, regardless of their field of study, should consistently be afforded the same opportunities. This would be true for personal spiritual growth as well as maturing in a community of faith.

One of the areas of church life in which we continue to struggle is that of effectively transitioning. Once a leader moves on, his or her subordinate is often left unprepared to handle the tasks at hand and in many more instances no one is in place to take over. Were we to effectively disciple and mentor our students, these transitions would be more effective. In addition, our students would be better prepared and willing to continue serving God beyond our ministry contexts. Discipleship is part of the Great Commission—not an option.

## **Some of Intentionality's Fruit**

Creating an intentionally biblical community is a huge challenge. The more holistically we look at it, however, the less intimidating the journey will seem. We're not just holding Bible studies or taking students to church—we're helping them see Jesus at work in every part of their lives—a biblical framework.

In the end, when God's desire to save us becomes our desire, we seek him in spite of tradition's disappointments. But that step comes with time after we've been allowed to question in a safe space, a community that supports our journey. And when our students move through these phases and are intentionally nurtured, they will be better equipped to recognize and positively respond to the work God is calling them to do. Possessing a healthier picture of God, they will continue asking for more but will also be providers of more for those they lead.



## Endnotes

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<http://www.barna.org/barna-update/article/12-faithspirituality/15-christianity-is-no-longer-americans-default-faith>.
- <sup>8</sup>"Most American Christians Do Not Believe that Satan or the Holy Spirit Exist," 2009, The Barna Group, September 1, 2009,  
<http://www.barna.org/barna-update/article/12-faithspirituality/260-most-american-christians-do-not-believe-that-satan-or-the-holy-spirit-exists>.
- <sup>9</sup>Osborne, Larry. *Sticky Church*. City: Publisher, 2008, 42.

<sup>10</sup>I'm particularly speaking to the way God enlightens a community of believers not just an individual. Miracles are a great example of that as in Acts 3 and 4. Another example is the Adventist Pioneers' understanding of when Sabbath begins. In both instances, God revealed his truth to a community—an act that always leaves less room for doubt



# THE THREE "C'S" OF CAMPUS MINISTRY

by Jiwan S. Moon

## Abstract

*After secondary school many young people move away from home for higher education. A number of these have difficulty finding and adjusting to a new church while their parents are miles away. Absence of parental presence and guidance, and absence of mentorship from their faith communities cause these adolescents to make more decisions of their own, which are frequently influenced by their peers more than anyone else. When introduced to a new and often very secular environment, many university students find challenges in keeping their Christian identity and their religious lifestyle. Sadly, many leave home as believers, but go through an identity crisis at school and return as unbelievers at the end of their university experience. A lack of ministry presence on a secular campus makes it even harder for university students to keep their faith and practice their religious beliefs. To keep university students in the church, a nurturing environment would include the following three "C's" of campus ministry: Church, Community, and Campus.*

## The Reality of the Youth Exodus and Lack of Ministry Presence

The slow but steady exodus of young people out of our churches is a growing concern, and is a consequence of gaps in the ministry provided to them from childhood through adolescence and into their post-secondary educational experiences. These loopholes reveal gaps in ministering to our young people, resulting in the loss of young people from our churches. One of the most prominent gaps is the time when these youth leave home, often for the first time, to attend colleges or universities. Once these youth find themselves on secular campuses, away from their family and home church's influences, they slowly lose their spirituality in an environment that is often hostile towards Christian beliefs and standards, and contrary to their previous lifestyle at home. Many go through an identity crisis, finding themselves caught between the faith which they have been practicing for many years and a world view which is often foreign and which often contradicts their religious beliefs. As a result, many of the youth who attend secular colleges or university as believers return home as unbelievers. When youth pursue their post-secondary studies on secular campuses, their views on faith, Christianity and God often become confused because of the prevalent secularism in the college and university

setting, and because of the lack of positive choices and influences to maintain and further develop their spiritual growth.

## The Three C's of Campus Ministry

To counter the negative effects of studying in a secular college or university where a young person's Christian lifestyle and religious views are often challenged, these young people must be provided with a safe and secure environment where they can be protected from the influence and the effects of secularism found on campus. To succeed in reaching and maintaining the spirituality of these post-secondary students, a support and mentoring system needs to be established and identified. Such a system will include the following *three C's*: *Church, Community, and Campus*. It is often very challenging to provide all three elements in the life of a post-secondary student.

I believe the following method is one of the most ideal ways of providing the three C's for a successful campus ministry. *First*, a student needs to be introduced to the local church, and should become an integral part of that church's worship and fellowship experience from the very start of one's college or university years. *Second*, someone from the local community, ideally a member of the church, should adopt the student as part of the

home-like community. When adopted by a church member into a community, the home-like influences of the new community fills the void the student has left in order to attend school. *Thirdly*, there must be an Adventist youth ministry presence on campus. For example, an Adventist chaplain or local church pastor or Adventist campus ministry mentors can initiate contact to serve in the role of spiritual care provider for the university students. They will need to engage in setting up occasions and opportunities on campus where the students can go and find an environment and intentional mentorship and nurturing away from their home and home church.

### **Tripod Campus Ministry**

The successful growth of a post-secondary student's spirituality while on campus is dependent on ensuring the presence of the *three C's*. Just as a tripod can stand firm and secure only by having all three legs, a post-secondary student's spiritual growth while on a secular campus is dependent on the presence and influence of church, a home-like community, and campus ministry. It is a lack of understanding or implementation of this concept that causes us to fail in securing a continuous development of faith experiences in college and university youth. Let me illustrate this model by sharing two success stories of students who have successfully completed their university years both academically and spiritually. Their experiences will also reveal how we can continue to improve and develop Adventist campus ministries at secular post-secondary campuses.

#### **A Foreign Student**

More than four years ago I received a phone call from a young lady who introduced herself as a student from the Bahamas who was planning to come to Canada to study. Jane (not her real name) told me that she had been accepted at a nearby university and she was looking for a local church she could attend after she arrived at the university. She found my contact phone number from our church website. She was very polite and courteous and I was happy to provide all the necessary information. I asked her to contact me again when she arrived in Canada.

She did. And the first Sabbath morning she attended the church, I was happy to introduce her to

the church family. I asked them to extend not only a warm welcome, but also to provide love and care for this new university student since she was living away from home for the first time in her life. Ann (not her real name), a senior member of the church who had been recently widowed and was well known for her philanthropic work in the community made an extra effort to not only warmly welcome her, but also offered to give her a ride to the church every Sabbath morning. Soon Ann and Jane became close friends and Jane was very thankful and gracious for the kindness of this gentle and caring woman. From that point Ann became to Jane a family away from home. Every Sabbath they came to church together in time for Sabbath School. A generous church member adopted Jane, which provided a safe and secure home-like environment for her while she away from home.

Whenever Jane got sick, the church knew about it because of Ann's involvement in Jane's life—caring for her and letting the church know how they could help. In fact, one time when Jane was under some financial difficulties, it was Ann who informed the congregation, which led to church assistance. And Jane became involved by participating in Bible study groups with church members and even served as a teacher for the Junior Division. *Even though this church wasn't her mother church, she became an integral part of it.* Jane had found a church which was willing to welcome her, allow her to feel at home, and which made a conscious effort to extend love and care for her even though she was a new comer. Jane quickly found a home church away from home.

After her introduction to the church, the congregation started working towards providing a ministry presence at the university, especially for the Adventist students. Soon Jane played a major role in setting up and arranging an Adventist students' club in partnership with the pastor of the church. Every Friday afternoon, the local church pastor went to the university campus student center to conduct Bible studies and group fellowship meetings. Students from the neighboring university also joined the club. They named it "The Blue Rock Christian Fellowship" and invited to other students to join. After four years of successful university life both spiritually and academically, Jane graduated from the university, still actively participating in the church. This success

story demonstrates how to apply the *three C's* model of a tripod campus ministry to ensure that no university students are lost while away from home and their home church.

## **Introduction and Adaptation to a New Church**

Parents can play a major part in introducing their children to a nearby church when their child leaves home for college or university. One Sabbath morning at church I noticed four unfamiliar faces. Two mothers had brought their university children to church since they had just moved to town to start their studies. It was very inspiring for the church family to see that these mothers cared enough to find a church they were hoping their children would attend. As they were being introduced to their new church family, the church was asked once again whether anyone would adopt these new students while they attended university away from their homes. One family with three little children volunteered to care for Karen (not her real name) and from that point on Karen had a home-like community away from her home. The fact that their mothers made an extra effort to seek out the local church and attend Sabbath worship services with their children allowed these students' university experiences to begin positively in a spiritual way.

Since then Karen attended the church faithfully, helped with the Junior Choir, and occasionally played the piano for the church. She also became an officer of the Blue Rock Christian Fellowship campus ministry chapter at the university. She graduated this year after four years of study and returned to her home and to her home church even more spiritually active than before.

## **Conclusion: What Worked Well?**

Even though I shared two impressive success stories regarding Jane and Karen, there are many other stories of failure. What worked so well in these two situations that these students lived out their Christian faith and beliefs and defied the odds of a secular campus environment to change them negatively? I believe it is due to providing a complete ministry presence through inclusion of all *three C's* of campus ministry.

First, *Church*: No time was wasted before they found their new church. This is often a daunting task

considering that they have to meet new people and find new friends in an often new and foreign environment. The church's eagerness to welcome these students created a non-threatening and supportive atmosphere for them to feel at home. Even though they were away from home, the students had a home-like environment where they felt cared for and where they experienced Christian love coming from their fellow believers. They didn't have to wait before they found themselves an integral part of their new church. Both a willing and determined church and a faithfully attending and actively participating student in that church provided a recipe for spiritual success and growth in the life of the university student.

Second, *Community*: These students had a community that adopted them and included them as members of their family. This is not possible without selfless and generous church members who are willing to adopt a student into their family. Community is more than a church experience where you attend services once a week. It is continuous and intentional interest and care extended beyond the weekly worship hour to an intentional concern for the well-being of these students on a daily basis.

Third, *Campus*: Jane and Karen were both self-motivated and eager to create among themselves a safe environment where their Christian faith and their beliefs would not only be appreciated, but also be encouraged. They were not passive in seeking a spiritually friendly environment. Instead, they were intentional in creating their own spiritual environment with the support of the local church. They made positive choices that would engage them in vibrant religious expression through involvement and service. They played a major part in providing care for other students as well. They chose to play an active role instead of a passive one on their university campus.

## **What Must We Do Now to Ensure Successful Campus Ministry?**

To ensure a successful campus ministry and to ensure the spiritual growth of students during their university years, three conditions have to be met.

First, *Student*: The student has to be self-motivated to diligently seek or create an environment that will be conducive for the student's faith journey.

They often lack spiritual resources such as parental guidance, spiritual mentorship from adults including youth ministry professionals, faith experience opportunities, etc. Add to that the often overwhelming secular influences available from the internet, media, and their peers, university students are challenged to maintain a spiritual focus. To counter this, university students have to be self-willed and self-motivated.

Second, *Spiritual Mentor*: There has to be ministry presence to university students where they can be instructed and taught of their beliefs and how to continue to live their Christian lifestyle. A spiritual mentor can be anyone who is godly and willing to care for the students by providing continuous and intentional attention, interest and affection. This spiritual mentor can be a pastor, an elder, a church leader, a church officer, or another spirit-filled church member. Merely attending church once a week may not be sufficient to effectively equip university students to overcome overwhelming influences of the secular world.

Third, *Spiritual Community*: This describes an environment and a group of people where students can worship and fellowship with others who share common goals and objectives in life.

As the silent exodus of our youth becomes a growing concern to our churches we must become more aware of potential gaps in ministering to our young people. We must realize their need for positive choices, positive influences and people in their lives who will extend to them spiritual, physical and emotional care and concern on a regular basis while they are away at school. The gaps can be closed with regular and positive mentoring at the church, in the students' daily lives by caring individuals, and on their campus through Christian fellowship groups. The spirituality of our young people can grow so that their years of study may not be ones where they become more passive in their faith, but where they may reach a stage of spirituality that actively pursues their Lord and Savior through dedication and service to Him. If the spiritual, physical and emotional needs of university students are met through a complete ministry of the *three C's*, we should not be surprised to see young people standing up for Jesus, and becoming lifelong soldiers of our King!



# IVY LEAGUE ADVENTISM MINISTRY

by Alex España

## Abstract

*My role as a college administrator at an Ivy League university provides a unique perspective regarding the experience of Adventist students on campus and the role the Adventist Church can assume at such universities. Data, survey results, and strategies are considered for the Adventist Church to establish itself as a relevant, Christ-centered organization to better target one of the largest spiritually questioning population groups in North America.*

## The Writing on the Wall

“What?” It took me a second to gather my thoughts. For months my diplomas hung inconspicuously behind my students as they sat in my office to discuss their curriculum, ambitions, relationship issues, fears, and a slew of other topics that are so fervently engaged in a manner that only a college student with such raw intelligence and slight immaturity can.

“Yeah, Southwestern Adventist College...where is that?” Her head was completely turned around now, staring at the slightly faded maroon and gold diploma. Before I could answer, the rest of her body adjusted as she leaned in and peered even closer to the second diploma, “Andrews University?” Pause. She turned around and looked me squarely in the eyes, “Are you Seventh-day Adventist?”

If I didn’t vocalize it, I’m sure my expression said it... “Oh boy.” Almost instantaneously, a small bead of sweat popped out of the top of my bald head and began rolling down my forehead as a thousand responses and possible repercussions raced through my mind. It’s true, I’ve heard the question before but for some reason, as I sat in my Ivy League uniform of khaki pants, blue blazer, white shirt and colorful polo tie; I suddenly became a bit unsure of myself. What should I say? How should I say it?

If I say, “Yes,” where could this conversation

lead? Would I somehow be mixing my faith with my job? Uh-oh, this sounds like some breach of separation-of-church-and-state laws. Seriously, I’ve been here for six months and will this be how I lose my job? Maybe I can distract her? Hmm, I wonder if I have any movie tickets left over from last night’s event? I could offer her a Starbucks card. No, no, no...what am I thinking, could I actually offer someone who is inquiring about my faith a movie ticket and a Starbucks card?

“Dean España?” Her words interrupted my stream of inaudible panic.

“Yes?” I responded, desperately hoping we could get back to the topic at hand, her law school application.

“Are you Seventh-day Adventist?”

With the pillars of Columbia University’s Lowe Library behind me and the image of me walking across campus with my office belongings nicely packed under one arm and my freshly minted resume tucked under the other, I answer... “Yes... yes I am.”

The student sat back in her chair, her body now relaxed from the pseudo-yoga class it took to examine my education credentials, and smiled, “Sweet; me too! I always thought I was the only Adventist at Columbia...”



## Spiritually Lonely but Not Alone

The story is really not that unique. Each year, scores of Adventist students enroll in non-Adventist campuses, public and private. In 1950, for every 100 Adventist church members, there were 26 students in Seventh-day Adventist schools. By 2000, although the total number of students in Adventist schools had surpassed the one million mark, the ratio had declined to less than 10 students for every 100 members.<sup>1</sup>

The reasons students choose to attend non-Adventist colleges range from finances to wanting to get away from mom and dad's iron grip to the attraction of a more academically rigorous curriculum. Others enroll in such colleges because they simply did not know of the Adventist college option. But as thousands of Adventist students integrate into these campuses, wandering into the metaphorical wilderness, it appears the church in general simply cuts its losses and moves on.

Two weeks after my encounter with the student in my office, I met Lisa, another Seventh-day Adventist Columbia undergrad. From the Midwest, Lisa attended church when she was back at home but had not visited an Adventist church in New York City since her less than stellar initial experience at a church in midtown. However, she heard through the grapevine there was an Adventist administrator on campus and, after long pleas from her mother, decided to seek me out. I vividly remember the day Lisa came into our office because as I walked past the front desk that morning, I heard my administrative assistant explaining to a student that our office did not have any "dentists." Silly. Five minutes later, my boss walked into my office and asked unscrupulously, "You don't know of any Adventists that work in this office, do you?"

I once again self-disclosed my religious preference, this time to the entire staff (in case there was any question) and soon after, Lisa was in my office. She explained how through her years at Columbia, she felt "alone...like she was the only Adventist student on the entire campus." These feelings eventually led to Lisa disassociating her Columbia life from the life back at home, but it wasn't for lack of trying. Lisa relayed the story of overhearing a conversation from a couple of students behind her as she left a basketball game

on campus one Friday night (gasp!). In response to a question regarding plans the next day, one of the students said, "I normally would go to church on Saturdays but I haven't done that since I moved to New York." (double gasp!) Lisa, assuming the student was a Seventh-day Adventist, quickly turned around, hoping to connect with the guy that mentioned the church on Saturday stuff. But locating those two voices in the sea of faces proved to be of no avail. Lisa was feeling spiritually lonely, and yet she was not alone.

## Blinded With Stats

As part of the consortium of schools that participates in the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP), each year Columbia University surveys the first year class, measuring parental income and education, ethnicity, educational and career plans, and other demographic data such as values, attitudes, beliefs, and self-concept. It also asks religious preference. The 2006 CIRP results for Columbia University confirmed Lisa's belief that she was not alone. Out of the 1170 first year students that took the survey, .8% self identified as being Seventh-day Adventist. Whether this figure was the direct result of heavy recruitment in the Loma Linda area remains to be seen, but what *is* a statistical fact is the first year class of 2006 at Columbia University had nine students self-identify as Seventh-day Adventist. This figure was startling in two ways; first, in volume—the .8% that self-identified themselves as being Adventist was higher than that of the United Church of Christ (.7%), Mormon (.7%), and Church of Christ (.6%). Secondly, as I continued meeting students who felt spiritually isolated on campus, the numbers say they didn't need to be isolated. I figured that statistically there was a potential of more than 30 Adventist undergraduates enrolled at Columbia.

I found another statistic that interested me. While 33% of Columbia University first-year students self-identified as being either Catholic or Jewish, a staggering 35% self-identified as having no religion at all. Draw your own conclusions on that one.

## The Importance of Being Earnest

For many years I have heard the cries from church leadership, "The youth are the future of this

church." Even Jan Paulsen, President of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist, in an effort to connect with the younger generations of Adventists, initiated a "Let's Talk" video series where he engaged Adventist youth in a Q & A format. I assisted in the production of the "Let's Talk—New York City" and was impressed with President Paulson's willingness, candor and seeming transparency.

However, when it comes to the number of Adventist students that sojourn onto secular campuses—at times feeling abandoned by the greater church—it is time to move from "Let's Talk" to "Let's Do." As late as 2007, the Adventist church did not have a ministry category for collegiate ministries; instead, focusing primarily on AY Societies, Pathfinder Clubs, and so on.<sup>2</sup> If we believe the young people are the future of the church, it is time we place a greater emphasis on the spiritual well-being of college students and take action. This is a generation that expects results, is spiritually questioning and is willing to work if given the opportunity. I can attest to this fact, because in 2002, Adventist students began meeting on the campus of Columbia University. Today, Columbia boasts the most active Adventist Collegiate Fellowship chapter in the Ivy League, participating in ecumenical events, hosting an annual collegiate summit, and engaging in community service.

## Membership Has Its Privileges

In order to be a recognized religious organization on campus, most colleges require a club/organization to have a registered "chaplain," a spiritual caregiver that tends to the students, attends campus meetings, and is available to respond to emergency needs. Official campus chaplains also serve as a referral source to the greater university, work collaboratively with other campus chaplains when appropriate, are invited to panels, discussions, and seminars regarding religious issues and campus events. And, most importantly, registered "chaplains" have access to CIRP results and other critical statistical information regarding students who self-identify as Adventist.

In a pragmatic world, conferences in North America would begin "hiring" chaplains to fulfill this initiative—assigning staff to colleges and universities that have a core group of Adventist

students in place and building from there. But given the *sometimes* bureaucratic nature of the church, it can be difficult to be pragmatic. It's time we cast the net further; young alums, local church lay leaders, and faculty/staff, can all get involved in this vital mission work. Something must be done. Roll a plan into action!

When I served the Office of the Dean of Students at Purdue University, one of my responsibilities was to be the liaison between the university and the University Religious Leaders Association (URL). Purdue University has over 30,000 students and over 20 different religions in the URL. One that was missing, unremarkably, was Seventh-day Adventists. It took a change of leadership at the local church before the value of connecting with the campus was fully appreciated. Before I left, the local Adventist pastor had connected with several of the college students, prayed at a graduation ceremony, and prayed with the football team before a game. Imagine, an Adventist pastor (and consequently the greater church) fully immersed into the fabric of campus life. It can be done.

## Conclusion

Although strides are being made in reaching secular campuses, without an appreciation, strategic plan and funding from church leadership, we will continue losing educated, connected, and spiritually searching Adventist college students in the name of apathy.

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# CONTINUE THE CONVERSATION

by Sebastien J. Braxton

## Abstract

*Academia continues to develop new research, methods, and conclusions and the SDA student should have the ability to continue the conversation on campus in the light of these new developments and share the gospel in a relevant way. This paper highlights the importance of SDA students evaluating their class material through a biblical worldview. This evaluation could take form in a paper that demonstrates command of the subject as well as the Bible. An example analysis of the subject of Economics is given within the body of this paper.*

## Introduction

As we traverse the seemingly “concrete jungles” of the university, many influences press upon our understanding of society and ourselves—perhaps what one would experience walking through a literal jungle. By far, the most influential of them all is the classroom. The countless ideas, theories, and philosophies bombard the minds of students as relentlessly as the work assigned. One would think the origin of the word “student” traced back to the combination of study and indentured when you consider the information necessary to excel or even just to pass certain courses. Often the focus for students is success in the course, whether that means an “A,” “B,” or merely not having to repeat the class. However, this focus leaves the student’s mind open to ideas, theories, and philosophies potentially dangerous to one’s mental and spiritual well being. Students find themselves so preoccupied with grades, scores, and assignments that they do not stop to seriously scrutinize the content so quickly stored in their minds. Their minds are unguarded to false ideas and conceptions of God, the world, and individual humans. This results in a difficulty to understand spiritual things, at best; and an unhealthy skepticism, unbelief and resistance to spiritual things, at worst.

During my time as a student, I have witnessed both results. Such experiences support the warning given to those who desire to do the work of campus ministries, “But I scarcely dare present this method

of labor; for there is danger that those who have no connection with God will place themselves in these schools, and instead of correcting error and diffusing light, will themselves be led astray.” (emphasis mine)<sup>1</sup> If our primary purpose is to correct error and diffuse light, then it behooves us to acquaint ourselves with the “light,” and know the word of God well enough to correct the erroneous ideas presented. Yet, we find some of the same ideas presented and defended within Christendom.

Where is a youth to go in such a time? To what can a young person depend upon with complete confidence? The Psalmist answers, as if reading the mind of a youth today, “Where withal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy word.”<sup>2</sup> Whether we are in a secular or Adventist university, our way is cleansed by “taking heed” to God’s word. Paul in his ministry to Thessalonica found the Bereans nobler because they tested *his* teachings against the scriptures.<sup>3</sup> Such a practice and exercise is not in futility, for we are forewarned that, “None but those who have fortified the mind with the truths of the Bible will stand through the last great conflict.”<sup>4</sup> The same source continues, “But God will have a people upon the earth to maintain the Bible, and the Bible only, as the standard of all doctrines and the basis of all reforms... Before accepting any doctrine or precept, we should demand a plain ‘Thus saith the Lord’ in its support’.”<sup>5</sup> (Emphasis mine)

It seems that the current mood of the university is that Biblical Christianity has lost its ability to *continue the conversation* with the changing times. Many are labeling the Bible anachronistic in many discussions that lead to major shifts in the paradigms of students. I will demonstrate a project that would help students reach campus and the world by their ability to continue the conversation on various subjects of academic research. Such a project demands that a student not only possess a strong grasp of the subject, but also God's word, wherein lies the power to transform hearts.

In response to such a calling, full of assurance, I decided to pray for wisdom to discern the content of my courses that particular school year. One course I found to be greatly estranged from a biblical understanding was Economics. On the surface, the course appears "reasonable" and quite in harmony with the general philosophy of how to relate to resources and possessions. However, by God's grace, a careful eye will see the subtle philosophies contained therein, undermining some fundamental biblical tenets. This sample analysis will cover a brief history of Adam Smith, the father of economics, and his initiating work, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, as the basis of the social science and a short biblical response.

## Adam Smith

Adam Smith, a native Scot, found himself at the University of Glasgow at the age of 14. Here, "he was deeply influenced by the lectures on moral philosophy given by Francis Hutcheson, by his first exposure to ancient Stoic thought, and by his reading of the great natural rights theorists of the late 17th century, Grotius, Pufendorf, and Locke."<sup>6</sup> Smith excelled at Glasgow and received a scholarship to Oxford University, where he found a myriad of resources to confront the moral issues he had come upon in his undergraduate years. The two major issues that eventually served as the major themes of Smith's writings and lectures fell into two categories: 1) how to reconcile the Christian demand for selflessness and benevolence in human affairs with arguments that selfishness and egoism drive the masses without turning to "revelation" and 2) the growth of commerce and its place in society. To state these two great themes in laymen's terms, the

first theme could be posed as *selfishness vs. morality*, and the second as *moral psychology vs. the nature of commerce*.<sup>8</sup>

It must first be said that Smith's resistance to turning to revelation to answer apparent quandaries did not stem from any antagonistic view. Smith lived and wrote during the height of the Enlightenment, captivated by the new view of nature derived from Newtonian mechanics. It seemed that nature and even the universe at large consisted of innate laws endowed by a Creator, such as gravity. On this basis, Smith and other enlightenment philosophers adventured to find the "innate laws" within social behavior, so society could find the harmony illustrated in nature. Religious implications of such thought gave entrance to Deism<sup>9</sup> and served as a basis for the enlightenment, substituting reason for revelation. More specifically, the concept of reason in Smith's day referred to the adaptation of the scientific method to the inquiry of any field, but in his case, society. A history of human societies relates to the modern, enlightened, social scientific approach to society in the same way as gathering laboratory data relates to the actual scientific work done by a scientist.<sup>10</sup> Hence, it was in the annals of history that Smith sought for the remedy to the moral dilemmas of his time, which culminated into his life work, *An Inquiry into the Cause and Nature of the Wealth of Nations*.

## The Wealth of Nations

The *Wealth of Nations* answered the questions, "Where does wealth come from," and "How can we get more of it?" These questions stemmed from Smith's general conclusion that there exists a rough correlation between the amount of wealth possessed and human happiness. *The Wealth of Nations* represented Smith's answer to these questions with some practical applications and illustrations. This book took him more than 20 years to write and can be broken up into two basic sections. The first section covers three major themes: the division of labor, the process of capital accumulation, and a general economic history of the West since ancient times. The second section covers two major themes: the theory of prices and the theory of capital accumulation. By far, Smith's greatest contribution to economics as we know it today is the division of labor. Smith saw that the division of labor not only



increases production, but also the productivity of labor and thus the aggregate wealth of society. Since Smith assumes some correlation between the amount of wealth and human felicity, logically, the question follows, "What is it that impedes the division of labor?"

The book presents a system of thought and the main impediments, which points to the extension of the market as the fundamental cause. Smith asserts that two things prevent the market from extending. The first is the natural causes of space and time. The second is governmental interference exemplified by acts such as protective tariffs and hindrance of monopolies.

Smith deals heavily with governmental interference for obvious reasons. He posits that if the government restricts trade, then free, unrestricted, rationally *self-interested* individuals will not maximize their productivity, or their output and wage, or their wealth, and thus decrease their felicity. From this perspective, it would seem reasonable to place governmental interference as harmful since it restricts society's happiness. Furthermore, Smith sensed the division of labor as the only sure means of creating wealth, and used a pin factory scenario to illustrate his point. Smith sought to practically show the undeniable benefit to efficiency that the division of labor brought. Artisanal production, as termed by Smith, pictured a master pin maker, whose craft opened the way for special desires of consumers, but was relatively inefficient. However, rational production pictured a large division of labor within a pin factory in which one repeats a single act all day. Such labor opens the way for greater consumption, and is quite efficient.

## Social Consequences

Smith strongly believed that morals, economics, and government were weaved inseparably within the web of society. In fact, the first portion of *The Wealth of Nations* was comprised of his previous and first published work, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*. Thus, Smith possessed some insight into the possible social consequences of such a change in economic thought. The first apparent consequence appears in the quality of the worker. The master pin maker would be well acquainted with good metal, proper tools, and overall production. When the work was divided into an efficient assembly line creation,

the worker became ignorant and found himself reduced to the level of a machine by a simple repetitive operation. Also, there would be a reduction in the level of craftsmanship. And even though the division of labor creates employment for the less skilled in society, it creates unemployment for the "master pin makers" since their business was primarily self-sustaining and they lacked the ability to maintain such a high level of production as the pin factory.

While the previous social effects could be reasonably foretold by Smith, the most profound and unforeseeable effect arrives in the structural change in society at its most basic level—the family. The structure of the family as we see it today stems from the implementation of the division of labor during the industrial revolution. Society saw the status of men and women altered as close approximations of the same work among the sexes developed with machines, making the requirement of strength in work unnecessary. This "undoing" in a sense of "men's labor" and "women's labor" may have been a precursor to women's drive for equal rights, an interesting benefit. Inevitably, with the ousting of muscle requirements within the work place, we see the advent of child labor further altering the family life. Alterations in society in the general sense came in the stratification of society based upon one's wealth and occupation. Logically, this also leads to a compartmentalization of society into classes, with some degree of antagonism in their respective interests, i.e. the separation of the employer and the employee. On the topic of wages, employers seek to minimize wages in order to minimize expenses and maximize their own wages, while the employees seek to maximize wages in order to cover their personal expenses.

Many contemporary critics of Smith's *Wealth of Nations* and economic theory point to the unhealed social scars still being experienced today as *prima facie* evidence of the injurious nature of such ideas, but unfairly so. In the context and era in which Smith wrote, it would be unreasonable to expect him to predict such distant social and moral effects upon a capitalistic society and even the world. As we often say, hindsight is 20/20. While I agree with the correlation of certain economic theories with certain social effects, I consider it illogical to vilify Smith for the ideas he advocated as if he understood and

anticipated the social consequences in the ensuing years. In following such reasoning, we would have to vilify Newton since his discoveries were interpreted as to lead to Deistic beliefs, which eventually lead to Atheistic beliefs, completely contrary to Newton's personal commitment to the Bible and his fundamental reasoning for his inquiries into nature.

## Biblical Response

While much of this background is absent from most undergraduate courses, the assumptions are no less present in the material. Economics assumes the basic belief of Smith, i.e., that an increase of wealth results in an increase in happiness. Any Bible believing student should step back in prayerful reflection and study to see if this is really so. We could begin with the experience of the Patriarchs and immediately notice that the Bible poses no concern with wealth itself.<sup>11</sup> In fact, in the song of Hannah we find it is the Lord makes one rich.<sup>12</sup> Scripture places the issue of wealth with the people place their trust. The Bible suggests such warnings as, "He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase: this is also vanity."<sup>13</sup> Solomon, the wisest man, one of the wealthiest perhaps throughout history, states that riches will not satisfy.

Even Jesus, in His discussion with the rich young ruler, did not suggest the loss of riches, but only a delay.<sup>14</sup> A tension emerges in our experience when we make riches a basis for our trust. As Psalm 52:7 describes, "Lo, this is the man that made not God his strength; but trusted in the abundance of his riches, and strengthened himself in his wickedness." One of the clearest voices on this subject is Christ as He hones in on the divine purpose in wealth through the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus. The issue becomes twofold: a) of being overly concerned for the temporal to the neglect of the eternal and b) God blesses with wealth for the benefit of the financially poor and spiritually poor through the support of Gospel. Thus, the prophet Jeremiah encourages the rich man not to glory in his riches but in knowing the Lord.<sup>15</sup> This is the true and proper source of his happiness and trust. In the poignant question of Jesus, "What shall a man be profited if he gain the whole world and lose his soul?" Jesus is not against us gaining the

world. He's against us gaining the world at the expense of our souls. This is *Biblical* economics.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>White, Ellen G. *Selected Messages*, Volume 3. Washington DC: Review and Herald Publishing, 1980. 236.

<sup>2</sup>Psalms 119:11.

<sup>3</sup>Acts 17:10-12.

<sup>4</sup>White, Ellen G. *The Great Controversy*. Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1950 594

<sup>5</sup>White, Ellen G. *The Great Controversy*. Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1950. 595.

<sup>6</sup>Muller, Jerry Z. *Adam Smith In His Time and Ours*. City, Publisher, date, 17.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

<sup>9</sup>Deism is the belief that reason rather than revelation or tradition should be the basis of belief in God. "It also designates a largely British 17th-c and 18th-c movement of religious thought emphasizing natural religion as opposed to revealed religion, and seeking to establish reasonable grounds for belief in the existence of God." This was probably also a heavy response to the previous prevailing idea of the infallibility of the Church, and the call to suspend reason and accept by "faith" the tenets of the Church. Galileo's experience serves as an excellent example and was probably well known at the time. He was quoted saying, "I do not feel obliged to believe that the same God who has endowed us with sense, reason, and intellect has intended us to forgo their use." [http://www.reference.com/browse/crystal/9284]

<sup>10</sup>Superstar Teacher Series (bibliographic information needed)

<sup>11</sup>Genesis 13:2; 36:7; 1 Kings 10:23; 1 Chronicles 29:28.

<sup>12</sup>1 Samuel 2:7.

<sup>13</sup>Ecclesiastes 5:10.

<sup>14</sup>Matthew 19:16-22.

<sup>15</sup>Jeremiah 9:23.



# FROM MINISTRY TO MOVEMENT: THE POTENTIAL OF PUBLIC CAMPUS MINISTRY

by Samuel Koranteng-Pipim

## Abstract

*Too many young people have lost their faith on a public university campus. Despite the barrage of sophistry hurled at these young people, only a handful of denominational workers are engaged in ministry to these students. On many secular campuses, ministry to students is virtually non-existent. At best, sound campus ministry efforts are dependent on a few student leaders that graduate all too quickly. Even where student-led groups do exist, they often lack a clear biblical focus and evangelistic mission. A viable and sustainable program of training for ministry to public university students is seriously lacking within the Seventh-day Adventist church. For some, it seems that ministry on secular university campuses is not worth the investment. However, the history of CAMPUS, a division of the Michigan Conference Public Campus Ministry department, shows that when converted students are trained and empowered to be missionaries on college campuses, an Adventist secular campus ministry can grow into a vibrant movement.*

## Introduction

In September 1998, the Michigan Conference became the first conference in the North American Division (NAD) to create a separate department focused solely on ministry on secular college and university and campuses.<sup>1</sup> One year later, CAMPUS (Center for Adventist Ministry to Public University Students) was established as the nerve center of Michigan Conference's Public Campus Ministries Department.

