



Lessons for Eternity: Adventist Education in Michigan

It is nearly impossible to discuss Adventist Education without acknowledging its rich history. The first Seventh-day Adventist School was founded in 1872 by Goodloe Harper Bell at a small house behind the Review and Herald in Battle Creek, Michigan. That school—now Battle Creek Academy—set into motion what would become the largest protestant parochial school system, with a total of 6,966 educational institutions and over 1.3 million students worldwide. In Michigan alone, Adventist education comprises 31 schools and over 1,500 students.

But while the history of Adventist Education is rich, the philosophy behind it is more profound. “Adventist Education should be part of a three-legged stool,” says Jeremy Hall, Superintendent of Schools for the Michigan Conference. “It’s the home, church, and school, working together to help create a firm foundation for students to be raised to know Jesus as their personal Savior and be equipped to share that love with other people.” The

Michigan Conference Board of Education has taken a distinct position in applying this philosophical approach in something that Hall describes as “the three keys to success in Adventist Education.”

The Three Keys

The first key is bringing young people to the foot of the cross. “That means every teacher is an evangelist. I tell my teachers, ‘You teach math and spelling on the side. Your main goal is to reach a young person for the cause of Christ, and to model the love of Jesus to them beyond worships and Bible classes,’” Hall explained.

The second key is quality at all levels. “We don’t need to have the greatest buildings and the latest computers,” Hall continues, “but what we do has to be done at a high level of quality. We must communicate effectively, have great customer service, top-notch academics, and professional decorum in everything that we do.”

The third key is training our students in the message and mission of the

‘The Michigan Conference Board of Education has taken a distinct position in applying...’the three keys to success in Adventist Education.’

Seventh-day Adventist Church. “Our young people need to be in the laboratory of Christianity. We give them a lot of theoretical knowledge of what it means to be an Adventist; but just like chemistry class has a laboratory to prove the theoretical information that we teach in the classroom, we’ve got to make sure that we have practical opportunities for young people to have proof that Christianity is real.”

Bearing Fruit

Adventist Education has borne fruit for participating families in a multitude of ways, including socially, academically, and spiritually. “One of the things that Adventist Education has done is create lifelong friendships, and potentially provide a spouse that has the same beliefs as you,” Hall said. “In addition, he continued, “Adventist Education has done a phenomenal job of creating opportunities. I’ve never

“Is it possible that we forget the deeper meaning of worship referred to in Revelation 14—the focal point of the Great Controversy?”

By Jim Micheff,
President



THE FOUNDATION OF WORSHIP (PART II)

When the wind picked up, they knew they were in trouble. As the intensity grew, the mariners quickly realized this was no ordinary windstorm. When the tempest exceeded anything they had ever experienced, they believed the storm was supernatural. Fearing for their lives, they began calling out to their individual gods. The captain found Jonah sound asleep below deck, and woke him saying, “How can you sleep? Get up and call on your God! Maybe He will take notice of us so that we will not perish.” The sailors concluded that whatever god was in control of nature was upset with someone on their ship. They cast lots to find out who was responsible. When the lot fell on Jonah, they surrounded him and asked, “Tell us, who is responsible for making all this trouble for us? Who are you and where do you come from?” Jonah responded, “*I am a Hebrew and I worship the Lord, the God of heaven who made the sea and dry land*” (Jonah 1:9).

In our modern Christian culture, we commonly use the word “worship” to include all kinds of religious interactions. Is it possible that we forget the deeper meaning of worship referred to in Revelation 14—the focal point of the Great Controversy? Jonah’s response is fascinating because he is actually running from God! He obviously isn’t referring to an event or style of programing when he claims to worship Him. Let’s address a few questions as we take a broader look at worship.

Who is the object of worship? The first commandment points to God as the supreme object of worship. Jesus left no doubt when He said, “For it is written, *you shall worship the Lord your God and Him only you shall serve*” (Matt. 4:10).

What is worship? Worship is the process of becoming like the one being worshiped. By beholding we become changed. True worship involves opening our heart to God and giving our entire self, our thoughts and emotions, to God’s use. Then all of life becomes an act of submission—an act of worship.

“Worship is the process of becoming like the one being worshiped.”

