

MICHIGAN MEMO



TIME TO MINGLE



“If your church were to disappear from your community, would anyone notice?”

On Sabbath, December 14 at 4 PM, the Great Lakes Adventist Academy (GLAA) students were piling out of the bus dressed in their formal black performance attire. They were invited to the Edmore Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Village of Edmore just four miles west of the academy. This concert would be different from others as the Edmore church members had specifically invited community members to attend a “community concert.” During the Christmas season, many of us take for granted the benefits of musical concerts, and nativity pageants that the general public may not get an opportunity to enjoy. The members of the Edmore Church had desired to share this blessing with anyone who would like to come, and they opened their doors and invited one and all.

The evening started with moving the furniture to accommodate the large number of singers and musicians at the front of the small country church. Candles were lit and wreaths lighted. The students gathered in the hallway with anticipation as two smiling young greeters welcomed visitors. The church bell was rung at 6:15 PM, signaling the start of the program at 6:30 PM sharp. The members were praying for those who had come, and asking for the Holy Spirit to bless all who attended. The choir began with the acapella selection “Carol of the Bells,” and the acoustics of the church allowed the sound to surround each member of the audience. The bells rang with praises to our Lord and the strings soared. Hearts were uplifted toward God. The students didn’t realize that their audience was a mix of Seventh-day Adventists

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KAMERON DEVASHER

HEAVEN ON EARTH

“Pastors and administrators are called to train individual members for personal ministry and to organize local congregations for soul-winning service.”

Working Like Angels

When Jesus taught His disciples to pray, He instructed them to entreat our heavenly Father, “Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” (Luke 11:2) What exactly does that mean? Beyond a mere turn of phrase, I believe Jesus was saying that God actually wants us to execute His will here on earth the same way it is executed in heaven. Therefore, to do God’s work well, we need to better understand how heaven operates.

Revelation chapters four and five provide a fascinating glimpse into the inner workings of the heavenly courts. Here we find the members of the Godhead each in their respective roles—the Father on the throne, the Son as “a Lamb as though it had been slain,” and the Spirit “sent out into all the earth.” (Revelation 5:6) Beyond the Heavenly Trio there are four living creatures and twenty-four elders, each in their assigned place. Yet for all the rightful attention given to God, the living creatures, and the elders, the overwhelming majority of heaven’s population is made up of another group of beings. “Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands.” (Revelation 5:11) Whether that number is literal or figurative, we can all agree it is a lot of angels! What is their function in God’s kingdom?

The Apostle Paul explains how God

“makes His angels spirits and His ministers a flame of fire” and that angels are “all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation.” (Hebrews 1:7, 14) So while there are a handful of key leaders, heaven consists mostly of angels, each tasked with personally ministering to the lost. That is the model of labor God wants to see reflected in His church on the earth.

The Counsel of Jethro

You are likely familiar with the story of Israel’s organization recorded in Exodus 18. No sooner had the Lord delivered the Israelites from Egypt than it became expected that each day “Moses sat to judge the people; and the people stood before Moses from morning until evening.” (Exodus 18:13) When his father-in-law, Jethro, observed this practice, he questioned Moses as to why he worked that way. Very sincerely Moses answered, “Because the people come to me to inquire of God. When they have a difficulty, they come to me, and I judge between one and another; and I make known the statutes of God and His laws.” (Exodus 18:15, 16) Despite his sincerity, the way Moses was working was not in harmony with heaven’s ideal. To correct the situation, Jethro made a two-part proposal.

First, he recommends that Moses “teach them the statutes and the laws, and show them the way in which they must walk and the work they must do.” Interestingly, this counsel is practically identical to what Moses was already

doing; the only difference being the added task of teaching people “the work they must do.” The instruction Moses gave needed to include more practical application of personal duty.

Second, Jethro encourages an expanded leadership structure. “Moreover you shall select from all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them to be rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens.” (Exodus 18:21) Instead of one man directing all the affairs of an immense sea of people, Moses should arrange the congregation such that everyone would have his or her place in a small group for the purpose of service.