Located in Ann Arbor, Michigan, near the University of Michigan, CAMPUS is widely recognized today for pioneering and developing a credible Seventh-day Adventist missionary training program for campus ministry. Among other things, CAMPUS—

- has earned the trust of many students and young people as the place where lives are transformed and where brilliant and godly leaders are developed;
- is the only Adventist secular campus ministry that has a viable, sustainable, carefully-planned, and year-round program of training for students;

- is one of the few ministries in the NAD that has succeeded in actually creating a truly racially-diverse and mission-driven student movement;
- is the birth place, headquarters, and a sponsor of GYC (Generation of Youth for Christ), a thriving, grassroots, revival movement organized and led by Adventist young adults;
- has also spawned in North America other student movements and endeavors, such as ALIVE, ANEW, I.e.a.d.s., STRIDE, Advent/Campus HOPE, ExCEL, L-I-N-K, p.r.e.s.s, and others—all of which are attracting attention from other regions of the world.<sup>2</sup>

None of these accomplishments would have been possible without the blessings and providential leadings of the Lord, careful strategic planning, and the training and empowerment of converted youth to be missionaries to their peers. This paper is a first-hand report of how God is growing CAMPUS from a ministry into a movement.<sup>3</sup>

## I. The Providential Leadings of the Lord

Even though CAMPUS had been following a carefully conceived plan, none of those associated with this ministry was fully aware that the specific plans, personnel, and timing of events were actually orchestrated by God Himself. It was only after the fact that those involved clearly realized the footprints of God. It is this providential leading of God that was expressed elsewhere as “*Something Has Happened*.”<sup>4</sup>

The Patriarch Jacob captured this “Something Has Happened” sentiment in Genesis 28:16-19:

And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, *Surely the LORD is in this place; and I knew it not. And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.* And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it. And he *called the name of that place Bethel*: but the name of that city was called Luz at the first (italics mine).

Many students who have been impacted by the ministry at CAMPUS can also exclaim with Jacob that the Lord was uniquely with them during their years on public university campuses and they knew it not. This dreadful environment of secular academia is “none other but the house of God.” Indeed, “this is the gate of heaven.” For many students, the secular campus was their Bethel—the place they found God (or where God found them) and were commissioned to ministry.

No doubt, those laboring on various secular campuses have many compelling stories to tell of students who, running away from their parents’ values, religion, and even God, found their way back to faith on those very campuses. These experiences confirm that public university and college campuses are not to be neglected, feared, or abandoned because they are “secular” bastions of sophisticated unbelief, polytheism, moral relativism, and self-destructive behaviors through wrong lifestyle choices (e.g., alcohol, drugs, pornography, immoral sex, occultism, etc.). They are mission fields where the Spirit of God is still at work. On

these secular campuses God’s divine ladder is still stretching up to heaven, pointing out the way of salvation even to students who are determined to declare independence from the spiritual influences of their parents.

The above observation should encourage those currently ministering on the seemingly barren fields of secular university environments. With God’s blessings, the public university and college campuses can actually become centers of major revivals and reformation movements as were the campuses in the days of the Protestant Reformers.<sup>5</sup>

To illustrate this fact, consider the history of CAMPUS and how its three-fold strategy is fueling the growth of the Michigan Conference secular campus ministry into a movement.

## II. The Three-fold Strategy of CAMPUS

When asked what sets CAMPUS apart from other approaches to secular campus ministry, Michigan student leaders have often pointed to the following core ideals:

*Vision:* To develop a Bible-based revival movement in which every student is a missionary.

*Philosophy:* Academic excellence combined with spiritual excellence.

*Methodology:* Biblical simplicity based on Ellen White’s counsel that “Your success is in your simplicity. As soon as you depart from this . . . your power is gone.” (2T 608).

*Goal:* To double CAMPUS’ membership every year.

*Watchword:* Each one reach one.

*Mission:* To prepare public campuses for the imminent return of Jesus Christ.

*Motto:* Taking Higher Education Higher

But what many do not know is that the seven core ideals above didn’t just happen. They all spring out of a three-fold strategy to evangelize secular campuses:

1. Bring Missionaries TO campus
2. Raise up Missionaries ON campus

### 3. Send forth Missionaries FROM campus

*The strategy is based on the assumption that converted young people (not adults nor trained ministry professionals) are the most effective group to reach their fellow students.* First outlined in a 1999 “CAMPUS Masterplan” document, the three-fold strategy seeks to mobilize, train, and inspire “every student [to be] a missionary.”<sup>6</sup>

The first strategy (“*Bring Missionaries TO campus*”) is being accomplished through the Missionary Training Program.<sup>7</sup> The second strategy (“*Raise Missionaries ON campus*”) is being fulfilled through a network of university student groups, both within and outside Michigan, that have embraced the ideals of CAMPUS. This network comprises students who attend major CAMPUS events (e.g., Retreats, LEADS, ExCEL, GYC, etc.). The third strategy (“*Send forth Missionaries FROM campus*”) will be fully realized when our students and alumni begin to impact the church and the world in a very powerful way.

Already, students involved in phases I and II are beginning to change campus ministry into a *movement*—a growing network of Adventist young people who are dedicated to spiritual revival in their personal lives and passionately committed to the sharing of the Three Angels’ Messages to their peers.

Because the history of this emerging network is not well-known nor well-understood, it may be helpful to briefly summarize how it is intimately connected with CAMPUS’s vision of developing a “Bible-based revival *movement* in which every student is a missionary.”

### III. From Ministry to Movement<sup>8</sup>

The potential of *ministry to students* becoming a *movement of students* was evident as far back as 1998. That year witnessed a revival at a Korean camp meeting at Kutztown University in Kutztown, Pennsylvania, as the lives of young people were transformed through sound biblical preaching. Most of the young people at the camp meeting were students enrolled in universities and colleges on the East Coast of the United States.

The students involved in this revival, together with those at the University of Michigan, became instrumental in shaping the contours of CAMPUS

and, later, transforming the ministry into a movement.

#### 1. SPARC

Describing the remarkable 1998 revival at the Kutztown University camp meeting, one of the student leaders of the Korean group (Tracie Kim) wrote to me:

In light of the strong messages that spoke to the youth’s needs, known and unknown, anger and bitterness subsided, fences mended and we were brought together by the burdens that we carried towards the common goal. We were tired, but we really felt like angels were working with us and we saw God’s hand in the spiritual atmosphere of the meetings.

A year later, 12 or more of those Korean young people crowded into a small studio apartment in Boston to eat and socialize. They were all laughing and having a great time when around midnight one of them asked a spiritual question that would change the course of their lives and impact the Adventist Youth movement in North America and beyond.

“From that moment on, the conversation turned into a Bible study, a Bible study that lasted until 8 AM the following morning. Never before had we experienced the powerful presence of the Holy Spirit. His presence was so real in the room that we could almost touch Him”—Tracie Kim.

The spiritual bond they experienced that night over the Bible study led them to start SPARC (Students Preparing Adventists for the Return of Christ), with a goal to lead their fellow young people to total commitment to the message and mission of the Seventh-day Adventist church.

In that SPARC group was a 20-year old Brandeis University student, who became one of the key architects of GYC. Today, he is the Program Director of CAMPUS, even while serving as pastor of the Oakwood SDA Church in Detroit. His church is being developed as the home base for Wayne State University campus ministry.<sup>9</sup> His ministry, alongside that of his fellow Koreans, has helped to sustain the spirit of excellence within the emerging campus

movement and also helped the young people to transcend the black-white racial divide endemic within North American Adventism.<sup>10</sup>

## **2. CAMPUS**

Not only were the lives of the Korean young people impacted by the 1998 Kutztown revival, but the speaker himself dedicated the remainder of his life to ministry to young people (he had previously committed himself to teach at Adventist Universities and Seminaries). It was at this camp meeting that he accepted Michigan Conference's invitation to start and direct its newly created department of secular campus ministry. Instead of working out of the Conference headquarters in Lansing, the office of this department was based in Ann Arbor, near the University of Michigan campus. CAMPUS was established the following year in Ann Arbor to train young people as missionaries on secular campuses.

Thus, in 1999, under the theme "Higher than the Highest" (which was a call to excellence), CAMPUS welcomed 12 exceptional young people into its first batch of the missionary training program. Three of them were younger than 20 years of age and the remaining nine were in their early twenties. These young pioneers had all embraced the call to excellence, simplicity, sacrifice and commitment. They suspended their studies and careers and came to Michigan to serve as missionary volunteers on a secular university campus. No one paid them to do so. On the contrary, they paid to be in that program. They slept on the hard floors of an unfurnished rented house until a donation of furniture was made to CAMPUS. The rigorous classes they took yielded no academic credit. Their spirit of self-sacrifice was not always appreciated. When asked why they decided to respond to this radical call to discipleship, one of them, a 19-year old Hispanic missionary, replied to the Director of CAMPUS:

There exists an army of dedicated young people out there who are willing to do God's work. They are scattered all over the place. They will go anywhere, provided someone mobilizes them, trains them, and challenges them.

That 19-year old missionary accepted the

challenge to take full responsibility to bring about such a spiritual movement of youth. He started thinking about how to network with other young people with the same vision. That teenager became another of the three leading founders of GYC. He later served as Program Director of CAMPUS. He currently serves as a pastor in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, and his church is the home base for campus ministry at Michigan Technological University.<sup>11</sup>

## **3. The Princeton Connection**

Again in 1999, in a seemingly isolated event, a young woman of Trinidadian heritage who had earlier abandoned her faith when she enrolled at Princeton University was looking for peace. The Holy Spirit impressed upon her the need of repentance. That year she recommitted her life to the Lord.

Almost a year later she was visiting a neighboring church, which was hosting a satellite evangelism meeting, when she met a member of SPARC. Since her conversion the young Princeton student had begun ministering on her campus. Now the SPARC member introduced her to other Adventist young people involved in campus ministry.

As she listened to sermon tapes given to her by members of SPARC, she came to learn about CAMPUS, and would later volunteer as a missionary after her graduation from Princeton. She became the first president of GYC and served as Executive Secretary until 2007. She subsequently received a law degree at Washington and Lee Law School. Today she works as an attorney and continues to be active in campus ministry in the Northeastern United States.<sup>12</sup>

## **4. The Vision of A Movement**

In January 2000, members of SPARC visited the University of Michigan where they formed friendships with the students and missionaries at CAMPUS. This group of friends was instrumental in organizing and formulating the vision of GYC. Of note was a friendship between Justin Kim (a Korean), Israel Ramos (a Hispanic), and Andrea Oliver (an African-American of Trinidadian background). These three students were the principal architects of GYC, the racially-diverse grassroots movement of this group of Adventist young people.



In its seven-year history (2002-2009), GYC, with the active support of CAMPUS, has transformed many lives and enabled them to be godly and effective leaders, brilliant and winsome soul-winners, and sound spiritual counselors for college/university campuses and other professional environments. Today, the GYC-phenomenon that was birthed at CAMPUS continues to spawn many other grassroots youth and student movements and initiatives in the NAD and around the world.

## Conclusion

Who would have thought that a simple three-fold strategy to evangelize secular campuses—namely, “Bring Missionaries *TO* campus,” “Raise up Missionaries *ON* campus,” and “Send forth Missionaries *FROM* campus”—could have had such an impact? True, CAMPUS is nowhere near its potential. Yet, the fruit it is already bearing suggests that when young people are transformed by the Word of God and are given sound training, they become the most effective group to reach their fellow students and impact their generation.

Such is the potential of a Bible-based, life-transforming, and mission-driven approach to ministry to secular university campuses. When such a ministry combines authentic spirituality with a philosophy of excellence and a methodology of simplicity, it is inevitable that the ministry would be transformed into a vibrant spiritual movement. We ignore this kind of ministry at our own loss.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Prior to 1998, other conferences, churches, and individuals in the North American Division (NAD) had made laudable efforts to reach out to students on public universities and colleges. Often their efforts were subsumed under youth, education, or personal ministries departments. Michigan Conference was the first in the NAD to create a separate department focused solely to ministry to secular university students. The director appointed to oversee the development of this new line of ministry in Michigan, Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, was trained in engineering and systematic theology. He had previously served as the director of a thriving public campus ministries program in Ghana, West Africa. He was also a key architect in pioneering

the establishment and growth of Ghanaian Seventh-day Adventist churches in North America and Europe.

<sup>2</sup>For more on the different activities of CAMPUS, see “CAMPUS: A Conference-Sponsored Campus-Based Ministry” in Kirk King and Ron Pickell, eds, *The Word On Campus: A Guide To Public College Ministry* (Lincoln, NE: AdventSource, 2008), 275-285. See also Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, “CAMPUS History and Major Dates and Events,” detailing “CAMPUS Interactions with Other Students, Organizations, and NAD”—a 7-page document shared with attendees at the ACF/NAD meeting in Berkeley, California, November 14-16, 2008.

<sup>3</sup>I write from the perspective of one who, since 1998, has been intimately and actively involved in the conception, development, and leadership of the Michigan Conference Public Campus Ministries department. Since its creation in 1999, I have also served as the Director of CAMPUS.

<sup>4</sup>The phrase “Something Has Happened” was the title of a special message I presented to attendees at the CAMPUS alumni weekend on April 19, 2008. The message details the early history of CAMPUS.

<sup>5</sup>Historically, God has often launched major revival and reformation movements from public university campuses. For example, great movements were associated with John Wycliffe at Oxford University, John Huss at the University of Prague, Martin Luther at the University of Wittenberg, John Calvin at the University of Geneva, John and Charles Wesley at Oxford University, and others. For more on this, see E. G. White, *The Great Controversy* (Boise, Idaho: Pacific Press, 1911), 79-264.

<sup>6</sup>At the Shine '99 conference at University of Carolina, Chapel Hill, I shared with the attendees the 1999 “CAMPUS Masterplan” document while discussing the work at CAMPUS, noting especially our missionary training program, our philosophy, methodology, and goal. During the B2K (Berkeley 2000) meeting at the University of California, Berkeley (September 2000), the CAMPUS team shared with others a progress report on the public campus ministry in Michigan.

<sup>7</sup>CAMPUS runs a Missionary Training Program in Ann Arbor, Michigan, near the University of Michigan campus. It is a two-semester, hands-on program that combines sound classroom instruction with practical field training in ministry and outreach activities. The classes are taught by dedicated staff and guest instructors. The goal of the Missionary Training Program is to develop godly and effective leaders, brilliant and winsome soul winners, and sound spiritual counselors for college/university campuses and other professional environments. Limited to no more than a dozen serious students at a time, the program runs concurrent with the academic year at the University of Michigan.

<sup>8</sup>For this history, I am indebted to the following works: Sikhululekile Hlatshwayo, Justin Kim, & Stephanie Quick, eds., *For this Purpose: A Compilation of Sermons and Presentations from GYC* (Ann Arbor, MI: GYC Resources, 2008). Israel Ramos, "What Adventist Young People Really Want: The General Youth Conference Experiment," in *Here We Stand: Evaluating New Trends in the Church*, ed. Samuel Koranteng-Pipim (Berrien Springs, MI: Adventists Affirm, 2005), pp. 61-70. Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, "A Grassroots Youth Revival Movement: The Untold Story of the Struggle & Triumph of GYC." Available at the author's website: [www.drpipim.org](http://www.drpipim.org). [http://drpipim.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=126&Itemid=5](http://drpipim.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=126&Itemid=5). Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, "Koreans & the Adventist Youth Revival Movement: A Reflection & An Appeal. Unpublished document, available through the author.

<sup>9</sup>Justin Kim, that 20-year old student, served GYC as Executive Secretary, VP for Programming & Resources, and currently is a General VP. Three other individuals who, coincidentally, all have the same last names as Kim, also played major roles in the future GYC movement: 1) Tracie Kim, then 25 – was a law student at Boston University School of Law. Today she is working in the Intellectual Property law department at Caterpillar, Inc. She is also the legal advisor for GYC. 2) James Kim, then 22 – was a student at Rutgers University, NJ. He has subsequently graduated from Loma Linda School of Medicine and is doing his residency. He has served as

Treasurer of GYC. 3) Jeannie Kim, then 20 – was an undergraduate student at Brown University. She received a masters in education from the Harvard School of Education. She currently volunteers at Greater Boston Academy, and is part of BLESS. She was the Secretary of Internal Affairs of GYC. There were other Korean student leaders (I call them –"the almost Kims," because their names missed the initial "K" so they are simply "lms")—Andy Im, Ray Im, and Steve Im. They also are part of the campus ministry movement.

<sup>10</sup>CAMPUS and GYC have always reflected a significant, active presence of Korean students and youth. Their involvement has helped to heal the black-white racial divide in North American Adventism. More significantly, the impact around the world of the philosophy of excellence promoted by CAMPUS cannot be humanly explained without noting the tremendous contribution of Korean youth. These Korean youth, most of whom are brilliant students, have contributed to the "higher-than-the highest," "can-do," "gutsy, no-nonsense," and "all or nothing" spirit of CAMPUS and GYC.

<sup>11</sup>That 19-year old missionary was Israel Ramos. Until 2007, he was President of GYC. Others who later responded to the challenge and embraced this vision of a grassroots young people's movement included: Judy Namm (graduated from the University of Michigan and worked as a teacher at the Ann Arbor Adventist school. She served as GYC's VP for Programming and Logistics and is currently the Administrative Secretary of GYC). Steven Waterbrook (graduated from University of Michigan, then studied medicine at Loma Linda University where he started Advent HOPE—an Adventist campus version of the Campus HOPE on secular campuses. He became a Vice President of External Affairs of GYC). Mike Orlich (graduated from University of Michigan Medical School and then worked as a Physician and Academic Dean at Weimar Institute. He served as GYC's Vice President of Evangelism).

<sup>12</sup>That young Princeton student is Andrea Oliver. The SPARC member she met in 1999 was James Kim (at that time a student at Rutgers University, NJ). James later served as Treasurer of GYC when Andrea was its President.



# RE-THINKING EVANGELISM: A HEART FELT APPROACH

by Andrew Perrin

## Abstract

*The world is changing and so must the way we do evangelism. Something everyone throughout the world shares is the fact that we all experience and exhibit feelings and emotions. When we examine these feelings and emotions we hold the key to the most powerful evangelism technique— ministering to the heart of the individual. Ministering to the heart in turn opens individuals to personal healing, spiritual growth and the understanding of identity.*

## The Problem

I remember being made to attend weeks of prayer at the local academy church when I was a high school student. There was a pervasive feeling of discontent regarding the required attendance of the twice-daily meetings. However, regardless of the negative feelings that accompanied each week of prayer, I was always amazed that I would come away from these week long events completely spiritually charged to serve God in the greatest way.

In college, the generally negative feelings towards these spiritually emphasized weeks did not exist to the same degree. What was consistent however was the feeling of being spiritually charged. In both cases, this charged up feeling would be a burning sensation that would last anywhere from a week to a month before sizzling off.

Reflecting on these two segments of my adolescence and the religious programming geared for youth, the question must be asked, "What does it take for one to move from merely listening to actually responding—making a permanent change in one's life?" Pondering this question has unveiled further thoughts and questions beyond those dealing individuals. For example, when it comes to those who will be pastors, what about ministry as a whole?

As society continues to change, the numbers of those in need of spiritual sustenance grows and will continue to grow. Of the many different and

important areas of ministry, evangelism stands out as an essential tool capable of addressing the personal needs of individuals in phenomenal ways. The college campus is a fertile ground for evangelism. In such an environment, people are beginning to question and think through issues, many for the first time in their lives. That makes this stage of life a critical moment for stimulation and growth. How we reach out and evangelize now can have a momentous effect on how these students will later reach out to the world. What will it take for leaders to evangelize on college campuses and what methods will they use?

## Evangelism Defined

Evangelism, as defined by David Bosch, is "the dimension and activity of a church's mission which offers everyone the equal opportunity to be directly challenged to a reorientation of their lives."<sup>1</sup> Noteworthy words in this definition include "everyone" and "equal." Offering a life reorientation to everyone equally assumes that those doing the evangelizing have taken into account the life situations of those being ministered to so as to better relate to where they are in life's journey. Paul understood this in Ephesians when he wrote, "Remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world."<sup>2</sup> By emphasizing their personal past, Paul ignited their understanding of the fact that they had issues in

their lives that needed to be recognized and remembered. This could help them relate to others who were currently experiencing troubles and hardships. Paul brought about a new sense of thinking. By putting the Ephesians in touch with their own selves, he opened them up to better relate to those in the wider community and world.

## **Biblical Evangelism**

The critical question that must be asked is “What then should evangelism look like?” After his wilderness temptation Jesus returned to Nazareth where he attended the synagogue on Sabbath. Reading from the book of Isaiah Jesus spoke, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are oppressed, to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord” (Luke 4:18,19). Simply put, Jesus, through this simple discourse at the synagogue, was articulating how evangelism was meant to be. He revealed that the nature of God meets the needs of those who are in need. The concept of God supplying when there are felt needs was exactly what Jesus was attempting to relay. Not only does God speak individually to people, but He also works through others, as we see in Jesus, to changes lives, give new hope, outlook and security. Jesus’ view on evangelism, in every way, emphasized the supplying of human needs.<sup>3</sup>

Rob Frost echoes this same ideology when he states, “the Gospel is most relevant where it matches another person’s needs.”<sup>4</sup> This is what Jesus taught in the synagogue, and which he later exemplified in the Sermon on the Mount when he blessed the poor, the hungry and the poor in spirit while preaching on the hillside. It was not just a matter of talk, but also a matter of necessary action. When it comes to evangelism, Robert Schuller has proposed that you must “find a need, and meet it.”<sup>5</sup> The underlying reality is that everyone possesses a need. The needs may vary based on the individual, but given that we are all products of a sinful world, we cannot escape the fact that we have needs. At the very least, we must acknowledge that the needs of others might keep them from a fruitful relationship with Christ. We are all victims of Sin and therefore we collectively suffer the consequences. However,

we are called to address those needs and bring others to an understanding of their worth as children of God. This brings meaning to their lives while at the same time validates their life experience. Such ministry can only be done when the needs of the heart are met.<sup>6</sup>

## **What It Looks Like**

Jesus met a Samaritan woman at a well on a typical blistering day.<sup>7</sup> With the assumption that there would be no one around to dispute or delay her retrieving of water, it must have come as a surprise to have a Jewish man come forward and proceed to ask for a drink. The approach Jesus used in asking for water is a key point to understand the methodology of evangelizing by meeting the needs of others. It was obvious that this woman had a physical need—she was thirsty. It was the perfect opportunity for Jesus to extend an invitation to voice her emotional and spiritual needs as well. As Jesus began to discuss the personal issues in this woman’s life, she was convinced that she needed his “living water.” The end result was that one woman went back and was able to draw many, based on Jesus’ evangelism to the needs of her heart. This woman’s struggle with sincerity, genuineness and adultery was brought to the surface when Jesus linked her physical need to the needs of her heart.

David Henderson suggests, “For something to be relevant...two things need to be true. First, whatever it is... needs to be pertinent to my life. It has to address the issues I’m wrestling with, answer the questions I’m asking, meet my needs.”<sup>8</sup> As we follow the story of Jesus and the Samaritan women, we see that not only was she physically thirsty, but she was in need of a spiritual change as evidenced by her haste in accepting Jesus’ offer. Christ took her spiritual and emotional issues and addressed them in a relevant way she was sure to understand, linking them to physical needs.

## **Putting It Into Practice**

Henderson has also proposed, “One of the convictions that unites Christians is that the Bible speaks to our issues. The Bible has actual relevance.”<sup>9</sup> Evangelism in a modern setting does not need to look any different than that of Jesus ministering to the woman at the well. Frost depicted

it this way, "The task of the evangelist is to tell the story of Jesus, but to tell it in such a way that it relates to the ordinary lives of men, women and children. The challenge is to apply this story in ways that relate to people's search for meaning, and to their deep-rooted and personal felt needs."<sup>10</sup> Therefore, Christ's consistent method of evangelism must be constantly shifting, changing and morphing to meet the specific needs of those searching.

For example, when preparing an evangelistic seminar series, designing a series based on the natural hungering and desire of man could be a springboard into a host of topics. The need for rest or solitude or peace are all needs that everyone experiences. This provides a connection—a foothold to gain access to the heart of those we seek to reach. By addressing the heart and felt needs that people experience daily, we are able to make a connection with the real matters of the heart, making it relevant to their lives.

If our purpose in reaching out to students is to draw in others, then it is imperative that we consider the approach of Jesus if we want similar results. We must cater our evangelism to the immediate needs of others if we are to reach their hearts. There is a natural attraction to issues and topics of the heart because people struggle with these very things and are asking these types of questions on a daily basis. Pierson notes, "When needs are met, decisions are made."<sup>11</sup>

Evangelistic series based upon doctrine and Adventist beliefs definitely have their place. But they should be incorporated as those being ministered to begin to more fully understand who they are in Christ and how God has brought new meaning to their life's journey. As Pierson suggests, our first and foremost response should be the immediate heart needs of the individual. This is not an argument to strip theology away from evangelism. Krish Kandiah asserts that "theology ought to be by its very nature evangelistic and evangelism ought to be by its very nature theological."<sup>12</sup> The two cannot be divorced from each other. Evangelism must always be backed up by the theology of the church, performed within the belief systems of the church.

## Conclusion

Evangelism is a powerful tool only when the

Holy Spirit has been invited and is leading. This does not suggest that as humans, we ignore our call to be prepared. We have no reason to pass up studying the world around us and to think of new and creative evangelistic means. The human heart naturally suffers from the weight of Sin. This suffering and brokenness cannot be healed solely by doctrine or theology. Healing comes when there is recognition that the heart is broken and is in need of something tangible. Addressing felt needs in tangible ways opens up the heart, providing the knowledge of who people are in Jesus Christ. This is what Jesus did with the Samaritan woman, which in turn brought many who were searching for meaning in their lives. People are just waiting for it to be introduced in a relevant manner.

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup>Bosch, David Jacobus, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*, American Society of Missiology Series No. 16. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1991.
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- <sup>3</sup>Pierson, Robert D. *Needs-Based Evangelism: Becoming a Good Samaritan Church*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2006.
- <sup>4</sup>Frost, Rob. *Sharing Jesus in a New Millennium*. Queensway, Bletchley: Scripture Union, 2000.
- <sup>5</sup>Pierson.
- <sup>6</sup>Heath, Elaine A. *The Mystic Way of Evangelism: A Contemplative Vision for Christian Outreach*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008.
- <sup>7</sup>See John 4.
- <sup>8</sup>Henderson, David W. *Culture Shift: Communicating God's Truth to Our Changing World*. Grand Rapids, MI.: Baker Books, 1998.
- <sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*
- <sup>10</sup>Frost.
- <sup>11</sup>Pierson.
- <sup>12</sup>Kandiah, Krish. "Lesslie Newbigin's Contribution to a Theology of Evangelism," *Transformation* (02653788) 24.1, 2007.



# ADVENTISTS IN NON-ADVENTIST COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES: IMPLICATIONS FOR MINISTRY FROM A PERSONAL JOURNEY

by Paul M. Buckley

## Abstract

*Adventist young people who don't attend Adventist schools often find themselves marginalized in the life of the church. Reasons exist for attending non-Adventist schools. Instead of classifying all tertiary schools outside of the Adventist educational system as public education, a more accurate term would be non-Adventist colleges and universities (NACU). The author shares his personal journey with NACUs and makes suggestions for what churches can and should do to minister to young adults attending school away from home. These include relationship building, networking, introducing expectations quickly, integrating students into church activity, and mentoring. This calls for collegiate focused ministry on the congregational level and a re-framing of Christian education to be broadly based in congregations instead of merely at*

*Adventist schools.*

In December of 2008 I entered the world of Adventist higher education as an administrator at Andrews University. Prior to this, my education and career in college/university administration developed in the "secular" world. I never attended Adventist academy or any of our 14 colleges and universities nationwide. This essay reflects my personal academic journey as an Adventist in public schools and non-Adventist colleges and universities (NACU's), as well as my experiences as a university administrator in support of Adventist students. I hope to illuminate the Adventist student experience in NACU's and challenge the definition and approach to Adventist Education in the United States.

I have heard non-Adventist education referred to as the "public sector" by Adventist educators. It is important to denounce this misnomer which hides the truth about access, equity, and privilege in U. S. American education and the context in which Adventist education is found. What Adventists call "Christian Education" is actually a fraction of the

private educational sector, specifically matriculation in Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) affiliated schools, academies, colleges and universities. According to the U.S. Department of Education, there are 33,740 private schools at the K-12 level, of which SDA academies are a part. The other 98,793 public schools across the nation represent varying levels of quality in education for young people in this country. Whatever the quality, public schools represent America's access and right to education by law. Federal and state governments continue to be challenged in providing equitable high quality education for all their constituents. Private education generally represents privilege and less access for young students, while the caliber such education has a large range.

This is the reality of American schools at the K-12 level of education. This is also the reality for Adventist schools—a private enterprise. Succinctly put, there are disparities among Adventist schools themselves, between the private sector (which Adventist schools are only a part) and the public

sector, and these issues complicate our discussion of what it means to minister to Adventists youth who do not attend Adventist schools.

There are 4,140 colleges and universities in the United States. At the post-secondary level of education, private institutions (2,441) far outnumber public ones (1,699). Approximately 900 colleges and universities in the U.S. identify as “religiously affiliated” institutions, which comprises a little more than one third of private higher education. Adventist colleges and universities represent less than two percent of those religious institutions. Hence, using “public sector” to describe NACU’s is grossly inaccurate. This is important because we may miss significant opportunities to understand trends and issues experienced by other religiously affiliated schools and the broader private four-year college sector when inappropriately label our institutions. Such a practice also skews our standing in the world of higher education.

### **My Educational Journey**

There are several reasons why many Adventist parents do not send their children to Adventist schools. These reasons include affordability, perception of quality, physical distance, and more. The cost of academy and the desire to keep me close to home with my siblings influenced my parents’ decision not to send me to an Adventist high school. However, I never asked my parents about attending an Adventist academy. For the most part I was happy with the schools I attended and felt appropriately integrated into that educational system. Daily morning worship with my family laid an incredibly strong foundation for knowledge of and relationship with my Creator. Conflicting information at school did not bring about confusion for me because these issues were addressed at home. Still, I performed fairly well throughout my elementary and secondary years.

But my achievements were never recognized at church. My church did recognize success markers of my friends who attended the Adventist academy. Their names were often called from the front of the sanctuary for their participation in school activities, moving up exercises, and going away to or returning from boarding school. Certainly other young people who attended non-Adventist schools (public or private) like I did were sometimes

included in Sabbath service announcements. However, those moments did not seem as special or as sincere. Yet I never fussed about these peculiar and subtle ways my church discounted my non-Adventist education. Instead, I interpreted these slights as confirmation that my academic experience would be one that was molded without the support of my church. I saw Adventist education as exclusionary and elitist. Sometimes, I even considered it a farce because it was presented as the better alternative for character building and its students did not always represent that to me.

Toward the end of my high school years I was even more thoughtful and intentional about my academic and spiritual development. I knew I would go on to college primarily because my older siblings did. However, they did not attend Adventist institutions. During my senior year in high school my church sponsored me to attend College Days at Oakwood University (Oakwood College then). My experience was profound. I found the music, fresh country air, and the ambiance of a campus where one could randomly find students in prayer or reading their Bibles freely quite attractive. Until then, I had never seriously considered Adventist colleges for my education. I began to explore it as a possibility.

Although Adventist higher education offered some programs that met my academic interests, I was concerned about the strength of these programs in terms of national reputation. At church, proponents of SDA colleges and universities talked about religious educational themes at the expense of other important considerations, such as preparation for graduate school and career development. Hence, I did not think of Adventist campuses as *serious* college learning environments. The cost of tuition again moved me in the direction of public rather than private education—Adventist or not. I attended college in the State University of New York (SUNY) system and vowed to maintain my faith in a microcosm of the real world where Adventists were not the majority population.

My older sister attended the University at Albany four years before me so I benefited from the connections my parents already had with a family who attended Capital City Seventh-day Adventist Church in Albany. This helped to keep me connected to church for the first two years of college. However,



it was difficult to adjust to a different church culture that I considered less vibrant than my home church. There seemed to be no other church options in the area, and without a car, my mobility off campus was extremely limited. There was one other Adventist student at the University in Albany. She was a year ahead of me and felt as disconnected as I did. Often we lamented how different this church experience was from our own and developed conversations of discouragement. Soon, we lost touch with one another. I am not sure whether she graduated or transferred out from the university. I remained, but felt very lonely at church without more college-aged students around. I also felt underutilized and my detachment grew. Further, this detachment from my new church was compounded by a loss of intimate connection with my home church. I couldn't find my place.

By my junior year, my lifestyle was much more integrated with campus activities. I worked as a resident assistant and became president of two highly influential organizations on campus. I was busy. Church attendance became periodic. Although I kept the Sabbath at home most of the time, I found myself in a downward spiral that kept me moving further and further away from church attendance. With each absence, I seemed to provide opportunities for others to judge me. When I did attend church, I avoided people and quickly left at the end of service. I did not want to be judged. My own feelings of guilt about my lack of church attendance exacerbated the situation. I likely perceived more judgment than was actually there. Meanwhile, leadership opportunities on campus allowed me to hone important interpersonal and professional skills, and sometimes gave me a platform to share my faith. I missed church but could not reconcile the actual experience of attending with the ideal I desired. I wanted church to be engaging, educational, spirit-filled, active, and relevant. It wasn't.

Finally, when I graduated, I gave up completely on church. I began to search for other meaningful spiritual experiences. I thought of religious practice as an unnecessary culture of habit that did not nurture the more important spiritual and personal core of the self. I rebelled. Yet I continually prayed for grace. This lasted for approximately three years until I moved to Syracuse, New York, where I

cautiously answered the call of God to return to church. While I did not feel particularly connected to the programs of the church, I was especially intrigued by the relationships I observed between a group of college, graduate, and professional school students. They were very caring toward each other, creating a small group within the larger church, sharing potlucks and hanging out together. This stirred a passion within me for Adventist students in NACU environments.

Over the ten years that I spent at Syracuse University, it was my personal ministry to develop impactful relationships with Adventist students in order to help facilitate their spiritual development and maintain their connectedness to church. This important work demands thought and effort. However, the most important element is sincere love and an interest in students. As an educator, these elements were at the heart of my work with any student. Adventist affiliation nurtured these elements more rapidly and profoundly.

## **Elements of My Campus-Church Ministry**

**Relationship Building.** I believe that relationships are at the core of faith expression and they maintain church growth. I quickly "adopted" Adventist students as extensions of my family and connected them with other church members in our small group. We exchanged contact information promptly and began to develop meaningful rapport. I found out their interests, skills, talents, or activities at their home church. As I developed these personal relationships, I took much more interest in the person than any particular agenda to keep them in church. I found that people come to church for relationships more often than to fulfill an obligation.

**Network.** Support works best when it is within a network. I shared information about students and their well-being with other friends at church. Together, we nurtured individual students, ministering to their needs along lines of interest, culture, gender, etc. This approach created a stronger sense of family away from home and an accountability based on relationship.

**Introduce Expectations.** Soon after meeting a student, I always introduce the expectation of seeing the student at church (and on campus). I didn't do this in a paternalistic way (at least initially) but with a familial and friendly tone. It was important for me

to let students know they were not alone. I expected them to call me for any need they may have, such as for transportation to church. I also expected them to do well and to be a part of the family. It was important for me to match the expectations that I had of the students with expectations that demanded something of me. For example, opening my home to college students meant having certain grocery items that were favorites of particular students, even foods I did not eat.