Who defines worship? The one being worshiped defines it. For example, a rock star is defined by their looks and actions. People who idolize or worship them voluntarily incorporate their style of dress or admired actions into their personal lives. For Christians, Jesus is our example in all things, and He demonstrated total submission to the Father, modeling how to worship.

Is there a preparation for worship? In this quarter’s Sabbath School guide

In the Crucible with Christ for July 26, the lesson pointed out three important facts that help lay the groundwork for worship. The passage used is Job’s response when he learns that all his children and wealth have been stripped from him. “Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked I will depart. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away. May the name of the Lord be praised” (Job 1:20-21).

First, Job admitted that he was helpless and had no “rights” or claims to anything. Next, he understood that God was in absolute control. Then he acknowledged that God was and is righteous. As Job’s relationship with God deepened over the years, it became more meaningful. So had his reverence and submission to God. When the crisis came, he was able to continue to worship because he fully trusted the Lord. Psalm 96:6 says, “Oh come, let us worship and bow down; Let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.” “True reverence for God is inspired by a sense of His infinite greatness and a realization of His presence” (Ellen G. White, *Prophets and Kings*, p. 48). James adds that if we submit ourselves to God, we draw near to Him and He will draw near to us.

How should we worship? God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth. To worship in “spirit and truth” means to have an attitude of reverence and, in all sincerity and with the highest faculties of the mind and emotions, apply the

principles of truth to the heart. As we grow, our worship experience will deepen. The Holy Spirit is our Teacher; Scripture is our textbook.

Who benefits from worship? God is not a taker; He is a giver. Everything belongs to God. He created everything, including us. Although God appreciates and enjoys the love we give Him, He is the source of that love. God doesn't need our love to do anything for Him. It doesn't give Him self-confidence or fortify Him from discouragement. His desire for worship is not motivated by selfishness. He knows we need to worship Him because we are dependent on Him for everything in life.

What can you expect when you worship God? Initially we may experience a sense of happiness or contentment, or some other positive emotion. But as we experience life, it doesn't take long to realize that a superficial understanding of worshiping God doesn't sustain those feel-good emotions. Our emotions should not dictate our worship, rather our worship must be based on scripture. We can expect the promises of God to be a reality in our lives. Satan would have us think that when we worship God challenges will be filtered out of our life experiences. But Peter warns us that worshiping God doesn't shield us from the consequences of this evil world but does provide us the opportunity to put our trust in God (1 Peter 4:12).

What do I get out of worship? We don't worship to get—we worship to be! Worshiping God involves surrendering to His authority and control. God created us with basic human needs that ultimately only He can fulfill. Before sin He provided for all those needs. There was no lack for anything. When man rejects God, he also rejects the one who supplies all our needs. Our world is full of people suffering from low self-worth, no purpose, anxiety, and fear. So many are without hope.

When we are reconciled to God and submit ourselves to Him, the way is restored for God to provide all our needs. He fills our hearts with love, and we have a sense of value. He promises that even though we walk through the valley of the shadow of death we will fear no evil—because He is with us. He gives us a purpose for living by encouraging us to go home to our friends and tell them of the hope He has given us.

Why does God want worship? Satan portrays God as demanding and threatening – as if He were forcing us to worship Him. He knows that if we submit to God's authority, we will be victorious over every deception he has.



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

OCTOBER 3

Kalamazoo Korean

Pastor JinWon Lee

Kalamazoo/Kalamazoo
Filipino Co

Pastor Moise Ratsara

Kalamazoo Filipino Co

Pastor Dharwin Yanilla

OCTOBER 10

Kalamazoo ACS Center

Kalamazoo Jr Academy

OCTOBER 17

Centreville/Kalamazoo

Countryside

Pastor Mike Szykowski

Covert/Hartford/Pullman

Pastor William Richardson

Hartford Food Pantry

Covert ACS

OCTOBER 24

Allegan/Gobles

Allegan Food Pantry

Gobles Jr Academy

Gobles Pinedale ACS Center

OCTOBER 31

Otsego/Paw Paw

Pastor Sean Reed

Otsego ACS Center

Paw Paw Food Pantry

We need what only God can give, and He cannot give it unless we worship Him with our whole heart.

By God's definition, worship cannot be forced. Willing worship from the heart is a choice!

