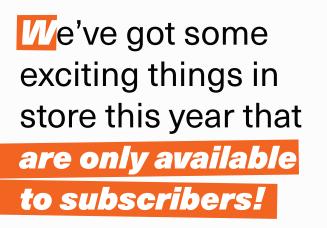


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# Adventist Journey

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## **My Journey**

As I think about how God has led my life, no words can suffice. God has given grace, forgiveness, mercy, direction, comfort, and unconditional love to me. All He asks in return is love and obedience. That is my Adventist journey and what a wonderful excursion it is! Visit https://vimeo.com/245647774 for more of Arlene's journey.

ARLENE L. JOHNSON, PH.D., MSN, ANP-BC, NR Dean of the School of Nursing and Health Professions, Oakwood University Arlene Johnson and her 11 siblings are all graduates of Pine Forge Academy, an Adventist high school in Pennsylvania.



**Dear Reader:** The publication in your hands represents the collaborative efforts of the North American Division and *Adventist World* magazine, which is inserted halfway through *Adventist Journey* (after page 8). Please enjoy both magazines!

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FEATURE

# Young Adults Need Us, But We Need Them More

Dialogue on race relations, the church, policy, and communication main thrust of second "Is This Thing On?" Facebook Live event.

BY KIMBERLY LUSTE MARAN



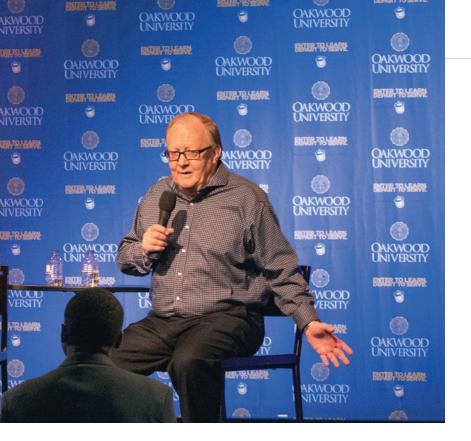
n December 2, 2017, Oakwood University students and student government leaders from

colleges across the North American Division (NAD) dialogued with church leaders during the second Facebook Live event titled "Is This Thing On?" (ITTO). The almost-twohour question-and-answer session with Dan Jackson, president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America, and Alex Bryant, executive secretary, was held in the Leroy and Lois Peters Media Center on Oakwood's campus the evening before the start of the 2017 Pastoral Evangelism and Leadership Council (PELC).

The unscripted program on the campus of the Adventist Church's only historically Black college/university (HBCU) featured questions taken from the studio audience, Facebook, and Twitter. Social justice, race relations, regional conferences, church policy and governance, and women's ordination topped the topic list.

Pieter Damsteegt





"Racism and social justice is a subject that is a very relevant to young people today," said Andrew Taylor, Oakwood University student and United Student Movement president, in the days just before the event. "I'm excited to have an open discussion regarding this important topic with church leaders and college students."

"I am planning a four-part Jesus-centered community event/conversation in Tacoma, [Washington], sometime in the spring regarding social justice, racism, White privilege, and poverty," tweeted Benjamin Orian as the live event streamed. "It is a serious conversation that the church needs to be having."

David Hamilton, a senior mechanical engineering major at Tennessee State University, was glad he came to ITTO with his father. "I've never experienced anything like it in the Adventist Church. It was refreshing to see this kind of transparent and open discourse," he said. "It's good that the church is giving millennials the space to start discourse. More events like this are what will help keep us in the church." Hamilton applauded the effort to use social media, where his generation communicates and often exists, to "bridge the gap."

#### Social Media Impact

Minutes after the event aired, Facebook reports indicated that the

#### SCREENING ROOM

Visit ow.ly/NUWJ30h3F4X or https://vimeo.com/245976334 to watch the "Is This Thing On?" 2 video. For more information, check out the NAD Facebook page at www.facebook.com/NADAdventist, or visit www.ittoshow.org.

video broadcast received 11,300 views, 240 shares, and about 2,000 reactions and posted comments, which included 975 questions and statements regarding the conversation. More than 80,500 Twitter accounts were reached through almost 400 tweets and retweets.