**Integrate into Church Activity.** I have found this component to be especially important for church to remain a significant part of the any student's college experience. My ministry was most successful when I was Adventist youth leader and director of one of the church choirs. I quickly integrated these talented college students into one or more of these activities. The choir became a significant church retention tool because of its very supportive and collegial culture.

**Well Rounded Support.** Sometimes students feel disconnected from church because people at church do not take their collegiate lives and needs into consideration. An off-campus meal on Friday nights or Sabbath afternoons is just the beginning. I found it was important to also discuss classes, campus activities, professional development and networking, and more with the student. Learning about the other six days of the students' lives while offering encouragement and understanding connected the "secular" life with the "sacred" life for a holistic relationship that supported their success. We provided social outlets as well, doing many non-church activities together.

**Mentorship.** Older individuals should always consider the relationships they build with college students as mentoring relationships. However, this key element should also be developed in college students as a responsibility they have to younger youth of the local church. I found the college students to be more invested in the relationships they could develop as role models to younger youth of our church. Adventist young people love to give back. Opportunities to mentor facilitated growth and commitment for many of the college students I worked with.

Today, I remain in contact with many of the Syracuse University Adventist students and alumni with whom I have developed strong bonds of

friendship. More importantly, everyone in the small group is connected with at least one person in the group. While each person may be at a different points in the educational and spiritual journey, most remain deeply committed to church and ministry. Such a blessing is deeply gratifying for me as my passion for this type of ministry is a result of my own NACU experience. With the great majority of Adventist youth attending NACU's across the nation, it is important that we develop strategic care for our students. This higher level of care can only be realized when we understand Christian/Adventist education in a new way. A broader view of Adventist education should be engaged to incorporate learning at church and home.

It will take significant changes in the operation and delivery of educational services for our K-12 and higher educational institutions to meet the demands of all our students, providing more equity and access than the formalized Adventist education we currently operate. I consider Adventist education to be the accumulated lessons that promote an understanding of Christ as our personal savior who is soon to return and prepares us to be salt and light in the world as we anticipate that return. This broader definition might help us to administer an Adventist education for the 21st century. This conception views Adventist education as a network which not only includes Adventist schools and colleges as learning centers, but focuses on the student and reaching them where they are.

Three examples of strategies for administrating an Adventist education that all members of a local church community can access include the following: 1) empower families and guardians to facilitate learning at home before or after students go to their non-Adventist schools; 2) be more intentional about Sabbath School facilitation; and 3) assist parents to engage their students in the curriculum of our auxiliaries such as Pathfinders.

Adventist education must be more intentional at church and collaborating with families in the home setting. A resurgence of relevant literature for the 21st century would be effective for equipping the saints. This concept then moves with the student from K-12 to higher education, requiring churches to be intentional in providing deeper learning opportunities for NACU students at the local church and on campus.

## **Recommendations**

- Conference and local church departments of Education must reconsider Adventist Education as an inclusive enterprise with broader reach than Adventist schools, colleges and universities.
- Sabbath School, Adventist Youth Society, homes where Adventists live, and all church auxiliaries where youth participate should be considered learning centers of Adventist education. Hence, curriculums should be developed to reflect this intention with stronger coordination.
- Collegiate Ministries should be developed at each church to include a Sabbath School or distinct Bible study class, campus outreach, and hospitality services.
- Local church Education departments should facilitate transfer services by sending an introduction letter to the church/es near the campus of NACU students with a brief biography and contact information.
- Churches near campuses must reach out to the Student Affairs or Student Life offices to provide information about the Seventh-day Adventist church to be placed in student directories, bulletins, and planners. (Often NACU students are unable to find basic information about a local church near campus in the campus literature because the church has made no effort to provide such information.)
- Pastors of churches near campuses must make a personal connection with Student Affairs or Student Life professionals at the institution and find out what possibilities exist for on-campus fellowships and ministries for Adventist students.
- Collegiate Ministries should include persons who have had a college experience, love youth, and are close to college age.
- Churches should integrate college students into their activities in meaningful ways. College students do not need busy work, but meaningful assignments with lots of lead time.
- Pastors and churches should consider carefully that Adventist schooling can be promoted without discounting education (public, private, Christ-centered or secular) as an important value of Seventh-day Adventists.
- Collegiate Ministries should develop care packages and other hospitality services that encourage local students and students who are away during major examination periods.
- Collegiate Ministries should develop initiatives for parents of college students that help them to adjust to the evolving and transitioning relationship with their son or daughter.
- Churches should recognize the return of college students during holidays and breaks, develop financial support initiatives for all college students with need, and provide some type of recognition for outstanding academic achievement and graduations.
- Involve college students in mentoring initiatives of the church.
- A perhaps more radical recommendation may be that the Church should develop a category of church membership that would allow college students to become “associate members” of their campus churches with the right to serve in particular capacities or offices as full members of that local college-town congregation while maintaining their regular membership back in their home church.
- Remember that relationship and connectedness are two critical concerns for the church and college students. Let these be the focus points of Collegiate Ministries.

## **Conclusion**

In this essay, I have discussed K-12 schools and pre-college Adventist education as significant influences on education at the tertiary level. Through a recounting of my own journey in non-Adventist schools and at non-Adventist colleges and universities (NACU's), I demonstrated the tenuous

position of many students when they lose a strong sense of connectedness through relationship with the church and its members. At the root of this disconnectedness is the use of exclusionary language and approaches by our church or members, or the lack of strong intention to be inclusive in our conception of the Adventist educational enterprise. I reflected on my ministry with Adventist college students at an NACU to suggest some principles for a successful personal ministry with NACU students, such as: relationship building, networking, introducing expectations quickly, integrating students into church activity, and mentoring. However, the church must develop institutional strategies that will help us to retain NACU students and help facilitate their spiritual growth and commitment. Collegiate Ministries must become a standard department or component of church ministries at every church near a college or with collegiate members. Education departments at every level of our church must reconsider Adventist education as an inclusive value and enterprise of the church. It is no longer enough to say that families must make sacrifices for Adventist schooling if they believe in Christian education, but to direct significant energies to the full development of Adventist learning centers that will minister to this generation.

# CAMPUS BASED YOUTH MINISTRY: AN INCLUSIVE APPROACH

by Scott R. Ward

## Abstract

*The Adventist church has a rich history of campus-based youth ministry centered on Adventist academy campuses. The Adventist system is so campus-based that many youth pastors attempting to follow church-based models have difficulty including non-academy students in their ministries. The church's mission is to reach all Adventist students in the community not just the ones attending Adventist schools. The solution is a campus-based youth ministry model that can be used for both academies and public high schools and can be used by youth pastors and lay youth leaders. By developing such campus-based youth ministries all high school aged Adventist students can be ministered to while getting outside the Adventist "bubble" and on to public campuses for effective youth evangelism as well.*

## The Advantages of Campus-based Youth Ministry

Youth ministry in North America began in the 50s and 60s when a distinct youth culture began to develop.<sup>1</sup> This initial youth ministry movement was campus-based as "youth evangelists" went on campus to reach teenagers for Christ. Years later churches started hiring youth pastors and youth ministry became church-based rather than campus-based. As this transition continued over time churches began to use fun and games to "draw" youth into the church facility. This "fun and games" youth ministry model of the past 25 years is now being declared bankrupt<sup>2</sup> and youth ministry leaders are searching for a new model. Campus-based youth ministry seeks to return to the school campuses and find the youth where they are living their lives. It also seeks to meet their needs in the real world rather than continuing to use gimmicks to draw them into our churches. Campus-based youth ministry is rooted in relational youth ministry,<sup>3</sup> seeking to be salt and light. Research today is revealing the fact that many people, "Like Jesus but not the Church," as Dan Kimball has so eloquently titled his most recent book.<sup>4</sup> In light of America's current cultural context, reaching out to public high school campuses is no longer optional. Youth no longer come to church as they once did. If our ministries want to reach youth for Christ, they must meet them where they spend most of their time—at school!

Even though Adventism has a long history of campus-based youth ministry, we still suffer from the negative effects of trying to "draw" people in rather than going out and connecting with students in their world. Likewise, other Christian based schools are missing the boat as well. If our youth are surrounded by Christians only, who do they witness to? Where do our ministries do outreach? Many Christian campuses are quite Laodicean because of this. The Christian mindset needs to change back to an outreach orientation rather than a nurture orientation. Spiritually speaking, as Christians in North America, we are nurturing ourselves to death! The future of Adventist evangelism, and thereby, the overall church, is in the hands of the youth leaders of today. We must seriously consider how are we "training up the child!"<sup>5</sup>

This is not to suggest that we close our Christian schools. What is being said is that in order to save our youth from spiritual death, we need viable ministries to attract and lead all our youth—including those on public campuses to Jesus Christ. We need to focus our communities on Jesus and provide opportunities for his power to be unleashed. We need to get our students in a position to see the powerful hand of God at work and get them excited to reach out to the un-churched youth on campus. When we sequester ourselves to our own private campuses and ignore the public campuses we literally have the world to lose.



## **How My Campus-based Ministry Began**

If you are serious about getting to know youth—get on campus! Volunteer to do anything! Schools always need free labor. Being an artist, I wanted to help in the art room at my local academy. What I ended up doing was teaching a mandatory art class. That was perfect! I had 55 minutes a day with my target audience. This gave me a reason to be on campus. My daily presence opened doors to also host a “family group” of 8-10 students on Tuesday mornings and to take the lead for Thursday morning chapels where I was eventually able to start a praise band and coach student speakers to give devotional talks. Again, My regular presence on the academy campus made it the overall base of operations for my ministry. All academy youth from all churches (including non-Adventist) were invited to all my activities. This seemed natural because most Adventist teenagers think in terms of the friends in their circle—the ones they see at school on a daily basis. They don’t think in terms of “youth group.” I couldn’t tell students that only members of my church could go on my mission trips, houseboat trips and other activities? That would create artificial segregating. This led me to develop a campus-based rather than church-based ministry model.

As my academy campus ministry was developing a teenage girl approached me at a church potluck and told me she was a freshman at the local high school that year and wanted me to help her start a Bible study on her campus. I went through the registration process with the high school and was cleared to be on campus. Then I had permission slips signed by parents saying that I could meet with their children for “counseling” during lunch-time.<sup>6</sup> Our group size varied each year depending on how many were interested and if they brought friends. I was amazed at how many youth I met had an Adventist background—either parents or grandparents had been church members in the past but had lost interest. I was able to reconnect with many of these youth and some began to reconnect with the church. My initial ministry on this public high school campus was one of getting to know people and staying connected with Adventist youth and their friends. They were not coming to church, so I went to them and met them on their turf.

My public campus ministry took off two years later when I re-started the Christian club on campus. The club had folded because of dwindling attendance. I believe interest had waned because the club primarily offered student-led Bible studies during lunch. It seemed to me that during lunch time students wanted a break from studying. I believed that more than anything youth needed to find other Christian students to develop community with so that they could withstand negative peer pressure. Eventually I discovered that the students also wanted to do outreach on their campus.

When my focus was primarily on Adventist students my group was small. It seemed that the youth sometimes felt like they might appear to be a little odd by attending such a small obscure group. Some demonstrated hesitancy to participate at times. But by opening the group to all Christians, the Adventist students had opportunities to be leaders in the overall Christian community and to benefit from being a part of a larger more visible group. I had done the same thing at the Adventist academy where Adventists were the clear majority, but this was my first attempt at a public high school where the Adventists were in the minority.

Each week our Christian club starts with a “check-in” time where everyone shares how his or her week is going and makes prayer requests. This is how we all get to know and support each other and become friends. As our lunch time groups grew from 5 or 6 per lunch period to 20 or 30 we found that we had to divide into small groups to maintain the intimacy and bonding within the group.

When our campus ministry was ready to start doing outreach we developed a website: [www.peace4youth.org](http://www.peace4youth.org). The website is still developing as we try to reach students more effectively, but the goal is to draw youth in with photos of our activities, then offer simple steps for developing personal spirituality. The goal for the website is to become a place for campus clubs to network and share ideas.

We promote our website during our “pizza and prayer” outreach events where our club members, wearing peace4youth t-shirts, spread out all over campus during lunch time offering free slices of pizza and “peace4youth” wristbands while taking prayer requests. We have an adult/teen prayer team



regularly praying for hundreds of requests from this ongoing ministry.

Now with campus ministries at every high school in town, both public and private, I have access to nearly all teens. So, last January "Peace4youth Campus Ministries" hosted a city-wide youth rally that attracted nearly 500 youth to a weekend event that was amazing! I partnered with the local youth pastors' network with the goal of all our youth groups working together to reach un-churched youth. I call it "Billy Graham style" youth evangelism where we all work together for the basic Gospel that we all agree on. The weekend was a huge success.

Through these events my Adventist youth have grown spiritually and are now inspired to reach out even more on their campuses, and the non-Adventist students in my clubs will always remember that it was an Adventist youth pastor who reached out to them and helped them in their walk of faith. Getting on campus, getting to know students, helping them network with each other, encouraging them in their walk of faith, and staying in communication via websites, social networking sites and texting is what makes this ministry work.

### **Variations of the Campus-based Youth Ministry Model**

**Full-time Youth Pastor Based at One Church.** This model is based on what I am currently doing as described in this paper. Any youth pastor with a well-rounded program of youth activities based at the local academy, only needs to spend an additional two hours per week at the public high school campus to follow this model. The concept is to form a "group" at each school so that the public school students no longer feel like the "odd man out." When public high students feel like they are a part of a Christian "group" on their campus they feel more comfortable coming to the existing youth ministry events because they are no longer coming alone. They are coming with their group—a group that is just as spiritual, if not more spiritual, than the academy students.

**Academy Bible Teacher/Campus Chaplain.** Another important model to be developed is for the academy Bible teacher/chaplain to be the one visiting public schools at lunch time, especially in

areas that have no youth pastors. This is important because the Bible teacher/chaplain is already serving in this role on one campus and could easily connect on other campuses as well. This model would go a long way toward helping marginalized public high school students feel welcome at church too. The vast majority of youth ministry funding goes to our academies. Increasingly, our youth are choosing to attend public high schools. We need to be fair by reaching out and ministering to all Adventist youth on all campuses, both public and private.

**Full-time Traveling Youth Pastor/Public School Chaplain.** Northern California Conference has a small-school youth pastor who visits all the small elementary schools in the conference. He conducts weeks of prayer and connects with children in any way he can. This is a good model to adapt for a public high school chaplain as well. Find the churches with larger groups of students in public schools who want to reach their campuses. One chaplain could visit 10 schools on a bi-monthly basis making a huge impact and giving God the opportunity to make things happen.

The chaplain could also spend time recruiting lay volunteers as well. Most Christian clubs on high school campuses are run by teachers, not pastors. It's something anyone who loves youth can do. All you need is a caring heart and a good book on running small groups.<sup>7</sup> This model could impact dozens of schools.

### **Conclusion**

One of my favorite things to do is visit a new high school campus. Have a parent call ahead saying that you will be visiting their child on campus. Then you show up with about 5 pizzas, a hundred "peace4youth" wristbands and some "peace4youth" t-shirts to give away. Trust me, you will draw a crowd of admirers! Everyone will want to know what you are doing. That's right, the crowd will come to you! Give away the P4Y (peace4youth) items that point them to the spiritual website, give everyone a chance to tell about themselves, have prayer then be on your way. It's a high impact evangelistic tool that anyone can use, and all the models listed above can be legitimately funded with evangelism money.

Adventist youth ministry needs to start reaching out to all our students instead of being satisfied by merely reaching out to the most churched and most accessible groups who attend our Adventist schools. Reaching out to only the easily accessible students is narrow minded, un-evangelistic and unbiblical. Jesus rebuked the Pharisees for taking this approach.<sup>8</sup> Instead, talk to the youth at your church and discuss the Insight article "Taking God to School"<sup>9</sup> and then schedule a time to visit them at school and meet their friends!

## **Endnotes**

- <sup>1</sup>Oestreicher, Mark. *Youth Ministry 3.0*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008, 45-6. See also: Root, Andrew. *Revisiting Relational Youth Ministry*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2007, pp52-3.
- <sup>2</sup>King, Mike. *Presence-Centered Youth Ministry*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2006, 25. See also Oestreicher, 64.
- <sup>3</sup>Root, 15.
- <sup>4</sup>Kimball, Dan. *They Like Jesus but not the Church*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007.
- <sup>5</sup>Proverbs 22:6.
- <sup>6</sup>For more information on how to get on a public high school campus see my website: [www.campusbasedyouthministry.org](http://www.campusbasedyouthministry.org)
- <sup>7</sup>Walshe, Alan. "Transformational Youth Ministry," in Dudley, Roger and Allan Walshe, editors. *Ministering with Millennials*. Lincoln: *AdventSource*, 2009, 179.
- <sup>8</sup>Matthew 8:10-13.
- <sup>9</sup>A copy of this article is posted at: [www.campusbasedyouthministry.org](http://www.campusbasedyouthministry.org)

# SCHOOLED IN CULTURE: A NEW APPROACH TO PUBLIC SCHOOL MINISTRY

by David Achata

## Abstract

*While many Seventh-day Adventist students attend church-sponsored schools and universities, much larger numbers enroll at public high schools and universities. Often public school students withdraw and eventually disassociate themselves from a local church. In the campus environment, many students see only two options: either they feel they have to withdraw from the campus and its culture in order to follow Jesus, or they feel like they have to conform to the culture and forsake their faith. Thankfully, there's a third option—to follow Christ in culture. In order for this to happen, the student must both understand the campus culture and adhere to a biblical worldview. This will enable students to not only survive, but to thrive and affect their campuses for Jesus. Through first-hand experiences, interviews and observations, this tool will help pastors, parents and campus-ministry leaders effectively disciple the students in their care by addressing issues such as Biblical Worldview, Sabbath and Servanthood as ways to empower students to reach their campuses. Students can follow Jesus in the culture of the public campus and affect it for God's glory.*

Amy grew up going to Christian schools and even attended a Christian university. She'd never had a job or even attended a school outside the Seventh-day Adventist school system. But one Spring she decided to take a break from college and move to Orlando, Florida, to participate in the Disney College Program.

Amy soon discovered that her apartment complex was the hub of Orlando's college scene. The Visa Way Apartments, which became her new home, more than lived up to the nickname, "Vista Lay." For the first time in her 21 years, Amy came into daily contact with people who were not Christ-followers.

Her first weekend, Amy found herself sitting alone in her apartment thinking about how different this place was from anywhere she had lived been before. What kind of person did she now want to be? How would she live with no one looking over her shoulder? She had to make a decision about how she was going to connect with this new culture where everyone seemed to believe something different.

## What I Believe

What Amy experienced isn't too different from the situations many high school and university students face in both private and public schools. However, students who choose to participate in public institutions and programs often experience these types of dilemmas at greater intensity.

The latest statistics show that only 15 percent of all adult SDA church members attended private Adventist schools through college.<sup>1</sup> This means that 85 percent of SDA young people, by the time they reach college, will come to a point when they'll have to decide how to live outside the Christian subculture.

While some might be alarmed at the above statistics, I think they represent an exciting time we've entered. They show that the majority of our young people are on the fast track to being exactly where they're supposed to be: in the world surrounded by non-Christians.<sup>2</sup>

Skyler, a junior at a public high school of 3500 students, illustrated this point. "When you're a light

in a dark room,” she said, “it’s different than being a light in the sun. Private school students don’t have that kind of opportunity.”

Students like Skyler understand they can actively participate in the reign of God today on this earth.<sup>3</sup> I believe this “Good News” has the potential to empower countless students to greatly affect their campuses for Jesus.

## **Misperceptions**

The common misperception today, however, is that going to a public school is the worst thing that could happen to Christian young people. They’re often told that evil runs wild at public schools and they should be careful not to get sucked in.

While these perceptions have some truth, they’re not completely accurate. By using scare tactics to protect students, we have made it seem like there are only two options when attending a public institution: 1) In order to follow Jesus, you must withdraw from the public-school culture, or 2) if you don’t withdraw, you’ll end up conforming. However, neither of these options is biblical or Christ-like. It’s time to consider a third option—following Christ in culture.

## **Understanding a Biblical Worldview**

If students are going to thrive on campus and affect their peers for Jesus, they need to understand a biblical worldview. This means recognizing that God is active in all things and in all places. He has placed us here and now so we can draw attention to the fact that He is not far from any one of us.<sup>4</sup>

This worldview can be seen in Jesus’ message that the kingdom is near.<sup>5</sup> It’s also evident in the apostle Paul’s practice of using the poets and philosophers of his day<sup>6</sup> to bring to light how God’s reality was breaking into human history.<sup>7</sup>

Students attending public institutions have a unique opportunity to reach the world because the world has gathered at the campus. To make the most of this opportunity, they must see the campus with a biblical worldview and a missional mindset<sup>8</sup>—viewing themselves as missionaries right where they live<sup>9</sup> and seeing all of life as a way of engaging with God’s mission in the world.<sup>10</sup>

Throughout Scripture, we can see examples of individuals who looked at the wider culture with a biblical mindset. The prophet Daniel, seeing God’s hand in his circumstances<sup>11</sup> and wanting Nebuchadnezzar to know his God,<sup>12</sup> excelled at Nebuchadnezzar’s university. He was able to study the culture of Babylon<sup>13</sup> without withdrawing from his faith or conforming to the fallen ways of the Babylonians.<sup>14</sup> In the same way, Paul studied the culture of Athens to reach those who lived there.<sup>15</sup> Jesus took the culture of a first-century Jew.<sup>16</sup> The call to 85 percent of our young adults is similar—be schooled in culture to reach those in the culture.

## **Raising up Theologians**

Chuck Bomar, in his book *College Ministry 101*, points out how students go through a universal identity crisis. As they move through various social situations, their identities shift to fit their circumstances. He notes that our job as leaders and ministers is to help students move beyond their temporary circumstances.<sup>17</sup>

Bomar suggests that we cultivate in our young people the identity of a theologian, meaning “one who studies God.” The theologian is someone who processes her spiritual identity alongside her social identity. She has a missional mindset and seeks opportunities in which she can live out her identity as a child of God. Bomar concludes, “The Theologian can endure trials and changes in circumstances because circumstances don’t define her. She finds meaning in something that doesn’t change, no matter the circumstances.”<sup>18</sup>

What is helpful in equipping young theologians is not a program, but principles. Programs can’t always be replicated because every context varies. But theologians carry over their principles regardless of the context. The following are three principles that have been helpful to me.

### **Principle #1 – Free Students to Be a Movement**

Young adults don’t feel loyalty to an institution or established sets of rules, but they do feel a desire to follow Jesus. While an institution preserves culture, movements create culture.<sup>19</sup> I know countless high school and university students who want the freedom to create a new culture and

interpret for themselves how their values are fleshed out in real life.

For instance, take the way we have traditionally taught students to observe the Sabbath. While many have been taught that Sabbath is a day for withdrawal and naps, Jesus taught the Sabbath was a gift and a day to be active in doing good.<sup>20</sup> Allowing students to create a movement means they take Jesus' values and principles, and then interpret them to fit their context.

Ashley and Elizabeth approached me three years ago with the dilemma of whether or not to quit the cross-country team because they had to run on Saturdays. I communicated to them the values of Jesus and one guideline that the Sabbath is a day to cease struggling to secure your place in the world.<sup>21</sup> I said if they were running to win, run the other six days of the week. But if they were running to be Christ to their team, they should run. On hearing this, a huge burden was lifted off of them. They ended up running on the team, and on their off weekends, they sometimes brought friends from the cross-country team to church.

On the flip side, I have students like Ross who come from very traditional families. He never participates in events at his public school. But he befriended fifteen-year-old Azad, who was a Muslim, and after years of inviting Azad to his house and bringing him to church, Azad had an experience with God and became a follower of Christ. My point is that values interpreted in different contexts by different people will look different. We can't impose a one-size-fits-all approach.

The Sabbath is only one example. When we arm students with values and a biblical worldview, we open the door for Christ to create a movement through them. What a contrast to burdening them with the task of preserving a culture that may not apply in their context. With a biblical worldview, they will become a force in the world.

## Principle #2 – Develop People

The first principle of freeing students to be a movement only works in the context of developing people. Whether it's one's biological family or church family, people need intentional support to develop, and that need starts early. A child's moral

values are generally decided by the age of nine, and foundational spiritual beliefs are typically ingrained by age 13.<sup>22</sup>

As a youth pastor, I recognize that I'm part of these students' spiritual family. That's why I visit them on their campuses and meet their friends. I have them over to my house. I ask their feedback about how I can better equip them to be Christ at school. Understanding their needs requires that I talk less and ask a lot more questions.<sup>23</sup>

In one such conversation, I had about ten students over to my house and asked them how they felt about being a believer surrounded by non-believers. Almost every one of them said they felt alone and told me they craved a forum to discuss what they were going through. By asking questions in a context of care and listening, I can help my youth develop and live out a biblical worldview in their specific contexts.

I live life with my students to offer that kind of support. Whether it's in a weekly small group or a monthly get-together at someone's house. Developing people takes time and intentionality.

## Principle #3 – Teach and Model Servanthood

Azad recently said to me, "The Church could teach how to serve people more, 'cause when you serve, you get closer to God yourself, and you help other people get closer." Rather than focusing on church attendance, emphasize serving others.

Teaching and modeling servanthood gives young adults an everyday spiritual discipline to practice. Liz, a freshman at a public university, was concerned about what to do at parties since she didn't plan on drinking. I told her not to worry because she already has something else to do—serve. God hasn't placed students like Liz in a public setting to preserve themselves, but rather, to lose themselves for the gospel.<sup>24</sup> Erwin McManus wrote in *An Unstoppable Force*:

The serving that we are called to requires direct contact. You cannot wash the feet of a dirty world if you refuse to touch it. There is a sense of mystery to this, but it is in the serving that the church finds her strength.<sup>25</sup>



If we want our young adults to be “strong in Christ,” the solution may not necessarily be another Bible study. Jesus taught that true spiritual growth comes when we do God’s will,<sup>26</sup> which is to serve our brothers and sisters in this world<sup>27</sup> so they will have evidence that what we believe is true.<sup>28</sup>

Teaching and modeling servanthood is about cultivating a mindset of living for others, of meeting others where they are. While some may view this territory as unsafe, we have to ask ourselves a question: If we as parents, pastors, and teachers only train our kids to be in safe places, what will they do when they inevitably find themselves in dangerous places? More importantly, are we brave enough to lead and instruct them into the dangerous places for Jesus’ sake?<sup>29</sup>

What’s the point of being a Christian if you’re not in the world? Why did Jesus leave the safety of heaven and even come to this dangerous and sin-filled world? What did Jesus mean when He said that if you wanted to follow Him, you had to deny yourself and go where He led?<sup>30</sup> What do we think this is about anyway?

## Conclusion

Think about the examples of the men and women in Scripture who faced personal danger and even death to reach their respective cultures—Paul, Daniel, Joseph, the apostles. Most importantly, God Himself embraced the first-century Jewish culture through Jesus in order to save the world. Now His story continues with us. He has called me to train the students under my care to be Christ on their campuses. He has called us all to be Christ and lead others in our communities. May He give us wisdom and courage as we train those entrusted to us to follow Christ in culture.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Sahlin, Monte, and Paul Richardson. “Seventh-day Adventists in North America: A Demographic Profile,” in *North American Division Secretariat Demographic Survey* November, 2008, 29.

<sup>2</sup>John 17:15.

<sup>3</sup>Matthew 3:2, 4:17, 10:7; Mark 1:15; Luke 10:9, 10:11, 21:31.

<sup>4</sup>Acts 17:27.

<sup>5</sup>See footnote 4.

<sup>6</sup>Acts 17:28.

<sup>7</sup>Wright, N.T. *The Challenge of Jesus*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999, 38.

<sup>8</sup>Matthew 28:19-20.

<sup>9</sup>Kimball, Dan. *They Like Jesus but Not the Church: Insights from Emerging Generations*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007, 20.

<sup>10</sup>McNeal, Reggie. *Missional Renaissance: Changing the Scorecard for the Church*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2009, xiv.

<sup>11</sup>Daniel 1:1-2.

<sup>12</sup>Daniel 2:29-30.

<sup>13</sup>Daniel 1-2.

<sup>14</sup>Daniel 1:8, 6:10.

<sup>15</sup>Acts 17:16-34.

<sup>16</sup>Luke 4:16; John 1:14.

<sup>17</sup>Bomar, Chuck. *College Ministry 101: A Guide to Working with 18-25 Year Olds*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009, 42.

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*, 43-44.

<sup>19</sup>McManus, Erwin. *An Unstoppable Force: Daring to Become the Church God Had in Mind*. Orange, CA: Group Publishing, 2001, 95-103.

<sup>20</sup>Mark 2:27; Matthew 12:11.

<sup>21</sup>McLarty, John Thomas. *The Fifth Generation: Spiritual Treasures of Mature Adventism*. Riverside, CA: Adventist Today, 2005, 78.

<sup>22</sup>Barna, George. *The Seven Faith Tribes: Who They Are, What They Believe and Why They Matter*. Wallingford, CT: Barna Books 2009, 166.

<sup>23</sup>See Appendix A.

<sup>24</sup>Mark 8:35.

<sup>25</sup>McManus, 23.

<sup>26</sup>John 4:34.

<sup>27</sup>Philippians 2:5-7.

<sup>28</sup>John 13:35.

<sup>29</sup>McManus, 32.

<sup>30</sup>Luke 9:23.



# “STANDOUT” PUBLIC SCHOOL RETREAT

by Andrea Jakobsons

## Abstract

*Standout is a public high school retreat created by the enrollment team at Andrews University in order to respond to the growing concerns of Adventist youth choosing public schools over Adventist schools. Since the statistics of youth who leave the Seventh-day Adventist church are grim for those who attend public schools, the enrollment team decided to address the issue. The team created a weekend on the campus of Andrews University specifically geared towards public high school students (while including home-schooled youth) in hopes of inspiring Adventist youth to seek a deeper experience with Christ and in turn begin to make future decisions based on His guidance. Recognizing that these decisions may or may not lead them to Andrews University was not a deterring factor as the primary focus was to create a community of youth that seeks after God and to build their identity as Seventh-day Adventist Christians.*

## Standout

According to Hurst, 66-75% of Seventh-day Adventist youth attend public schools.<sup>1</sup> Additionally, statistics show that Adventist youth who attend public schools instead of Adventist schools leave the Adventist Church at an even higher rate than those who attend Adventist schools. The attrition of Adventist public school youth may be up to 80%,<sup>2</sup> whereas, according to Dudley, the attrition for Adventist school youth is about 55%.<sup>3</sup>

The enrollment team at Andrews University, which consists of recruiters, admissions personnel and guest relations, has traditionally targeted students from Adventist academies. However, when the enrollment team began receiving statistics regarding most Adventist high school students attending public schools, they knew it was time to reach out to this population. Since so many of our Adventist youth are choosing public schools, the enrollment team began asking questions such as: “How does Andrews University demonstrate to these students that Adventist education is an important aspect of a Christian lifestyle?”

The enrollment team soon realized that rather than attempting to portray Andrews University in a glamorous light, it was of greater importance to portray Christ as the brightest light. Only when youth fall in love with Christ and see Him as the light of their lives, will their decisions, including educational

decisions, be based on His leading. Thus, perhaps the answer is to inspire youth to truly follow Christ. As they seek God guidance, many of them will be led to Adventist colleges or universities if God indeed wants them to be there. We decided to create a retreat that targets public high school students and specifically their spiritual needs.

## Mission Statement of Standout

Standout, a public high school retreat, seeks to provide an opportunity for public high school students and home-schoolers to worship together, to meet other youth, to experience God, to learn together, and to refresh their walk with Jesus. We hope to empower and inspire youth to be a powerful force that brings Jesus to our world as a united community that seeks to devote its efforts to prayer, fellowship, learning and breaking bread together.

Our Mission Statement is based on the following verse: “They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.”<sup>4</sup>

Standout is a public high school retreat annually hosted on the campus of Andrews University since 2006. It is a retreat that occurs over three consecutive days and focuses on creating a community that seeks after God. We have placed it on the campus of Andrews University for several reasons. We wanted to separate it from a specific

church location so that youth do not feel like it is a competition of which church or region has the bigger youth rally. We also wanted to give these high school students the experience of being on the campus of the university. We hope that their positive experience at Standout will also translate to a positive experience with the campus and its people. Whether God leads them to attend Andrews University in the future or not, we want to provide a community that will nurture and strengthen their walk with Christ into adulthood. Our hope is to encourage them to ask God for guidance in every step they take and to deepen their sense of belonging to the Adventist family of faith by involving them in worship and service within and outside of the Standout community.

### **Relationships and Community**

The goal is to give youth a taste of a community based on Acts 2:42 (NIV): "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer." Just as the apostles spent time together in fellowship, learning, eating, and praying together, Standout seeks to do the same. We want to offer youth a weekend during which they experience a community where youth fellowship and worship together through each aspect mentioned in the verse: prayer, eating, learning, and fellowship. It is essential to notice that the verse states that the apostles "devoted themselves" to these things. They didn't just do them once in a while. They devoted themselves to doing them every single day. We want to give youth a weekend experience demonstrating that this kind of fellowship is possible. We hope to inspire them to carry this into their everyday lives. We want to allow them to participate in a living faith because as De Oliveira (2009) aptly states: "Living faith generates living faith in others."<sup>5</sup>

The 180° Symposium in 2008 identified the need for genuine, authentic relationships among youth as one of the key aspects of youth development. Unless this is met, youth will look elsewhere to fulfill it.<sup>6</sup> Standout seeks to provide an opportunity to meet this need of teenagers by creating a community. "Healing relationships and creating community are primary in Jesus' plan for restoration and it is a priority for postmodern (millennial) youth and young adults."<sup>7</sup> Standout is a

weekend designed for youth to meet other youth—to bond with the group as a whole as well as with their own youth group from home.

Group activities during Sabbath School or ice-breakers promote community and relationships. So do "Open Mic," break out sessions, Saturday evening games, and even meal times. Although past Standouts have mainly focused on building relationships during the event, the plan is to further develop and create a community that will last beyond the three-day retreat. Through a website and other online communication tools, Standout will stay in touch with all past attendees and will continue to build community through constant communication with Standout participants.

### **Chaperones and Adult Support**

The community of Standout would not be complete without the presence of adult chaperones. These adults bring the youth to the event as well as spend the weekend with them. Our goal is to involve the adults so that youth experience a true community that includes everyone. Although the weekend is geared towards the youth, the support, prayers, and importance of adult presence cannot be underestimated. When Chap Clark studied adolescents he discovered that most of the issues that youth face grow out of abandonment. In general, the adults of our society have abandoned the youth. As a result, young people have created their own world in which they fend for themselves. Clark states, "The goal of youth ministry should be to make disciples of Jesus Christ who are authentically walking with God within the context of intimate Christian community."<sup>8</sup> He identifies three convictions that are core to this understanding, with the third one being "young people and adults recognize that a community is one in which all members need and belong to one another."<sup>9</sup> That's why Standout invites the participation of the adults who are investing in the lives of the youth.