What did Jonah mean when he said, "*I worship the Lord, the God of heaven who made the sea and dry land*"? In the study notes for Jonah 1:9 (NIV Andrews Study Bible), it says that the phrase "I worship the Lord" is an expression that means "I believe in the Lord God and live according to His stipulations." The foundation of true worship is a reverent love so strong you will obey and honor God. Worship *starts* as an **attitude** (reverence) and *results* in **action** (submission to God) and over time *becomes* a **state of being**. By God's grace, together we can follow Paul's admonition when he said, "Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sister in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship"(Rom. 12:1, 2, NIV).



On the church herb garden tour, attendees learn about the health benefits of some twenty different medicinal and culinary herbs.

Dinner from the Garden

By Health Ministries team,
Brighton church

Have you ever toured a garden? Perhaps a botanical garden or a vegetable garden at a historical farm or maybe a large field of tulips or sunflowers. We seem fascinated with gardens because the Master Gardener first placed us in a garden home and made gardening our first occupation. Here He also gave us the secret to good health – a plant-based diet.

These facts led the New Beginnings Health Team at the Brighton Seventh-day Adventist Church to prayerfully develop a unique summer community outreach. Several years prior, a portion of the church landscaping was turned into an herb garden that now contains twenty-five different culinary and medicinal herbs. These have been used in cooking classes as well as in teaching natural remedies classes put on by the New Beginnings Health Team. At the parsonage next door, Pastor Steve Schefka and his wife Staci put in a small cottage garden. Though less than 200 square feet, it has produced twenty different fruits, vegetables, and flowers using methods like square foot and vertical gardening.

What if the community could be invited to come and tour these gardens and then enjoy a garden dinner featuring locally grown produce? What if this could be done in connection with their ongoing plant-based cooking classes that already had a large following? That

became the inspiration for the “Dinner from the Garden” outreach event.

On the evening of August 11th, over 30 community guests arrived at the church for the occasion. After a warm welcome, Pastor Schefka began with a short PowerPoint presentation on why



we are drawn to gardens. He began by describing the perfect Garden of Eden where there was no disease, predators, or death. “See this tiger,” he said, pointing to the majestic animal on the screen, “he wasn’t trying to kill anything because he was plant-based. Everything was built to run on a plant-based diet!” He then quoted Genesis 1:29, “And God said, ‘See, I have given you every herb that yields seed which is on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; to you it shall be for food.’” In that first garden, mankind was given

the choice to eat the food God had provided or to choose their own way. Sadly, they chose to eat what God had forbidden and death was the result.

However, years later in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus made the choice to surrender to God’s plan and to go to the cross to die for our sins. Three days later He was resurrected from the Garden Tomb. Scripture reveals that gardens represent the fruitfulness and healing that Jesus wants to bring into each of our lives (Isaiah 51:3; 58:11).

“The Bible begins and ends with a garden.” Pastor Steve concluded. “The book of Revelation tells us that the Garden of Eden will be restored and there will again be no more curse. How many of you want to be part of that future garden?” It was beautiful to see the guests positively respond to this garden gospel presentation! Staci Schefka followed up with an invitation to receive free Bible guides on health topics or common Bible questions. Since they first began offering Bible lessons, over two dozen attendees have requested them and many have attended or are still in Bible studies. “If there is one thing that I get more excited about than even talking about health and plant-based eating,” Staci says, “it is studying the Bible and applying it to my life and discovering hope and answers and then helping others find the same. That is why we make this invitation at every class.”



New Beginnings Health Team members, Mary-lou McAlpine & Staci Schefka, lead out in the food demonstrations.



Jay McKeown shares his testimony of how he lost 100+ pounds and overcame many health challenges by making plant-based eating his new lifestyle.

Following this devotional, it was time for the herb and cottage garden tours. Participants learned how herbs like oregano, sage, comfrey, and yarrow have amazing health benefits and are great natural remedies for common ailments like bronchial infections, wounds, sprains, and fevers. At the cottage garden, everyone was encouraged to begin growing their own food even if only in containers.

After the tour, a garden meal was served which included vegetarian barbecue meatball sandwiches with coleslaw, summer corn and edamame salad, sour cream and onion kale chips, and a summer berry fruit crumble. During the recipe demonstration portion taught by Marylou McAlpine and Staci,

everyone was surprised to learn that the “apples” in the fruit dessert was actually zucchini! What a delicious and fun way to use this abundant garden vegetable.