Jethro concluded with encouragement saying, “If you do this thing, and God so commands you, then you will be able to endure, and all this people will also go to their place in peace.’ So Moses heeded the voice of his father-in-law and did all that he had said.” (Exodus 18:23, 24)

Jesus, the Model Minister

It should come as little surprise that Jesus, who had commanded the angel host and established the working order of heaven, instituted these same principles among His disciples on earth. At their very first interaction, Jesus said “Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men.” (Mark 1:17) They were not merely to be witnesses of Christ’s work for the lost, but to become workers themselves.

PRAYER FOCUS

Every Monday morning, the Michigan Conference staff meets for worship and prayer. Here is the list for February. Please join with us as we pray for these churches and ministries.

FEBRUARY 3 - 7

Kalamazoo Korean
Pastor Jin Won Lee
Kalamazoo Jr Academy
Kalamazoo Community Services

FEBRUARY 10 - 14

Brighton/Lakes Area Company
Pastor Steve Schefka

FEBRUARY 17 - 21

Menominee/Wilson
Pastor Tom Hubbard
Wilson Jr Academy
CAMPUS Retreat

FEBRUARY 24 - 28

Central Lake/Gaylord
Pastor Chris Ames
Teen Bible Camp

“Unceasing PRAYER is the unbroken union of the soul with God, so that life from God flows into our life; and from our life, purity and holiness flow back to God.”

—Ellen G. White

Later, after having spent time assisting Christ in His ministry, the disciples were sent out to practice what they had learned. “Then He called His twelve disciples together and gave them power and authority over all demons, and to cure diseases. He sent them to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick... So they departed and went through the towns, preaching the gospel and healing everywhere.” (Luke 9:1-6) Expanding this model even further, we read how “After these things the Lord appointed seventy others also, and sent them two by two before His face into every city and place where He Himself was about to go.” (Luke 10:1) That’s eighty-two people Jesus deployed for practical ministry!

“Then He said to them, ‘The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few; therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.’ ” (Luke 10:2) Jesus knew that His mission entailed not just His own labor for the lost but training of others to do the same. “In all His work, He was training them for individual labor, to be extended as their numbers increased, and eventually to reach to the uttermost parts of the earth.” (*Acts of the Apostles*, p. 32)

From the Apostles to Christ’s Return

After Christ’s departure, His lessons of organization for individual labor weren’t lost on His disciples. When the believers began looking to them to care for every need of the congregation, the Apostles immediately put into practice what they had learned from Jesus. “Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, ‘It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word.’ ”

(Acts 6:2-4) And what was the result? “Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.” (Acts 6:7)

This story illustrates the proper role of church leaders. Pastors and administrators, like Jesus and the disciples He trained, are called to train individual members for personal ministry and to organize local congregations for effective soul-winning service. As the Apostle Paul explained, “And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.” (Ephesians 4:11, 12)

This biblical model is further elucidated by the *Spirit of Prophecy*. In *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 149 we read how, “Every church should be a training school for Christian workers. Its members should be taught how to give Bible readings, how to conduct and teach Sabbath school classes, how best to help the poor and to care for the sick, how to work for the unconverted.” This call for personal ministry from every church member is so vital that we are even told that, “The work of God in the earth can never be finished until the men and women comprising our church membership rally to the work and unite their efforts with those of ministers and church officers.” (*Gospel Workers*, p. 352)

I love working in Sabbath School and Personal Ministries (SSPM) because this department exists to train, equip, and encourage lay members to win souls and grow their local churches. How desperately we need a revival of every-member evangelism! It is my conviction that this, at least in part, is what Jesus had in mind when He taught us to pray for God’s will to be done “on earth as it is in heaven.”