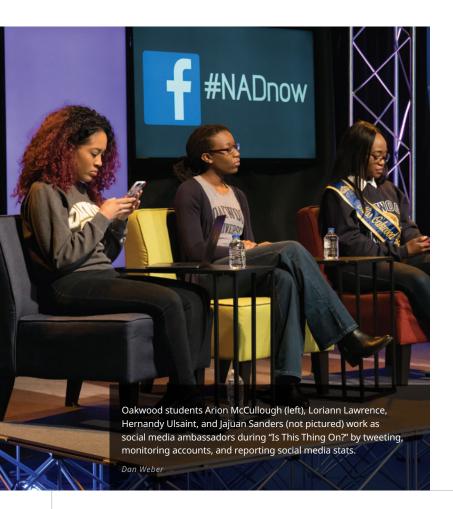
The NAD Office of Communication also created a Snapchat geofilter for use on the Oakwood campus on event day. More than 3,000 views, 520 swipes, and 89 uses were recorded after the event. "Snapchat is another way to connect with young adults on social media," said Julio Muñoz, ITTO host and producer. "We hoped our filter would help create awareness of our live event here at Oakwood and for future dialogues."

#### LISTEN IN

Anthony Gan, student body president at Union College, marketing major: How do we get over some of these [behavioral] issues and focus on love, and really narrow in on what's important?

Alex Bryant: That's the growing challenge we have as Christians. How do we keep our focus on the right thing? And the right thing is love. To me, that's about growing in Christ every day, and trying to emulate Him and keeping the focus on that. Jesus said there are weightier matters, and love and mercy and justice are a part of those, and it's easy to be distracted by the little things because those are easy things. Loving people from the heart is challenging because we must die to self. We have to keep that before all of us, whether it's the church corporately or us individually. We have to bring ourselves back to the center, Jesus Christ.

**Dan Jackson:** The apostle Paul makes a statement. He says, "We ought always to think of others better than ourselves" [see Rom. 12:3]. It's not my business to judge you. For me to sit in judgment of you is inappropriate. In reality, it's un-Christian.



#### LISTEN IN

Josiah Taylor, student executive vice president of Oakwood University, political science major: *I know why we* started regional conferences, but do you think we should get rid of them and/or make more a diverse environment in our church? Or do you think we still need them?

**Bryant:** Unequivocally, we still need regional conferences. Why? The mission of the church is advanced better with regional conferences. The construct of regional conferences and the reason we started in the first place was a negative reason: our inability to treat each other with the love of Christ that we talked about earlier.

The result of regional conferences was that the work among Black people in the United States literally exploded. There was a principle behind that—people can reach people who are like them better than other people. We have found this principle to be true in the Philippines, in Africa, and anywhere indigenous people are leading and finding ways to connect with people who are like them in terms of the mission of the church. We need that type of construct missionally.

We're still struggling with some of the same challenges in our society and in our church that we were back then, but the missional reason leads all others.

In addition to Oakwood students helping behind the scenes during filming, four students were tasked with working as social media "ambassadors" during the show. These students interacted with Muñoz periodically throughout the broadcast, sharing viewer statistics and questions that Jackson and Bryant answered.

#### **Intentional Dialogue**

"I am extremely grateful to have had the opportunity to be a part of this very necessary conversation," said Loriann Lawrence, a junior interdisciplinary studies: French, art, and marketing major who helped as a social media ambassador on the ITTO show. "The dialogues between corporate leaders and young adults are few and far between, so when opportunities like these arise, it shows that we are moving in a good direction."

"Is This Thing On?" is an intentional effort to reach as many young adult Adventists in North America as possible and engage in a conversation on issues important to them.

"This discussion should not and, I know, will not end here," Lawrence added. "Inevitably I felt closer to our leaders by being in the same space, asking any questions we [young adults] had. Coming

Loving people from the heart is challenging—we must die to self. from that, I can better relate—and come from a place of more understanding when I see certain things happening in the church."

After the event Jackson expressed his interest in continuing the dialogue. "I believe this generation [of millennials] is uniquely poised to finish the work," said Jackson. "We need to engage our young adults in open and transparent conversation on issues that are important to them. They need us, but we need them more."

Arion McCullough, sophomore marketing and broadcast journalism major and one of the social media ambassadors, said, "I learned a lot of good information about where our church stands on certain topics. The candidness of the topics and answers surprised



The church needs to speak out where there is injustice and try to understand how we can model correct behavior.

me. On the church's stance on social justice in particular, Jackson gave his honest opinions.... Makes people my age more comfortable with talking to church leaders. It shows that the older generation does care about our questions and concerns."

Plans are under way for another event in the spring, and questions may also be answered in the interim—use #NADnow when tweeting/ posting questions.

Kimberly Luste Maran is an associate director of the NAD Office of Communication, and editor of Adventist Journey.

