



Official Newsletter for the Michigan Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

MICHIGAN MEMO

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▲ Women's Ministries Team

The DOCTOR Is In!

By Deb Montcalm

MEMBER, PIONEER MEMORIAL CHURCH

“Tornado conditions had grounded all flights from Atlanta. Carolyn was in shock and Jane felt like a deer in the headlights. But both women knew who was in control – our heavenly Father.”

Getting a text message at 6 AM rarely brings good news, and the text message received by Jane Harris (Women's Ministries Director) was no exception. It read, “My flight has been cancelled!” The text was from Carolyn Sutton, the main speaker for this year's women's retreat at Camp Au Sable.

Tornado conditions had grounded all flights from Atlanta. Carolyn was in shock and Jane felt like a deer in the headlights. But both women knew who was in control – our heavenly Father.

They began to pray and by 8 AM, just two hours later, God provided another main speaker for the first of three

weekends of the women's retreat—Tammy Milligan, who lived just under an hour away from camp.

Carolyn was thrilled to hear it was Tammy who would be filling in for her because the two had connected many years previous when Tammy had asked Carolyn to pray with her about a burden to be a public speaker. And here Tammy was, about to share Jesus in place of the woman who had promised to pray for her.

A few hours after agreeing to be the speaker for the first weekend, Tammy was at the retreat blessing the ladies with the message God had given her, which

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- EDITORIAL -

Seeds of Distress in the Church

By Jay Gallimore

MICHIGAN CONFERENCE PRESIDENT

“Satan hates this church. He will develop every chance to hit it from within and without. His goal is to destroy the church by either infecting it with false teaching or destroying its structure and unity.”

From time to time, since its inception, the Seventh-day Adventist Church has faced dissension. This should not surprise us. With a representative form of church government, it has many moving parts consisting of the local churches, conferences, unions, and the General Conference (GC).

In addition, it operates in many different countries, languages, and cultures around the world. With so many leaders and entities there is a lot of opportunity for discontent, for whatever reason, to develop.

Secondly, Satan hates this church. He will develop every chance to hit it from within and without. His goal is to destroy the church by either infecting it with false teaching or destroying its structure and unity. The history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, like the early church, reveals how Satan endeavors to work amongst us. Here are a couple of notable examples from the past.

In 1907 John H. Kellogg was disfellowshipped from the Battle Creek Tabernacle for his pantheistic, New Age teachings. He and his cohorts were very powerful and influential. This was no small crisis and some wondered whether the church would survive. But the church kept on growing.

Then there was Ludwig R. Conradi. He was a charismatic and talented German who oversaw and did much to build up the work in Europe. However, he was also the impetus for schism, division, and apostasy. In World War I, he became very nationalistic and encouraged

Adventists to bear arms in the conflict. Young faithful Adventists were drafted and suffered greatly because of his betrayal. Unfortunately, he was not dealt with until he had caused great damage, and arguably the impact is still felt in European Adventist churches today. He left the Adventist Church in 1932.

Now it seems we are faced with another challenge to our unity. It too is over a biblical issue as well as church governance. In 2015, for the third time, the GC session with thousands of delegates from around the world, voted not to allow women to be ordained to the office of Elder for the world church.

However, some unions have refused to bring their practice into harmony with this decision. In Europe, Australia, and North America, which make up about ten percent of the world church, there is considerable support for this insubordination. But also, in those same divisions there is a great deal of support, particularly among lay people for the GC vote and deep concern over the threat to unity.

But this *attitude* of insubordination, and not necessarily the ordination issue itself, has deeper roots. Could it be that a false presentation of the gospel has fertilized this attitude?

As Western culture has become increasingly secular and anti-Christian, our teaching on biblical lifestyle has brought attention to our peculiarity and distinctiveness. Struggling with our carnal nature in an increasingly carnal world, we have preferred a walk with Jesus that isn't so narrow and rugged. We

don't want to appear in the odd fringes of society.

In response to these longings, preachers have arisen among us who cleverly or naively pit acceptance and justification against Christian lifestyle and sanctification. In doing so they have created a tension that does not exist in the Bible. For sure, there was a debate in the early church of casting off Jewish ceremonialism, particularly for Jewish Christians. But there was never a war over God's grace against good behavior.

Nevertheless, over the years, for many Western Adventist leaders, the concept that grace produces good behavior has become blurred. The Church Manual is now viewed as dated and the section on Christian lifestyle as legalistic.