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THEY SAVED MY LIFE

Gloria was a middle-aged woman with a pleasant smile and a careworn expression. I was visiting in her home with two students from our very first Emmanuel training session, Shane and Aris, ages 23 and 16, respectively. They had been surveying door-to-door as part of a class assignment when they made their way inside a security apartment building. Hers was the last door. As she was recounting the experience from her vantage point, she told of how her husband had recently passed away. Sickness had consumed him, and machines were keeping him alive. He finally asked that he be allowed to die, and she consented. When he died, Gloria became very depressed. She withdrew from her family, and although she was never much of a drinker, she began to drown her sorrows in alcohol. She became very reclusive. “I just didn’t want to talk to anyone, even my own children,” she said. I asked her, “Why on earth did you answer the door for these two guys?” She paused reflectively, then replied “I guess God knew just what I needed when He sent them. They saved my life.”

As I reflect on this experience, I think of the words of Jesus who told us so plainly, “The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few” (Matthew

9:37). What greater privilege could we ask than to be a part of Christ’s work in the salvation of souls? How many more “Glorias” are waiting for someone to reveal the love of Christ to them in personal ministry? And what are the things we consider so important that we allow them to keep us away from the harvest field?

Ellen White names self-indulgence, unwillingness to sacrifice, and love of ease as some of the things that Seventh-day Adventists had allowed to distract them from uniting with Christ in His work of saving souls. She then wrote these sobering words:

“Many, many are approaching the day of God doing nothing, shunning responsibilities, and as the result they are religious dwarfs. So far as work for God is concerned, the pages of their life history present a mournful blank.” (*Review and Herald*, May 22, 1888)

My friend, what do the pages of your life look like? If they look anything like mine, there is still room – room for more kind words spoken, more compassionate deeds done, more truth-filled tracts shared, more Bible studies given. There are still more

“Glorias” who need to experience the saving love of Christ. And praise God, there is still *time!* Don’t you want to pledge yourself more fully to Christ, to be used by Him in reaching someone in your circle?

If you answered “Yes” to the above question, then let me share an exciting opportunity with you! This coming fall, we will be conducting a special *Emmanuel On Location* training session at the Michigan Conference Office in Lansing. For seven days beginning September 27 and continuing through October 3, participants will be immersed in an environment of soul-winning and evangelism. There will be a variety of classes taught by experienced instructors, along with practical, hands-on training in classroom labs and field work. These are designed to give you more confidence in the Biblical foundations of your faith, more ability to infuse your church with the spirit of revival, and more courage in sharing your faith with others, making you a more active and effective witness for Christ – anytime, anywhere.

The \$249 registration fee covers accommodations in a top-rated area hotel, breakfast (provided by the hotel) and lunch daily, and all class materials. For those living close enough to commute, the cost for registration will be \$125 and will include the lunch meals and materials. To register, or if you would like more information, please visit our website at michigansspm.org, or call Jody at (517) 316-1581. Space is limited, so register early!

Thank you for your faithfulness and your dedication to Christ, from those of us at the Michigan Conference and every “Gloria” we are able to reach for the Kingdom.

Mark Howard, Associate Director, Sabbath School and Personal Ministries



Who moved on the heart, Who first drew the mind to view Christ on the cross of Calvary. Faith is rendering to God the intellectual powers, abandonment of the mind and will to God, and making Christ the only door to enter into the kingdom of heaven.

When men learn they cannot earn righteousness by their own merit of works, and they look with firm and entire reliance upon Jesus Christ as their only hope, there will not be so much of self and so little of Jesus. Souls and bodies are defiled and polluted by sin, the heart is estranged from God, yet many are struggling in their own finite strength to win salvation by good works. Jesus, they think, will do some of the saving; they must do the rest. They need to see by faith the righteousness of Christ as their only hope for time and for eternity.

Ellen G. White, *Faith and Works*, p. 24, 25

WHAT MAN CANNOT DO

Man can achieve no praiseworthy exploits that give him any glory. Men are in the habit of glorifying men and exalting men. It makes me shudder to see or hear of it, for there have been revealed to me not a few cases where the homelife and inner work of the hearts of those very men are full of selfishness. They are corrupt, polluted, vile; and nothing that comes from all their doings can elevate them with God, for all that they do is an abomination in His sight. There can be no true conversion without the giving up of sin, and the aggravating character of sin is not discerned. With an acuteness of perception never reached by mortal sight, angels of God discern that beings hampered with corrupting influences, with unclean souls and hands, are deciding their destiny for eternity; and yet many have little sense of what constitutes sin and the remedy.