We provide two breakout sessions for the adults in which they are given tools for youth ministry. In the future, we would like to provide tools and materials that these adults can take to their churches and further educate church members on the issues surrounding youth and their attrition along with the discussions from the 180° Symposium.

## Worship & Spirituality

Singing, speakers, prayers, breakouts, and all of the other activities are designed to inspire youth with a passion for Christ. We want them to walk away wanting more of God in their lives. We desire for youth to have a deeper experience with Him and to long for more. In the Valuegenesis II report, Gillespie and Donahue suggest, "Personal piety is crucial according to our research, and young people need to be shown how to build a personal spiritual life. Show them how to have meaningful Bible study with the use of inspirational materials, Christian music, and community service involvement."<sup>10</sup> It is our hope to provide breakout sessions and other worship experiences that will give them the tools for developing a daily relationship with Christ rather than only provide a one-weekend boost in their spiritual lives.

Ron Pickell mentions that "many young people who have grown up in the church don't really know what to share"<sup>11</sup> when asked to share their faith. I believe that not only do they not know what to share but many of them also don't know what they believe. An important part of spirituality is our understanding of theology. Our comprehension of Adventist theology influences the way we understand God and what happens in our lives. As I converse with students I am struck with the reality that many of our youth do not know and would not be able to explain the basic tenants of our faith. Therefore, it seems imperative that we emphasize theology in youth ministry. In one weekend we cannot accomplish all that is needed in this area, but we can focus the sessions on teaching and learning bible truths. Just as Acts 2:42 points out that the people devoted themselves to learning, so we want to devote the weekend activities to teaching and learning. We also plan to stay in touch with the students throughout the year and encourage them to delve deeper into the Word and to learn more of Scripture and theology. Standout creates a community that will also inspire youth in a renewed passion for Biblical truth.

## Service and Involvement

Standout also embeds an opportunity for service activities. We invite youth to participate in a service project as they arrive or during Sabbath afternoon. Every year the service opportunities may be different,

but there will always be a way for youth get involved and make a difference in a certain community. Dudley and Gillespie's Valuegenesis report points out that active involvement is one of the big reasons youth remain in the church.<sup>12</sup> Therefore, we will ensure opportunities for service in the Standout weekend.

Additionally, we invite Standout attendees to be active participants in various parts of the programs throughout the weekend. They can create an art project for display, prepare special music, lead out in song service, share a testimony, participate in discussions during breakout sessions, etc. The voices of our youth are heard.

Chris Blake suggests "Youth Summits" as one of the three solutions to stop the exodus of young people leaving the church.<sup>13</sup> He recommends that the Adventist Church should re-introduce Youth Summits, as they are "designed to create a large critical mass of energetic youth and focus on involvement rather than entertainment."<sup>14</sup> I see Standout as a variation of a Youth Summit. Standout exists so that the "large critical mass of energetic youth" catches a fire for Christ from each other. They need to experience a gathering with other youth since they are comparatively alone in many of their churches. Standout serves as a boost because it reveals there are other youth who love the Lord. Rather than one day, however, Standout occurs over the whole weekend. Youth positively comment on this time period as they appreciate the bonding that results from having a full weekend to socialize and fellowship.

Blake's statement points out that Youth Summits were designed to involve youth and not to entertain them. I completely agree with this statement. However, I believe that those in youth ministry may each view the concept of entertainment differently. There may be some who will walk into a Standout worship session and see it as entertainment because we have a band playing up front, video clips running, drama group performing, etc. Although we involve the participants of Standout in much of our programming, I believe that inviting the participation of professional or semi-professional figures is also imperative and does not signify entertainment. Just as in the Old Testament sanctuary and temple, there were musicians whose sole job it was to 'do' music day and night,<sup>15</sup> so it is

important that our events include the participation of those who have been called by God to minister through music or drama. The experience of joining in worship with musicians or our drama team is invaluable as it creates a depth of worship that cannot be accomplished in the same way through 'lets practice right before' worship. If God impressed on His people to appoint the Levites to focus on music and lead the nation in worship, then it is safe to say that professional leadership in music is not entertainment when its purpose is to uplift God with others.

## Future Vision

Our vision is to see Acts 2:42 implemented in the lives of the students. We want to see them acquire and demonstrate a thirst for learning from God, meeting together, discussing their faith, and seeking to walk with Christ. We would like to see long-term development and a strengthening of the youth's Adventist identity.

We would like to see public high school students and home-schooled students who are excited to be a part of the Standout community not just for one weekend but for the whole year. The indicators of its success will be the constant communication with students and Andrews staff through our website and other online or phone conversations. The Standout team also visits various churches and youth rallies throughout the year, which offer additional venues to stay in touch with youth.

As Standout keeps growing, it may be necessary to offer two Standout events per year. The total number of participants has increased at a rate of about 50 each year, with more than 200 in 2008. Preferably, Standout will not be larger than 300 participants because the event will lose its intimate feeling. The smaller size allows for greater fellowship and participation of students as well as the Andrews' staff-student engagement.

Ideally, we would like to transition the students who are involved in Standout and enter colleges and universities to a collegiate ministry program such as GODencounters. GODencounters is "a movement of young adults who are wholeheartedly seeking a 24/7 experience of GOD, recklessly living for His renown."<sup>16</sup> As a young adult ministry,

GODencounters would be an ideal transition for youth who have been involved in Standout as they keep pursuing a 24/7 experience with God.

## Results

1. *Spiritual* – During the last Standout, 150 students came to the front to recommit and give their lives to God. Many had made decisions for baptism as well. Every year students and chaperones leave messages of the transformation that God has worked in their youth. As one of the chaperones stated:

"This past weekend I really saw God working in our group. All of my kids come from broken homes. One of them has had 6 stepdads and has a family history of drugs and alcohol abuse. One was adopted and the adopted family kicked him out. He has been living on his own and going to school for about 5 months. Another one of our kid's dad is in a rock band and lives the bad band lifestyle, her teenage sister just had a baby and they hate each other. The last one said she doesn't believe in God and that our parents are "Jesus" in a way. This is why I feel like they need weekends like this to really find out that Jesus, no matter what, will always love you and find YOU worth any sacrifice even His own life."<sup>17</sup>

A few of the students in this chaperone's group commented as well. These are their impressions of Standout:

"The one thing that touched me the most was when the drama class did that presentation/play ...I don't know what it was but it touched me so much I actually teared up, NO JOKE!!! But keep that on the down low. I am most definitely looking forward to coming back next year."

"When they called people to the front on Saturday I got up but it wasn't real. But the last call they made and I went up that was real. I felt weird and like an outcast compared to everyone else that came in the beginning. But when the weekend ended I felt like I can actually change. It might be hard, but it will be worth it."<sup>18</sup>



One of the most amazing parts of the weekend is observing the ministry of the sponsors who work with these youth. They are committed and caring adults who would do anything for these young people. Their love and care is palpable. Watching these adults reassures me that God has His hand over His youth!

2. *Andrews Attendance* – It has not been our primary goal to make sure that students who attend Standout enroll at Andrews University. We want them to go wherever God leads them. But Andrews University has been blessed with a steady attendance of students who have participated in Standout. Unfortunately, it is difficult to measure how many students have chosen Andrews solely because of their Standout experience since some have completed an application or an interest card somewhere else. But there are many who have been entered into our database under the Standout code every year. Out of those who have been entered since 2006, we have about 30 Standout attendees who are currently attending Andrews University.

It does appear that the Standout event is leading students into a stronger relationship with God and to Andrews University. As one student commented: "I am so glad you planned this weekend. Everything was perfectly planned and it helped me A LOT! Everything from the worship sessions, to the breakout sessions, or just the family setting that it presented. I don't go to a SDA school so this weekend also helped me realize that I need to put myself in a college with other students who have the same beliefs as me."<sup>19</sup>

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Hurst, V. G. "Unity and Ministry Through the Massification of Adventism" in Dudley, Roger, and Allan Walshe, editors. *Ministering with Millennials*. Lincoln: AdventSource, 2009, 79-89.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup>Dudley, Roger L., and Bailey Gillespie. *Valuegenesis: Faith in the Balance*. Riverside, CA: La Sierra University Press, 1992.

<sup>4</sup>Acts 2:42, NIV.

<sup>5</sup>De Oliveira, Japhet. "Adventist Identity Crisis: In the Leaders or the Led?" in Dudley, Roger, and Allan Walshe, editors. *Ministering with Millennials*. Lincoln: AdventSource, 2009, 41-45.

<sup>6</sup>Dudley, Roger L., and Allan Walshe. (2009). "A Report on the 180° Symposium" in Dudley, Roger L. and Allan Walshe, editors. *Ministering with Millennials*. Lincoln: AdventSource, 2009, 1-10.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>8</sup>Clark, Chap. *Hurt: Inside the World of Today's Teenagers*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004, 188.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*, 189.

<sup>10</sup>Gillespie, V. Bailey, and Michael J. Donahue. *Valuegenesis: Ten Years Later. A Study of Two Generations*. Riverside, CA: Hancock Center Publications, 2004, 348-349.

<sup>11</sup>Pickell, Ron. "Proclamation vs. Protection: Reshaping the Vision of Adventist Youth Ministry" in Dudley, Roger, and Allan Walshe, editors. *Ministering with Millennials*. Lincoln: AdventSource, 2009, 141.

<sup>12</sup>Dudley, Roger L., and Bailey Gillespie. *Valuegenesis: Faith in the Balance*. Riverside, CA: La Sierra University Press, 1992.

<sup>13</sup>Blake, Chris. "Stop the Sad Exodus: Three Practical Solutions" in Dudley, Roger, and Allan Walshe, editors. *Ministering with Millennials*. Lincoln: AdventSource, 2009, 27-31.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*, 31.

<sup>15</sup>1 Chronicles 9:33.

<sup>16</sup>[www.godencounters.org](http://www.godencounters.org).

<sup>17</sup>K. Nelson, personal communication, April 20, 2009.

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup>A. Coleman, personal communication, April 20, 2009.





# ADOPTING YOUR LOCAL PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

by Kevin Becker

## Abstract

*God promised to give Joshua every place he set his foot. It is my belief that most Seventh-day Adventist churches have little or no impact on the community in which they are located. Depending on which statistic you look at, the median age for an Adventist is between 51 and 62. I believe one of our biggest hurdles, "the graying of Adventism," could become our greatest strength. I believe that if churches would adopt their local public elementary school they would not only increase their impact, but would establish a positive presence in the community that would transform their image from doomsday fatalists to world-changing optimists. I have placed my feet at my local public elementary school and claim those children and teachers for Christ.*

I long for the day when Adventist churches will adopt their local public school. While our church is far from perfect, we did adopt our local public elementary school and I am thankful. Here is my story.

## My Story

All I have ever known of public schools was that they were residences of evil. If you were a "good Adventist" you would sacrifice whatever was needed to place your children in an SDA school. Public school was evil.

I have had the privilege of attending SDA schools from kindergarten through my masters of divinity degree. I am grateful for the education that I received, but I have always had this fear of public schools. They are big! Many have enrollments in the thousands. The SDA elementary school I attended was the biggest one in the Atlanta area at the time and there were five of us that graduated from 8th grade.

After graduating from Andrews Theological Seminary, I taught at my alma-mater, Atlanta Adventist Academy. I loved my five years of teaching, coaching, and being a chaplain. However, when I took the call to pastor in the Collegedale Community Church, my life's purpose came into focus.

My senior pastor, Dr. Jerry Arnold, when casting the vision of his church plant, told me that CCC

started with the purpose of ministering to the community. I was expected to be involved in the community. This excited me. Outside of ingathering or colporteur and trying to get money from people, I had never been in a church that focused on the community. What did that mean? What did it look like? How would I participate in a meaningful way?

As I pondered what my ministry to the community would be, I began to inquire of God. This was new territory for me so I made it a matter of prayer. One day I took a prayer walk on the Greenway, a short nature walk from Collegedale City Hall to Southern Adventist University. I had just asked, "God open my eyes..." when right in front of me I saw our local public elementary school, Wolfvever Creek. This was the ground I was to claim in Jesus' name. God clearly spoke to me and asked me to invest in young people that attend Wolfvever Creek Elementary School.

When this became clear, I went to the front desk with a note telling them I was the new children's pastor at Collegedale Community Church and that we were a community-oriented church. I asked the best four-worded question available, "How can we help?" From that, I was invited to the kindergarten room to read some books and tell stories. After that, they invited me to tell stories for a few of the grades. Next, they invited me to tell stories to the whole school. One thing led to another and I made a shirt that said "The Story Guy" and started doing Hamilton County's Character Education program. I

now go to the school once a month and tell stories on honesty, fairness, courage, respect, caring, etc. I have been featured on the evening news, written about in local papers and have been invited to numerous schools in the greater Chattanooga area.

### What is Working

Out of that match made in Heaven, we have started an "Adopt-a-Teacher" program and have tutored students in school and at a low-income housing project. We have helped at parties, ice cream feeds and PTA programs. We even provided 80% of the volunteers (and most of the planning) for a huge carnival and gave the school the profits from the event. I have joined the Parent Teacher Association and worked with the executive committee on planning Family Fun Nights and talent shows. I was recently given a "Life Achievement Award" from the State of Tennessee, the highest award the PTA gives out. We brought in a traveling prayer room that we called a reflection room. In conjunction with the reflection room and our church, we raised \$10,000 for wells in Africa. I have met with students one-on-one and counseled them. We have given Christmas gifts to poor families. We have taught good study skills and challenged kids to walk, drink water, and get plenty of sleep in preparation for their annual state-administered academic assessment exams. We have planted flowers, raked leaves and washed windows at the school. I send out a monthly email to one hundred and fourteen families updating them on the stories and giving suggestions on how to become successful families. We are now in the process of challenging students to run a Junior Marathon. We provide mentors to train students every Tuesday night. The list goes on and on.

Think about it:

- Where does non-Adventist society come from? Public school.
- What is the heart of any community? Public school.
- What age group is most vulnerable, needs the most support, and is teachable? Elementary age students.
- When are most Christians first exposed to Christianity? In their elementary age years.

### Where We Could Be More Effective

While many great things have happened at our church, in the community, and at the school, we still have a long ways to go. I still feel like I don't know what I am doing. I long to be more effective and constantly look for new paths to make a difference.

I would love to see a more focused, intentional discipleship program for the public school children who attend my church. I feel we lack a church-based network supporting Adventist children who are in the public schools. This could be a gold mine of ministry opportunities. If we could build up these students so they influence their school instead of being negatively influenced, it could transform the way churches are organized.

Another area that my church could improve is the utilization of more volunteer support. My congregation is filled with busy professionals, many of whom work and raise small kids. It is hard for them to volunteer during the day at Wolfvever Creek School. Over the five years we have been working with Wolfvever many church members have helped. However, many current church members still aren't aware of our vision.

### Where to Begin

If you are interested in reaching out to your local school, here are a few things to consider.

- Go to your local school and ask the simple question, "How can we help?" This question demonstrates a servant's heart. God is big enough to set the agenda!
- Don't distribute religious literature. Serve. Follow the school's agenda. Look for ways to help. What are the needs?
- If there is a family in your church that sends their children to public school? If so, start there. They might have an "in" already. They might know teachers and/or neighbors. How do adults become friends? Many become acquainted through their children and their school activities, which is more natural than knocking on someone's door and asking to pray with them.

- Most teachers can't give enough one-on-one time to students and would love someone to sit with children and listen to them read. Informal tutoring is a positive way to start.

week they could listen to children read, grade papers, or help prepare materials. The smile of a grandmother can warm hearts and change a child's life forever.

## **Conclusion**

We have adopted Wolfever Creek because we are Christians, not because we are trying to make them Adventists. I feel that much of our denomination's evangelistic strategy has been information-based. It's like we follow a three-step formula of I have the truth, you need to know it, so here it is. In a postmodern society, this isn't effective. My ministry style is one that loves people and builds them up where they are. My goal is to establish life-long, authentic relationships and create community. And the ironic thing is, this has a tendency to draw people instead of repelling them.

We offer unconditional love, inspiration and practical help to become contributing members of society. The truth that people are looking for is not the correct interpretation of a theological Bible passage, but the authentic living out of one's life. The integrity of one's character, the improvement of one's community, the mentoring of a child speaks more to the truth of who God is than a glossy brochure covered with beads. From tutoring to storytelling we unconditionally love our neighbors!

Our church has made a positive impact on how people view Seventh-day Adventists in the "Adventist Ghetto" of Collegedale. I have seen a church get involved in the community. I have seen the community have positive feelings towards our church. It is very rewarding for me to walk into Wolfever and see the faces of both teachers and students light up, knowing I am here to serve them unconditionally and will help them have a better day! The growing perception of our church is that we are focused on the real issues of today instead of the uncertain issues of tomorrow.

The median age for an Adventist in North America is climbing. Many of our SDA churches are filled with older people. While this is a terrible problem and begs us to look at what kind of environments we are creating, it could serve us well. Many older folks have a gift when it comes to working with young people. Most have an hour a



# LET'S GO OUTSIDE: TRANSFORMING THE TRANSITIONS

by Kirk King

## Abstract

*The Seventh-day Adventist Church is serious about the spiritual nurture of younger generations. It spends millions of dollars and dedicates countless hours to preserve the faith of children and youth. However, perhaps the most glaring gap in the church's ministry for younger generations is the absence of ministry during significant times of transition. This is particularly true when those transitions take the young people outside the bubble of the Adventist world. Nowhere is this issue more critical than in the lives of Adventist college students who attend secular schools. The Church is also serious about evangelism. Curiously, the church is missing one of the greatest evangelistic opportunities by not capitalizing on the presence of thousands of Adventist students attending public institutions. It is time to redirect Adventist youth ministry from its goal of preservation to focus on proclamation. Nurture is not the exclusive right of students in Adventist schools or even of those involved in Pathfinders or Sabbath School. Adventist youth and young adult ministry must "go outside," disciple Adventist students who are already there, and reach the public college campus for Christ.*

The poem *Footprints in the Sand* by Mary Stevenson, penned in 1936, has been a comfort to many who have placed their trust in Jesus as their personal Savior. This message of God's faithfulness is, however, lost on those who do not believe in the Savior. The second set of footprints is irrelevant to anyone who has not experienced the tangible presence of Jesus. How can they know of his love unless someone transformed by God's love walks the beach of life with them?

Even young people who have been kept safely in the beach house can have a difficult time understanding the meaning of the footprints in the sand. If the Church is, as one student put it, "The only reminder left on earth that Christ was here,"<sup>1</sup> how will a student who has not yet internalized a personal savior view the absence of their church through significant portions of their journey? Where is God when two sets of prints become one? Where is the church during periods of trial and transition?

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has developed some amazing ministries for children, youth and young adults. From Pathfinders and Sabbath School to a comprehensive education system the Church presents an image of truly caring for the next generation. It is, however, during the

times of transition that ministry is often missing, especially when that transition takes a young person outside the protective bubble of institutional church life.

Nowhere is this more true or obvious than in education. Most young people who receive an education from any source outside the Adventist system of education find themselves on their own. Some are even criticized for choosing a "secular" path. Many look back to find only one set of prints in the sand and have no context to understand that God is still with them.

The overlooked reality is that these students offer the church a most incredible opportunity to reach the world. They interact with the thought leaders of tomorrow's world. They walk the campus with thousands of students searching for meaning in life that only Christ can provide. Though it will take a paradigm shift of epic proportions, the church's young people who are being educated outside the Adventist bubble can become effective disciples for the Gospel.

The church will have to go with them onto the public campus, however. These students need church leaders who are willing to help them find



transformation in the grace of Christ. They need spiritual mentors to disciple them so that they can learn to walk with others and introduce them to Jesus. The church will need to go with them to encourage and empower.

Students who have Christ-centered spiritual support during significant times of transition, like college, find that their lives are transformed by his love for them and they are in turn empowered to reach out to others with that love. The Church—and that includes every level of denominational governance, every local congregation and every member who occupies a pew, can make a difference in the life of a student and turn the transitions in life into transformations in life. However, if the Church is to accomplish this vital task, it will be necessary to go outside the safety of the church halls and walk with the students into the world and onto the secular campuses. And why not go outside? Jesus did in the past and Jesus does in the present. Will we join Him?

The writer of Hebrews ends his epistle with some implications for believers in Christ and his sacrifice. He notes that just as the old sacrifices were offered outside the city gates Jesus was crucified “outside the city gates.” He then puts forth the appeal, “So, let’s go outside, where Jesus is, where the action is—not trying to be privileged insiders, but taking our share in the abuse of Jesus. This ‘insider world’ is not our home.”<sup>2</sup> Throughout the Bible the mandate is clear: God’s grace is not for a privileged few to hoard, isolated from the world. Jesus’ sacrifice was for all. The role of every one who walks with their Savior is to go outside and spread the good news.<sup>3</sup>

There are an estimated 50,000-60,000 students with an Adventist background on public campuses in North America any given year.<sup>4</sup> These students need to know their church cares. They need encouragement, support and training to reach out to their campus for Christ. There are nearly 19,000,000 college students in North America this year.<sup>5</sup> That is nearly the same as the combined population of the five largest North American cities, New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Houston and Toronto. What resources would the church invest in any one of those cities if they were without an Adventist presence? What will the church invest in the 60,000 to reach the 19,000,000?

## **Transitions**

Transitions can be referred to as a time “in between.”<sup>6</sup> “It is the process of letting go of the way things used to be and then taking hold of the way they subsequently become.”<sup>7</sup> One of the most significant and difficult transitions is the time between adolescence and adulthood. Many ancient and primitive cultures created “rites of passage” to mark this transition and teach valuable lessons necessary for the mature responsibilities in the tribe. The lessons often focused on learning skills that could be used to promote the well being of the family or protect the community. These rituals honored the end of one stage of life and intentionally reset the direction to the new. Though often marked at the beginning or end with specific celebrations, these transitions were not seen as events but as a process. In many cultures those engaged in the process would spend several months or even years in a wilderness environment in preparation for their future lives. Those in charge provided this time to help individuals set aside their old identities and find new ones.<sup>8</sup>

While the modern western world has few rites that are so intentional, it is still possible to identify events that mark the end of one stage of life and the beginning of a new. Learning to drive a car or opening a first checking or credit card account stand out as events common to the process of becoming independent. Education provides contemporary culture with its most profound transitions—starting school and certainly graduations.

But, like many of the ancient rites of passage, the true transition is not an event but a process. The years in college are probably the closest Western Culture will ever get to the ancient process of helping youth move into the adult world. Training for a profession is only one aspect of the journey. The acquisition of knowledge is one small part of this transition. The development of life skills, a sense of purpose, a work ethic and a personal world-view are also important elements.

Most schools in the Western World today lack the ability to help students make the necessary transition into maturity because they have become “isolated entities” cut off from the home, the church and the community. “Institutions were created to protect the young . . . Protection has come to mean

isolation.”<sup>9</sup> This analysis came from the National Commission on Youth in 1980. The commission called for changes in the public education system that would partner with the broader community to design new environments for youth that would help as they made the transition to mature, productive adults.<sup>10</sup> There is not a good deal of evidence that schools took this report seriously. Perhaps what is needed is for community organizations, like the church, to embed themselves into the fabric of campus culture, set themselves up as partners and assist in the task at hand. Christian-based campus ministries do that on campuses around the world.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has been slow in discovering the potential this type of ministry holds. Perhaps this is due primarily to the fear of losing support for the church-based education system. Yet with at least 70% of Seventh-day Adventist college students attending non-church sponsored schools, it would seem that the need and the opportunity to guide students through one of life’s key transitions would overcome all other fears. Walking with students during the “in-between time” of college is one the greatest ways to ensure that they walk with the church after college and ultimately into the Kingdom! We need Adventist-based transition ministries today!

## **Transformation**

One of the primary tasks in major life transitions is to discover identity. Who am I within my community? What is my role? Where do I fit in the world? How can I survive? What do I have to contribute? Answers to those questions have become increasingly difficult in a culture that glorifies popularity at any cost and rewards consumerism. Not surprisingly, professions that will bring fame or wealth attract many young people. Few, though, are ready to adopt the Biblical lifestyle that “strength is for service not status.”<sup>11</sup> While most people would agree with the biblical lifestyle in principle, few are ready to digest its implications. Making the transition from self-centered consumer to selfless servant requires total transformation of thoughts and attitudes.

The Apostle Paul put this challenge to the Romans and to all followers of Christ when he wrote, “Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of

your mind.”<sup>12</sup> People often use this text to encourage a host of external behaviors. While obedience to the law of God and the principles of health can arguably be promoted here, the real issue at hand is much larger. This is Paul’s transition in Romans, the point where he moves the argument from the incredible grace of God in Christ to the personal response of anyone who grasps the message of the Messiah. “In view of God’s mercy,”<sup>13</sup> followers of the Savior are to offer themselves fully to him. This is about being changed from the inside out. It is only then that our worship, our obedience, can be used by the Spirit of God to fill the world with the light of his love.

One of the biggest issues created by isolating youth from the world at large is that they often learn an unintended lesson. They learn to conform to the community they are a part of instead of being transformed by the life of the Master. Conformity is taught when correct behavior is given greater emphasis than God’s grace. Conformity happens when students are insulated from the reality of the world. Since the Gospel was planted in the soil of a sinful planet, it thrives in the context of the conflict between good and evil. Christians were never called to ignore sin or quarantine its members from the world. Followers of Christ are called to engage the world and reclaim sinners. When lives permeated with God’s grace are injected into a sinful world, faith will flourish and people will be transformed.

We could then pose the question, “When is it safe to send young disciples into the world?” Certainly those with a mature faith are better suited to reach sinners while avoiding sin’s grip themselves? Therefore, young people should be sheltered and taught until they are ready to go outside. Right? The trouble with that point of view is that some of the most effective witnesses are the newly converted. The excitement and passion of realizing that, “I was blind, but now I see,”<sup>14</sup> is still fresh and “the most persuasive and effective argument for the validity of Jesus’ claims is the testimony of a changed life.”<sup>15</sup> That testimony is best kept fresh and alive by sharing it with others who also long to be made whole.

While the transition from child to adult is a process, the transformation necessary to reach maturity is best accomplished by engaging the world in which we will live, not by retreating from it. This is, of course, not a “sink or swim” proposition.

This process is more like on-the-job training. Effective disciples learn from their Master as they bear witness to others of his love.

The Gospel of Matthew proclaims throughout its pages that the long awaited Kingdom of Heaven had come in the person of Jesus. Matthew also makes it clear that this Kingdom was to continue to live in the people who, transformed by its power, dared to be disciples. The final verses of the book present the challenge and the promise of support. Jesus said, "Go and make disciples"<sup>16</sup> . . . "I'll be with you as you do this, day after day after day."<sup>17</sup> Thousands of college students, already touched by the healing hand of their Savior are going each year into the world of the public college campus. Jesus has promised he would be with them. What about their church? Let's go outside where the students are, where Jesus is.

Following are seven concrete and specific recommendations for church leadership to turn the transitional experience of college into a time of transformation for students. The challenge for the Seventh-day Adventist Church is to create an intentional process where discipleship becomes the natural goal of all programming. What if having a spiritual mentor became as natural a part of the process of growing up for Seventh-day Adventists as getting a drivers license? What if discipleship became the predominant model for youth ministry instead of entertainment, indoctrination or neglect? What if spiritual transformation became the primary objective of the transitional years of college?

## **Recommendations**

The first recommendation is to **prepare students to live outside the bubble**. Church leadership must assume that at some point every student will live in an environment that does not shield them from temptation or cater to their spiritual appetites. Ultimately every aspect of the church's ministry for its young should be refocused on this objective. This will include Sabbath School, Pathfinders, the formal education system and every retreat and program organized by the local church, the conference or any other level of leadership. Every person charged with the spiritual development of youth must learn to ask, "How will this ministry contribute to helping these young people become the 'salt and light'<sup>18</sup> Jesus calls his disciples to be?"

The most important aspect of this preparation is the second recommendation and by far the most important, **introduce students to Jesus** as One who longs for their friendship. Since Jesus is indeed the center of all true faith and doctrine, this should be as natural as breathing. However, the history of humanity and of the church through the ages reveals that sinful humanity always finds a way to exalt itself and its institutions. Discipleship begins and ends with Jesus. He is the only true Master. Doctrine is not sovereign. The Church is not the head. Only Jesus can transform the soul. The body is effective only as each member exalts Christ, who is the head.<sup>19</sup> The message of the Church must always be that "The grace of Christ is the only good ground for life."<sup>20</sup>

The third recommendation is for the Church to **invest in the lives of students and ministries** dedicated to the process of transformation. This includes a commitment of the Church's financial resources as well as the time and energy of the members. It will not be sufficient to invest in existing church sponsored institutions and expect that they are enough to accomplish the task. The Church must go where students are and invest in new initiatives.

One of the first investments should be in the development and support of ministries on public college campuses. It is estimated that there are at least 100 active Adventist-based student groups on campuses throughout North America. Each year these ministries spawn new chapters on additional campuses. If these groups of students are going to become communities that share Christ on campus and not merely enclaves for Adventist students to retreat, it will be necessary to provide support and training. It will also require a continual stream of relevant resources.<sup>21</sup> All of this will take financial support and personal effort.

Another important investment is in a system that networks students with ministries and with supportive churches. Some efforts have already been launched with this goal in mind. The Churches of Refuge<sup>22</sup> initiative sponsored by the Center for Youth Evangelism<sup>23</sup> and the Adventist Youth Transition Network being developed by the Center for College Faith<sup>24</sup> are two examples. Cooperation and coordination will be vital to make these efforts effective. Ultimately the goal of these networking

ministries is to ensure that as young people transition, they connect with people and communities who can continue to nurture the process of spiritual development. We can anticipate these points of transition when students move into or out of college or simply move from one location to another.

The fourth recommendation is to **develop a system of spiritual mentors designed to disciple students**. Draw these adult mentors from the ranks of dedicated Pathfinder counselors, Sabbath School leaders and professional teachers. They might be retired members or young professionals seeking a way to make a meaningful contribution. They will most importantly be local church members who are committed to a personal growing relationship with Jesus and who have a passion to dedicate time to the spiritual development of young disciples.

The role of denominational leaders in this will be to encourage, train and support ministries that make discipleship a priority. Big events, training programs and even resources can create interest and assist in the process, but they will not be enough to grow disciples. The process of disciple-making requires a long-term commitment to a personal relationship. Church leadership can change the current model that promotes, graduates and then neglects youth and young adults. It can begin to reset that paradigm to develop new models designed to intentionally maintain meaningful connections with every young person, especially through crucial times of transition like college. Church leadership at all levels can also begin to recruit and train committed adults to serve as spiritual mentors.

The final three recommendations relate to the methods and goals of discipleship. The fifth recommendation is to **engage students in discussion and encourage a personal faith**. College is a time to develop personal world-views, beliefs and practices. It is vital that Christian men and women devoted to disciple-making possess two important qualities. First, they must have a personal, growing relationship with Jesus that is evident in the way they live in the world. Second, they must be willing to be teachers who encourage personal exploration and creativity. Instead of being told what to think and how to act, youth and young adults need to have the freedom to think for themselves,

personally explore the reasons for faith in God and develop conclusions that they own. Dictating every detail of faith usually proves to be counter-productive. Every person must come to understand the Gospel personally and apply it in the context of one's culture.

Encouraging personal discovery is not the same as promoting the idea of living without absolutes. Absolute relativity is just as dangerous as neurotic religion. That is why the sixth recommendation is that any one engaged in disciple-making should **challenge students to model their lives after Jesus**. That still means honoring the personal freedom of choice afforded by the Creator and affirmed by the Savior. But all spiritual leaders are called upon to model and advocate a lifestyle representative of Christ, who called his followers to "love the Lord with all your heart, with all your soul and all your mind . . . and love your neighbor as yourself."<sup>25</sup> Eugene Peterson refers to discipleship as "A long obedience in the same direction."<sup>26</sup> That direction is always towards the personal God, who is both Creator and Redeemer. It is important for those with a mature faith to engage young people in relationships of mutual and voluntary accountability as they travel the journey of faith together.

The seventh and final recommendation is to **send students outside to engage their world for Jesus**. Not only is this command of Jesus to all disciples it is also the most effective way to preserve faith and prepare students for the Kingdom.

When faith is challenged, it is strengthened. "The person who waters will be watered."<sup>27</sup> Interacting only with people of like beliefs will not bring about transformation. In fact, it can be dangerous. And the results look a lot like conformity. This is one of the reasons that the Church needs to honor the decision of students who choose to receive degrees from secular institutions. Going outside the denomination for college may even be the best way keep them healthy inside the denomination. At the same time, the Church must be willing to walk with students as they sort out their faith in an environment often hostile to belief in Christ. It also means being ready and willing to support the efforts of students to lead others to Christ by providing discipleship training and culturally relevant evangelistic tools. "So, let's go outside. Where Jesus is. Where the action is."<sup>28</sup>



## Conclusion

Ministry on the public college campus might be the greatest opportunity for evangelism in North America in the twenty-first century. It might also be one of the best methods to affect the retention of young adults. It holds great potential for turning transition into transformation. This could be the best investment the church will ever make in terms of finances or evangelism. It will look different than traditional evangelism. It will need to be viewed as a process and not an event; as a long term investment rather than a short term kick back. The returns will ultimately be realized both in the church coffers and, most importantly, in the hearts of those who come to understand what it means to walk along the beach of life with the Life Giver. Campus ministry is not about setting up monuments on campus so that others can see that Adventists were there; it is about leaving footprints in the campus sand that many students might come to know that Jesus walks with them.

Let's go outside!