For the record, I believe Adventists maintain the correct understanding of the gospel, which incorporates both justification and sanctification. Fundamental belief number 10 states: "*Through Christ we are justified, adopted as God's sons and daughters, and delivered from the lordship of sin. Through the Spirit we are born again and sanctified; the Spirit renews our minds, writes God's law of love in our hearts, and we are given the power to live a holy life.*"

Our acceptance and justification and our Christian lifestyle and sanctification are like inhaling and exhaling. They are different, yet totally interdependent. To pit justification against sanctification is like pitting inhaling against exhaling. We must have *both* in harmony to live! Here is a sample of that harmony coming from the Apostle Paul's passionate testimony: "*God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.*"¹

Mocking Christian lifestyle as though it is an enemy of the gospel is preaching a false gospel. But it gets worse. In a recent evangelism council in the West, the idea was advanced that the church should just baptize people and afterwards teach them doctrines like the "state of the dead."

I knew similar attitudes existed in places regarding smoking, Sabbath keeping, unclean foods, and jewelry, to name a few; but I was shocked when I heard that.

Let's be clear. False grace will destroy every virtue of Christianity. And legalism, which is a form of false sanctification, will destroy the joy of true grace in our hearts. Just look around at the secular churches. In the name of cheap grace one can become a member or even clergy and embrace almost any abomination forbidden in the Bible!

In Western Adventism much has been surrendered to carnal worldliness. For example, when unfaithful secular churches opened the doors to the degrading and rebellious rock music culture, many Adventist churches ignored the Church Manual and followed suit. When popular evangelicals like Rick Warren and Bill Hybels marketed their evangelistic methods, many Western Adventist leaders jumped on their bandwagon.

This attitude was on display at a recent meeting in London, sponsored by the noncompliant unions on ordination. These unions were urged to stand together against the GC like some Christians were urged to stand against Germany in WWII, or like Martin Luther against the Pope.

Do they really believe our Church is like the medieval Roman Catholic Church? Are our elected leaders—who can be removed—really like the Pope that Luther stood up to? Or is this just hyperbole? If it is, then it is an irresponsible use of hyperbole.

We could also ask if encouraging defiance and hurling unfounded accusations is the path to unity. Perhaps all of this is simply the fruit of an attitude that resents the direction and guidance of the world church over the decades and the attempt to provide justification for fissure in the name of unity.

The decisions of the body are the lifeblood of its organization! Cooperating with those decisions, even if our own opinion is different, is what brings unity

and life to the church. There will be difficult times for the Church ahead, from many directions, as we approach the end. Its organization and life will be threatened by worldly attitudes, secular culture, and false teachings.

When germs invade the body they have their own agenda contrary to the body. Sometimes they will destroy a finger or a limb, but the body does have an immune system. And there is a balm in Gilead, a master Physician that resides there. By God's grace, the church will recover. No matter how much it is mocked or crucified on the cross of human arrogance, it will fulfill the purpose of its Creator!

Despite our wounds and bruises, our Physician has promised us a new heart! The mind of Christ! It is the mind of Christ that compels us to humility and unity, that moves us to submit to Scripture instead of culture, and motivates us to patience and longsuffering with each other.

People in the church may have differences of opinion. That's fine as long as we treat each other with Christian courtesy. And respect due process! But an attitude of rebellion is like witchcraft.²

For instance, in the rebellion of Korah, Dathan and Abiram, Moses was falsely accused of all kinds of things. But in the end it wasn't Moses that responded to that attitude, it was the Lord. It was that same attitude which blinded and bewitched a third of the angels in heaven. Any attitude of rude criticism and defiance—from whatever source—against God's church can cause a lot of suffering, but in the end it will not prevail. Did Kellogg's and Conradi's rebellion succeed?

The Lord is longsuffering and patient. Remember how He dealt with Job's hard questions? The Lord delights in a submissive heart, but will never accept a rebellious attitude.³

¹ Galatians 5:16, 6:14

² 1 Samuel 15:22

³ See God's dealing toward rebellion within the context of Jeremiah 26:19.



An Avenue for Success

By Jed Genson with Beth Thomas

JED PASTORS THE MANISTIQUE, MCMILLIAN NORTHWOODS AND SAULT STE. MARIE CHURCHES

PRAYER FOCUS

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

JULY 31- AUG 4

Benton Harbor/Coloma/Hartland
Indonesian

AUGUST 7-11

Elk Rapids Spanish/Shelby Spanish
Pastors Raul Parra

AUGUST 14-18

Rogers Heights Spanish
Pastor Eric Del Valle

AUGUST 21-15

Grayling/Houghton Lake/Mio
Pastor Bela Kobor
Grayling Elementary
Community Service Center

AUG 28-SEPT 1

Detroit NW/Cherry Hill
Pastor Steven Conway

The day dawned dreary; rain was imminent. Pastor Jed Genson and his wife Jodi, loaded materials into a pickup and made the hour-long trek to Sault Ste. Marie. Atypical outreach ideas are necessary in their three-church district spanning over 120 miles of the Upper Peninsula.

