

Adventist

# JOURNEY

INSPIRATION & INFORMATION  
FOR NORTH AMERICA

Special Issue: NAD Year-End Meeting



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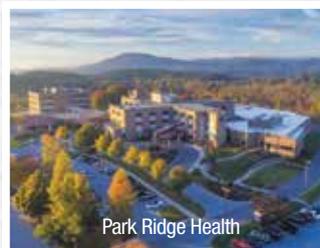
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## Adventist Journey

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### My Journey

God said, "Are you going to jump in 100 percent and trust Me, or are you going to hang back?" With less than two months before the start of classes at Pohnpei Seventh-day Adventist Mission School, and with no money, or a way to get to there, I decided to trust God. I took that leap. He caught me, and the money and tickets came through. Visit [vimeo.com/nadadventist/ajlindseycrumley](https://vimeo.com/nadadventist/ajlindseycrumley) for more of Crumley's story.

**LINDSEY CRUMLEY,**  
returned student missionary,  
Walla Walla University engineering major



Cover Photo by Dan Weber

**Dear Reader:** The publication in your hands represents the collaborative efforts of the North American Division and *Adventist World* magazine, which follows *Adventist Journey* (after page 16). Please enjoy both magazines!

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# Having the **MIND** of Christ



G. Alexander Bryant, executive secretary for the North American Division, preaches during the NAD Year-End Meeting Sabbath worship service on Nov. 2, 2018.

Jesus' style of servant leadership should be our guide.

BY G. ALEXANDER BRYANT

*This article is adapted from the November 2, 2018, NAD year-end meeting sermon entitled "Having the Mind of Christ," given by G. Alexander Bryant. Some characteristics of the oral presentation remain.—Editors.*

**T**he world teaches, "Hate your enemies," but Jesus says, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you" (Matt. 5:44, KJV). This teaching of Jesus was countercultural.

It was a part of the culture of Jesus' day to repay an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. Kill or be killed. Only the strong survived.

It was a part of the culture of Jesus' day, and it's a part of the culture of our day.

Jesus came and turned this upside down. He said, *That's what I know you live by. I know that's what society says around you.* "But I say unto you, Love your enemies."

We see these revolutionary principles spawning the growth of the Christian church. These early Christians took and lived the principles of Christ, even unto death. Tertullian, Josephus, and other early church historians have said that the blood of martyrs became the seed of the church.

The more they lived out these principles, the more others wanted to join the Christian church. And the mind of Jesus, the principles of His kingdom, have brought down worldwide governments and changed laws. They inspired Mahatma Gandhi to bring down British rule in India. They changed Jim Crow laws and ended segregation in the United States.

The powerful principles of Jesus still work today.

## Counterculture: Getting It

My middle son, when he was 6, kept losing his lunch money when he went to school. So one day I said, "Son, if you lose this one, I'm not going to give you anything else until you learn how not to lose your lunch money."

Photography by Pieter Damsteegt

That 6-year-old child looked at me and said this: "Daddy, if you don't give me any lunch money to lose, how can I learn how not to lose it?"

So I kept giving him lunch money, and my son kept losing it. And I kept giving it to him, and he kept losing it. I kept giving it to him, and he kept losing it, until one day my son got to the place where he didn't lose his lunch money anymore.

Jesus' disciples were caught up in the culture of their day and what leaders did. One of His greatest challenges was how to change the mind-set of His disciples from a worldly view of leadership to one that was Christ-centered, with a Christlike approach. We find Him in Mark 9 taking advantage of an opportunity to insert this principle of His leadership style.

In Mark 9:30 (and a companion passage in Mark 10), the night before His death, we find Jesus back at this same place with His leaders. *How can I inculcate in their minds my principles in Christian leadership?* I imagine Him wondering. We find Jesus bringing the message again and again.

Jesus kept talking to the disciples about the leadership model He wanted them to follow. And every time He talked about it, they kept losing it. And guess what? Jesus said, *We going to talk about it some more.* So here we find Jesus once again trying to deal with this subject with His disciples. The Bible says, "And they departed thence, and passed through Galilee; and he would not that any man should know it. For he taught his disciples, and said unto them, 'The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall

When we hold up the democratic process as though it is sacred when it's only a tool, the majority can run over the minority without consideration for the needs of the minority.