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup>Gillespie, V. Bailey, and Michael J. Donahue, *Valuegenesis: Ten Years Later, A Study of Two Generations*. Riverside, CA: Hancock Center Publications, 2004, 146. The book was quoting Wendy Murray Zoba, *Generation 2K: What Parents and Others Need to Know About the Millennials*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999, 78.
- <sup>2</sup>Hebrews 13:13, *The Message*.
- <sup>3</sup>See Genesis 12:1-3; Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8 and Revelation 7:9.
- <sup>4</sup>Sahlin, Monte. *Trends, Attitudes, and Opinions: The Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America*. Center for Creative Ministry and the North American Division of the General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, 1998. This information is extrapolated by taking the results of a 1997 survey found on page 122 of that report, which indicates that two-thirds of Seventh-day Adventist college students attend a college or university not affiliated with the Adventist church, and then doubling the number of students attending Seventh-day Adventist Colleges, which is around 25,000. Other unofficial studies done in local conferences indicate that the percentage may be as high as 80 percent. Therefore the estimate of 50,000 to 60,000.
- <sup>5</sup>U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. *Digest of Education Statistics, 2008*. <http://nces.ed.gov/fastFacts/display.asp?id=98>, Chapter 3. The total Fall enrollment given for 2007 is 18,248,000. Canadian information is taken from Statistics Canada. <http://www40.statcan.gc.ca/101/cst01/educ54a-eng.htm>. According to this source Canada had just over 1 million students enrolled for the 2007-2008 school year.
- <sup>6</sup>Peterson, Eugene H. *A Long Obedience in the Same Direction*, 2nd Edition. Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2000, 20.
- <sup>7</sup>Bridges, William. *The Way of Transition: Embracing Life's Most difficult Moments*. Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 2001, 2.
- <sup>8</sup>Bridges. 7-8.
- <sup>9</sup>Brown, Frank B., Director: National Commission on Youth. *The Transition of Youth to Adulthood: A Bridge Too Long*. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1980, 13,14.
- <sup>10</sup>Brown, 1-6, *Recommendations*.
- <sup>11</sup>Romans 15:1, *The Message*.
- <sup>12</sup>Romans 12:2, *New International Version*.
- <sup>13</sup>Romans 12:1, *New International Version*.
- <sup>14</sup>John 9:25, *New International Version*.
- <sup>15</sup>Cole, Neil. *Cultivating a Life for God*. Carol Stream, IL: Church Smart Resources, 1999, 17.
- <sup>16</sup>Matthew 28: 19, *New International Version*.
- <sup>17</sup>Matthew 28:20, *The Message*.
- <sup>18</sup>Matthew 6:13-16, *New International Version*.
- <sup>19</sup>Ephesians 4:14-16
- <sup>20</sup>Hebrew 13:9, *The Message*.
- <sup>21</sup>*The Word on Campus: A Guide to Public College Ministry* by Kirk King and Ron Pickell along with videos and workbooks were published between 2008 and 2009. These materials were supported by Vervant, The Church Resource Center of the North American Division. CAMPUS, a public campus ministry sponsored by the



Michigan Conference, has also developed materials for student leadership as well as doctrinal and evangelistic training.

<sup>22</sup>[www.churchofrefuge.org](http://www.churchofrefuge.org)

<sup>23</sup>[www.adventistyouth.org](http://www.adventistyouth.org)

<sup>24</sup>[www.centerforcollegefaith.org](http://www.centerforcollegefaith.org)

<sup>25</sup>Matthew 22:37-39, *New International Version*.

<sup>26</sup>Peterson, 17.

<sup>27</sup>Proverbs 11:25

<sup>28</sup>Hebrews 13:13, *The Message*.



# THE LOCAL CHURCH AND PUBLIC EDUCATION: STUDENT SPIRITUAL CARE PRE- AND POST-GRADUATION

by Ronald H. Whitehead

## Abstract

*Families continue to provide the foundation for the spiritual development of young people. Today adult Adventists in North America are part of the church primarily because of their Adventist roots and relationships. About half grew up as Adventists, and almost an additional third joined because of personal relationships. Both of these often get cast aside when young adults move away to college or graduate school. It's time to be proactive to identify local churches can will provide a welcoming home atmosphere for young adults in transition. A new system called "Churches of Refuge" (COR) identifies such churches and provides certification, training and networking to foster the spiritual health of young adults. Without healthy, student sensitive Adventist congregations, North American church growth for the Adventist Church will continue to decline.*

## Adventist School Attendance

Numbers and "statistics" regarding Adventist school attendance often get cast about in casual conversation without solid research. Often people rely on faulty memory or hearsay as they pontificate about how many students attend (or don't attend) Adventist schools. Over the years 2007-2008, the NAD Secretariat sponsored a survey conducted by the Center for Creative Ministry. The results, a "Demographic Survey of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America," provide data that directly affects the spiritual care and the growth of students in the SDA Church in North America.

The of the questions asked directly about SDA school attendance: "Did you ever attend and Adventist school?" Their responses yielded 52% yes, and 48% no. Slightly over half of those surveyed had attended SDA schools. Further information indicated how many attended the various levels of SDA education.

- A. 28% Attended Adventist education Elementary, Secondary, and College
- B. 7% Only Elementary

- C. 13% Only Secondary
- D. 34% Only College
- E. 11% Elementary and Secondary
- F. 2% Elementary and College
- G. 3% Secondary and College

This research shouts to the local church pastor to better understand that spiritual care and faith development of students in public education has become as important as all other forms of church growth methods. No longer can Adventist education be considered the primary way that the local church transfers spiritual growth and faith maturity to its youth.

## Why People Become Adventists

One of the most revealing, and for some, the most shocking pieces of information that came out of that same 2007-2008 survey dealt with responses to the basic question about how people became Seventh-day Adventists. The straight-forward question was, "How did you become and Adventist?"

- A. 51% Grew up in an Adventist family and started going to church as a child.
- B. 31% Joined the church through a personal relationship. About twice that many say relationships are what brought them to the church at the start. This is particularly true for young adults, African-Americans, and Hispanics.
- C. 10% Joined the Church through public evangelism. Most of these are over the age of 62.
- D. 5% Joined the Church through personal bible studies. Hispanics are more likely to give this response than other ethnic groups.
- E. 3% A variety of other methods, none large enough to warrant a classification of its own.

### **A Business Parable**

Consider a parable in which the church is a public business and you are the new owner of the family business. Let's say you have been spending millions of dollars every year on business growth methods that have worked for your parents and grandparents, but you notice that your business is not growing like it did in the past. So, as the new owner, you decide to research reasons why people became your customers.

To your surprise you found out that while old business marketing methods had some merit, 82% of your customer growth came from simply two methods.

- A. Brand loyalty because of the influence of the family.
- B. Brand growth because one satisfied customer invited a new customer to "buy" your product.

Let's apply this parable to the Church. If your "family business" was the Church, and you were the senior pastor trying to grow your church, where would you focus your time and resources? Would you stay with what your parents used or would you emphasize the two methods that worked for more than 80 percent of your members. Would you give priority to the influence of the home and friendship evangelism? Of course!

It doesn't take much imagination to make the link to students in public and private education. What if they stop "buying" their parents' faith traditions? What if they stop inviting their friends to church? What will soon happen to any local church or denomination where there is not "brand loyalty?"

### **2010 and Beyond**

It must be understood that local churches in 2010 must find ways to minister to the post-modern student and 20-something if they seek long term church growth. Congregations must re-focus their mission and evangelism plans to be more intentional and aggressive to hold on to their students and post-college young adults. The evil one has never attacked any generation with so many compromising and sinful distractions. The battle is on, but many local churches do not "get it" yet.

Typically a public school student away from home has little or no local church support. These students must become a part of the master evangelism plan of every local church. For too long a student's salvation has been understood to be the responsibility of the home. Without question, the home is the most important influence over a student's salvation, But the time has come for the local church to be much more intentional and aggressive to encourage both students' salvation and denominational loyalty. Besides, it often takes a new environment, away from home, for a young person to differentiate their spirituality from that of their parents or the church of their childhood. A move away to college presents an ideal situation for a young adult to personalize their spirituality and their church loyalty.

### **What Do Young Adults Think About the Church?**

Less than half of all young adults ages 18-22 view their church positively, according to a Spring 2007 Life Way Research document, titled "Views of their Church Between Ages 18-22." If this same survey was offered to Adventist youth in public education away from home, what do you think they would say? Do you think they would feel connected to the local church back home? I would hope so; but I think not.

## What if We Dream a Little?

- A. What if every Adventist Church located within five miles of a public university had a ministry focused and staffed for students and young adult graduates?
- B. What if the NAD provided special evangelism funding to churches located near public school universities?
- C. What if all graduates from public or private universities were given a web site to help them find churches all over the world that have made plans to welcome them unconditionally?

As for now, letters A and B are dreams for the future; but letter C is being piloted right now! Many senior pastors and college/university leaders are working together so students who move from home to attend college or graduate school can know about churches that are young-adult friendly in their new locations. The term given for such churches is "Churches of Refuge" (COR).

Parents, educators, administrators, pastors, and congregations notify students moving to large or small cities about a COR congregation in their new environment—a congregation to nurture their walk with God. COR congregations belong to an association of churches that maintain young adult ministry quality control by seeking certification from the AU Seminary Center for Youth Evangelism.

Each COR congregation offers the Center for Youth Evangelism COR evaluation team written documentation to validate their measurable compliance.

At this time there are nine COR values that must be documented by a local church seeking certification. The nine COR values that span four categories are:

### Spiritual Growth

1. **Sabbath** – CORs are committed to providing a meaningful Sabbath experience.
2. **Discipleship** – CORs are committed to following Jesus Christ in all areas of life.

### Relationships

3. **Acceptance** – CORs are committed to accepting people just as Jesus did.
4. **Community** – CORs are committed to building a caring and welcoming community.
5. **Support** – CORs are committed to supporting youth and young adults with their life challenges.

### Community Impact

6. **Service** – CORs are committed to demonstrating God's love through acts of service.

### Empowerment

7. **Leadership** – CORs are committed to senior youth and young adult leadership.
8. **Budget** – CORs are committed to investing money in senior youth and young adult ministry.
9. **Change** – CORs are committed to change that leads to improved ministry for young people.

### Conclusion

Churches of Refuge (COR) is one way local congregations can take steps right now to band together with other congregations to offer a rich spiritual environment to support the spiritual, social, and physical needs of young adults.

For more information about COR go to [www.AdventistYouth.org](http://www.AdventistYouth.org) or [www.ChurchofRefuge.org](http://www.ChurchofRefuge.org) or call (269) 471-8380 or 1-800-YOUTH-2U.





# FACEBOOK FAITH: SOCIAL NETWORKING IN A FAITH BASED COMMUNITY

by Kirsten Oster Lundqvist

## Abstract

*Social networking provides a high impact and efficient ministry to the moveable generation. Through social networks such as Facebook, ministry from a pastoral perspective can become more authentic and meaningful. A young person's digital identity often reflects one's faith due to increased openness. A minister can engage in a non-hierarchical manner. Prayer and bible study as well as pastoral care through social networking occur as relationships deepen via social networking and making people real. Spiritual and religious views are freely shared, creating sacred spaces in the midst of life practicing a holistic faith identity in a secular community. Contacts can be maintained with those who move from a local church to a new environment such as college or entering the work force away from one's childhood roots. The asynchronous nature of communication within social networking and the practice of engaging with many individuals simultaneously eases the minister in her work. Therefore social networking not only increases the quality of the work, but also empowers the minister to be more efficient.*

## Introduction

Gone are the days of the church parish in which everyone lived within walking distance to the church. Today a church parish is structured on relational experiences, not geography.

Even at the Newbold Church on the campus of the SDA college in Great Britain, the majority of church attendees live off campus and commute more than 30 minutes to attend church. The question arises, "Where is your home church?"

When those who regularly attend the Newbold Church choose to move geographically, they remain part of the Newbold Church community and still see this as their church, despite being geographically closer to other Adventist churches. Their attendance gets limited to holidays and other occasional visits rather than weekly attendance at worship services. Only a few in this group of young adults will attend an Adventist church in the new community where they now reside. Gone is the seemingly global appeal of the Adventist church to this emerging generation as their commitment to their own "local home church" isn't dictated by geography.

As young adults have embraced internet Social Networks (SN) for community, how will a church respond? A ministry of presence through SN emerges as a core form of ministry—keeping them present in the life of the church, and keeping their spirituality alive.

The duty of pastoral care for young adults tends to continue to be expected from the "home church." Young adults often find integration in other Adventist churches challenging. Complications and challenges increase when young adults leave home for college because the vast majority of Adventist college students in Europe attend universities that are not faith-based.

Ministry is grounded in relationships—between individuals and God, and between individuals and the church fellowship and the surrounding community. SN sites provide a strong platform to be part the lives of other people. And this can be done without being bounded by geography.

## Presence Ministry

I became aware of the scope and possibilities of SN in ministry as I observed my husband at work.

He is a computer scientist researcher in the area of e-learning, competencies and SN. This led me to integrate SN such as Facebook<sup>1</sup> into my ministry.

Quickly I discovered that this was a tool that would enable ministry to a much wider range of individuals, especially among young adults and teens—the moveable generation. SN became an integral part of my ministry to youth and young adults. It gave me an inroad to being present and relational with them in their online lives. As living life online increases, it is essential for ministry to be present where people are. With church affiliation tied to one's early or established congregation, a ministry of presence through SN might be the only method to maintain ministry with those who move. This has major implications for young adults who leave their home town and church for college.

### **Digital Faith Identity**

Online living is as real as “normal living” to many people, and it is here that such people build and strengthen relationships. Research suggests a practice among youth and young adults in which they exhibit an openness to share and expose private issues online, sometimes naively.<sup>2</sup>

The digital identity of youth and young adults reflect their faith and religious beliefs. Previous generations were not seen as being free with personal and private information. Now Facebook profiles show and share an individual's political and faith orientations. As a result, SN normalizes spiritual and religious views and enables sharing these alongside political and activist opinions. Youth and young adults seem even freer to practice their holistic identity in a secular community than was previously seen. They share spiritual and religious views and journeys. As a result, they create sacred spaces in the midst of life. SN encourages authentic and transparent lives, which enables relational ministry to move in a more appropriate and relevant manner. Relationships built purely in church related programs often struggle with authenticity and relevancy to the lives that youth and young adults live outside of a church program.

### **Deeper Connections**

Dialogues and chats on SN strengthen the face-to-face encounters people have with each other. What often fails to be captured in a brief, impromptu

contact during a church program can go deeper more quickly based on previous SN interactions. Issues and questions that build a foundation for heavier topics have already been covered, and done so openly through the SN. The connection between a minister and a church member deepens as it becomes more real. You can know through SN statuses and updates what is happening in the other person's life.

Face-to-face contact with those already connected through SN allows greater transparency, authenticity, and depth. A minister can target needs that previously would have been kept at arms' length by youth and young adults. She is now able to mingle in the realities of where they are in their lives. Such depth strengthens relational ministry.

Consider the time that would be spent travelling in person from one SN contact to another. A knock on the door might not be as welcomed as a SN contact. A minister could easily engage in more prayers and Scripture studies with online contacts than are possible in person. Availability becomes less of an issue, which certainly works out better across time zones and schedules that don't match. A prayer group no longer needs to be limited to those who can catch a ride to the church regardless of the weather or their distance from the physical church. Now a prayer group can span continents. When done well, a minister through SN can foster a community of prayer practices that makes prayer applicable where individuals are at any given time.

### **Connected Ministry**

Besides providing a strong platform for multiple information flow, SN is attractive in a postmodern society. Invitations to a variety of onsite contacts, events, and causes seem commonplace and non-threatening. This also makes church events more transparent and available to people who do not attend church. It invites spiritual friendships and relationships.

Individuals who might not be regular in church attendance are more apt to consider an SN invitation to an event less intrusive than a phone call or face-to-face invitation to the same event. SN is able to bridge personal spaces for event invitations and yet remain safe. For those outside of the geographical community, the online community/parish becomes

an important place for the flow of information. It also allows connectivity and communication regarding who is (and is not) attending—something that is often quite important for young people when they consider whether or not to attend an event.

SN strengthen relationships in a non hierarchical manner and invite the minister into lives where there previously would have been barriers. SN provide a platform where it is perceived to be safer to exchange and explore ideas, experiences and feelings than sharing them face-to-face with the minister. Communicating through chats and messaging appears to offer a level of confidentiality that a church foyer does not provide on a Sabbath morning.

Because of communication interaction on SN, continuing the conversation in person can be a natural and non-intrusive development. This form of “SN visitation” is effective among the youth and young adults who might feel overwhelmed with a house visit, which often is not the appropriate form of visitation for them in the first place.

As lives are lived online, digital visitation becomes a natural outreach and point of contact. One can be present in their online lives and can reach individuals in various levels of depth. Some discussions remain superficial, while others move to more depth with dialogues about spiritual and religious matters. Such conversations youth and young adults might hesitate to engage in with a minister, unless that minister has been present in their online life. Ministry threads of communications on SN can take a relationship into a deeper level of life-sharing and God-sharing, in a language and format that is at the core of postmodern living.

## Effective Connections

The asynchronous nature of communication within social networking eases the minister in her work. The minister is able to engage with many individuals at the same time. In the past, a minister could visit one person at a time. Now she can visit five or six individuals online, either as a group or individually. Travel time between locations, being dressed appropriately for any given setting, and even odd hours make asynchronous communication more of a match with regular life. And the thread of communication continues across

time and despite time zones. Hence the church parish becomes a worldwide parish grounded in a local church community. This makes authentic life-sharing possible in communities that might have not existed when limited by geography. It strengthens bonds between church attendees in a ministry not driven by attending church programs. Traditional methods of ministry have taken on new formats, such as participating in study groups across university campuses or across continents.

## Conclusion

SN provides an emerging ministry form that is relevant to postmodern youth and young adults. It offers the minister a deeper level of connectivity to engage in life, sharing in a relevant format. It strengthens relational communications between a minister and individuals who might not seek pastoral care. It maintains contact with church members who have moved away and have not connected to church in their geographical proximity. It deepens face-to-face contacts by having shared with some depth online already, which paves the way for greater openness in person. Relational interactions available through SN make it possible to not only reach the campus, but reach the world.<sup>3</sup>

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup><http://www.facebook.com>

<sup>2</sup>*This Is Me* (Odinlab, University of Reading) and eLearning Communities and spaces (Parslow, Lundqvist and Evans).

<sup>3</sup>The author would like to acknowledge the work of Odinlab at the University of Reading. The work of the researchers shaped the philosophy behind the work described in this paper.



# THE OBAMA FACTOR

by Timothy P. Nixon

## Abstract

*The candidacy of Barack Obama and historic presidential election revealed some important lessons to us about our country and its future. One of the most interesting elements of his election was the way in which this campaign was able to engage youth and young adults. In the general election Obama won 66% of 18-29 year old voters. Much of his organization and support for youth was done by collegians on college and university campuses around the country. At a time when the Christian church is hemorrhaging 70% of young adults ages 18-22 Obama's ability to galvanize and win the youth vote could be instructive to churches. How was his campaign so successful in winning the youth vote and what lessons can we learn as we seek to engage, preserve and win young adults on public college and university campuses? This paper looks at seven strategies the Obama Campaign used to effectively reach and win the support of collegians and suggests five strategies that we can use as a church in public campus ministries.*

## Introduction

The candidacy and historic election of Barack Obama to the presidency of the United States in 2008 has raised several issues for America. Many have suggested that his election signals a transition in America around the issue of race. For some it signals that we are now living in a post-racial era. The old biases and divisions of our past have been swept aside by his election and reveal that we have finally climbed the steep mountain of racism and bigotry. But is this assertion true? Are we living in a post-racial America?

The Southern Poverty Law Center's annual report titled, "The Year of Hate," found the number of hate groups are growing and blame their ire on the election of Barack Obama and the economy. Don Black, former Ku Klux Klan Grand Wizard claims the number of registered readers on his white nationalist website has surged to unprecedented levels in recent months. On the day of Obama's election more than 2,000 people joined his website.<sup>1</sup>

While Don Black and individuals of his ilk do not represent the vast majority of Americans, it does remind us that while Barack Obama's election does represent a change, it certainly does not signal that America is post-racial. We still struggle with the vestiges of old racial tensions. However, there is something we as Christians can learn from this historic election. And it was best evidenced when the nation was introduced to Barack Obama in 2004.

It was during the Democratic National Convention of 2004 that a relatively unknown named Barack Obama, democratic candidate for the U.S. Senate of Illinois, was given the plumb assignment as keynote speaker for the convention. What catapulted him into national prominence was his call to set aside our differences, transcend the "red state" and "blue state" divisions that separated us and become the "United States of America." Obama had found a theme that resonated in the deep recesses of the American Spirit; the desire to become "One" America; a truly "United" States of America. This theme brought Obama national attention instantly. His message of a truly united America became a rallying cry for his presidential candidacy. And it was this theme that especially attracted collegians to his cause.

When President Obama's candidacy was in the exploratory stage, one of the strongest groups pulling for him to run was young people. Ben Waxman, a young adult 20-something wrote, "I've been amazed at the number of students who ask me about Obama and can't wait for his campaign."<sup>2</sup> Waxman states further, "...he also excites kids who have never voted in their lives."<sup>3</sup> And lest someone thinks the Obama support was coming from non-white youth Waxman says, "Most of my fellow students are white and grew up in rural areas. Yet many of these students are eager to vote for a black guy from Chicago with a self-described funny name."<sup>4</sup>



Once his candidacy was announced the Obama campaign aggressively went after the youth vote. Early polls in 2007 had Obama leading his closest democratic rival among college students 43 percent to 23 percent.<sup>5</sup> Obama would use this huge collegiate support to help him win the Iowa Caucuses. During the Iowa caucus the number of young democratic voters increased by 135% from the 2004 caucuses and young voters preferred Obama to his next closest competitor by more than 4 to 1.<sup>6</sup>

Though conventional wisdom told Obama not to depend on the youth vote because of its unreliability, the Obama campaign refused to allow this to determine its investment in young voters. And the investment paid off. In speaking of the phenomenal draw that Barack Obama had among young voters, David Von Drehle wrote, "His opponents promise fight, but Obama promises healing."<sup>7</sup> This aggressive attention to the youth vote helped to sweep Obama to key victories on Super Tuesday, eventually winning him the democratic presidential nomination. In the general election Obama won 66 percent of the age 18-29 vote compared to McCain's 32 percent. The only age group that Obama lost in the general election was 65 and over.<sup>8</sup>

Obama won nearly every demographic group in America during the general election. He also won every cultural group, except white Americans. And while he did not win the majority of the white vote he won the highest percentage of white votes for a democratic candidate since 1976. Even more noteworthy; he won the majority of white voters age 18-29 by ten percentage points above McCain (54% to 44%).<sup>9</sup> Obama's historic election has changed the landscape of politics for years to come and has now placed a new demographic (18-29 year olds) among those who every candidate must court to win elections at the local, state and national level.

The big question is, "What does this election mean for Christians as we consider a strategy to effectively win and keep collegiate age young adults in the church?" According to Thom and Sam Rainer 70 percent of churchgoing young adults drop out of the church between the ages 18-22. The third highest reason they list for dropping out is, "moving to college."<sup>10</sup> It is during their stay in college that a

good amount of young adults stop attending church. Before we jump to conclusions about the spirituality of young adults, it is important to note that the church dropout rate is pervasive among all age groups of those who claim to be Christians. While 52 percent of Americans claim to be members of a Protestant church only 28 percent actually attend.<sup>11</sup> So the problem of absenteeism is larger than generational. Christians in general seem to be attending church less and less.

Neither is it college attendance alone that is the cause. According to one report, 69 percent of those who attended college between the ages of 18 and 22 stopped attending church for a year, while 71 percent of those who did not attend college in the same age span did the same thing.<sup>12</sup> So whether they went to college or not young adults leave the church during the years of 18-22 at about the same percentage.

What do we know about collegians and their spirituality? The Higher Education Research Institute of UCLA found that, "Most college students have a very high level of spiritual interest and involvement. Many are actively engaged in a spiritual quest and in exploring the meaning of life." It is not a lack of spiritual interest that is the cause of the drop-off from church. The study also notes that "Freshman have a high expectation for the role their institutions will play in their emotional and spiritual development. They place great value on their college enhancing their self-understanding, helping them develop personal values, and encouraging their spiritual expression of spirituality."<sup>13</sup>

Collegians also have a high degree of spiritual interests. Three-fourths say they are "Searching for meaning/purpose in life and similar numbers have high expectations that college will help them develop spiritually. Many are engaged in a spiritual quest with nearly half reporting they consider it 'essential' or 'very important' to seek opportunities to help them grow spiritually."<sup>14</sup> Collegians come to college with high expectations spiritually, but for some reason the church has not been effective in capitalizing on this interest.

The quest for meaning and purpose comes from God. Ecclesiastes tells us, "God has planted eternity in the human heart."<sup>15</sup> And God promises us He will fill that void if we seek Him. He says through the

prophet Jeremiah says, "If you look for me in earnest, you will find me when you seek me. I will be found by you says the Lord."<sup>16</sup> If that is so, why is the church failing to help collegians find the void in their lives that only God can fill? Rainer notes, "The church is not capturing and engaging these students' spiritual interests. In fact, the church is doing the opposite. We're losing them because the church is uninteresting to them."<sup>17</sup> The church has not made young adults their priority, so why should we be surprised that they become disconnected from the church when they go to college? If the church is to regain its place of primary importance in the lives of collegians it must change its approach to ministry. Instead of focusing most of its time on those 65 and older, the church must take the "Obama approach."

No matter what you think politically of the newly elected president, we all have to be impressed with his gaining 66 percent of voters 18 to 29. How did he do it and what can we learn from his strategy? There are seven strategies that the Obama campaign used to galvanize young voters.

First, was his message of change. Unlike his opponents, Obama presented a message of reconciliation, bringing the nation together and bridging the divide that separated the nation into red states and blue states. It was not just bridging the ideological differences of political parties, but also the racial and cultural differences that have haunted America from its inception. One noted, "His is the language of possibility, which is the native tongue of the young."<sup>18</sup>

Ben Waxman gives three reasons for Obama's appeal to collegians. First, was his positive vision for the future and moving beyond partisanship. Second, was his ability to transcend many of the past political and social battles that young people no longer care about (such as the Vietnam War and many other volatile issues from the 60's). Third, they are looking for a national figure that can advance the conversation about race in America.<sup>19</sup>

Waxman states further, "Every poll shows my contemporaries constitute the most tolerant demographic in the country. A sizable majority says that race does not play a factor in how they would vote for president. This is an incredible departure from past behavior."<sup>20</sup> It should be noted that all

three emphases are relational. About this phenomenon *Time* writes:

Obama... radiates the new. He doesn't just talk about change; he looks like change. His person and his platform are virtually indistinguishable. Obama, like Tiger Woods and Angelina Jolie, has one of those faces that seem beamed from a postracial future, when everyone will have a permanent, noncarcinogenic tan. He has small kids and a low BMI... His campaign is crawling with cool young people, and the candidate fits right in. We've yet to see Obama flustered or harried; instead, he gives off the enigmatic Zen confidence of the guy who is picked first for every game.<sup>21</sup>

Second, was Obama's use of technology.

Eight months before Obama announced his candidacy for president, a Bowdoin College junior, Meredith Segal created a Facebook group that reached full-fledged PAC (Political Action Committee)-status with nearly 62,000 members and chapters at 80 college campuses. When Obama announced his candidacy this well-structured organization became a part of the Obama campaign. By October 2007 Students for Obama with more than 600 chapters were formed on college campuses and high schools across the country. Before the Iowa caucus the Obama team had established chapters on nineteen college campuses and 144 high schools across Iowa.<sup>22</sup>

This internet organization was used to mobilize hundreds of thousands of youth and young adults to work for the Obama campaign.

Melissa Dahl writes, "Through a steady stream of tests and Twitters, experts agree Obama managed to excite young voters by meeting them where they live—online."<sup>23</sup> The Internet has become the community of choice that many millennials use to stay connected and build consensus. Morley Winograd, co-author of "Millennial Makeover: MySpace, YouTube, and the Future of American Politics," says, "This is a group of people who are constantly checking in with everybody else in their

circle to make a decision.” “This is a generation that doesn’t tend to think about asking experts for opinion, they tend to ask each other, and then that becomes the truth.”<sup>24</sup>

Obama became known for his Blackberry. This knowledge highlighted to many young adults that Obama was in tune with their generation. He understood and lived by the same means of communication they lived by. Throughout his campaign he used the Internet to communicate directly with his supporters and even announced his vice presidential choice for running mate on the web, before he made the official public announcement.

Obama’s use of the Internet dovetails into his third key strategy, empowerment. In speaking of Obama’s Iowa strategy, Drehle notes, “Obama did something unusual in politics: he made them (youth) a genuine priority. After his rallies in towns across the state, he met backstage with student leaders from the area—a privilege most campaigns reserve for local VIPs and fundraisers.”<sup>25</sup> Obama gave young adults quality time and invested in their involvement and leadership. “He also hired as his youth-vote coordinator Hans Reimer, a veteran of Rock the Vote, which has been working to mobilize the student vote for years, with increasing success. Reimer extracted a promise that his work would be an integral part of the overall campaign, not a lip-service, photo-op’ed afterthought.”<sup>26</sup> This intentional decision by Obama would translate into huge dividends during the primary season and the general election.

The Obama campaign empowered young people to not only get involved in his campaign, but also assume leadership positions in reaching their peers. Meredith Segal’s initiative was rewarded when she was invited to leadership in the campaign. Her vision spawned several key initiatives to enlist youth volunteers into the Obama campaign. A winter internship program was launched, an ID program targeted at college students was begun, youth canvassing and a text messaging program was instituted all when the creative juices of the collegians who were interested in the Obama campaign were empowered.<sup>27</sup> Michelle Stein, 20, was media coordinator for Obama’s youth campaign in Missouri.

These collegians represent a sampling of the many 20-something’s who assumed key leadership roles throughout the Obama campaign. Psericks notes, “The Obama campaign has shown the commitment and organization not only to turn out youth voters...but to offer opportunities for leadership training.” He continues, “Young people are not just votes...they are the future of this country.”<sup>28</sup> Marissa Cumpton, a 20-year-old junior at Iowa State said, “I think part of the reason why Obama is so popular is because he encourages young people to participate, he is very inclusive of young voters.”<sup>29</sup>

Fourth, the Obama campaign directed his resources toward the effort to win youth support. Drehle writes, “Obama put his money where his mouth was, spending precious radio and television dollars on ads specifically at Iowa students.”<sup>30</sup> The Obama campaign took the risk of investing in the most unreliable age demographic, 18 to 29 year olds. Conventional political wisdom had defined that age group as least likely to show up at state caucuses and voting polls. Ann Selzer, a veteran Iowa pollster noted, “the majority of those who do show (to caucuses) are usually over the age of 55...habitually, the younger people don’t show.”<sup>31</sup> Obama invested in the youth vote and it would pay him huge dividends in the primary season and the general election.

Fifth, was Obama’s appeal to unity. Millennials have a natural unity bound by their desire to build consensus and make group decisions. To this point Winograd notes, “No decision is made without dozens of e-mails, texts, Facebook messages to check whether an idea works for the whole group—which could explain why Millennials so firmly latched onto Obama’s message of unity.”<sup>32</sup> Michael Hais who co-wrote “Millennial Makeover” with Winograd explains, “They (Millennials) are naturally inclined to be unified...they were reared to believe that everyone has a role to play, everybody is the same and everybody should look for group-oriented solutions.”<sup>33</sup>

Millennials have been called the “Barney Generation.” “Countless afternoons during their childhood, millions of Millennials sat down to watch a big purple dinosaur teach problem-solving to a diverse cast.”<sup>34</sup> To this point Hais says, “They solved their problems by the end of the half hour, and they

all accepted one another...Millennials, because they are much more collegial...will figure out a way to incorporate everybody's point of view."<sup>35</sup> Early in his campaign Obama emphasized diplomacy in dealing with our nations enemies, while other candidates bristled at the idea. While older voters questioned Obama's policies, his approach of diplomacy first resonated with young voters.

Sixth, the Obama campaign was intentional about building community. The Obama campaign used an old adage in politics. Face-to-face contact. It has been known for decades that the best way to get voters to vote is through face-to-face communication. Many recent campaigns had abandoned this old tried and true method for mass-mailings and phone banks. In the 1990s Yale University published several influential studies proving that personal canvassing is more effective than direct mail or phone calls from strangers. They discovered that voters are more likely to go to the polls if they are asked face-to-face by someone they trust.<sup>36</sup> Michael McDonald notes, "It's really the same way we organized back in the heyday of political machines: know your voters and turn them out personally. Obama has keyed into this and applied it on campus, using students to recruit other students."<sup>37</sup>

Obama's campaign used this personal approach for a generation that craves community among its peers. Obama's young loyalists organized "dorm-storming," a canvassing technique that matches student volunteers with dormitories where they live or have friends. Kevin Wolfe, a 19-year-old Washington University Obama organizer says, "It's a very intimate interaction because they're hearing about Obama from someone they already know."<sup>38</sup> Couple this with Obama's use of the internet and one can see how he was able to build a community among collegians.

Seventh, Obama was able to inspire collegians. Gordon Fischer, former Iowa Democratic Party Chair, said, "I have not seen young people as excited about a candidate...He's just on a different level. He's so energized young people, and it's not just young people—there's minorities, independents, even some Republicans..."<sup>39</sup> When Claire McCaskill, the highest ranking Democrat in Missouri hesitated to endorse Obama, it was her daughter who convinced her to. After watching her mother's emotional reaction to

Obama's moving speech after winning the Iowa caucus, Maddie Esposito, McCaskill's 18-year-old daughter said to her mother, "You know you believe in him." "It's time to step up...You have to do it, or I'm never talking to you again."<sup>40</sup> Caroline Kennedy confessed that her three teenagers, "Were the first people who made me realize that Barack Obama is the President we need."<sup>41</sup>

Not only were collegians inspired campaigners for Obama, they also supported the effort with their finances. 24-year-old Jade Baranski...gave \$200 to the Obama campaign. She reasoned, "Compared to what some people donated, its nothing, but for me it was definitely a sacrifice...I honestly feel this election could come down to one vote, one person, one dollar—so hopefully all the money and time I've put in will be worth it."<sup>42</sup> And 53 percent of those who supported Obama's candidacy described him as inspirational.<sup>43</sup> There can be no doubt that inspiration was one of the key factors in Obama's appeal among all demographic groups and especially to collegians.

## Translating Obama Strategies to Church Strategies

So what strategies can we use and implement from the Obama campaign?

We must begin by realizing that our future lies in the next generation. We must be intentional about making youth and young adults our number one priority. Let us remember that the original Jesus movement some 2000 years ago was a youth movement. Jesus himself began his public ministry at the age of 30. John the Baptist, his cousin and forerunner was just a few months older and together they were able to begin a revolution that would change the course of human history.

It is that revolutionary spirit that we must capture and direct with the same fervor and dedication as the Obama campaign did. The memorable words of Ellen White are appropriate for today, "With such an army of youth, rightly trained, might furnish, how soon the message of a crucified, risen, and soon-coming Savior might be carried to the whole world!"<sup>44</sup> How might we go about that "right training" today? Let me suggest five approaches that may be particularly effective with collegians.



First, we must build community. As mentioned above, the Obama campaign understood the importance of building community in order to successfully attract and engage collegians. Millennials who become disconnected from the church cite the lack of caring and feeling welcomed as a reason for falling away from the church. The Rainer's write, "Dropouts left because they felt disconnected from the people of the church; those who stayed did so because they felt connected."<sup>45</sup> They say further, "There is a clear correlation between how young adults perceive the people of the church and whether they drop out...young adults connect to churches where the people are open, positive, and caring. Conversely, young adults drop out of churches where the people are indifferent or critical."<sup>46</sup> We cannot expect to minister to collegians unless churches become engaged in building community with them. "The church, which is supposed to be the locus of community, does not provide a sense of community for many of the dechurched...as a consequence, these young people move to different places to connect with others."<sup>47</sup>

Friends and family play a huge role in keeping collegians connected and reclaiming the disconnected. "For the dechurched to become re-churched, a gentle nod often came from friends and family. One-half or 50 percent of the re-churched attribute their return to the encouragement of friends and family."<sup>48</sup>

"Today's collegians are the Starbucks generation. They gather and chat at places often called third places which can often take the place of the church."<sup>49</sup> Some churches have become innovative, by setting up parachurches in coffee shops and the like. This has become an effective way of reaching those who may feel alienated from the church but not from alternate gathering locations.<sup>50</sup> If we are to effectively build community with collegians we must think outside the box, meet them where they are and dare to try something different. Jesus, our perfect example, was always where the people were—so much so that he was accused of always being among publicans and sinners. If our perfect Lord risked Himself and his reputation to meet the unchurched where they were, should we, His sin-filled disciples, do less?