One day, as Jodi searched through local events, she happened across an advertisement for the annual Arts and Crafts Fair in Sault Ste. Marie. The event typically draws over 10,000 visitors. An idea took root in Jodi's mind. What if their church sponsored a booth with interactive health activities and information? She contacted the event coordinator for more information. As she explained what the booth would be offering and the coordinator became excited. She gave them all the vendor space they needed, free of charge!

Sault Ste. Marie members created tabletop displays related to diabetes, dental hygiene, and stress management. Others volunteered to handle the interactive games: A Jeopardy-style board with questions related to eye, brain, respiratory, and heart health, and a spinning "Wheel of Exercise." Nutrition related crafts and Bible story books for children rounded out the repertoire.

As the Gensons drove to the Sault the day of the event, they prayed that the

Lord would hold the rain. They prayed for their members and the guests who would visit their booth. To them, it was more than just offering important lifestyle information—it was the opportunity to introduce seekers to Jesus.

After setting up, they didn't have long to wait before their first visitors arrived. The bright display boards and child-related crafts drew hundreds of guests. The event coordinator was surprised. She remarked, "I'm so happy you guys are here! This is wonderful."

Guests were invited to fill out health surveys with the potential to win a special mystery gift bag filled with a stress-relieving bath gel, coloring book, water bottle, and Bible promise cards. Several indicated they were interested in stress management, vegetarian cooking, and Bible studies. Sault Ste. Marie member Holly Statt remarked, "One mother was really excited to find the Bible story books for her kids. She put her name in the drawing and was interested in our upcoming classes."

The success of the outreach was not measured by hundreds of visitors, though. It was gauged by personal interaction with people, hearing their stories, praying with them, and meeting their needs. It was following Christ's method and that alone is successful.

The Life of A Public Evangelist



By Dan Towar

MICHIGAN CONFERENCE EVANGELIST

Look at the fields,” Jesus said, “for they are already white for harvest” (John 4:35)! This thrilling promise of Jesus urges the proclamation of the gospel in the life of the evangelist. It is the burden of the heart and the reward. Saving souls is the goal!

A day in the life of a public evangelist begins with devotions and prayer. For me, exercise follows. I might add, reading from a wide variety of books is important and may include biographies, books on church or personal growth, and current events.

The early morning routine helps to focus the work for the day that involves various appointments and visitations until the evening or the 7:00 PM evangelistic series. Each day of an evangelistic series is similar, but never identical.

Some months ago, the *Discover*

Revelation evangelistic series took place at the Charlotte Church. The church members were organized into various committees and groupings that helped facilitate an organized program. By design these committees involve a significant number and active members feel they are contributing to the success of the series because they are!

Visitations consume most of my time during a given series. These visits include Bible studies, answering questions, and encouragement for continued attendance of the series. It is in the home where major commitments are made and answered prayers and miracles take place. All the time! It’s exciting to see a “negative” visit turn into something very positive. Baptisms often occur as a result of this type of follow-up!

Public evangelism breathes life into

the churches by enhancing their love for souls and facilitating revival among the members. A promise for everyone engaged in the Lord’s work is found in the book, *Mount of Blessing*, pp. 90-91.

“And at the final day, when the wealth of earth shall perish, he who has laid up treasure in heaven will behold that which his life has gained. If we have given heed to the words of Christ, then, as we gather around the great white throne, we shall see souls who have been saved through our agency, and shall know that one has saved others, and these still others. . . . With what joy will the worker for Christ behold these redeemed ones, who share the glory of the Redeemer! How precious will heaven be to those who have been faithful in the work of saving souls!”

WOMEN’S MINISTRIES, *cont’d*

tied in perfectly with the retreat’s theme: “The Doctor Is In!”

Carolyn arrived after the first weekend to speak for the following two weekends. What could have been catastrophic, God turned into a double blessing!

Women from over 220 towns and cities in Michigan attended this year. In addition to hearing God-inspired messages from Carolyn and Tammy, they were able to attend seminars on nutritional gardening, hydrotherapy, quick soups and breads, prayer and faith, victory over life’s battles, the challenges

of caregiving, and depression recovery and stress resilience.

Saturday evening provided opportunities for fun during the “Crazy Scrub” party where the ladies showed off their creativity and sense of humor by dressing up in their redesigned and outrageous medical scrubs. The evening ended on a high note with enthusiastic participation in a game called “Let’s Make A Deal.”