#### LISTEN IN

Malik Mayne, Oakwood University, piano performance major: *Why is it that the Seventh-day Adventist Church continually remains corporately silent on matters of social justice and distances itself from victims of social injustice when Jesus Himself continually stood up for those who were disenfranchised*?

**Jackson:** From the perspective of the North American Division, we have not been silent on this. We've spoken to the issues regarding Trayvon Martin, [Freddie Gray, Michael Brown, the South Carolina church shooting], . . . What we have tried to do is to talk to the issue of injustice and what is wrong.

In terms of being proactive, we have developed diversity conferences, where we bring together different people groups and professionals and try to dialogue. We've had about two of these in the past seven years.

Have we missed on a few occasions? Yes. Have we failed on a few occasions? Yes. But we do recognize this, and we have tried to implement, for example, even in the division office, a carefully laid out plan of employing a diversity of people.

There is something endemically wrong in our culture, in our system, that must be changed. The church needs to speak out where there is injustice and try to understand how we can model the correct behavior rather than always speaking about the negative. How do we act toward people? How do we eradicate the injustice and the racism that is a part of this society, and sometimes part of the church as well? For me, this is the biggest issue.

We need to build into our programs and our staffing what is exemplary in terms of not only hiring but also of relationships, how we get along, and how we model the gospel of Jesus.

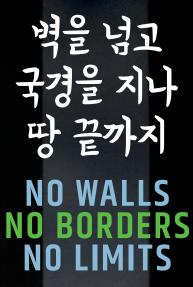
**Bryant:** We have struggled corporately in terms of what balance the church should strike in dealing with social justice issues. You can go back in the history of the church and find that the local church, individual members, and leaders of the church were extremely involved, but there isn't much history on involvement as a corporate entity. How do we tackle that?

The greater impact we can make is what happens at the local level in our churches and our local communities. That has a much greater impact than our corporate statements will ever have.

In Columbus, Ohio, for example, after the seven or eight young Black men were shot and killed, they started dialogue. They invited the community, and the church was packed with police officers, community leaders, and citizens. This was done across the country in Seventh-day Adventist churches. That type of action, bit by bit, even though we may not get all the headlines, can begin to change our communities.

Prophecy tells us that things are not going to get better. But the church and its members should have a voice in these issues and be as active as we can.

THIS MAGAZINE Adventist CONTINUED AFTER World



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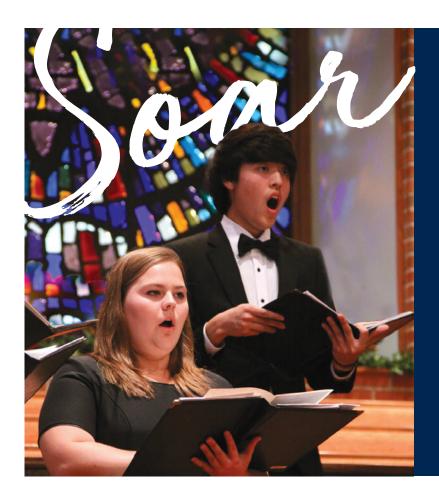
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MISSION UPFRONT

MISSIONARY: Madeline Cadavero LOCATION: Chuuk, Micronesia

# Are You Afraid to Die?

**y name is Madeline.** I'm from Murphy, North Carolina, and I'm serving as a student missionary (through the North American Division Office of Volunteer Ministries) on the island of Chuuk, Micronesia. Despite the postcard-like views of palm trees and colorful sea coral, life in Chuuk is not a walk at the beach.

I've been teaching here for only about five months, but it seems as if I've grown and matured five years in that time. I've been challenged in some pretty crazy ways.

Patience is often hard to obtain and swift to vanish. We can go from crying to laughing in seconds (and vice versa!). But ultimately, although our work is hard and our hours are long, I've found that there is no greater responsibility than working for the good of another human being.

No two days are ever alike in the teaching world. The days, however, do tend to blur into weeks, and weeks into months before I realize it. But every now and then there's usually a day or an experience that stands out above the rest.

One such experience occurred while I was teaching summer school. On this particular day I had only one eighth-grade student in my class. He was generally more reserved around his classmates. I had just finished giving the Bible lesson, and Matthew\* had been characteristically silent throughout the entire lesson. But I felt impressed to ask him, before we moved on to English class, if he had any questions about what we had discussed. He took a long moment; then, to my surprise, he asked a question.