We hear so many things preached in regard to the conversion of the soul that are not the truth. Men are educated to think that if a man repents

he shall be pardoned, supposing that repentance is the way, the door, into heaven; that there is a certain assured value in repentance to buy for him forgiveness. Can man repent of himself? No more than he can pardon himself. Tears, sighs, resolutions—all these are but the proper exercise of the faculties God has given to man, and the turning from sin in the amendment of a life which is God's. Where is the merit in the man to earn his salvation, or to place before God something that is valuable and excellent? Can an offering of money, houses, lands, place yourself on the deserving list? Impossible!

There is danger in regarding justification by faith as placing merit on faith. When you take the righteousness of Christ as a free gift you are justified freely through the redemption of Christ. What is faith? "The substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1). It is an assent of the understanding to God's words which binds the heart in willing consecration and service to God, Who gave the understanding,

(MINGLING)

and members of the community. The beauty of watching these young people from all over Michigan, and beyond, representing multiple cultures, was inspiring!

When the concert was complete, there was a general feeling of peace and wonder. As the people filed out of the sanctuary, there were smiles, hugs, handshakes, and hearty well wishes for a Merry Christmas. There were Christmas cookies and *GLOW* tracts waiting in the foyer for guests. They also had an opportunity to sign up for a DVD presentation of the concert on the way out. The guests could not believe that the young people were from a school in the area. Many exclaimed how lovely the concert was, and how talented the students were.

The week before the church held a live nativity program with musical selections, poetry and scripture readings as the final stop in the annual Edmore "Christmas in the Village" events. The *Lakeview Area News* attended the events that evening and the journalist wrote a glowing half page piece in the newspaper highlighting the program, and advertising for the GLAA concert the following week.

These concerts were the culmination of a year of planning and implementation based on Christ's method alone. The Sabbath School lesson asked a thought-provoking question this year; "If your church were to disappear from your community, would anyone notice?" The church has worked together to "mingle with men," in acts of kindness, and intentional programming that is community-oriented.

The year began with passing out carnations with the children outside the supermarket on Mother's Day. In the summer, members went out and canvassed the community regarding

special needs. Vacation Bible School was held outdoors in a neighborhood park. Backpacks, school supplies, and Thanksgiving baskets were distributed. Multiple families were adopted for Christmas. Even the highway through town has been adopted by the church! A smoking cessation class and an evangelistic series will be added to the events planned in 2020. The friends we have made in the community will be invited. Activity for others has made the church lively and filled with purpose. To reach the people we need to get to know them, we need to show them we care, help them, and become friends. We can't do that if we never leave the church.

Changes are being made to make the church more visitor friendly. Clutter

has been eliminated, new chairs, flowers, and decorations have improved the appearance of God's house. A new lighted sign will be placed this year. To increase the sphere of influence, the Facebook page and the website have been updated, and sermons and pictures are being uploaded. Attention to details is important and the gifts given to every member are needed for success. Please pray for this small country church that they will continue to be motivated by this mission and united in faith to minister to the needs of their community.

"Christ's method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Savior mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed his sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then he bade them, 'follow me.' " (*Ministry of Healing*, p. 143)

See the entire concert at the Edmore SDA Church Facebook Page.

Daniel and Laura Jean-Francois, pastor and wife, Alma, Edmore and Lakeview churches

(HEAVEN)

Making this very application, Mrs. White counsels, "How can you who repeat the Lord's prayer, 'Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven,' sit at ease in your homes without helping to carry the torch of truth to others? How can you lift up your hands before God and ask his blessing upon yourselves and your families when you are doing so little to help others? ... The heavenly messengers are doing their work; but what are we doing? Brethren and sisters, God calls upon you to redeem the time." (*Historical Sketches*, p. 288)

Friends, I believe that we all, myself included, should pray more earnestly as Christ taught us. May we each "redeem the time" by dedicating ourselves to individually seeking the lost and coming close to those in need. In so doing we will cooperate with the ministering angels and taste a little piece of heaven here on earth.