Chef Miguel and his cheerful staff provided amazing meals and Pathfinder groups from Cedar Lake, Grayling, and

Gaylord helped with clean up.

Shortly after the three weekend retreats were over, a drawing was held for a Nathan Greene print which was displayed at camp. Ruth Cook ended up winning the prize!

Similar to each year, surveys and phone calls revealed a genuine appreciation for the blessings, fellowship, and laughter of the retreat, and giddy anticipation for next year’s retreat!

To God be the glory, honor, and praise!



Sandy Finds Adventism

By Debi Everhart

COMMUNICATION SECRETARY, DOWAGIAC CHURCH

Front row, left to right: Roberta Randle, Sandy Randle, Alice Swann, Walter Swann

Back row, left to right: Pastor Travis Smith of the Troy Adventist Church and Pastor Ted Toms of the Dowagiac Adventist Church.

“So when a flyer arrived in the mail advertising *Unlock Revelation*, a Bible prophecy series, it got her attention.”

Sandy had been comfortably attending a non-denominational church for nearly ten years when she started to sense that something was missing. The Bible was not the focus of the worship. So when a flyer arrived in the mail advertising *Unlock Revelation*, a Bible prophecy series, it got her attention. She had always been interested in the book of Revelation; yet she tossed out the flyer, not expecting to attend.

But in a few days a distant friend sent her a text recommending a series on the book of Revelation that she had started to attend. Sandy went to www.UnlockRevelation.com and found that it was being offered nearby at the Dowagiac Seventh-day Adventist Church.

After attending just one of the meetings, Sandy was ready to recommend it as well. She suggested that her daughter find where the series was being shown somewhere near Ann Arbor where she resided. Then Sandy invited her local friend Alice to accompany her to Dowagiac.

Alice knew of Adventists because her mother had been baptized into the Adventist church later in life. John Groda, an Adventist chaplain who had ministered to her mother, had begun to study with Alice, who soon discovered that she didn't know the Bible well at all! She began to see how incorrect conclusions were sometimes reached when Scripture wasn't read in context. Deciding that disciples of Christ must have a foundation, she made the Bible her guidebook.

But how would her husband respond? Walter had been raised as a Baptist and believed that the Bible is the final authority. He and Alice often attended different churches rather than having a place to worship together. But as Alice began to attend seminars at the Adventist church, Walter started to feel drawn in the same direction. First he accepted an invitation to enjoy supper with Alice at the home of Melody Wallace, elder at the Dowagiac Church. Then he began to attend some meetings, and eventually tried church services as well. Pastor Ted Toms took him out to eat a few times. “The love they showed was so great,” Walter said. “That’s what drew me.” Though he’d had a lot of experience facilitating Bible study groups, he now felt that he was studying the Bible more than he ever had before.

Sandy had begun attending the Dowagiac Church on Sabbaths but still went to church on Sundays as well. But she prayed and felt convicted that the Adventist church was the Bible-based one that she should join. She continued to study the Bible thoroughly while her friends Alice and Walter did the same and prepared for baptism.

Praise God! Walter, Alice, and Sandy were baptized at the Dowagiac Church by Pastor Toms. Sandy was especially thrilled because her daughter Roberta came with Pastor Travis Smith from the Troy Church to be baptized together with her mother, uniting themselves as family before God.



First Sabbath at Elwell Seventh-day Adventist Church

July 2017 started with the initiation of the first worship service in the new church building

located on 33 Elwell Street in Grand Rapids. The new church is made up of mostly refugees and immigrants from the Umuhuza and Maranatha African groups.

On the first Sabbath service there were few parking spots available. The sermon was shared by Pastor Daniel Scarone, the multi-ethnic ministries coordinator for the Michigan Conference.

The members were thankful for district superintendent Pastor Bob Stewart and the conference leadership—elders Jay Gallimore, Jim Micheff, and Leroy Bruch—for helping to make this a reality.

District Six Retreat

District six church members have been enjoying a spiritual retreat at Camp Au Sable each summer for the past few decades. Come join us Thursday through Sunday, August 17-20 as we refresh in the Creator's natural environment with inspirational messages from Elder Louis Torres on Friday evening, Sabbath morning, and evening vespers. Many also enjoy the canoe trip each year in addition to horseback riding, the Nature Center, camp store, boardwalk, and go-carts. Come for the long weekend or just for the day! For accommodations call Chris Morris (989) 435-4401 by August 4. For more information contact Jerry Sundberg (989) 621-7729 or email him at jerryhsundberg@gmail.com.