The benefits of plant-based eating are undeniable. Jay McKeown, a recent Christian and convert to plant-based eating, shared with the group how he had lost over a hundred pounds, reversed his pre-diabetes, overcame depression, and got off nine mental health medications by going plant-based. “Once you control what goes into your body,” he told the audience, “You can actually take control over everything else in your life.”

This Dinner from the Garden event shows that we can use the activities we already do in daily life – gardening and

eating a vegetarian diet – and combine these to reach the community in a fun and practical way. We encourage you to plan your own “Dinner from the Garden” event next summer!

To find recipes or view previous classes, visit www.facebook.com/nbhealthteam or the YouTube channel “New Beginnings Health Team.”

Note: Jay who gave a testimony during the class along with his wife are now in two Bible studies a week. They have been regularly attending church and want to become members of the church. They are so excited to have found a church that talks about individuals being the temple for the Holy Spirit and promotes plant-based eating.



W.S.U. executives present Lusanni Acosta with diploma at special graduation ceremony. (L-R) Dr. Christopher Cheatham, Interim Provost, and VP for Academic Affairs; Dr. Edward Montgomery, President; Dr. Diane Anderson, VP for Student Affairs; Dr. Lusanni Acosta; Jeremy Hall, Superintendent, MI Conference; Jorge Rodriguez, Professor; Steven Butt, Dean, College of Engineering and Applied Sciences.

“Upon hearing about Acosta’s beliefs, and her determination to do what she knew to be right, WSU administrators held a special graduation ceremony—just for her.”

Standing Up for the Sabbath in University

While growing up in the Caribbean, Lusanni Acosta had no idea of the miracles God would work in her life for His sake.

Early on, she knew she wanted to be an engineer. “I knew what my goal was from the start,” she says. Acosta says that mathematical skills came easy to

her. “I found all those things—algebra, geometry, calculus—easy,” she said. She decided to study civil engineering for her undergraduate degree. She re-

.....

(Lessons for Eternity: Adventist Education in Michigan)

seen someone say, ‘I want to be a brain surgeon, but I went to Adventist schools my whole life.’”

Adventist Education has also resulted in many baptisms. “At our last quinquennial session, there were over 400 baptisms associated with students being in Adventist schools over that five-year period. Our LIFT (Lifestyle Improvement for Teens) event is the result of at least 60 baptisms every year,” Hall said.

He believes that some results are yet to be seen. “It’s only until we get to heaven that we’ll be able to see the impact that Adventist Education had on people,” he said. “It lingers with you.”

By the Numbers

Over the past several years, Adventist Education in Michigan has experienced some setbacks. Since 2013, nine schools have closed. In addition, Michigan has experienced a net loss of over 500 students in its elementary and secondary schools. “As a department, we’re looking at this and saying, ‘This is a major problem.’” said Hall. “Seventy-eight percent of Michigan Conference Adventists are over the age of 40. Only 17 percent of Michigan Adventists are between the age of 20 and 40. Older people don’t have kids. Because of that, we’ve been seeing our school enrollments shrinking.”

Hall says that another factor that has led to the statistical decrease in enrollment is the multitude of educational options and a significant homeschool trend in Michigan. The COVID-19 pandemic also contributed to the loss of students. “Through COVID, we saw our enrollment drop by about 175 students. This past year, we gained back a significant amount—almost back to pre-COVID numbers. We’re anticipating that families might start coming out of public school, not liking what they’re seeing in society, and joining our schools.”

Needs are Provided During Challenging Hiring Season

According to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, some 300,000 teachers and other staff left the education field between February 2020 and May 2022, a nearly 3 percent drop in the workforce. In addition, nearly 8 percent of teachers leave the workforce every year. Finding teachers to fill open positions has become increasingly difficult across the nation. “At one point there were 350 education openings in the North American Division (NAD), which is unprecedented. Even before COVID, teacher prep education programs were seeing a drop in enrollment, which means that young people aren’t as interested in teaching,” said Hall. “The fact that we have the teachers that we have now is just a straight-up miracle.”

The Michigan Conference welcomed 15 new teachers this year, and miraculously, every opening is accounted for. For some schools, this meant that their position were filled. Others are managing with a smaller staff or becoming an



The first key is bringing young people to the foot of the cross.