Second, the church must become more technologically savvy. George Barna notes that technology is fast becoming the latest driving force behind what is often called the "generation gap." The generational divide brought on by the digital tools is significant. While all Americans are benefiting from the use of technology, Barna points out, "Each successive generation is adopting and using technology at a significantly greater pace than their predecessors. Studies show the exponential reliance on digital tools among Americans under the age of 25."<sup>51</sup>

The use of technology has become the most important advancement that has impacted the communication world. "Facebook, the largest Internet social-networking site, boasts a market share of more than 85% of four-year U.S. universities, with millions of members averaging 20 minutes per day on-site exploring."<sup>52</sup> Friends and relationships are built by collegians on the Internet and information is passed to one another through various forms of technology.

Barna notes that while all generations use technology, none use it more than millennials (or "mosaics" as he identifies them). Barna identified 14 digital activities used by society for communication. Elders and Boomers use only two (email and search), while the Mosaic generation uses eight (email, search, texting, hosting personal websites, tweeting, instant messaging, blogging, watching online videos and downloading music). This expanded use of technology is vast and the gap between the use of technologies by collegians and their parents is ever widening.<sup>53</sup> If we are to build community with collegians and reach them where they are the church must expand its use of technology.

Third, the church must strive to become united. Unity is not uniformity, but rather interdependence. It is recognizing that there is a place in the Body for everyone. Just as the body has different functions and plays different roles, each entity functions cooperatively under the guidance of the head. If the church is to reach collegians effectively, it must get beyond its old divisions of the past. It must put aside notions of racial privilege, class distinctions and social status. Paternalism, cronyism, chauvinism and nepotism must be surrendered to Christ. We must begin to live out the admonition of

Philippians 2:5 and let the mind of Christ live in us.

Jesus said in John 13:35 that the identifying mark of his disciples would be their love one for another. In Jesus' only recorded prayer in John 17, He asked the Father in verses 20-21 to bring His disciples into unity. "20—I am praying not only for these disciples but also for all who will ever believe in Me because of their testimony. 21—My prayer for all of them is that they will be one, just as You and I are one, Father—that just as You are in Me and I am in You, so they will be in us, and **the world will believe You sent Me.**"<sup>54</sup>

Ellen White made this comment about the prayer of Jesus:

The instruction given me by One of authority is that we are to learn to answer the prayer recorded in the 17th chapter of John. We are to make this prayer our **first study**...to **learn** the **science** of this **prayer**. My brethren and sisters, I ask you to heed these words and to bring to your study a calm, humble, contrite spirit, and the healthy energies of a mind under the control of God. Those who **fail** to learn the lessons contained in this prayer are in **danger** of **making one-sided developments**, which **no future training will ever fully correct.**<sup>55</sup>

One of the things collegians yearn for is unity. Frank Lutz, the conservative pollster found that "The most compelling issues for today's students were not the hot-button issues of their parents: abortion, crime and affirmative actions. Instead their concerns were the nature of politics: the perceived gridlock of parties, conniving of special interests and shallow biases in media. When Obama talks broadly about changing those dynamics, what strikes some older ears as airy and substance-free hits young voters as the chime of insight."<sup>56</sup>

Matt Adler notes, "What Obama brings to the forefront is the issue of process. It's not just what gets done but how it gets done; the morality of the process matters. Being honest open and inclusive is an issue in itself."<sup>57</sup> Many young adults have moved beyond the arguments that their parents still engage in, like music, jewelry, women's role in the church, the race of their leaders and the like. They are more concerned about our ability to truly exemplify the character of Christ as a community of faith. They are

drawn to character that believes and practices true unity and equality.

Fourth is Empowerment. Young adults are looking for meaningful leadership in the church, not lip service. The "Let's Talk," initiative by our General conference President, while well meaning, did little to change the perception of young adults about their church. While talking is good, it is meaningless if there is no real change in the leadership and structure of the church. Young people today want more than activities; they want to be active. The Rainers' note, "While most students are participating in church activities, relatively few have actual responsibilities in their church. Only 37 percent had regular responsibilities in their church and only 25 percent held leadership positions in their church."<sup>58</sup> "Those churches that have students thinking in terms of service, giving, and missions are more likely to retain the younger generation."<sup>59</sup>

If we are to be effective in keeping collegians we must find ways to engage them in meaningful ministry in the church. We must recognize that they are the key to reaching humanity for the future. In speaking of the impact young adults can have Ellen White writes, "You can do a work that those who minister in word and doctrine cannot do. You can reach a class whom the minister cannot affect."<sup>60</sup> We must find ways to empower the next generation for meaningful ministry and service.

Finally, we must inspire young adults in order to reach them. Jesus is the center of all inspiration. He has promised in John 12:32 that if He is lifted up, He will draw all people unto Himself. Christ-centered ministry will bring the inspiration that collegians are looking for.

Our worship should be inspirational to collegians. The 63 percent of collegians that stay in the church agree that the pastor's sermons are relevant to their lives and 69 percent say the worship is appealing to them. There can be no doubt that spiritual inspiration must be at the center of our approach to winning and retaining collegians. It might mean changing our approach in how we communicate the Gospel and how we worship.

One essential church pastor said, "We are not compromising the Word, but we are making the changes to reach this age group. Our worship style has changed, and we have a Tuesday night worship



service that is specifically geared as a place of reentry into the church.”<sup>61</sup> The Rainer’s conclude, “Encouragement from friends and family for the young adults to return will be of little value if the church is mired in a time warp in the 1960s or 1970s.”<sup>62</sup>

If we are to be effective in reaching, retaining and rechurching collegians we must regain our sense of mission. We must become excited and energized about the sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ with everyone. When the church becomes vital to us, more than a country club or resting place, the church will become vital to young adults as well.

I will close with this concluding statement:

“Essential churches are multiplying churches because they constantly seek to look and reach beyond themselves. They thus multiply with the presence of new Christians and with the return of the dechurched. Many are multiplying churches because they start new churches, new campuses, and new ministries. That outward focus attracts and retains young adults. They want to be a part of something that is making a difference.”<sup>63</sup>

So let us not shrink from the challenge God has set before us. Let us remember that with God, “All things are possible.”

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> *Growing hate groups blame Obama, economy,* CNN.com.

<sup>2</sup> Ben Waxman, “*Why Obama Wins the Youth Vote,*” Philadelphia Daily News, January 19, 2007.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> Ben Adler, “*Obama Youth Appeal Strongest on Campus,*” December 14, 2007. Politico.com.

<sup>6</sup> David Von Drehle, “*Obama’s Youth Vote Triumph,*” Time, January 4, 2008, www.time.com/printout/0,8816,01700525,00.html.

<sup>7</sup> David Von Drehle, “*The Year of the Youth Vote,*” Time, January 31, 2008, www.time.com/time/printout/0,8816,1708570,00.html.

<sup>8</sup> Local Exit Polls-Election Center 2008, www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2008/results/polls/#val=USP00p1.

<sup>9</sup> Exit Polls-Election Results 2008-The New York Times, //elections.nytimes.com/2008/results/president/national-exit-po....

<sup>10</sup> Rainer, Thom S. and Sam S. Rainer III, *The Essential Church? Reclaiming a Generation of Dropouts,* (Nashville, TN. B&H Publishing Group, 2008), 3.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 153.

<sup>13</sup> *Spirituality in Higher Education,* Higher Education Research Institute, Graduate School of Education & Information Studies University of California, Los Angeles.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> Ecclesiastes 3:11 (New Living Translation)

<sup>16</sup> Jeremiah 29:13, 14 (New Living Translation)

<sup>17</sup> Rainer, Thom S. and Sam S. Rainer III, *The Essential Church? Reclaiming a Generation of Dropouts,* (Nashville, TN. B&H Publishing Group, 2008), 31.

<sup>18</sup> “*The Year of the Youth Vote,*” 3.

<sup>19</sup> “*Why Obama Wins the Youth Vote.*”

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> “*The Year of the Youth Vote,*” 6.

<sup>22</sup> Psericks, “*The Real Strength of Obama’s Student Organization,*” November 6, 2007, www.mydd.com/story/2007/11/6/111118/1816

<sup>23</sup> Melissa Dahl, “*Youth Vote May Have Been Key in Obama’s Win: Young Voters had ‘record turnout,’ Preferred Democrats by Wide Margin,*” November 5, 2008, 2. www.msnbc.com/id/27525497/print/1/displaymode/1098/

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> “*The Year of the Youth Vote,*” 4.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> Psericks.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 1-2.

<sup>29</sup> Ben Adler, 2.

<sup>30</sup> “*The Year of the Youth Vote,*” 5.

<sup>31</sup>Brian Montopoli, "Could a 'Hidden' Youth Vote Propel Obama?" 3, 4. [www.cbsnews.com/stories/2007/10/04/politics/main3329322...](http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2007/10/04/politics/main3329322...)

<sup>32</sup>Dahl, 2.

<sup>33</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>34</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>36</sup>"The Year of the Youth Vote," 4.

<sup>37</sup>"The Year of the Youth Vote," 4, 5.

<sup>38</sup>"The Year of the Youth Vote," 5.

<sup>39</sup>Brian Montopoli, 3.

<sup>40</sup>"The Year of the Youth Vote," 2.

<sup>41</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>42</sup>Dahl, 2.

<sup>43</sup>"The Year of the Youth Vote," 3.

<sup>44</sup>Education, 271.

<sup>45</sup>Rainer, Thom S. and Sam S. Rainer III, *The Essential Church? Reclaiming a Generation of Dropouts*, (Nashville, TN. B&H Publishing Group, 2008), 37.

<sup>46</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>47</sup>Rainer, Thom S. and Sam S. Rainer III, *The Essential Church? Reclaiming a Generation of Dropouts*, (Nashville, TN. B&H Publishing Group, 2008), 46.

<sup>48</sup>*Ibid.*, 224.

<sup>49</sup>*Ibid.*, 225.

<sup>50</sup>*Ibid.*, 225.

<sup>51</sup>"New Research Explores How Technology Drives Generation Gap," 1. [www.barna.org/barna-update/article/14-media/212-new-research...](http://www.barna.org/barna-update/article/14-media/212-new-research...)

<sup>52</sup>"The Year of the Youth Vote," 6.

<sup>53</sup>Barna, 1.

<sup>54</sup>John 17:20, 21 (New Living Translation), bold print is the emphasis of the one quoting.

<sup>55</sup>8T 239, bold print is the emphasis of the one quoting.

<sup>56</sup>"The Year of the Youth Vote," 7.

<sup>57</sup>*Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>58</sup>*The Essential Church*, 85.

<sup>59</sup>*Ibid.*, 86.

<sup>60</sup>1T513.

<sup>61</sup>*The Essential Church*, 224.

<sup>62</sup>*Ibid.*, 224, 225.

<sup>63</sup>*Ibid.*, 239.



# LEAD THE WAY

by Steve Case

## Abstract

*The primary need for public campus ministry is leaders. For the Seventh-day Adventist Church, this has been the key element. Leaders direct mission, determine the emphasis, draw followers, extend their own influence, and develop stability for campus ministry. Calling leaders should take precedence over institutional approval, endorsement or funding. The call for leaders remains foundational for public campus ministry.*

When it comes to campus ministry, don't expect the school to lead the way, at least not at public colleges and universities.<sup>1</sup> By its very nature, a public campus doesn't concern itself with either a foundational or intentional religious orientation. Yet campus ministry does exist to varying degrees on many public campuses. What makes the difference? Is it the school administration? The students? Faculty and staff? Local church involvement? The existence and persistence of parachurch ministries? A history of consistent campus ministry at a given school?

Without discounting the vital role of the Holy Spirit, consider the role of the human leader for campus ministry. While we pray for God's activity in our campus ministry, we anticipate He will work through people to carry out His will. That means a human leader will be God's instrument for leading other humans in campus ministry. The primary human need for campus ministry is leaders.<sup>2</sup>

## Who Will Lead?

Promoting, pleading, voting, or even funding campus ministry won't make it happen. People are the way God reaches young adults on college campuses. Who will lead those ministries for the Seventh-day Adventist Church? The Church's primary resources for such ministry are found on Adventist campuses. But bemoaning or criticizing ministry on Adventist campuses rather than public campuses does little more than shooting ourselves in the foot.

The Adventist Church's primary resource for public college ministry presents seven models of existing Adventist campus ministry at public

colleges in North America.<sup>3</sup> Tremendous variety can be seen in these models, including campus-based, church-based, conference-based, evangelistically oriented, fellowship focused, and even a home base with lodging for SDA students. But the common thread for each working model is a consistent leader. In fact, for each model a specific leader can be identified as the primary initiator of that ministry.

Because the Gospel Commission targets the entire world, even a modest visionary leader can see that public campus ministry stands as an ideal mission field for the Gospel—far better than most existing Adventist churches. That's where you will find significant numbers and varieties of people coming on their own volition for life training and new discoveries. Does the Gospel speak to these? Let the school's system of matriculation and graduation draw people and send them out. By reaching the campus, we will reach the world.

## The Leader Directs Mission

Whether an official mission statement exists, gets posted, debated or presented for possible funding, the actual mission of a campus ministry follows the rudder of the leader. Frequently a leader's mission isn't articulated, voted or framed. But it reveals itself in the tone of the campus ministry, the types of activities that stem from it, and the people who respond to the ministry.

Some might formally revise an existing mission statement with a new reality. In other cases, official mission statements get relegated to paperwork, which rarely counts when it comes to actual ministry. But the leader's official or unofficial mission permeates the campus ministry. After all,

leadership is about influencing people, not managing a process or a program.<sup>4</sup> If the leader truly is leading, then people are following. If not, then the “leader” merely holds a title.

In some situations a leader might lack clarity in the mission of the campus ministry, other missions might compete or people might not buy into the mission. A donor’s mission might not match the leader’s. Such scenarios usually result in status quo ministry at best and internal conflict at worst. But when a leader is clear and consistent in mission, others follow, and donors buy into the mission. The exponential impact indicates that the supernatural is noticeably at work.

### **The Leader Determines Emphasis**

While a mission provides a grand purpose, the various steps and processes for implementing the mission must be fleshed out for it to become real. This reveals what emphases a campus ministry will have. The leader plays the crucial role. Will the campus ministry give greater emphasis to gathering students or sending them? Or will these be equal? Will the arena of faith be more about questions or answers; discussion or proclamation? Will things be campus-based or church-based? Is the target group fellow Adventists, other Christians, “regular people,” or antagonists? How will priorities show when it comes to worship, evangelism, faith development, fellowship, service, or merely socializing?

Whether the emphasis comes from the mission or vice versa, the leader determines the emphasis simply by putting forth ideas and plans, or by endorsing what others offer for the campus ministry. It may seem relatively small at times, but the leader’s essence shapes everything the leader does.<sup>5</sup> Newcomers must follow the leader or convince the leader to buy into different ideas. Otherwise they, and their ideas, will need to find a place for expression or emphasis elsewhere.

For example, if the leader emphasizes gathering for fellowship, the word on the street as well as official information will communicate “Come to the Christian hang out,” rather than “Share your faith in the public square.” If the leader emphasizes integration into a local church, don’t expect a majority of the gatherings to take place on campus. If service receives the emphasis, be prepared to get

dirty rather than argue about correct doctrine. While individuals might have their own preferences, the leader initiates the campus ministry emphasis.<sup>6</sup>

### **The Leader Draws Followers**

Followers empower a leader. And the greater the number or intensity of the followers, the greater the influence of the leader. With the annual cycle of campus ministry, those who begin in leadership already have a head start. The mission and emphasis a leader presents at the start of a school year will draw those who support or have an interest in those elements, which further increases the significance of the leader. A leader attracts those who are like the leader.<sup>7</sup>

At campuses where a weak or ineffective leader offers little vision, purpose, or clarity about the campus ministry, students will follow leaders of other entities. Without the necessary leader in a ministry, followers simply go elsewhere. Conversely, a strong leader for a campus ministry will draw more followers.

Consider a leader who champions debates on current issues. Those who enjoy participating or observing debates will find themselves drawn and involved. Those without an interest in spiritual topics might still participate just because of the thrill of clashing ideas or to sharpen their own skills. Conversely, those looking for an opportunity to kick back and relax or to meet people in a mingling atmosphere of warmth and acceptance will go to another place where somebody leads and ensures that type of environment.

### **The Leader Extends Influence**

Because a leader draws followers, the influence of that leader extends farther because, like concentric rings emanating from a pebble thrown in a lake, followers influence those beyond the initial impact of the leader. A leader who emphasizes Sabbath commitment and observance will equip followers with reasons and experiences for it. When those followers come in contact with others outside of the leader’s sphere, the followers will utilize what they have received from the leader. In this way, the leader’s influence extends beyond what the leader alone can do.



This may repel or draw others to the original leader. If it repels others, the follower can easily return to the leader for more input. If it draws others, the follower will take new followers to the leader. Like another stone thrown into the water, the ripples move out yet again.

If a leader fails to make an impact, the lack of influence being extended results in the campus ministry making little impact and possibly resorting to merely a campus club. When you find a vibrant campus ministry, you'll see a leader whose influence gets extended by the followers.

### The Leader Develops Stability

A new campus ministry carries out the vision of the initial leader. When new leaders replace departed ones, they often provide their own stamp on ministry. While change can spice up a lethargic ministry, it can easily destabilize an active one. People refer to "grooming new leaders" as part of the job description for existing leaders, especially when they expect or anticipate a change of leadership.

When it comes to campus ministry, the transitory nature of students increases the likelihood of short-term and often unstable ministries. Students in official leadership roles may serve for only a year or two. A theoretical model recruits a college freshman for involvement the first year, assisting leadership the second year, and possibly becoming the leader the third or fourth year. But what about students who change schools or drop out? What about those who turn their focus towards their major, graduate school, or significant relationships? And then there are unexpected surprises, such as possibly finding a life partner, family distress, financial considerations, and even loss of faith.

A long-term leader develops stability for a campus ministry. This is more apt to occur when the leader is not a fulltime student or possibly not even a student at all. A church member in the community, a professor on campus, or a hired campus ministry chaplain can provide continuity so that the ministry builds on past experiences rather than starting new each year. Like a steady motor that keeps the boat moving regardless of how strong or weak a short-term paddler might be, the on-going leader's

stability moves the ministry farther and more consistently than the fluctuating intensity of merry-go-round leadership.

### Leading the Way in Campus Ministry

Instead of begging for institutional support or pleading for budgets, look to the supernatural God to work through human leaders for campus ministry. That's where significant ministry and the Gospel-in-action take place. Because "support" is usually a follower rather than leader, those who wait for it will never lead. If we look to institutions or donors to make this happen, we'll brag when Adventist campus ministry presence increases from its current 1 ½ percent to a mere two percent,<sup>8</sup> or we'll retreat and create reports to maintain funding one more year.

The better option is to rely on God to work through leaders of campus ministry. Place the call, like the one sent to Isaiah, "I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?' And I said, 'Here I am. Send me!'"<sup>9</sup> Jesus used the same model to start His Church—a handful of leaders and the power of the Spirit. That is how to "lead the way" when it comes to campus ministry.

Who will respond to this call?

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>On a Christian campus, typically you can find hired, elected, and even volunteer leaders for ministry as an integral part of the school and its mission.

<sup>2</sup>The initial 180 symposium in 2008 focused on retaining youth and young adults in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. "Leadership" emerged as one of the five themes for that topic, too. Dudley, Roger with Allan Walshe. *Ministering with Millennials*. Lincoln, NE: AdventSource. 2009, 4.

<sup>3</sup>King, Kirk and Ron Pickell. *The Word on Campus*. Lincoln, NE: AdventSource, 2008, 254-330.

<sup>4</sup>Maxwell, John C. *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1998, 14.

<sup>5</sup>Cloud, Henry. *9 Things a Leader Must Do*. Franklin, TN: Integrity Publishers, 2006, 18.

<sup>6</sup>Maxwell, John C. *The 21 Indispensable Qualities of a Leader*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1999, 70.

<sup>7</sup>Maxwell. *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*. 97.

<sup>8</sup>According to CollegeBoard, there are currently 3,856 colleges in the United States (Google search for "number of colleges in the United States" made 24 Sept. 2009. The first choice was [http://collegesearch.collegeboard.com/search/adv\\_typeofschool.jsp?s\\_kwid=list%20of%20colleges!2621493404](http://collegesearch.collegeboard.com/search/adv_typeofschool.jsp?s_kwid=list%20of%20colleges!2621493404)). Adventists report just over 60 groups that have registered with "Adventist Campus Ministries." (see King and Pickell. 254)

<sup>9</sup>Isaiah 6:8 (NIV).

# SUPPORTING AN ARMY OF YOUTH: PROVIDING NEEDED SUPPORT FOR ADVENTIST STUDENTS ON PUBLIC COLLEGE CAMPUSES

by Ron Pickell

## Abstract

*The Seventh-day Adventist Church stands poised before a great mission field opportunity to reach today's college campuses. We have a clear mission field – the campus closest to the nearest local Adventist church. We have a clear mandate in the stated mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church: "To proclaim to all peoples the everlasting gospel..." We also have potential missionaries on those campuses in the estimated 50,000 Adventist students enrolled there. In addition, we also have an organizational structure in the NAD Youth/Young Adult Department (ACF/NAD), which is ready to move forward to develop resources and provide networking, training, and leadership to accomplish the task. Church administration and leadership have offered meager resources for students on the front lines of a great mission endeavor. Bold and visionary leadership can make the difference. Like the religious leadership in Jesus' day, current church leaders hold the keys of power to support new ministry opportunities or maintain current efforts. We need bolder support of Adventist ministry on today's campuses. There are important steps we can and must take to support the witness of the majority of Adventist students already out there on the front lines.*

## Introduction

The mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church as described on the official church Web site is "to proclaim to all peoples the everlasting gospel in the context of the Three Angels' messages of Revelation 14:6-12, leading them to accept Jesus as their personal Savior and to unite with His church, and nurturing them in preparation for His soon return."

In the 2008 U.S. Religious Landscape Survey, compiled by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life – a landmark survey released February 25, 2009, it was discovered that roughly 60 percent of Americans reared in what it defined as the "Adventist family" of churches, a grouping of Protestants dominated by the Seventh-day Adventist denomination, continue to remain in that family as adults. This is encouraging in comparison to American Catholics, who comprise 31.4 percent of the adult American population, but 21.9 percent of whom still claim the faith of their youth – an

alarming 7.5 percent attrition rate in the overall population. However, we must point out that we, too, are hemorrhaging badly, since this same survey, which was conducted in 2001, reported a 71 percent retention rate compared to the current 60 percent retention rate – an 11 percent drop in only 7 years.<sup>1</sup>

Other estimates suggest that over the past few decades close to four million members have left the Adventist Church, with some 40 percent from North America alone. There are no good figures for Adventist young adult retention, but personal experience tells me when visiting our churches that the eighteen to thirty-five demographic is our greatest loss. Where are our young people and what is the best way to retain them? This question was raised and discussed in last year's 180 Symposium. This paper will argue that the majority of them are climbing over the walls of Adventism and becoming lost in the public educational system.

## The Facts

According to a 1997 study done by the Center For Creative Ministry, researcher Monte Sahlin found that 68 percent of Adventist college-age young people were attending non-Adventist schools.<sup>2</sup> In 2008, the Florida Conference Youth Department conducted its own in-house study and found that closer to 80 percent are attending public schools. This means that an Adventist home and local church are the only contact that many of our young people have with the faith of their youth, and by the looks of the local church landscape the majority is not connecting there, either.

In the Fall of 2005, the North American Division took a significant step to connect and engage Adventist young people attending public universities with the organization of Adventist Christian Fellowship (ACF). ACF is our answer to mainline and parachurch campus ministry groups like the Baptist Student Union, Catholic Newman Fellowships, InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, and Campus Crusade for Christ. The mission of ACF is to:

- Build Christian fellowship chapters on public campuses that honor God and nurture the spiritual lives of students in North America.
- Engage students in the mission of the Church through relational evangelism and Christ-like student fellowships.
- Empower local ACF chapters, churches, and sponsors through pastoral support, professional training, and access to resources.

There are currently 73 Adventist campus ministry organizations registered on the acflink Web site, with at least another thirty-some organizations not yet registered that we are aware of through the Center for College Faith.<sup>3</sup> A number of regions in the NAD are growing in their awareness of Adventist public campus ministry and beginning to organize efforts to connect with college students in the form of conference-wide efforts and regional campus ministry events.

The need is great! In a recent project to identify and strengthen already existing campus ministry efforts in the Pacific Union, Kirk King and Ron Pickell found many campuses with Adventist students in attendance, yet with little or no

coordinated campus ministry efforts for them. More information on this project and other steps currently being taken in the NAD can be found in a recent article in *Spectrum Magazine*.<sup>4</sup>

Students are our best resource in reaching out to other students. Students connect with one another and are the most important link to the campus. Thus, the need for an organized effort to connect with and support them through training, networking, and leadership is critical in student/church retention and in empowering students to live and share their faith on campus.

On many major campuses, we find Adventist students who care about their church and want to stay connected with its mission. They love God and want others to share in the same joy and experience with Him that they are having. By not staying connected with these young people, we are losing them from the Church. We are also losing our best evangelistic link to the campus.

Adventist public campus ministry is a powerful evangelistic opportunity for the Seventh-day Adventist Church. It is time we start taking a broader approach to evangelism, investing not only in the more traditional short and often expensive two- to three-week campaigns, but also in the longer-term indigenous evangelistic efforts on campuses. A change like this will engage our young people in the mission of the Church and continue to reap a great harvest for years and years to come.

We have come far in our efforts to develop a strong ministry to the public campus; but we have a long way to go. At this point, we still have very little contact with the thousands of Adventist students on public campuses. Through the ACF network, we estimate that we have contact with somewhere around 2,000 students – equivalent to a couple of our smaller Adventist colleges. But what is that among the estimated 50,000 still out there?

There is need for a coordinated effort among graduate students, Adventist faculty, local churches, and local conferences that will provide training and track students as they leave for college, as well as for alumni who are entering their careers. This age group presents a huge gap in our youth ministry program previously cared for through our own Adventist colleges. However, with less than 25 percent of our students attending an Adventist

college the best way for us to maintain contact with them is through the local church, which means that we must do all we can to strengthen our public campus ministry capabilities at that level. Many of these students want to grow in their faith and desire help in sharing their faith on campus. They also want and need local churches that support their choice in attending a non-Adventist college for whatever reason.

## What We Already Have

**A definite mission field.** There are 4,300 colleges and universities in the United States and Canada alone. These have a total enrollment of approximately 19,000,000 students – a number close to the population of the five largest cities in America. Surprisingly, there is often an Adventist church close to one of these institutions, but no Adventist presence or outreach to the campus. In many cases, we have a church literally across the street from a large state school, with no designated ministry presence.

**A clear mandate.** “Go into all the world and preach the gospel...,” which includes the important world of higher education. The specific mandate of the Seventh-day Adventist Church admonishes us to develop a ministry strategy for reaching today’s college student. In fact, we have two General Conference mandates for campus ministry development and outreach.<sup>5</sup>

The Educational Department of our church also provides a mandate for nurturing the faith of all our youth, regardless of location. The General Conference Education Department official Web site states that the Education Department exists “To ensure the quality of the global Seventh-day Adventist educational system and its work also include collaboration with other ministries of the church to help nurture the faith of Adventist students attending colleges and universities outside of the denomination system worldwide.”

**A clear and able-bodied mission taskforce.** Consider the 50,000 Adventist students on these campuses who are often ready and willing to organize efforts to live out their Adventist faith on campus. Unfortunately, we still hear reluctant church members and leaders make disparaging comments like, “Adventist students on public campuses are running away from the church and don’t want to be

found,” or “Students who attend a non-Adventist college should not have a ministry effort directed at them as it might encourage them to not attend an Adventist college.”

Such comments are disappointing and uninformed, to say the least. After twenty-five years of college ministry and personal experience with hundreds of students who faithfully attend church, serve in student leadership positions, request Sabbath letters to avoid test taking on Sabbath, reach out to their classmates, and invite them to church, I would have to say that it is clearly the minority that is running away from the Church. In fact, these faithful students are the Daniels of our day, standing for their faith in a secular environment and giving witness to the truth of the gospel among their peers.

Besides, even if they were running away, isn’t running after them part of our mission mandate? Students are in great transition during their college years, and many who start out running away from church are often won back with a warm and genuine personal interest in them. Campus ministry efforts prove very successful and students often literally come out of the woodwork with an organized, relevant campus ministry effort.

**A proven track record.** Other disparaging remarks center around Adventists being ill-equipped for ministry on the public campus. And then there are negative comments about students themselves: “Students are unpredictable,” and “All they want is nurture and to be served,” and “The non-Adventist students we are able to attract don’t easily become members.” It is true that campus ministry is not a three-week crusade and a baptism. It is evangelism over the long haul and it develops through relationships of friendship and discipleship.

Ministries take time to develop—they grow from students networking together. But it is untrue to say that Adventists cannot do public campus ministry. The ACF book, *Word on Campus: A Guide to Public College Ministry*, describes seven current and very successful campus ministry efforts. Four such ministries are: Advent House Seventh-day Adventist Student Center at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, with close to 30 years of successful ministry; C.A.M.P.U.S., the Michigan Conference ministry effort that offer training on multiple campuses; Maranatha, in Tallahassee, Florida, with



more than 100 students involved in campus outreach and student leadership; and, finally, our program at U.C. Berkeley, which has had a successful local church-based campus ministry among students on the U.C. Berkeley campus for almost 40 years. These ministries all demonstrate great success in connecting with students, engaging them in Bible study and prayer, challenging them to invite their friends, reaching out to the campus, and all of them can boast of baptisms throughout the years. The fact is, we do know how to do Adventist ministry on public campuses. We have many models of success that can be replicated in one way or another on any campus God opens the door for a new, developing ministry.

**Resources and training.** *Dialogue Magazine*, a journal for students on public college campuses, has been in circulation for almost 20 years and is printed three times a year. Adventist Christian Fellowship is the official umbrella organization for Adventist public campus ministry for the North American Division and receives division support.<sup>6</sup> The Center for College Faith (CFCF) was officially launched out of the Berkeley SDA Church this year as a center to help develop resources and training for ACF and Adventist public college ministry.<sup>7</sup> Some of the most recent resources developed through CFCF are *The Word on Campus* and ensuing workbooks: *The Word in Action: Launching Public College Ministry*; *Growing Your Faith on a Public Campus*; and *Sharing Your Faith on a Public Campus*. All of these workbooks have PowerPoint presentations and lecture guides for weekend seminars to help strengthen campus ministry efforts. They can be requested through CFCF. Michigan Conference's campus ministry program, C.A.M.P.U.S., also has training and resources that students and local churches can use.<sup>8</sup>

## What Is Needed

**Organizational support.** What we lack is the organizational support to accomplish our mission. In order for Adventist campus ministry to be successful with greater breadth, it needs the entire weight of the Adventist Church behind it. In theory, it should already have that support, according to the 1995 General Conference Report on Adventist Public Campus Ministries.<sup>9</sup> It needs General Conference, division, union, local conference, and local church support, with each layer of church organization and

structure providing the necessary attention and support. This mandate, which was voted almost 15 years ago, was tremendous; but it lacked any clear strategy or power to act and, unfortunately, no action has been taken since the vote.

**Full-time equivalents at the GC and division levels.** Especially at the GC and division levels, an actual Campus Ministries Department needs to be put in place, with a full-time designated and salaried individual to give overall leadership and direction for this very specialized endeavor. Ministry on a public campus is similar but unlike any other youth/young adult ministry in the Adventist Church. The reason why groups like Campus Crusade and Intervarsity have been so successful in campus ministry is their singular focus on the campus. The campus is ministry outside of our denominational structure. This alone makes it unique to the kind of youth ministry we are accustomed to doing. Of course, the nature of the campus culture adds to the specialization of reaching today's college students with the gospel. In order to be effective here, we will need a singular focus and expert leadership.<sup>10</sup>

**Resources.** We need to continue to develop our own resources and training specialized for our Adventist mission on the campus. Resources from other Christian organizations have been very helpful and will always be part of the reservoir we should tap. But our unique mission and message requires additional resources to support the ministry as we move forward. The Center for College Faith and the efforts of C.A.M.P.U.S. in Michigan Conference are great blessings and will need further financial support as we move ahead.

**Funding.** Finally, we need money—the kind of money it takes to run any successful ministry effort carried out today. We have the troop surge. Students are already there, but they lack funding to carry out the mission. But at this point, most of our campus ministry efforts receive almost no funding from the larger Adventist organization. The ACF/NAD coordinator is a volunteer position with an annual travel and expense budget of \$15,000, which, although appreciated, is a drop in the bucket compared to what is really needed to carry on a ministry of this scope.

One possible place for funding is from our own education system, which already accepts the faith development of students outside our system. For



example the Northern California Conference, as recommended by the union, annually sends the Pacific Union Conference three and three-quarters percent of its previous year's tithe for the support of Adventist colleges within the Pacific Union. This sum amounted to almost \$1,500,000 last year. Given that there are seven conferences in the Pacific Union, the union support of these colleges is even greater than what the Northern California Conference provided. The Pacific Union supports two colleges within its union and with additional subsidies for Oakwood College. The amount the Pacific Union sends to these colleges came close to \$8,000,000 last year.

We have a total of nine unions in the North American Division. What if each of these unions devoted even less than one percent of what they now send to our Adventist colleges to support ministry in their jurisdiction on public campuses? What if each of the divisions devoted a portion of their subsidy to the GC for the support of ministerial efforts for the same purpose? If so, we would have a substantial campus ministry budget at the GC and division levels and could really do something. All we need is less than one percent of what is already being generated for our own schools, which have less than one-third of our students in attendance.

Like our U.S. banks, we have the money. But we lack clear guidelines on how to appropriate it and make the funds available. Unlike the U.S. stimulus package, such a plan is not a handout, since the money invested in our students on public campuses will eventually come back to us many times over -- in retention of our own students, new converts to the faith, and an increased tithe base.

Another possible suggestion to fund local ACF groups is from the campus ministries budgets of our Adventist campuses. Each of our Adventist campuses has either a full-time chaplain for spiritual life and/or a designated program budget. If Adventist colleges shared some of their budget or made a portion of it available to students on public campuses, this could foster a relationship with those students and create a bridge between students on Adventist and non-Adventist campuses. Adventist campus ministries could broaden their mission to Adventist students on nearby public campuses, which would increase their ministry and might even help public college students return to an Adventist campus in the future.