Transitions in

MISSIONS



Cody Francis is the new pastor of the Carp Lake, Cheboygan, and Petoskey churches. He and his family joined the Michigan Conference from Hartland College (Virginia) where he served as dean of the college.



Ashley Tardif has been serving as the Bible worker for the Lansing Church since April. We want to extend her a warm welcome to our Michigan family!

- **Brian Choi** is the pastor of the Ann Arbor and Plymouth churches. Previously he pastored the Buchanan and Chikaming churches.
- **Jeff Dowell**, formerly the pastor of the Kentwood Church, is now pastor of the Delton Church.
- **Jacob Gibbs** is joining the Lansing Church as an associate pastor. He formerly served as the pastor of the Escanaba, Munising, and Riverdale churches.
- **Churck Hanlon** now pastors the Grand Ledge Church in addition to pastoring the Holt Church.
- **Cory Herthel** now serves as the pastor of the Warren Church. He formerly served as the pastor of the Midland and Mount Pleasant churches.
- **Christien Hodet** currently serves as pastor of the Fenton and South Flint churches. He previously served the Ann Arbor and Plymouth churches.
- **Mac Mills** will be pastoring the Irons, Frankfort, and Manistee churches. He was the former pastor of the Bay City, Bad Axe, and Unionville churches.
- **Garhett Morgan** previously served as assistant pastor of the Lansing Church. He now pastors the Big Rapids, Bristol, and Reed City churches.
- **Alex Rybachek** formerly served the Alma, Edmore, Lakeview, and Riverdale churches. He now pastors the Allegan and Gobles churches.
- **Jerryn Schmidt** is the pastor of Charlotte Church and has added the Urbandale Church. Previously, he was the pastor of the Grand Ledge Church.
- **Dale Sheridan** is the pastor of the Alma, Riverdale, Edmore, and Lakeview churches. Previously he served as an assistant pastor at the Metropolitan Church.
- **Andrea Walechka** is now a Bible worker for the Grand Rapids Central Church transferring from the Kentwood Church.

MONTHLY CALENDAR

JULY

- 27-30 | CAMPUS Leads
 31-8/3 | Ministerial Retreat - Camp
 Au Sable

AUGUST

- 2-6 | ASI - Houston, TX
 3 | New Teacher Orientation -
 Conference Office
 6-10 | Trust Services - Tuscan, AZ
 6-10 | Teachers Convention -
 Camp Au Sable
 18-20 | Adventurer Workshop -
 Camp Au Sable
 19 | Pioneer Women's Day -
 Historic Adventist Village
 20 | Lay Advisory
 20-22 | LUC Fall Spiritual Retreat
 23 | Camp Meeting Directors
 24 | MI Board of Education
 24 | School Starts
 25-27 | Pathfinder Workshop -
 Camp Au Sable
 29 | MI Executive Committee
 31-9/4 | UP Camp Meeting

SEPTEMBER

- 1-4 | Labor Day Weekend -
 Office Closed
 4 | Labor Day

FROM DRUGS TO JESUS

By Halee Boughton

It's amazing to me to look through my 22 years of life and be able to see all of the beautiful ways the Lord has brought my journey with Him into fruition. I didn't grow up in a Christian household, nor did the topic of God ever come up. I have only a handful of memories with me being inside a church, and they were mainly on holidays.

Throughout middle school and high school, I was either distracted by boys, drugs, or alcohol. It was about two years ago when for the first time, I met someone who made me want to know Jesus Christ. She was in her sixties, and her name was Marleen. She disciplined me for about

a year, doing small groups and praying with me, and I grew very close to her. She helped me grow a loving interest for God, something I had never had before.

I had made plans to move to East Lansing in October 2015, and six days after I moved, I received a text stating that Marleen had been diagnosed with stage 4 bone cancer and was only given 3-8 weeks to live. My faith was still so little, and I had only just started asking Marleen questions, and before I knew it she was gone. But it

was during that excruciating time when the God started to reveal Himself to me in a way that I had never seen before. His love was there to comfort and guide me through every step.

After Marleen passed away, I was lost and confused, but I had never been so eager to find answers. I spent the next



year wholeheartedly seeking out His truth, and the verse that got me through all of that was Jeremiah 29:13, "You shall seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart." The Lord helped me come to a very humbling place in my heart and life. I

wanted to find TRUTH in this chaotic and artificial world, to find the answers to questions that the majority cannot answer, and it led me to the true love of a Savior who saved my life.

He has shown me what is true, He has given me answers to the most difficult questions, and He has given me a new and better life. And now I am so grateful to be able to say that I will spend the rest of it living for the One and Only, Jesus Christ.