A.S.P.I.R.E satellite. The Michigan Conference welcomed 15 new teachers this year.

What’s Next

At Teacher’s Convention in August, the education department unveiled several new initiatives, including plans to transition to a four-day week and standards-based learning.

Hall says that the change to a four-day week will greatly benefit teachers, while also helping students. Students are at the heart of learning. But the teacher is the most important conduit. Fifty-eight percent of our workforce said that their biggest stressor was time. Teachers are burning out. After researching what they could do to help, and in consultation with administration, including input from principals and a teacher-principal focus group, the department proposed the concept of a four-day school week to the Board of Education. After careful review and additional research, it was determined that the four-day concept could be an option that local schools might adopt, with guidance and input from the various constituent entities, including families, as an important part of the process.

This concept is being piloted for the 2023-2024 school year and will be evaluated based upon multiple factors, one being the impact it has upon standardized test scores.

Standards-based learning is another major initiative that will be introduced to the teachers as a philosophical pivot in learning and instructional methods. The North American Division (NAD) has developed methods that teachers can use to combine subjects and teach students more efficiently. “Standards-based learning is a philosophical shift that is showing us how we can create efficiencies, cross-curricular strategies, and build in efficiencies that we hope will help teachers and students,” Hall said. Standards-based learning also enables teachers to help students understand the content they’re struggling with while engaging students who have demonstrated an understanding of the subject.

Other initiatives are also on the horizon. Administrators are exploring ways that Adventist Education in Michigan can relate to special needs, such as mental health. A.S.P.I.R.E Academy, a virtual Adventist academy, is also projected to continue to grow and flourish. Hall says the Education department would like to revisit a prior project that demonstrated the three keys to Adventist Education in an easy-to-understand way.

In addition, Hall says that he hopes to attract more teachers

.....

(Standing Up for the Sabbath in University)

ceived significant financial assistance and scholarships that paid the entire cost of her undergraduate program.

What awaited her, she says, was worth waiting for.

Standing for Her Beliefs

After high school, Acosta decided to attend Western Michigan University (WSU) in Kalamazoo. When she arrived at the university, something unexpected happened. Acosta had to sign some paperwork regarding her scholarships—but the only time she could sign was on Sabbath.

“I decided, ‘No, I will not bow to this graven image,’” she says. Acosta decided to discuss the issue with the program director. “I went to him, and he told me that they understood, and that they’d be willing to accommodate me.” This wouldn’t be the first time her faith was tested as she began her higher education experience.

Before Acosta started her courses, she had to take an exam. Again, she encountered a Sabbath challenge. This time it was not just paperwork—it was an exam, and the entirety of her financial aid depended on her completing it.

The director told her that she would only be allowed to complete the exam on Sabbath. “I told the director, ‘I’m sorry, but I can’t take it,’” she says. She was prepared to walk away from her scholarships. “I was only 18, and I was convicted, but I was still thinking, ‘Lord, I don’t know about this, but I am believing right now.’” The next morning at 2 a.m. she received an email from the director that she describes as a miracle. “It said, ‘Lusanni, there is an alternative day.’” She was able to take the exam, and receive her financial assistance.

At several points, Acosta had key exams scheduled on Sabbath, overflowing homework, and other challenges. But, she felt that these challenges were a way of witnessing to her friends on campus. “My friends would come to me later and say, ‘You’re getting an education, but you’re also doing ‘the God thing.’ So, what if we have a PhD? You’re already doing something powerful.’”

Because she stood up for what she believed, she reached her

to the Michigan Conference through a commitment to the evangelistic mindset of Adventist Education. He says, “I think that if we are distinct about the mission that God has given us, from an evangelistic standpoint, available teachers that feel the call of God in their heart for that type of experience will come to us and join our team.”

By Samuel Girven,

Cadillac member

friends in ways that traditional evangelism couldn’t.

Special Graduation

As Acosta prepared to complete her Doctor of Philosophy in Civil Engineering, she learned that WSU’s graduation would be held on Sabbath. Once again, she knew she had to do what was right. “I decided that I could not attend.” she says. “People came to me and said, ‘You’re not going to go? Lusanni, you have to go to your graduation. Isn’t a PhD high enough? Can you get a waiver from the Lord or something?’ and I told them, ‘No, God is higher than this.’”