## **Future Ministry Plans**

What would these additional monies help fund in public campus ministries? Here are a few possible suggestions. To begin with, the GC and NAD campus ministry departments and salaries mentioned above. This along with some possible new resources like those being developed by The Center for College Faith—ACF Mission Year, a student missionary program devoted to students willing to spend a year in practical ministry service on a public campus.

ACF Mission Year is being developed as a year-long taskforce position at a public college campus in partnership with local churches and conferences and the NAD Volunteer Student Missions organization. Instead of going overseas for one year of mission service, students would have the option of staying in their own country and spending a year on a public college campus, helping to launch or strengthen an ACF chapter on that campus.

In concert with ACF Mission Year, CFCF is also working on ACF University, a training program to orient and train students entering public college campuses and to prepare other potential taskforce workers. This program will include training to enhance understanding of postmoderns, the campus environment, campus evangelism, Christian apologetics, and foster leadership of small group Bible studies.

Students have also suggested two other ideas to help galvanize the national movement of Adventist students on public campuses. The first is "Praying for the 1970," a prayer movement for the 19,000,000 students on public colleges in the NAD and for the 70 percent of Adventist students on those campuses. The second is "ACF 7K Walk, Run Bike," a grassroots event to help local ACF chapters raise money and generate awareness for their own groups and for ACF/NAD. With additional funding, these and other initiatives could help grow Adventist public ministry and create awareness of Adventist students who are currently living faithfully for Christ on their campuses.

These are just a few ideas of how additional funding could help move Adventist public campus ministry forward in a big way. We have said nothing about the need for conferences on the national and regional levels, further development of the Center for

College Faith, and continued development of campus ministry resources.

## In Conclusion

The time comes for all of our young people to put into practice what they have learned about God and to share their experience with others. For those attending public campuses their faith is already on the line. With proper direction and encouragement the opportunities for ministry on public college campuses through the witness of our own students are great. The fields are literally white and ready for harvesting. This time, however, we actually have laborers ready to engage in the work. We have a mandate, a mission field, missionaries, and a strategy that works. What we lack is the power to act and the funding to make it happen. We need the keepers of the keys to open the vault and release funds to carry out the mission.

The \$6,200,000,000 cost of the ongoing San Francisco Bay Bridge renovation kept the state of California on hold at first—until legislators began to consider the additional cost of waiting. Doing so could raise that sum billions more in wage hikes and loss of revenue. The same could be said about public campus ministry. At first, the cost of funding a ministry to students on public campuses may seem unaffordable. But under closer scrutiny, the costs of waiting and not moving forward will be seen only to increase losses among a generation of young adults who have the potential to advance the mission of our church and magnify the witness of God's kingdom.

This is an appeal to the keepers of the keys to find a way to open the treasuries and turn our students loose on a world that needs their trained witness. Could this be the army of youth that Ellen White talked about seeing ready to carry the mission forward? Do we recognize their zeal for the Lord and their evangelistic potential? Are church leaders ready to support and fund this army already on the front lines of ministry instead of simply nurturing and educating the minority of Adventist students in our own schools? Are we ready to send them out as evangelists onto the campuses that they already attend, thus helping them live their faith in a real world context?

The Church needs the link our students can provide to the campus. The campus is crying out for their energetic witness. But our students will not be

successful without proper funding and resources. They need the tools, training, mentoring and spiritual support of their church to carry out this mission. How can we expect them to stand alone? Our students need the support of their church and they need it now!<sup>11</sup>

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup>Kellner, Mark. "Study: Adventists Score High in Membership Retention," in Upper Columbia Conference News. 5 March 2008. <http://www.uccsda.org/News/Membership-Retention>.
- <sup>2</sup>Sahlin, Monte. *Trends, Attitudes, and Opinions in the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America*. Lincoln, NE: North American Division and the Center for Creative Ministry, 1998.
- <sup>3</sup>Berkeley, California, Seventh-day Adventist Church, Center for College Faith, *Center for College Faith*, n.d., <http://www.centerforcollegefaith.org>.
- <sup>4</sup>Pickell, Ron. "Two out of Three: Adventists on Non-Adventist Campuses," *Spectrum Magazine*. 37.2 Spring 2009.
- <sup>5</sup>"Adventist World Leaders Adopt Campus Ministry Guidelines" in *Dialogue Magazine* 8.1, 1996; and "Secular Campus Ministry Endorsed" in *Dialogue Magazine* 3, 1992, 28.
- <sup>6</sup>North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists. *Adventist Christian Fellowship*, n.d., <http://www.acflink.org>.
- <sup>7</sup>Berkeley, California, Seventh-day Adventist Church, *Center for College Faith*, n.d., <http://www.centerforcollegefaith.org>.
- <sup>8</sup>*Adventist Students for Christ: Academic Excellence Combined with Spiritual Excellence*, n.d., <http://www.umich.edu/~asforc~aboutus.html>.
- <sup>9</sup>"Adventist World Leaders Adopt Campus Ministry Guidelines," in *Dialogue Magazine* 8.1, 1996.
- <sup>10</sup>The current coordinator pastors two churches while overseeing a full-time campus ministry program at U.C. Berkeley that has some 50 students involved on a weekly basis. It is unrealistic to think that much can really be done to help grow a division-wide campus ministry effort under the leadership of someone with all these responsibilities.
- <sup>11</sup>The author would like to thank Leigh Johnson for helping prepare this paper for publication.

# WHEN THE CANARIES STOP SINGING

by Martin Weber

## Abstract

*Concerned about attrition of Adventist students attending secular campuses, we seek ways of inducing them to remain with us—unaware that their departure is due to systemic dysfunction in churches throughout North America. The causative factor of young adult attrition is judgmentalism resulting from a lack of knowing how to love. We have forgotten a core insight into the Great Controversy—that love requires freedom of choice, despite the inevitable risks. Paradoxically, our very concern about safeguarding the spirituality of our young adults generates a judgmental counterfeit of love that drives them away in a spirit of toxic anxiety.*

## Introduction

Before the days of modern technology, coal miners placed canaries in cages throughout their subterranean tunnels as an early warning against the invasion of carbon monoxide. The toxic gas often seeped into mines, odorless and thus undetected. The dying of songbirds provided an early warning that the miners were endangered in an atmosphere of systemic toxin. When the canaries stopped singing, it was the first sign that everybody in the mines was doomed unless they could get to fresh air.

For the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America, the canaries are ceasing to sing. We are losing our young people, and our churches themselves are dying. Paul Richardson of the Center for Creative Ministry reports, “The median age for the Seventh-day Adventist community in North America, including the unbaptized children in church families, is 58. . . . Among native-born White and Black members, the median age is even higher.”<sup>1</sup>

Symposium colleague Ed Dickerson cites another study of Adventists in North America which confirms that more than half of attending members are 58 years or older.<sup>2</sup> Richardson adds the chilling statement: “There are more than 1,000 local churches in the North American Division that have no children or teens at all.”<sup>3</sup>

Confronted with the loss of these songbirds, what should we do?

Many church leaders, concerned about losing our youth and young adults (Y&YAs), focus on what can be done to persuade them to stay with us—as if the solution to a noxious atmosphere is to develop a strain of poison-resistant victims.

Let us remember that the loss of our Y&YAs is evidence that our entire church system suffers from a toxic atmosphere; it’s just that Y&YAs are the most vulnerable to it. Their demise warns of impending doom for all. Our task is to identify what is poisoning our Y&YAs and then lead our whole church into life-giving fresh air.

I believe the toxin we suffer from is systemic judgmentalism, resulting from a lack of love. It’s not that we want to be unloving; on the contrary, we care deeply, as evidenced by how deeply our church invests in educating children from kindergarten through their college years. But we suffer from a misunderstanding of how to love that generates judgmentalism. How come? We have forgotten the major issue of the Great Controversy—that love requires freedom of choice, despite the inevitable risks. Thus, paradoxically, our very concern about safeguarding the spirituality of our young adults generates a coercive and judgmental counterfeit of love that drives them away in a spirit of toxic anxiety.

Good intentions do not guarantee good results. I may open my car door with no intention of denting yours, but the damage is done just the same—and I may not even realize that I caused your problem.

We will look for solutions to Y&YA attrition after documenting evidence of the problem and its causes.

## Evidence of Systemic Judgmentalism

With Adventists in North America increasingly older in their demographic profile, we obviously suffer Y&YA attrition. We need not wonder why. ValueGenesis I and II documented that many Adventist youth have felt condemned and unloved by elder members. More recent studies indicate that judgmentalism persists.

In the previous report of this Symposium,<sup>4</sup> Van G. Hurst, president of the Indiana Conference, asks: “What is causing Adventist youth to leave the local church?” He cites a non-scientific but broad-based study that lists a number of reasons. Here are the first 12 reasons given by the Y&YAs themselves:

- Conservative elderly people that criticize us.
- Older folks never let it go if you do mess up so that you will never feel accepted there again.
- Peer pressure is causing youth to leave.
- Pushy grown-ups spouting rules instead of a real message.
- Church is boring and often we have non-existent youth groups.
- The older people make you feel like a sinner and that you do nothing right.
- Adults freak out over the smallest things like clothing (they need to worry about more important stuff).
- People judging the youth the ways we dress.
- Church is boring with songs from the 1800’s that I’ve never heard.
- Crazy old people with really strict views.
- The majority of our views always seem to come from Ellen White.
- People are constantly looking down and judging the youth.

These future voices from the grave should command our attention. Hurst’s data are replicated in the DMin project of this author, a scientific study of attrition among adult children of SDA clergy. My study identified 40 attrition factors, 11 of them extreme. Nearly all of these could be negatively understood, directly or indirectly, as an expression of judgmentalism.<sup>5</sup>

Let me re-emphasize that our problem as Adventists is not that we don’t care about Y&YAs. In prayer meetings, our predominant concern is their attrition. Often tears are shed. No fair-minded observer could accuse these praying grandparents (most prayer meeting attendees seem to be older members) of not caring about their kids, young and old. And yet many prayer warriors—in the same spirit of concern that stimulates their intercession—form the core group of judgmentalists in the church. What makes them oppressive to Y&YAs is their confused idea of love as being a forceful “straight testimony” rather than relational mentoring.

Picture the Adventist grandmother who stays up past bedtime to bake cookies for the youth group; then when delivering those cookies she feels compelled to admonish (scold) the teens for what they are wearing or listening to. Her condemnation is done for the sake of Christian love. But talking about love—and even trying to love—is not the same as actually being loving. Even though our intentions are good, we need to learn what love is and how to express it.

Hollywood seems obsessed with love, although most see it as a counterfeit to the real thing. Could the same thing happen in church—not the world’s counterfeit of cheap love, but *a religious counterfeit of love in the form of costly intolerance?*

## Learning to Love

Biblical love comes not only from a caring heart but an educated mind. Paul said, “It is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, *with knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent*” (Phil. 1: 9-10). Without knowledge and discernment that empowers us to approve what is excellent, our attempts to love may find a counterfeit expression in intolerance.

We see this in the *agape* love chapter, 1 Corinthians 13. Verse 5 says of true love, “It does



not insist on its own way.” This includes selfishness, but that’s not all. There is another way in which people withhold love—insisting on having things their own way and expecting everyone else to agree with their own views of dress, diet, music, worship, and everything else. They canonize their convictions, and anyone out of compliance may become the target of judgmental correction, even coercion.

To further clarify the connection between knowledge and love, 1 Corinthians 13:9 warns, “Now we know in part.” Nobody but God knows everything, and true love recognizes this, not only individually but corporately. Loving members and churches humbly tolerate some variance in understanding and expressing Christian standards. “Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom” (2 Cor. 3:17).

The fact that love requires liberty lies at the heart of the Great Controversy. Despite its risks, the God of love extends freedom to His creation. Will we do the same? It might be that we need to experience God’s love more fully in order for us to share it in our churches and communities, including secular campuses. Liberty of conscience is vintage Adventist doctrine, so we, of all of Christians, ought to understand the need for it and promote it!

Another evidence that love is lacking is the toxic anxiety throughout our system. “There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear” (1 John 4:18<sup>6</sup>). Besides the fear of freedom that robs us of love and causes judgmentalism, other systemic anxieties in North America Adventism are just as toxic, such as:

- Fear of culture—distancing ourselves from secular society
- Fear of man—intimidation by church bullies which empowers them
- Fear of truth—reluctance to journey on the road of theological discovery
- Fear of joy—so afraid of emotionalism that worship becomes lifeless
- Fear of job—career concerns so leaders are hirelings instead of shepherds
- Fear of funding—dread of financial crisis if benefactors become offended

Each of these systemic anxieties robs the church of its capacity to love. Each is worthy of further exploration for helpful remedies.

## Conclusion

The alarming aging demographic profile of the Adventist Church in North America raises the question, “Are we killing our youth and young adults?” Are we blindly living in a toxic atmosphere, desperately in need of fresh air? God’s call to his endtime people might first be to cast out our systemic anxiety by a fresh wave of love. The liberation from the Spirit will make us such people. That’s when judgmentalism will cease and our young adults will have the freedom to sing their own song. That’s when students on secular campuses will have reason to bring their friends home to worship with them.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Martin, A. Allan. “Burst the Bystander Effect: Making a Discipling Difference with Young Adults.” in Roger Dudley, ed., *Ministering to Millennials: A Complete Report on the 180° Symposium* (Lincoln, NE: AdventSource, 2009), 112. Hereafter cited as *Millennials*.

<sup>2</sup>Dickerson, Ed. “Suffer the Little Children (and the Young Adults),” in *Millennials*, 48.

<sup>3</sup>Martin, Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Hurst, Van G. “Unity and Ministry Through the Massification of Adventism,” in *Millennials*, 85.

<sup>5</sup>Weber, Martin. “Resolving Young Adult Attrition,” in *Millennials*, 185ff.

<sup>6</sup>Unless noted, all scriptures are from the *English Standard Version*.





# TASKFORCE NOW

by Michael J. Stevenson

## Abstract

*The world is currently wrestling with an economic downturn. As life gets rearranged; plans have to change. The convergence of a sluggish economy, lack of jobs and fewer slots available means that more Adventist young people are out of a job. At the same time the huge needs for leadership, mentoring and encouragement for students on thousands of campuses continues. The synergy that could happen at this convergence may come in the form of the revival of taskforce campus ministry across North America and the world. Now, amid the chaos of a global economic mix up, we can seize the moment, employ and deploy hundreds to nurture the needs of thousands through the revival and adaptation of Adventist Collegiate Taskforce (ACT).*

It was a perfect Fall day and the air smelled pungently of burning leaves. Squirrels chattered overhead and crows called to each other from the crooked, leafless branches of the shagbark hickories in my yard. With maples still aflame in color, I sat and contemplated the past and future of Adventist youth ministry. It seemed to me that the talk and theory surrounding Adventist youth and mission circled around and around the same themes with few useful ideas emerging. Would Adventist youth ministry ever evolve into something more robust and participative or would it seem to be as effective as just another circle of Dante's inferno?

Forty years ago the Aquarius Generation took their situation firmly by the horns. They were no longer interested in being bystanders while society swept them along. They wanted to be in the middle of the swim. They wanted action.

As a result, Adventist Collegiate Taskforce (ACT) was born in 1967. It targeted three Los Angeles neighborhoods with an urban mission that called for serving the community in new ways and engaging in personal evangelism. They focused primarily on young people and children. The first ACT teams conducted a day camp for 10 weeks that coincided with a hot meal program sponsored by the local public elementary school system. The teams spent evenings visiting the parents of kids who had attended the day camp. On Friday and Saturday evenings, the youth of the area were invited to a coffee house. The summer culminated with an

evangelistic series fueled by the relationships made during the summer. Each location had 4-6 taskforce workers who lived, ate and worked together. One of the original taskforce team members from the summer of 1967 was Monte Sahlin, now Director of Creative Ministries in the Ohio Conference.

Sahlin relates an episode from one of the summers in the late 60s when a taskforce team centered in Oakland, California received protection from the Black Panthers. Bobby Seale, the co-founder of the Black Panthers, sent word to the team that he wanted to see them. Although very apprehensive, they dutifully went to the meeting. Seale informed them that he was pleased with their activities and was particularly interested in white young people coming to a black neighborhood to be of assistance. He pledged the support of the Black Panthers, and told the team that they would not encounter any difficulties. The team reported that indeed they did not encounter any problems. Every day their day camp was guarded by Black Panthers.<sup>1</sup>

Within four years of ACT's founding, there were fifty teams of four and these teams came from the Pacific Union, the North Pacific Union, the Atlantic Union and the Columbia Union. The summer scholarship for participation in ACT amounted to \$500 with living and food expenses paid by the program. All of the teams focused on urban locations and lived communally in the areas where they served.

Since the 60s, however, the target group of ACT has shifted from outreach in urban areas to inexpensive labor for Adventist education. Academies capitalized on the enthusiasm of volunteer college-age young adults who would serve for minimal pay plus room and board. This helped academies who lacked the financial resources to provide full time budgets for some of their staff and/or teaching positions. The original targeting of youth in urban areas has been superceded by the safer, corporate options of academy life. Consequently, the original community evangelistic focus has been lost.

Adventist education has had to exercise economic prudence for some time, which is why it saw ACT as such a positive economic option. Today's economic situation has brought the rest of the church to realize the necessity of innovative actions regarding staffing. Adventist task force is a life-changing experience for its participants and makes economic sense for both the taskforce workers and the local church.

Involvement in the mission of the church changes young lives. Stories from the first 16 taskforce workers from the 60s give evidence of this. Sahlin is writing a book that will document conversations with these original 16 local missionaries. Early anecdotal results point towards changed attitudes, changed majors in college, and changed life directions--very different lives lived as a result of a summer spent as a taskforce worker in an urban setting in Los Angeles.

Other churches and organizations have also recognized the importance of engaging their young people in active ministry. Sahlin's research reveals that the Latter Day Saints (LDS) do not expect many conversions to their faith as a result of the actions of their young missionaries. They require this participation in mission because of the effect being a missionary has on the young people who are involved. Their zealously for their faith gets confirmed by deep relationships forged through long hours of door-to-door evangelism and communal living. The attrition rate among LDS young people is very low in comparison to the Adventist church and other mainline denominations.<sup>2</sup>

Recent research by Mike Stevenson indicates that participation on a day camp staff team for even

as little as five weeks in a summer increases the likelihood of future service for God, maintaining or increasing desire for spirituality, and improving attitudes toward the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist church. Involving young people in active ministry can change their lives.<sup>3</sup>

The current economy is keeping young people from getting jobs. This makes them open for other options. One of those options could be employment as a taskforce worker in a variety of situations. Like the Peace Corps, ADRA and Adventist Frontier Missions (AFM), taskforce could be viewed as a place to get hands-on experience for life, for mission, and for one's resume. Taskforce participants will be introduced to life-long friends who, though they may live worlds apart in the future, will always be welded together by the experience of mission. They will learn the joy of a ministry-based community.

The elements that made the original task force workers excited about their mission still exist today: A real connection to the local community, a close relationship with a committed group of coworkers, and a clearly defined vision and goals with obvious results. Simply put, it's an opportunity to do, rather than to just hear or watch. With many Adventist young people available due to the current job market, employing them in a mission-oriented taskforce position for a year provides a golden opportunity to harness their creative passion to be of service to God.

Not only do academies and other schools currently need help, so do local churches. Recently a conference president visited a church near a major university. The church pastor is bivocational—serving part time as the pastor and also serving as a nurse at a local hospital. The head elder intimated that the current pastoral leadership would never have the capacity to start a much-needed ministry to the collegians in the area. Wanting to support the local church, the president thought of taskforce as an inexpensive option in these economically trying times. That conference is now looking at funding three task force positions for local churches situated near major universities.

This scenario exists in many other congregations who receive minimal pastoral attention because they are part of a multi-church

district or are in an urban area with a huge community. In the past, a Bible worker would have been thought to be sufficient. But there is so much more to do than only personal evangelism or being a dean at a boarding academy. A small sampling of activities that taskforce youth could be involved in are: organizing community events, consulting with government agencies, administrating small groups, leading traditional or nontraditional worship, and reaching children and youth through day camps, branch Sabbath Schools and other venues.

There are many small churches that could probably afford to house, feed and pay a highly motivated, vibrant taskforce worker to lead them in community service and personal evangelism. Using the Ohio conference as an example, there are large parts of the six main metropolitan areas of Ohio that do not have any Adventist presence at all. Task force workers enhance the abilities of local churches to reach their communities and to open new work in communities that do not have an Adventist presence.

Taskforce is not a new idea; just a good idea that needs a fresh application. After all, our Adventist pioneers were teens and young adults who lived in tough economic times, and who worked for room and board and very little pay. Today this combination of local church need and the availability of unemployed Adventist young people is a nexus point in history that must not be missed.

Taskforce ministry has within its scope the power to change young lives, energize local churches and schools, and fit within the overstretched budgets of local conferences. In our rushed and hurried society, the value of a dedicated mission-minded worker can easily be seen when parents and older church members are tired, stressed and generally unwilling. A dedicated young person could be a breath of fresh air from God. Lest we continue to spiral in an impotent miasma of idea-mongering, let us take action to employ, deploy and enjoy the passionate young people that God has provided to the church at this time in earth's history.

## **Endnotes**

<sup>1</sup>Monte Sahlin, personal communication, October 2, 2009.

<sup>2</sup>Monte Sahlin, personal communication, October 2, 2009.

<sup>3</sup>Stevenson, Michael. Andrews University dissertation, 2009.





# ELLEN G. WHITE AND THE SECULAR CAMPUS

by William J. Cork

## Abstract

*Ellen White's statements about secular college campuses provide principles that can guide the development of Adventist campus ministry today. Remarks she made in 1891 and 1895 acknowledge the challenges of the secular campus, but also the necessity of a positive witness. Guided by the principles she outlines, Adventist campus ministry will both support students on the secular campus and live out a non-confrontational ministry of presence in the heart of the university.*

Ellen White never wrote a book about public campus ministry, but several of her talks and letters on the issue of secular colleges are gathered together in *Selected Messages*, Book 3, under the title, "Attending Colleges and Universities of the Land." In these passages she acknowledged that Adventist students were attending secular schools (with the support and even the encouragement of some Adventist leaders), and voiced her fears for their spiritual well-being. Yet she also saw the public campus as a mission field and outlined principles for ministry there. This chapter will explore the background of these statements, and then draw out some implications for campus ministry today.

Ellen White wrote at a time when public Higher Education was experiencing a period of growth and transformation in the United States. In the decades following the Civil War, federal land grants encouraged the establishment of state universities. Educational philosophy shifted from an emphasis on the classics to study of applied sciences and technology.<sup>1</sup> Many denominations which had their own colleges saw these new public institutions as competitors. Yet slowly the vision grew that they must provide pastoral support for students at public colleges. This started with individuals on scattered campuses.<sup>2</sup>

Discussions within Adventism paralleled those in other denominations. Adventists debated what the character of their schools should be as well as the issue of Adventist students at secular schools. The

first question was settled at a Teachers' Institute held in Harbor Springs, MI, in the summer of 1891, under the leadership of W. W. Prescott. This proved to be "the real turning point" in Adventist education, according to George Knight, placing Adventist schools on a solid Biblical and Christological foundation.<sup>3</sup> It served as "the first step in the 'adventizing' of Seventh-day Adventist education."<sup>4</sup>

Ellen White played a critical role in the creation of the Adventist educational philosophy, but her remarks to the teachers reveal a broader vision. She shared the reformers' criticism of classical education. In her talk on July 27, 1891, she unleashed a verbal barrage against classical education and reading of "infidel" authors. "We do not want to drink of the turbid streams of the valley. We do not want the corrupted sophistry of infidelity. . . . Many think themselves wonderfully wise in understanding the sentiments of infidel writers, but they will find that they are building upon a sandy foundation."<sup>5</sup> She warned against thinking that one can read these authors and safely separate the "vile" from the "precious." "The devil is a great deal smarter than you are, and you cannot see what he is driving at."<sup>6</sup>

Despite these strong statements, directed at both secular schools and Battle Creek College's attempt to copy them, she believed that in some cases it might be appropriate for Adventists to enter the perilous world of the secular campus. Some Adventist leaders, especially in the medical field,

actively encouraged this. The medical school at the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor was both a nearby resource and a dangerous temptation.<sup>7</sup> Ellen White said to the teachers,

I have been reading since I spoke here last, the warnings given to some who went to receive a medical education. They might receive that education without losing their spirituality if they were every day under the converting influence of the Spirit of God. . . .

It would be perfectly safe for our youth to enter the colleges of our land if they were converted every day; but if they feel at liberty to be off guard one day, that very day Satan is ready with his snares, and they are overcome and led to walk in false paths— forbidden paths, paths that the Lord has not cast up.

Now, shall professed Christians refuse to associate with the unconverted, and seek to have no communication with them? No, they are to be with them, in the world and not of the world, but not to partake of their ways, not to be impressed by them, not to have a heart open to their customs and practices. Their associations are to be for the purpose of drawing others to Christ.<sup>8</sup>

This last paragraph is critical, as we will see in a moment. It represents the seed of an idea that would grow in her mind over the next few years. She recognized the opportunity for evangelical witness on the public campus, despite the dangers.<sup>9</sup>

In a letter White wrote on October 9, 1891, to Leon Smith (son of Elder Uriah Smith), she again voiced her concerns about the spiritual life of those who would attend secular schools. After warning of the danger “to many of our youth” in listening to the discourses that are given by those who in the world are called great men,” she said:

The youth who go to Ann Arbor [the University of Michigan] must receive Jesus as their personal Savior or they will build upon the sand, and their foundation will be swept away. The Spirit of Christ must regenerate and sanctify the soul, and pure affection for Christ must be kept alive by humble, daily trust in God. Christ must be

formed within, the hope of glory. Let Jesus be revealed to those with whom you associate.<sup>10</sup>

Here again is a hint of the possibility of a positive witness, like that which she had raised weeks earlier at Harbor Springs. It is *barely* a hint. And yet four years later, when she reflected back on that conference, this became her dominant theme. More importantly, she developed her thoughts so as to leave no ambiguity:

The Waldensians entered the schools of the world as students. They made no pretensions; apparently they paid no attention to anyone; but they lived out what they believed. They never sacrificed principle, and their principles soon became known. This was different from anything the other students had seen, and they began to ask themselves, What does this all mean? While they were considering this, they heard them praying in their rooms, not to the Virgin Mary but to the Savior, whom they addressed as the only mediator between God and man. The worldly students were encouraged to make inquiries, and as the simple story of the truth as it is in Jesus was told, their minds grasped it.

These things I tried to present at Harbor Heights [sic]. These who have the Spirit of God, who have the truth wrought into their very being, prudent men, wise in their methods of reaching others, should be encouraged to enter colleges, as students live the truth, as did Joseph in Egypt, and Daniel, and Paul. Each one should study the situation and see what is the best way to represent the truth in the school, that the light may shine forth. Let them show that they respect all the rules and regulations of the schools. The leaven will begin to work; for we can depend much more upon the power of God manifested in the lives of His children than upon any words that can be spoken. But they should also tell inquirers, in as simple language as they can, of the Bible doctrines.

There are those who, after becoming established, rooted, and grounded in the

truth, should enter these institutions of learning as students. They can keep the living principles of the truth, and observe the Sabbath, and yet they will have opportunity to work for the Master by dropping seeds of truth in minds and hearts. Under the influence of the Holy Spirit, those seeds will spring up to bear fruit for the glory of God, and will result in the saving of souls. The students need not go to these institutions of learning in order to become enlightened upon theological subjects; for, the teachers of the school need themselves to become Bible students. No open controversies should be entered into, but opportunity given for questions upon Bible doctrines, and light will be flashed into many minds, and a spirit of investigation will be aroused.

But I scarcely dare present this method of labor; for there is danger that those who have no decided connection with God will place themselves in these schools, and instead of correcting error and diffusing light, will themselves be led astray. But this work must be done; and it will be done by those who are led and taught of God.

It was November 20, 1895. She was at a camp meeting in Armadale, Victoria, in Australia. Some of the leaders present held an impromptu meeting to discuss some questions that had arisen regarding religious liberty work. Her remarks that day were about witnessing in potentially hostile situations. She started by reading letters she had written the year before to A. T. Jones about work in the Southern United States, and then she answered questions from the leaders gathered. Adventist evangelists, she said, shouldn't be going down South, converting blacks, and telling them they must not only rest on Sabbath but *work on Sunday*. This would just cause trouble in an already delicate situation. The attitudes which supported slavery weren't dead and violence against blacks was increasing.

"Our laborers," she said, "must move in a quiet way, striving to do everything possible to present the truth to the people, remembering that the love of Christ will melt down the opposition."

The final issue on the Sabbath question has not yet come, and by imprudent actions, we may bring on the crisis before the time. You may have all the truth, but you need not let it all flash at once upon minds, letting it become darkness to them. I have had to bear a testimony against Bro. \_\_\_\_\_ on this point. He would take his chart, go out, knock at a door, and say, 'I have come to give you the third angel's message, and to tell you that the seventh day is the Sabbath.' But even Christ said to his disciples, 'I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.' We must not go into a place, open our satchel, show all we have, and tell everything we know about the truth. We must work cautiously, presenting the truth by degrees.

Then she apparently changed subjects, speaking about colleges and universities. But note carefully, she uses this as another example of the principle of working prudently and cautiously. This provides the immediate context for the section cited above about the Waldensians, who

... entered the schools of the world as students. They made no pretensions; apparently they paid no attention to anyone; but they lived out what they believed. They never sacrificed principle, and their principles soon became known. This was different from anything the other students had seen, and they began to ask themselves, What does this all mean?

This is then followed by the section stressing the importance of entering into secular colleges and universities. She concluded by discussing how to witness to religious liberty principles before governmental bodies. But before going there, she lifted up the example of Christ. He was teaching when he was only 12—not by preaching, but by simply asking questions.

Had [Jesus] led them to suspect that He was trying to teach them, they would have spurned Him. So it was all through His life. By His purity, His humility, His meekness, He rebuked sin. Those around Him could not find a single thing for which to blame Him, yet He was at work all the time. ... If

all our people would work in Christ's way, what a blessing it would be. There are many ways in which to diffuse light, and a great work can be done in many lines that is not now done. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

### **Conclusion: Principles for Campus Ministry**

Today, as in Ellen White's day, there are dangers on the public campus. Vulnerable students, away from home for the first time, celebrating their freedom and curious about the world, are subject to moral and intellectual temptation. This occurs in an environment that does not pretend to be able to sustain the Spirit. While we are right in continuing to offer Adventist higher education as a wholistic alternative, we cannot ignore the 70 percent of Adventist college students who attend secular schools. Adventist campus ministry can provide the spiritual component that can help them to survive and flourish. Key elements of such a ministry would include developing a balanced spirituality, centered on continual conversion, as well as providing intellectual formation to meet the challenges of secular philosophy.

But campus ministry cannot be merely a matter of sheltering and supporting Adventist students. It must also be an outreach to the university. This is the critical core of Mrs. White's counsel. We cannot see our goal as the building of centers on the fringe of the campus, but must instead embrace the goal of equipping students (and faculty and staff) for life at the very heart of the academic community as participants in the great conversation. Whereas many evangelical campus ministries thrive on debate and confrontational apologetics, she proposes what we might call an incarnational apologetic of life witness, responding in an attitude of humility and love to those who question what this might mean.

With these principles, we have excellent guidance apropos for today.

### **Endnotes**

<sup>1</sup>Knight, Gorge R. "The Transformation of Education," in *The World of Ellen G. White*, Gary Land, Ed. Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1987, 161-175, esp. 168-169.

<sup>2</sup>See, for example, Evans, John Whitney. *The Newman Movement: Roman Catholics in American Higher Education, 1883-1971*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1980. See also Hora, Galen, editor. "A Brief History of Lutheran Campus Ministry." N.P., 2006; <http://archive.elca.org/campusministry/celebrate100/files/presskit/abriefhistory.doc>.

<sup>3</sup>Knight, George R. *A Brief History of Seventh-day Adventists, 2nd Edition*. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2004, p. 96. See also Prescott's report, 1893 GCDB, 349ff.

<sup>4</sup>Knight, George R. "Seventh-day Adventist Higher Education in the United States," in *Religious Higher Education in the United States: A Source Book* edited by Thomas C. Hunt and James C. Carper. New York: Garland, 1996, 387-412, esp. 392-393.

<sup>5</sup>Ms 8b, 1891; MR No. 692; 9MR 67.

<sup>6</sup>*ibid.*, 68.

<sup>7</sup>Daniels, A. G. *The Abiding Gift of Prophecy*. Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1936, 354.

<sup>8</sup>Ms 8b, 1891; the last portion appear in 3SM 231. The entire manuscript appears in *Spalding and Magan's Unpublished Manuscript Testimonies of Ellen G. White*. 1915-1916. Payson, AZ: Leaves-Of-Autumn Books, 1985, 19-25.

<sup>9</sup>Her passion for evangelism, and her interest in new methods, were evident elsewhere in that conference. That's where she presented the manuscript for *Steps to Christ* to the teachers and it was decided to have it published by a non-Adventist publisher, Fleming H. Revell. See Douglass, Herbert E. *Messenger of the Lord: The Prophetic Ministry of Ellen G. White*. Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 1998, 445.

<sup>10</sup>Letter 26, 1891; 3SM 232-233.

# TOWARD BUILDING RESILIENCE AS THE BEST PATH TO PREVENTION

by Duane McBride, Gary Hopkins, Peter Landless & Jeffery Spady

## Abstract

*Substance abuse in the form of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs wreaks havoc in the lives of young and old. The party scene seems to be a given on college campuses. Seventh-day Adventist schools are not immune to these cultural influences. The best method of prevention is resilience. The components that contribute to resilience include a positively involved family, good self esteem, adult supervised after school activities for young people, a sense of community at school, service activities, and faith. By fostering these elements, we can be intentional about making our campuses exception in all areas.*

## Introduction and Purpose

The use of substances among elementary, high school and college students in the United States has been extensively studied by Lloyd Johnston and his colleagues for over thirty years.<sup>1</sup> While there has been some variance in the rates of use, over the last few decades, this national research project has shown the continuous high prevalence of alcohol and drug use. In 2008, about 14 percent of eighth graders used an illicit drug in the last year as did about 27 percent of tenth graders and 37 percent of high school seniors. The most prevalent substance used among young people remains alcohol with about one-third of eighth graders reported using alcohol in the last year, about 53 percent of tenth graders reporting use and 66 percent of twelfth graders. More alarmingly, 5 percent of eighth graders reported being drunk as did 14 percent of tenth graders and 28 percent of twelfth graders.<sup>2</sup>

The data among college students is even more startling. In 2008, about 47 percent of college students reported being drunk in the last 30 days with a slightly higher proportion of females reporting being drunk than males (47.1% vs. 46.3%).<sup>3</sup> Adventist educators can, perhaps, take some comfort in an article in the *Journal of Research on Christian Education* that indicates that Adventist college students may use alcohol and all other drugs at only about one-third the rate of college

students in general society. But this still means that there are a significant number of Adventist students, about one-third, who have initiated alcohol and/or other drug use.<sup>4</sup>

Research reports and clinical observation show that alcohol, tobacco, and non-prescribed drug use are serious issues that result in a wide variety of problem behaviors. Research has shown that poor academic performance is related to substance use.<sup>5</sup> A report from the National Survey on Drug Use and Health showed that over 72 percent of students aged 12-17 who did not use marijuana in the past month reported at least a B average while only 45 percent of those who reported using marijuana at least 5 days in the last month had a B or higher average.<sup>6</sup> Academic consequences may be one of the lesser consequences of substance use. The majority of alcohol users report having hangovers and heavy substance users also report fairly frequent use of the emergency room.<sup>7</sup> Criminal behavior is often a result of substance abuse as well. These behaviors include, driving while intoxicated,<sup>8</sup> unsafe sexual practices and assault including sexual assaults.<sup>9</sup>

In the United States, the growing problem of binge drinking and alcohol consumption in general led to the establishment of a Task Force to assess this problem. The statistics that appeared in the report was startling



(www.collegedrinkingprevention.gov). College drinking was found to account for 14,000 deaths per year in students aged 18-24 years. It was noted that 500,000 students were unintentionally injured; 600,000 were assaulted by another student; 70,000 students were victims of alcohol-related sexual assault or date rape; 2,100,000 students had driven a vehicle while under the influence of alcohol, all of these in the previous year. These figures are hugely alarming and Seventh-day Adventist College and University campuses are not exempt from the problem. At present, it is on a smaller scale but nevertheless with us, and the problem is not going away of itself!