"Miss, are you afraid to die?"

Rather taken aback by the abrupt way he posed the question, I thought for a moment, then answered, "No, I'm not. Are you?"

"Sometimes I do bad things. Then I'm afraid that God won't accept me, and that when I die I'll go to hell," he said quietly.

I nodded. "Yeah, I understand that feeling. But you know what's the cool thing about God?"



"The cool thing about God," I said, "is that He always forgives. His arms are always open, and He's always waiting for you to come to Him."

He looked at me, and the moment of anticipatory silence that followed was beautiful. I could sense his complete interest, his rapt attention.

"The cool thing about God," I said, "is that He *always* forgives. His arms are always open, and He's always waiting for you to come to Him. He will never turn you away!"

He blinked, as if this was something that had never occurred to him. "So God can never say no to me?"

It was my turn to blink, as salty tears suddenly sprang to my eyes. "No, Matthew," I answered. "God *will* never say no to you."

A beautiful conversation about forgiveness, and how to pray, ensued. I realized that God must have arranged for Matthew's three other classmates to all be absent that day, for he would have never opened up in front of his peers.

It's precious moments like these that stand out to me, among the hustle and bustle of school life, lectures, lesson planning, copy making, and grading of each day. These precious moments—and the times I see how God can work through me—are the moments that make it all worthwhile.

\*Name has been changed to protect privacy.



## NAD PARTNERS WITH COMMUNITY TO OFFER FRESH FOOD AND WELLNESS SCREENINGS

BY KIMBERLY LUSTE MARAN, NAD Office of Communication

pproximately 275 visitors to the Seventh-day Adventist Church's North American Division (NAD) headquarters in Columbia, Maryland, procured fresh produce and received free wellness screenings on November 19, 2017. This first NAD/community event came just days before Thanksgiving, and on the heels of the October 26 grand opening ceremony and dedication of the building.

Despite the cool, windy weather, more than 17,000 pounds of sweet potatoes, bananas, onions, lettuce, arugula salad mixes, organic spinach, pineapples, and more were distributed from the NAD parking lot. Earlier, excess produce from local grocers had been collected and transported from food distribution centers in Maryland.

"We had people waiting in line at 9:00 a.m., before the delivery truck arrived. Our event wasn't even scheduled to begin until 10:00," said Melissa Reid, associate director of the NAD's Public Affairs and Religious Liberty Department, and main event coordinator. "By 12:30 p.m. we had given out all the fresh produce."

"We had people waiting in line at 9:00 a.m., before the delivery truck arrived. Our event wasn't even scheduled to begin until 10:00." After the produce pickup, visitors were offered hot chocolate, then encouraged to enter the building's front doors to start the screening process.

The NAD partnered with nearby Howard County General Hospital to provide the following screenings for 40 visitors: blood pressure, stroke risk assessments, prediabetes risk assessments, BMI measurements. The hospital also offered follow up information and connections to Howard County resources and the opportunity to obtain long-term assistance through its support network.

#### **Getting the Word Out**

While some participants learned of the event through social media, many found out through flyers sent home with their children. One mother, whose child attends Stevens Forest Elementary School, missed out on some of the food varieties, but was grateful to take home a box of bananas and several plastic cartons of salad greens. "This morning I was cleaning out his backpack and saw the flyer in his Friday folder," she explained. "I came right over. I'm glad I got some [of the food]. It's a blessing." Orlan Johnson, director of the Public Affairs and Religious Liberty Department of the North American Division, hands fresh lettuce to a Columbia, Maryland, resident during the NAD's produce giveaway.

Pieter Damsteegt

"We were thrilled with the local public school system's willingness to distribute our flyer prior to the event," said Reid. "That made a huge difference in our attendance numbers."

The Adventist Church's North American Division relocated to Howard County in late September, and is endeavoring to become an active presence in its new community.

#### **Neighbors Helping Neighbors**

"The NAD Thanksgiving Produce Giveaway and Wellness Screening was a tremendous success in terms of meeting the needs of those in our local community," said Orlan Johnson, director of the NAD's Public Affairs and Religious Liberty Department. "It is our heartfelt desire to do all we can to make sure that here at the new NAD headquarters we are heeding the words of Matthew 25 by assisting our neighbor in need. It is our goal not to be content just to be in the community. Instead we strive to be part of the community. Sunday was a great start!"

Howard County General Hospital's Journey to Better Health program provided free health screenings and connected individuals to community resources during the November 19, 2017, Thanksgiving Produce Giveaway and Wellness Screening event at the Seventh-day Adventist Church's North American Division headquarters.