When she completed her undergraduate and graduate degrees, both graduations were held on Sabbath. On both occasions, she was able to participate in a photo-op with the university’s president in place of the traditional graduation ceremony. But this time, she discovered something even more worthwhile was in store.

Upon hearing about Acosta’s beliefs, and her determination to do what she knew to be right, WSU administrators held a special graduation ceremony—just for her. “The moment came, and it was so amazing,” she says. “I walked down the aisle and shook everybody’s hand. It was just like the ceremony that they had on Sabbath—but only for me. It was amazing, and it’s something I’ll never forget.”

Jeremy Hall, superintendent of Schools for the Michigan Conference, attended the ceremony and said it was an encouraging moment to witness. “It was a blessing and privilege to attend Lusanni’s special ceremony provided to her by the administration at Western Michigan University. The fact that the university president and officials were willing to do this for her was also meaningful,” he said. “It was encouraging to see the faith of this student who viewed her loyalty to God as more sought after and valued than marching with her classmates to receive her degree in the official ceremony. It’s encouraging to see that there are still young people who view the citizenship of heaven as of greater value than the pursuits of this world.”

By Communication team

MICHIGAN CONFERENCE OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

5801 W Michigan Ave

Lansing, MI 48917

PHONE 517.316.1500 FAX 517.316.1501

communication@misda.org

www.misda.org

www.facebook.com/miconf

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

MONTHLY CALENDAR

OCTOBER

- 2-5 LIFT
- 7-9 Mother Daughter Retreat
- 7-9 UP Marriage Retreat at Camp Sagola
- 9-13 Camp Au Sable Work Week
- 14-16 Lay Advisory Retreat
- 19-23 GLAA Home Leave
- 21-23 ACS Retreat
- 27-30 Rest & Renew Retreat

NOVEMBER

- 4-6 Public Hi-C Retreat
- 6-8 Prayer & Fasting (Pastors)
- 11-13 Crystal Mountain Marriage Retreat
- 11-13 Sabbath School Workshop – Camp Au Sable
- 20-27 GLAA Home Leave
- 23-24 Office Closed – Thanksgiving

DECEMBER

- 1 Lay Advisory Coordinating DoneCommittee
- 15-Jan 2 GLAA Home Leave
- 23-26 Office Closed - Christmas

MICHIGAN MEMO is a monthly publication of the Michigan Conference of Seventh-day Adventists for its constituents. Andy Im, editor; Beth Thomas, acting assistant editor; **Seminars Unlimited**, layout, design, and print. Comments may be submitted by emailing communication@misda.org.

NATURE NUGGET

Marram Grass and Sand Dunes

By Dr. Gordon Atkins,
Camp Au Sable Naturalist



PC: Dr. Gordon Atkins

If you have lived in Michigan for a while, you have probably visited some of the many dunes along the coast of Lake Michigan. So how does a sand dune form? You need sand, a place for it to pile up, waves to move the sand up on shore and most importantly wind. Wind pushes the sand into large hills. But that is just the beginning!

Plants called “pioneer species” begin to grow – but not just any plants. Marram Grass grows deep fibrous roots that go down to find water under the sand pile. In addition, Marram Grass grows roots that extend laterally and sprout up shoots. In this manner the Marram Grass can quickly over grow the dune. Now when the wind blows, the sand does not blow off but remains in place.

As the grass grows, its dead foliage makes soil which allows shrubs to grow. Eventually enough soil develops to enable a forest of trees like Maple and Beech to grow. A forest-covered dune is the final stage in the formation of a stable dune ecosystem.

Fire, over-grazing by animals and trampling by humans can lead to erosion of the sand dune and a “blow out” occurs. The vegetation gets sparse, or is removed completely, so that the dune is no longer stabilized. The dune sand can be blown around to new locations and the process has to start over again.

So, the question is, are you a stabilizing force in your community like the Marram Grass is for the dunes? Or are you an eroding force that leads to the breakdown of communities of which you are a member? We have many communities we influence, such as our family, our school, our church, our neighborhood and others.

God can help us become better stabilizers. Just like the Marram Grass, we need to dig deep into God’s word to keep ourselves going. Then we need to send “roots” out around us to be a stabilizing force to those with whom we come in contact.