In 1989, a survey conducted by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching reported that college presidents viewed alcohol abuse as their top problem related to campus-life. Interestingly, some have suggested that possibly the second-largest problem is that many campuses are still in denial.<sup>10</sup> If this denial of the magnitude and effects of substance abuse is real, there are major consequences to a safe learning environment that significantly affect the mission of higher education.

Data suggest that Adventist college campuses have significantly lower rates of substance use with research finding that about one-third of Adventist students may have substance use problems. Surveys of these students also indicate that the consequences are similar to those reported in general society studies. Our experience as researchers also suggests that Adventist schools may be in considerable denial about the existence of substance use problems on their campuses. It is clear from research data that our society and our Church must recognize the existence of substance abuse problems and use evidenced based prevention techniques to address these problems. It is the purpose of this chapter to provide a review of evidenced based on the research literature as well as from primary research conducted by faculty at the Institute for the Prevention of Addictions, strategies designed to prevent substance use among our young people. The following information and elements might be used to design such programs.

## **Building Resilience**

A powerful concept has emerged from research over the past few decades, inspiring hope among

researchers and educators alike: the concept of *resilience*. Resilience is the capacity to maintain competent functioning, to do well in school, hold pro-social values and have high achievement goals in spite of adversity. Such adversity can come from a variety of sources, such as living in poverty, in a home that does not encourage high educational or occupational goals or in a neighborhood with a high rate of delinquency and crime.

Research literature is replete with articles that identify causes, but it may be more important to identify what it is that protects youth in a high risk environment. In his classic article, Reckless, based on numerous studies he conducted, concluded that there were significant internal and external factors that related to protecting youth in a high risk environment. These included such internal variables as a high self-concept, commitment to conventional moral values including strong religious beliefs and such external factors as an adult such as a teacher or pastor, coach or other responsible adult who cared for the youth and provided encouragement, role modeling and appropriate socialization into becoming a functional adult. This classic research has fostered decades of further development and validation of this concept. Resilient individuals are those who, despite severe hardships and the presence of factors that place them at risk of a variety of ills, develop coping skills that enable them to succeed in life.<sup>11</sup>

Researchers explain resilience in terms of hardiness, and suggest that resilient individuals have a strong commitment to self and others and are willing to take action to deal with problems. They also have a positive attitude towards their social environment, hold a strong sense of purpose, and develop the internal strength that enables them to see life's obstacles as challenges that can be overcome.<sup>12</sup> It appears that resilience develops over time as a result of environmental support that facilitates its development at each developmental stage of a youth's life.<sup>13</sup>

In reviewing research on what fosters resilience among young people, one important factor emerges over and over again: the presence of valuable, sincere, and enduring relationships. Brooks has observed that "Resilient youngsters all had at least one person in their lives that accepted them unconditionally, regardless of temperamental



idiosyncrasies, physical attractiveness, or intelligence.”<sup>14</sup> Others have concluded that the “most precious lesson” learned from their research on resilience is that *hope* derived from relationships with caring individuals can serve as a protective buffer in the lives of vulnerable children and youths who succeed in spite of the odds.<sup>15</sup> College mentors of youth can capitalize on this aspect by providing opportunities for positive, sustained relationships with at-risk young people who might not otherwise have a caring and involved person in their lives.

Classically, researchers have applied a resiliency framework to those who live in high risk environments. In that sense, we may believe that the conclusions from this research do not apply to youth in “good” environments; to youth that are growing up within the safe context of a good family, a strong faith community, and quality church school education. In the last few years, it has become very obvious that there is no such thing as a safe environment. The “Monitoring the Future” study shows that most high school students report they have easy access to most illegal drugs.<sup>16</sup> Primary research the IPA has conducted in Adventist schools also indicates that students report ready access to illegal drugs.

Research on pornography indicates that pornographic websites are among the most visited websites in the world. Christian young people report easy access to these sites and may be more vulnerable to internet pornography use than they are to more public high risk behavior.<sup>17</sup> It is important for the Church to recognize that all of our youth exist in a high risk environment today. It is crucial that we implement the elements of resilience that have been found to be protective against engaging in substance abuse or other high risk behavior and effective in stopping high risk behavior.<sup>18</sup> The rest of this chapter focuses on some specific elements of resiliency that have been found to be effective in protecting our youth.

## The Role of Family

The role of the family in building resilience is primary. In his classic work on what prevents delinquency, Hirschi documented that attachment between youth and parents plays a core role in building resilience and preventing delinquency and substance use.<sup>19</sup> If parents have a strong emotional

attachment to their children, know who their child’s friends are and where their children are when they are not at home, study after study has found those rates of substance use and other forms of risk behavior as significantly lower.

Kostelecky found that parental attachment was significantly related to a wide variety of behaviors from academic achievement to positive pro-social behaviors as well as lower rates of the use of all types of substances.<sup>20</sup> Research also indicates that positive parental bonding is preventative across many cultures. McBride and his colleagues found parental attachment, particularly to both parents, was protective against all types of substance use in a study in the Caribbean.<sup>21</sup> Judith Brooke and her colleagues found that parental attachment was related to lower rates of marijuana use across different ethnic groups, for both genders and over a wide range of time periods.<sup>22</sup> Evidence suggests that parental attachment has a direct relationship to lower rates of substance use. Researchers have also suggested that parental attachment helps build resilience against peer influence. That is, strong attachment to parents is related to youth involvement with non-drug using peers and may limit the impact of drug using peers.<sup>23</sup> It is also important to note that attachment to parents not only may prevent substance abuse, but it also appears to be related to cessation of substance use. That is, those youth with higher level of attachment to their parents are more likely to cease drug use.<sup>24</sup>

It is important to note that the family can play a major role in causing or at least facilitating substance use. This can occur at least in two ways. First it has been consistently found that if parents use drugs and a child is emotionally attached to them, children are significantly more likely to also use drugs. Also, family dysfunction prevents the development of positive bonds and is related to higher rates of all types of substance use and lower rates of treatment recovery.<sup>25</sup>

Research also indicates that attachment to parents is also a strong protective variable in preventing substance use among Adventist young people. In 20 years of research conducted by IPA faculty we have found that among Adventist youth, attachment to parents is consistently related to lower rates of all types of substance use as well as other types of risk behaviors. Parents who accept their

children unconditionally, parents or grandparents who's children feel that they can talk to them about anything, parents who represent the kind of Christian that the youth wants to be when they grow up are significantly more likely to have children who have much lower rates of substance use.

Happy functional families have always been a strong part of Adventist beliefs. Data from general society as well as from studies done on Adventists shows that parental bonding is the first prevention building block—the first protective element that builds toward a foundation of resilience. The importance of the Church doing all it can to strengthen the families through its policies, direct programs and school family partnerships is crucial to building resilience among our youth!

### **Developing Self-Esteem**

Youth who had a positive self-concept have lower rates of delinquency even in a high risk environment. One of the most significant developmental tasks facing young people, particularly adolescents, revolves around their identity and self-worth. While the relationship between self-esteem and youth risk behavior is complex,<sup>26</sup> recent studies have shown that positive self-esteem was related to lower rates of violence,<sup>27</sup> lower rates of substance use,<sup>28</sup> and better substance abuse treatment outcome.<sup>29</sup> Some describe global self-esteem as how much a person values him- or herself— how much someone likes, accepts and respects him- or herself as a person.<sup>30</sup> Prevention of high-risk behavior should consider adolescents' self-appraisals and their ultimate ability to understand who they are and their purpose in society.

How do we encourage genuine positive self-esteem in young people? Perhaps we begin by noting a very basic Christian truth, that God so loved every human being that we would have sent His son to save even one of his creation. Each human being is of inestimable worth. It is important to distinguish between an inaccurately high or conceited opinion of oneself and a more valid appraisal of one's worth based on recognized competencies and worth because we are God's creation.

One way is to provide unconditional positive self-esteem, while encouraging an accurate

appreciation of their special abilities and worth.<sup>31</sup> This involves showing love and regard for them rather than merely judging them based on their behavior or academic success. It is important for young people to know with certainty that we care about what they are doing. The value of genuine high self-esteem in the realm of prevention is borne out in primary research conducted by the Institute for Prevention of Addictions (IPA). Those young people we have surveyed in 15 years of research in an Adventist College who reported unconditional love from their parents were about forty percent less likely to drink alcohol in the last year. Parental unconditional love may increase resistance to peer influence to use alcohol and other drugs. Within the Church and our schools, it is important for us to provide real opportunities for our young people to build genuine self esteem by recognizing their talents and providing opportunities to exercise their unique talents in a variety of church and school settings. Doing so, research suggests, can play a major role in prevention.

### **After School Activities**

After-school hours, when young people are out of school and while parents may still be at work, are the time of day when young people are most likely to engage in at-risk behavior. Studies show that often the largest proportion of drug use, sexual activity, and delinquency among young people occurs between the hours of three to six in the afternoon.<sup>32</sup> One of the strategies that schools have used to prevent high risk activity during the after school hours is to engage students in protective activities. Students who spent no time in extracurricular activities (after-school programs such as sports, clubs, music, etc) were 49% more likely to have used illicit drugs and 35% more likely to have smoked cigarettes than students who spent one to four hours per week in non-risky extracurricular activities.<sup>33</sup> However, the involvement of adults in after school programs may be an important part of effective after school programming. The "Monitoring the Future Study" has consistently found that students who spend time with their peers in athletic or other peer based activities are more likely to engage in substance use.<sup>34</sup> However, research demonstrates substance use is lower among students engaged in after-school activities that are adult supervised.

A core part of a resiliency perspective is the role of adults in prevention. After school activities supervised by adults are protective; involvement in after school activities without adult supervision is related to higher rates of substance use.<sup>35</sup> Thus, finding ways to engage children during the after-school hours should be a key part of any successful prevention effort. College students can be a significant resource in providing after-school activities for young people and keeping them engaged in positive, meaningful pursuits during that time.

### **School as a Community**

Over the past decade, research has emerged describing linkages between the social context of school and students' involvement in problem behavior. Four decades ago, Hirschi found that youths' commitment to school was related to lower rates of substance use, delinquency or other risk behaviors.<sup>36</sup> Battistich and Hom described school as a "functional community," meaning an environment characterized by caring and supportive interpersonal relationships in which students and teachers have the opportunity to participate in school activities and decision making, and a place where there are shared norms, goals and values.<sup>37</sup> Students who had a high perception of their school as a community enjoyed school more, were more academically motivated, were absent less often, engaged in less disruptive behavior, and had higher academic achievement than students who did not. In addition, students who perceived of their school as a community were less disruptive and used fewer drugs.

Other research has shown that when students had a perception of their school as a community they tended to read more outside of school, enjoyed reading more, liked school more, avoided work less, were more academically motivated, enjoyed helping others learn more, and had higher educational expectations. Academically, they performed better on reading and mathematical achievement tests. They also had more concern for others, had higher self-esteem, and resolved conflicts better.<sup>38</sup> Resnick and colleagues found that when students sensed a high level of connectedness at school, they were involved in fewer violent acts; were protected from use of cigarettes, alcohol and marijuana; delayed first

sexual intercourse; and showed better health and less risky behavior.<sup>39</sup>

School connectedness arises from relationships between people, working to create meaning and happiness in the context of an interdependent community of human beings in school settings. This can be accomplished by adults engaging with students in schools and developing meaningful relationships with them.<sup>40</sup> Primary research conducted by faculty of from the IPA found in a sample of Adventist college students that those who felt that there were three or more faculty or staff that they could talk to anything about used substances at half the rate of those who did not report this kind of connectedness.

These findings have implications for college administrators, faculty and staff to work with their students and develop programs using college students to engage in school activities with students, strengthening school connectedness, and promote an open trusting relationship with students. This would promote a school environment that is perceived by the students as caring and concerned about their health and wellbeing. Adventist education has a strong tradition of integrating the home and school as well as defining the school as a core part of the faith community. However, the tyranny of the daily, financial problems and conflicting priorities have resulted in the loss of some Adventist schools and reduced our ability to continue to apply this tradition as strongly as we may have done in the past. The data on the importance of the school for community should remind us that the role of Adventist education plays a crucial role in the resilience of our youth.

### **Service Activities**

Stark has argued that the triumph of Christianity in the Roman world occurred to a significant extent because of how Christians treated the communities in which they lived.<sup>41</sup> He noted that the Christians took the words of Jesus in Matthew 25:31-46 to heart and met the human needs of their communities. In Matthew 25 Jesus describes a powerful judgment scene in which God welcomes those to His kingdom who had taken care of those who were sick and had provided food and clothing to those in need. Stark argued that this revolutionary approach where "Christian values of love and

charity had from the beginning been translated into norms of social service and community solidarity” was in such stark contrast to the dominant Roman philosophies that Christianity changed the world.<sup>42</sup>

A recent Ellen White Estate publication noted that, “When we accept Him as our Savior, we will do the things He did, such as caring for the needy and homeless and being compassionate to those who are poor.”<sup>43</sup> The importance of service is not only a strong theological statement, but research also shows that engaging in service for others is a crucial part of protecting our youth from a wide variety of high risk behavior.<sup>44</sup>

Considerable attention has been directed at identifying effective approaches to reduce adolescent sexual risk-taking. Researchers have identified risk factors and protective factors related to sexual risk behavior. Kirby is at the forefront of reviewing programs for effectiveness in delaying the initiation of sexual activity and identifying features related to successful and unsuccessful interventions. He reports that service learning programs among young people are effective in reducing adolescent pregnancy and childbearing.<sup>45</sup> Other researchers confirm these findings. Melchior evaluated the “Learn and Serve” programs throughout the United States. Students in these programs spent an average of 77 hours providing various community services. Pregnancy rates among participants during the year in which they participated were lower than among non-participants.<sup>46</sup> Research also shows that engaging in service was related to higher rates of school retention and lower rates of substance abuse.<sup>47</sup> Primary research conducted by the IPA at an Adventist college in 2005 showed that those who engaged in 10 hours or more of community service each month were significantly less likely to use tobacco, alcohol or marijuana.

The exact role that service plays in prevention may be complex. However, Kirby speculates that it may be because participants develop sustained relationships with program facilitators, which may encourage resilience, or enhanced feelings of competency and greater autonomy, along with the positive feeling that they are making a difference in the lives of others.<sup>48</sup> Participating in service activities also reduces the opportunity to engage in problem behavior, especially during after-school hours.

College administrators should identify places and activities to involve their students in service activities. Creative thinking, involvement and planning could have a very positive impact on young people by getting them involved with helping others in their community.

## **Faith and Prevention**

For social scientists and public health researchers, the role of religion in prevention and building resiliency has often been problematic. Many scholars tend to be agnostic and have tended to view religiosity and spirituality as very difficult to scientifically measure and as just indicative of positive social bonds.<sup>49</sup> However, scientific data already gathered has been too powerful to ignore. A review of decades of research on the protective effect of religiosity on substance use showed that in about 80 percent of the studies, religiosity is significantly related to lower rates of alcohol, marijuana, and all other drug use.<sup>50</sup> They conclude that the empirical data is clear that involvement in faith communities and personal spirituality are strongly related to lower rates of substance use. It may also be related to harm reduction among drug users. IPA researchers found that street injection drug users who attended church frequently and indicated that their faith was important to them were more likely to clean their needles to avoid infecting others with HIV and not engage in crimes of violence.<sup>51</sup>

Primary research conducted by IPA researchers on Adventist populations also has found in over 20 years of studies that while the rate of substance use is lower among Adventist young people overall,<sup>52</sup> those who frequently attend church, are involved in church related activities frequently and have a strong involvement in personal spirituality are significantly less likely to initiate and continue alcohol and other drug use.<sup>53</sup> These data suggest that even those who are protected because of their faith based involvement are more likely to not use drugs if they are more behaviorally and personally involved in their faith!

A number of research papers also show that religiosity and spirituality are very involved with recovery from substance abuse. For many, those 12-step programs do work!<sup>54</sup> Research has consistently shown that religiosity and spirituality are positively related to treatment progress and



recovery. It is important for treatment providers to recognize and utilize religiosity and spirituality as a part of successful treatment.<sup>55</sup>

The mechanisms of how religiosity and spirituality facilitate prevention and recovery are complex. However, the literature suggests that they may relate to a number of aspects of these two constructs. First it has been noted that being involved in a faith community generally means that one is associating with non-drug users. This means that the social learning environment of faith community members involves interacting with a high proportion of non users. Additionally, being active in a faith community generally means that one has a support group that provides social support in many life stress situations. The availability of a support group is associated with lower rates of substance use. Another element likely involves the internalization of norms against illicit drug use and at least moderation in alcohol use.<sup>56</sup> The internalization of normative values has consistently been found to be related to lower rates of substance use. The role of family in prevention has been discussed. Research also suggests that family bonds are increased by involvement in faith communities. It has also been noted that religion's focus on judgment may be related to a wide variety of conventional behavior including lower rates of substance use. Finally, primary research conducted by IPA researchers over the last twenty years has found that the primary reason Adventist youth have given for not using substances is because of their relationship with Christ.<sup>57</sup>

The faith community and all of us involved in it have a major role to play in prevention and building resilience. An active campus chaplaincy program and integrating faith and learning are crucial element in substance abuse prevention on Adventist campuses. Research suggests that active involvement in church activities and a personal spirituality are key to prevention. It would also seem crucial to engage students in leadership of spiritual programs as well as doing everything possible to facilitate a strong personal devotional life.

## Where to Go from Here?

Earlier in this chapter, we alluded to the horrendous statistics uncovered by the US Task

Force on College Drinking. The Task Force concluded that:

1. The culture of drinking at colleges and universities can be transformed by *committed, research-based, collaborative* efforts supported by institutional leaders.
2. *College administrators and other concerned individuals* need to work together to change the culture of drinking on US campuses (and we would add on campuses throughout the world).

The actual title of the Task Force study and findings are summarized in a document entitled: "A Call to Action: Changing the Culture of drinking at US Colleges". We conclude this chapter with a clarion call to action in our communities, schools, colleges and universities. We have shared the research that undergirds focus on developing resilience and self worth in young people. Resilience leads to the making of good choices especially as far at- risk behaviors are concerned. Our educational institutions already have committed and concerned individuals on staff, in the student body as well as in surrounding communities and churches. We sometimes think that educating and providing information is adequate in our quest of prevention of at-risk behaviors and focus mainly on education and information.

Information is not enough!<sup>58</sup> Along with connectedness (and resilience), mentoring, service to others, and spirituality should be modeled, taught and experienced by the faculty and students. When information is shared, it should be accurate. For example, many blindly accept cursory comments that drinking alcohol has some health benefit. But there is no suggestion of this for young people in evidence-based literature! Tell them so! Faculty can help enforce the culture of non-drinking and non-substance use by *themselves* practicing what their employing institutions preach! It is sad to hear from students in our schools the reports that some of their teachers drink alcohol. Our actions drown out our words and values when they are contradictory.

Clinical, preventive interventions can be put in place in our campuses and instructions of learning to decrease at risk behaviors. This prevention will be drawn on the best available science and some



evidence-based initiatives have been discussed in this chapter. These initiatives should focus on the entire student body (universal) and yet others may focus on selected subgroups with greater risk such as those who may be experimenting with or even regular users of recreational substances (alcohol, tobacco and other drugs – ATOD). It is important to remember that non-dependent users often do not perceive the negative consequences of their habits and may be at even great risk of progression to full dependence. They need our efforts and attention.

Alcohol and tobacco should be banned on campuses. Alcohol should be eliminated at our sporting events and college gatherings. Conditions need to be created that support and implement these restrictions.

There should be programs/initiatives which invite those who have problems with addictions to be helped, without judgmental or retributive consequences, and that protect privacy. Such programs will ideally, with the sharing of information, provide skills training and personalized feedback to those in the process of prevention and recovery. This needs to be balanced with the need to prevent the spread of such behaviors within the student body. Psychology and prevention professionals should design and implement these initiatives at each campus, addressing the specific needs and demographics of each school. Human resources and budgets are required to ensure success in these efforts but, the salvific benefits more than warrant such investment.

Faculty and students should intentionally model, nurture and teach with a spiritual emphasis on relationships and connectedness. The National Science Foundation is currently studying majors in the Biology Department and the Behavioral Sciences Department at Andrews University to understand how students in these departments achieve a higher degree of discipline proficiency than would be expected from their college entrance scores. Preliminary data suggest that is the close mentoring and role modeling of faculty that has made the difference.

Focused, Christ-centered discipling is the goal. Alcohol, tobacco and other drugs are dangerous and addictive. However, the strongest reason not to cloud the mind with mind-altering substances

should not be the fear of addiction but rather the intentional desire to keep the communication with Christ open and the mind clear. We will then witness comprehensive, true education which "...has to do with the whole being, and with the whole period of existence possible to man [all]. It is the harmonious development of the physical, the mental, and the spiritual powers. It prepares the student for the joy of service in this world and for the higher joy of wider service in the world to come."<sup>59</sup>

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup>Johnston, L.D., O'Malley, P.M. Bachman, J.G. & Schulenberg, J.E. *Monitoring the Future: national results on adolescent drug use, 1975-2007*, Volume II. College students and adults ages 19-45. NIH Publication No. 08-6418B. Bethesda, MD: National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2008.
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# JUMP ON BOARD

by Steve Case

## Coming Together

Halfway through the 180° Symposium, invited attendees went into two days of closed door sessions to brainstorm, report, evaluate and revise recommendations for secular campus ministry. For the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Andrews University seemed the appropriate location for this think tank. The Center for Youth Evangelism initiated the 180° Symposium and chose secular campus ministry as the topic for the 2009 gathering. Because this is an Adventist issue and concern, it would need to take place among Adventists. While Andrews University is a General Conference institution, for this symposium North America had a very strong representation, with Europe adding several attendees. Location and funding influenced participation, as did interest and availability. Not surprisingly, most could also speak from personal involvement in secular campus ministry.

Institutional and personal support came in the form of funding and visitation from the following:

Ron Whitehead, Center for Youth Evangelism

Niels-Erik Andreasen, Andrews University

Denis Fortin, SDA Theological Seminary

Rodney Grove, Lake Union Conference

Jimmy Phillips, Adventist Review

Japhet De Oliveira from the Center for Youth Evangelism coordinated the entire 180° Symposium. Chris Blake from Union College led the two-day, closed session for invited attendees.

## The Task and the Process

The dialogue itself showed a much broader arena than anyone present had worked in prior to the 180° Symposium. Of course some had more exposure than others, but everyone felt the stretch of ideas that seemed deeper or wider, innovative or passé, insightful or worthless, promising or frustrating.

Based on the papers discussed during the first half of the 180° Symposium, the group divided into four sub-groups to give special attention to the following four categories:

1. College and University campus ministry
2. High School and Elementary campus ministry
3. Networking (who? where? when? how?)
4. Resources (materials, money, personnel)

Each sub-group wrestled with identifying where the Adventist Church currently finds itself. Next came brainstorming regarding where we need to go and how to get there. Periodically the sub-groups reported to the large group, received feedback, and returned to their sub-groups to make revisions.

A clear goal for the conclusion of the two-day session was a set of recommendations for secular campus ministry for the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Byproducts included the networking that took place during the 180° Symposium, encouragement and sharing of ideas, listening to stories of isolation and struggle, and hope from a small but significant collection of inspiring breakthroughs.

As could be expected for a task of this scope, sometimes things bogged down while at other times enthusiasm surged through the group. Debate and direction of discussions involved a clash and convergence of ideas and personalities. A moment of mounting frustration would get swallowed by a sense of spiritual infusion and hope. Other adjectives for this intensive include: difficult, multi-faceted, and worthwhile.

## Reports

1. *College & University campus ministry* – The statistics alone demand a thoughtful response and a focus for ministry. Even though some statistics are suspect or limited to a small population, the sense that a clear majority of Adventist students attend

colleges and universities outside the Adventist education system is the norm, and few seem to do anything about it. Various reports indicate 60-80 percent of Adventist students attend non-Adventist colleges and universities. In countries with no SDA college, 100 percent of the Adventists who attends college will be attending a non-Adventist school. The exception would be those who travel abroad to enroll at an Adventist school outside of their own country.

An equally startling statistic presents the evangelistic challenge and opportunity of colleges and universities. In North America, approximately 19,000,000 students attend these schools. This large number equals the total population of the five largest cities in North America—New York City, Los Angeles, Chicago, Houston, and Toronto. Imagine ignoring these five cities in light of the Gospel Commission to take the Gospel to the whole world. Unthinkable!

The time has come to acknowledge and respond to the reality of SDA students attending non-Adventist colleges and universities. Whether it's a lack of programs offered at SDA schools or a debate about quality education and school status, or the issue of cost or geographical preference, it's time to set aside the defensiveness of supporting Adventist schools while ignoring students at other schools. With only 14 SDA colleges and universities among 4300 other private and public colleges and universities in North America alone, we must think more broadly and with greater inclusion. The shameful indictment can be seen repeatedly at SDA Churches located directly across the street from a large, non-Adventist college or university, with virtually no ministry to that campus. Unbelievable! Unconscionable! If SDA Churches have a mandate to reach their community for Christ, then those in prime locations for campus ministry clearly should make that their priority and minister accordingly.

Higher education provides a fertile environment for people in transition. Some experience a new quest for knowledge and need forums for spiritual discussions to also progress. These students are the church right now. Let's not ignore them. Because of the transitions, where will community develop? Commitment at such volatile times may be absent or short-lived. Does that mean we should abandon the task or does that make our presence even more

vital? Congregations and individuals within a congregation can apply their spiritual giftedness to reach college students. At the same time, college students can be recruited to infuse local congregations with life and additional service. The Churches of Refuge model offers an identification of college student-friendly congregations.

2. *High School and Elementary campus ministry* – For individuals and families, which institution becomes the hub of community life—the church or the school? For those involved at an Adventist school, the two often function together. But for the many who don't attend an Adventist school, church and school function in separate worlds. That can change!

Start with impacting your own child and that child's circle of friends to be a positive influence in the community. Volunteer at your child's school. Do this simply to help rather than to "evangelize." Simply be a caring adult who wants to help. This might involve menial tasks like clean up or food preparation or decorating. It could include tutoring, playground supervision, office projects, or campus beautification. Work with your church and local schools to come up with a list of what parents and other adults can and cannot do. Then volunteer accordingly.

Consider adopting a school in your community. Start with adopting those where students from your church attend. These are "your kids." Then expand the term to include the other students as "your kids" as well. For many families, the school is the hub of community life. Instead of waiting for them to possibly attend your church, go to their world and get involved at the local high school or elementary school. By adopting them, they have become your mission field. The same thing can and should be done if your church has an Adventist school in the community—adopt it!

Some see this as a "sowing" campaign rather than as a "reaping" campaign. In evangelistic terms, this might be accurate. But it also provides current retention for Adventist young people attending public schools. Some have already found reclamation by being on the public school campus. Evidently being present has both current and future evangelistic results, with a service orientation rather than an evangelistic one.

Some campuses are open to an overtly religious club that your adopted students could galvanize. Consider linking with other ministries in the community or initiate ministries and invite others to join. Pathfinders might be a more neutral gathering than Sabbath School. Your church's ministry might occur at the church facility as well as at the school or other places in the community.

With such a local emphasis for ministry, would it be helpful for high school and elementary ministry to be part of ACF (Adventist Christian Fellowship) with its college and university target group? This question remains unanswered. College students could be part of a local church's adoption of local elementary and high schools. Perhaps the recent collegiate ministry publication *Word on Campus* needs a spin off for high school or elementary school ministry. Without question, children and youth need to be filled with God when they are young, not merely when they head off to college. Adventist colleges could get involved earlier in the recruitment stages by providing ministry events like "Standout" in conjunction with existing high school campus ministry programs.

While the initial ministry might be to Adventist students on a public school campus, the real target should enlarge to include the entire campus. The school provides a microcosm for the community. What an ideal place for a congregation to be!

3. *Networking (who? where? when? how?) and Resources* (materials, money, personnel) became difficult to differentiate; so they will be reported as one group. The strongest item for both networking and resources came in the form of a person who would pull all of this together. This might necessitate a superman or superwoman with magnificent spiritual gifts, commitment, experience, availability, charisma, organizational skills, enthusiasm, and a low-budget salary!

With existing campus ministry personnel and programs still at the fledgling stage, it becomes difficult to imagine providing the additional resources to network with others, especially on a national and even international arena. Some can report occasional and sporadic points of contact or interactions between Facebook friends. But the plethora of blips made possible through technology doesn't result in quantity equaling quality. The need

to sift through data and make good connections screams for attention and would provide a starting point for a campus ministry point person to set priorities for the Adventist Church.

It didn't take long to recognize the mammoth size of this job. Taskforce additions seemed like an economical means to tap into the creative and energetic pool of campus ministry volunteers already involved. This could provide an annual thrust of new vitality to resource a growing network.

Debate ensued regarding where to locate this position/person. No particular existing campus ministry seemed to be the catch-all or operational center for such a broad service. Two agencies/institutions emerged. The General Conference (GC) and the Center for Youth Evangelism (CYE) at Andrews University.

The GC seemed like a logical spot due to its organizational hub for the SDA Church and typically has a more global perspective than any given local institution. But with little representation from the GC at the symposium, current buy-in wasn't available. However, those present developed tips and strategies to include the GC in the recommendations from the 180° Symposium. The quarterly publication *Dialogue* comes from the AMiCUS branch of the General Conference Education Department. A campus ministry would need to include youth ministry, education, and potentially evangelism in new forms.

The CYE also seemed like a logical spot, especially since it hosted the 180° Symposium. With this point of reference, along with the start-up of Churches of Refuge, linking a new campus ministry position might be good based on current synergy.

Those in attendance spoke in favor of both the GC and the CYE, although some certainly leaned much more in favor of one or the other. The deciding factor might not be based on what is ideal but on who funds the position. That might also determine accountability and obvious influence.

Funding seemed to be the golden egg those present wanted, but nobody seemed to have. Fund raising from an institutional perspective involves taking data, voted recommendations, endorsements, and some type of lobbyist to the powers that be—

administrators. What arguments or carrots could be presented to these leaders? Potential future and current evangelistic budgets seemed like reasonable sources to those present. Fund raising outside of the institution gained little ground since nobody offered the names of any significant donors in this arena.

Website renovation and appeal seems like a “must” these days. Facebook gets the current nod for networking via the internet. Cell phones have their place as well.

In addition to the primary importance of a person, a large-scale event for students to attend could provide grassroots networking and future resources. But that would probably begin on a small scale with existing ministries and then it could grow.

## Recommendations

The 180° Symposium in October, 2009 provided a necessary exposure and increased awareness to secular campus ministry. Individuals and small but significant ministries operate under the power of the Spirit. The coming together revealed success as well as tremendous need. Placing all the hopes and expectations onto one person in a new role serves as the visible “next step” for recognition, networking, and moving forward. It will take visionaries to take this step. If you are one, paint the picture and display it!

The potential paradigm shift is not based on a single miracle worker. It comes from labels, and changing existing ones. For years we have used the adjectives “secular” and “Adventist” when it comes to describing campus ministry. The 180° Symposium started with the term “secular campus ministry.” Occasionally discussion differentiated between “Adventist campus ministry” that seems challenged and yet robust in comparison to “secular campus ministry.”

Here’s the recommendation: drop the adjectives! Let’s refer to this as simply “campus ministry.” Instead of supporting one or the other, let’s support both as one. Let’s enlarge the campus ministry at Adventist schools to include those on other campuses as well. Let’s link the campus ministry at non-Adventist schools (public and private) with the campus ministry at Adventist schools and churches. Both would be stretched. Both would benefit—in the

short term and in the long term. Let’s begin to speak with one voice.

Education continues to be fundamental for our society. Instead of segregating ministry based on systems of education, let’s change our campus ministry models to target not only our campus, but others nearby. Schools already do this with athletics, music, debate, science, and more. Ministry should certainly include a very local application, but it must reach beyond as well. Otherwise, we’ll lose our connection to our church or the world we seek to connect to God.

The matriculation process of schools supplies a steady supply of newcomers with new life, new ideas, new people! And they continue to graduate their students and send them out all over the world. Contrast that with joining an institutional ghetto (church or school) in which people stagnate and rarely go outside of their protective bubble. Instead of “losing students each year,” you automatically get to send them out annually. You have a guaranteed flow instead of a standstill.

Instead of ignoring or wistfully holding on during the school years, let’s be intentional in going to where people are—those who have an affiliation with the church and those who don’t. The call of Christ is to not only give our lives to Him, but for others, too.

When we reach the campus, we will reach the world.

***“On many major campuses, we find Adventist students who care about their church and want to stay connected with its mission. They love God and want others to share in the same joy and experience with Him that they are having. By not staying connected with these young people, we are losing them from the Church. We are also losing our best evangelistic link to the campus.” – Ron Pickell***

An estimated 70% of Seventh-day Adventist college and university students attend non-church sponsored schools. Many of these students are not finding a spiritual community they can connect with, creating a tremendous need for public campus ministry.

How can the Seventh-day Adventist Church intentionally foster biblical community on public college and university campuses? How can we reach both Adventist and non-Adventist students? How should we conduct evangelism to fit a changing world? These and many other questions were addressed at the 2009 180° Symposium held on the campus of Andrews University.

Papers presented at the 180° Symposium covered three major themes:

- Campus Ministry Models
- Campus Ministry Networking
- Campus Ministry Resources

Among the 23 papers included in *Reach Your Campus Reach the World*, you will find powerful ministry ideas presented by Steve Case, Kirk King, Ron Pickell, Alex Espana, Martin Weber, and many others. Topics covered include rethinking evangelism, campus-based youth ministry, social networking and the faith community, and supporting our youth.

Young people are searching for meaning. With the confusing messages bombarding them daily, they need to hear the truth. Is your congregation ready to reach out to public campuses?



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