Pieter Damsteegt

"Journey to Better Health was invited to participate in the first annual produce giveaway event. At this event Journey provided free health screenings and connected individuals to community resources," said Tara B. T. Butler, Population Health Program coordinator, Journey to Better Health (J2BH). The Howard County General Hospital program partners with Howard County faith communities to help individuals proactively monitor and manage their health. "This innovative faith-based initiative complements the ministry work of our faith partners as we strive to provide wholistic care (spiritual, physical, mental, and emotional) to those in our community," said Butler.

"Our county councilwoman, Jen Terrasa, suggested we contact the It is our heartfelt desire to do all we can to make sure that here at the new NAD headquarters we are heeding the words of Matthew 25 by assisting our neighbor in need.

AD NEWS UPDATE

principals of the local elementary and middle schools to publicize our event, and introduced us to Howard County General Hospital's Journey to Better Health program," said Reid. "We've felt so welcomed by the community so far! We are excited to continue to get to know our neighbors."

Added Johnson, "It is our hope and prayer to host similar events at least four times a year, and to share and/or remind people of our Adventist health message—both inside and outside of our church family."

Andrea Keele, Office of Volunteer Ministries long-term volunteer processing assistant, packs pineapples into a Howard County resident's shopping bag. *Gael Murray* 





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# A Way **Back In**

got my driver's license when I turned 16, and I was free. Free, except that we had only one car in my household. During the summer I would get the car. But my dad, who worked the 3:30-to-11:30 p.m. shift, would say two things: "Be back by 3:00, and don't bring the car back empty."

I figured that Dad needed only 15 minutes to get to work, so I'd come back at 3:15. Then he'd have to stop and get gas, which made him late for work. Finally, Dad grounded me.

I invited a young woman out for dinner. She finally said yes. So I pleaded, "Dad, listen, I know I'm on punishment, but can I borrow the car tonight?"

"Son, you're on punishment," he said.

He was lying in bed, shoes off, shirt off, car keys on the dresser. Dad is in bed, keys on the dresser. I made a mental calculation. Can I grab the keys and get out the door before Dad gets out of bed?

I grabbed the keys off the dresser, turned, and ran out of the house. I jumped over the fence, down the sidewalk, and out to the car. Dad was right behind me, barefooted, shirtless. He came around the fence as I threw the car into reverse. Dad ran behind, trying to catch me.

After the date, the weight of what I'd done hit me. I drove past our house and kept going. I thought about leaving home. My dad had forearms like Popeye.

It was now 12:30 a.m., and the house was dark. I tried the back window where I slept. It was open. Relieved, I quietly climbed in, got into bed, and managed to go to sleep.

At breakfast Dad came and sat next to me. He didn't say anything. The day came and went. Dad didn't say anything. The weekend went, Dad still didn't say anything. The month came and went. Dad didn't say anything.

I went to Oakwood University, graduated, became a pastor. Dad never said anything. I was tempted to bring it up, but I didn't.

At Thanksgiving dinner some 10 years later, I finally had the courage to bring it up. "Remember that time I got the car and took it? Why didn't you ever say anything to me?"

"Because I know you," he answered. "I know you so well that

I knew that it was a struggle for you to come back home that night. I knew you were prideful; I knew you were arrogant. I prayed, 'I hope my son comes back home tonight.'"

When my daddy said that, something in me broke, and took away that prideful, arrogant spirit. I asked about the window, which I had not left open.

"You haven't figured that out? I opened the window to give you a way back in."

#### Broken—and Transformed—Every Day

When I think about what God does for you and for me, summed up in Isaiah 53, something in me breaks.

And it needs to be broken every day. With my pride, I've injured people. They've injured me. I know that I have "in-

jured" God. Yet God's arms are wide open.

God says, "I know you messed up. But I'm still after you, trying to get you home." There's something

about beholding

God is in the business of transforming each of us.

God's love and what He does for us that breaks us anew. That's why every morning we should go back to that same plea to be broken again and say, "Lord, more than anything, I want to be like You."

God is in the business of transforming each of us. But He can do it only when we keep our eyes fixed on Him. Just as surely as my dad submitted himself for his son, our heavenly Father submits Himself for His children.

God wants to transform us. He knows we can't do it by ourselves. He says, "Watch Me. Look at what I've done, and it will transform you. You have a way back in."

G. Alexander Bryant is the executive secretary for the North American Division.

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