Rest and Renew Retreat

March 5-8, 2020

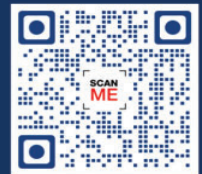
Camp Au Sable

Nature Keys to Balanced Living
Rest Dynamic Bible Study
Massages And More!

Info-Registration:

Cost: FREE when you bring a non-Adventist friend

Speaker: Chad Kreuzer, Anchor Point Films



Michigan Evangelism 

Would you like a stress free weekend to enjoy nature, free massages, keys to Balanced Living, and deep Bible study? The Michigan Evangelism Department is hosting an "almost free" retreat weekend for all MI church members.

The cost? You must bring someone (ages 12 & up) who is not a church member. We are providing a relaxed atmosphere where you can bring your friends, family, church visitors, Jesus on Prophecy attendees, or whoever, to study the Bible and prayerfully make a decision for Christ. All you have to do is register both you and your friend, and you are in!

PASTORAL TRANSITIONS



José Bourget is the new University Chaplain for Andrews University (AU). He served as Executive Pastor of Pioneer Memorial Church prior to accepting the call to serve full-time on the university campus. Be sure to keep him and the students attending AU in our prayers!

Do you want to receive the weekly e-newsletter of the Michigan Conference for the latest in news and upcoming events? Subscribe now by copying the following link to your browser: <http://bit.ly/MISDA7>.

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MONTHLY CALENDAR

February

- 1 Pathfinder Bible Experience Area
- 3-9 NAD Presidents' Retreat
- 5-9 GLAA Home Leave
- 11 District Superintendents
- 14-16 CAMPUS Retreat
- 17 Presidents' Day - Office Closed
- 18 MI Executive Committee
- 26 Camp Meeting Leaders
- 27 MI K-12 Board of Education
- 28-Mar 1 Teen Bible Camp

March

- 1-15 Camp Meeting Registration
- 5-8 Rest, Relax, Renew Retreat - Camp Au Sable
- 10 District Superintendents
- 11-22 Cuba Mission Trip
- 12-15 GLAA Home Leave
- 13-15 Marriage Commitment Retreat
- 21 Pathfinder Bible Experience Union
- 22 Lay Advisory
- 22-29 New in Ministry
- 24 MI Executive Committee
- 28-29 Conference-wide Fieldwork Berrien Springs

PROJECT SOCKS

Connie Ross, Vassar church member

Fall quarter, 2019 - The Vassar Primary/Junior Sabbath School Class decided they would like to start a project entitled, "Project Socks." We wanted the children to develop compassion for the less fortunate. Learning from a church member who had once been homeless, we found that one of the most important things a homeless person can be given are warm socks in the winter.

A can to collect our money was spray-painted and the children decorated it with paper socks. It was labeled, "Project Socks!"

The children were encouraged to find creative ways to earn money and then donate a portion of their earned monies to "Project Socks."

A request for money from the church members was also solicited. Pocket change was saved by some of the members of the congregation to give to the kids to add to their collection.

One of the church members brought in another collection can to have the kids decorate, and she placed it in her office for the public to donate.

Within one month \$194.44 was collected. 42 pairs of heavy-duty winter socks were purchased, and 21 pairs donated, for a grand total of 63 pairs.

On Sabbath the children eagerly rubber banded the socks together with the following message: "We hope these socks warm the soles of your feet as well as the souls of your being! Jesus loves you!

Vassar Seventh-day Adventist Church Primary/Junior Sabbath School Class." They were delivered to a homeless shelter in the area.

"If anyone has material possessions and

sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth." 1 John 3:17-18, New International Version

The children are already eager to begin a new project of love for the less fortunate next quarter!