Zina Johnson (right) and the praise team for the Sabbath morning worship service lead the congregation in singing on Nov. 2.

kill him; and after that he is killed, he shall rise the third day" (Mark 9:30, 31, KJV).

"They came to Capernaum; and when He was in the house, He began to question them, 'What were you discussing on the way?' But they kept silent, for on the way they had discussed with one another which of them was the greatest" (verses 33, 34, NASB).<sup>1</sup>

"Sitting down, He called the twelve and said to them, 'If anyone wants to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all.' Taking a child, He set him before them, and taking him in His arms, He said to them, 'Whoever receives one child like this in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me does not receive Me, but Him who sent Me'" (verses 35-37, NASB).

They'd left Galilee on their way to Capernaum, and on their way to Capernaum, Jesus is telling them, *I'm going to die. They're going to kill Me. They're going to destroy Me.* Jesus is pouring out His heart to the disciples, those who were closest to Him, those who you think would understand. This shows the power of culture, because even though they left their lives when He asked, when it came to following Him in leadership Jesus had to keep pounding the message in again and again (see Mark 10).

Jesus is trying to get the disciples to understand: *I came down from heaven, I descended, and you guys are so caught up in ascending. That's not the nature of Christ. The nature of Christ is to descend. It's to be servant of all.*

Do you understand what I'm trying to say? Look how deeply embedded the culture was in these disciples, these men who left everything to follow Jesus. What I understand here from Scripture is that we can be a follower of Jesus and not have the mind of Jesus. We can be a leader for Jesus and not have the mind of Jesus.

## Servant Leadership

Before Jesus defined what servant leadership looks like, He first addressed what it is not.

"But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be



The Peguero Sisters sing special music during the NAD Year-End Meeting Sabbath worship service.

so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Matt. 20:25-28, KJV).

The Gentiles lead by survival of the fittest, win at all costs, by any means necessary. That's what Gentiles do. They beat up on each other. They demean each other. They feast on one another with half-truths. They cut people down on social media. Jesus said, *That does not belong in the church of God. When you exercise those means, you are leading like the Gentiles.*

"Alternate facts," salacious lies, coercion, manipulation, and arm-twisting do not belong in the church of Jesus Christ. As Jesus said: "So shall it not be among you."

We must even be careful of holding up protocols and processes as sacrosanct. When we hold up the democratic process as though it

is sacred when it's only a tool, the majority can run over the minority without consideration for the needs of the minority. Jesus says, *Do not lead like the Gentiles.*

When He came to earth, Jesus emptied Himself of everything He'd been accustomed to: all the glory, all the dominion over everything, even equality with God Himself.

### Divested

Jesus wasn't worried about His career path. Some people feel, "If I don't rock the boat, my chances of advancing in the hierarchy of the church is greater, or keeping my position is greater."

When we fail to take a stand or speak up for fear of losing our position, then we have disqualified ourselves from our positions.

Jesus calls for leaders who will be like Him. We must divest ourselves.

If you're leading a way that is not costing you something, then you're not leading after the manner of Jesus. Servanthood leadership, Christ-centered leadership, costs something. It may cost you some friends. It may cost you some of your reputation. It may cost you a position, but it will cost. But Jesus says, *Whatever it costs you, I'll repay it a hundredfold.*

Having the mind of Jesus can't happen on our own. We must be transformed by the renewing of our minds. It's not that Jesus didn't use power; it's how He used His power that made the difference.

I'm most like Jesus when I have the power to destroy you and I walk away.

### Standing Up

I'm also most like Jesus when I use the power that God has given me to stand up for those who are disenfranchised.

God has called each of us to use the influence and the power that He has given us to stand up for the disenfranchised among us. When we stand up for the disenfranchised among us, it will cost us something.

Do you know what Jesus said when He started His public ministry? "The spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord . . . ; to comfort all that mourn" (Isa. 61:1, 2, KJV; see also Luke 4:18).

It sounds as though Jesus was all about the underprivileged, the marginalized, and the underserved. In fact, it sounds like social justice to me.

Jesus stood up for those who could not stand up for themselves. God asks us, God requires us, God looks for us, to use the influence of our position, the power of our position, whatever He has given us, to stand up for those who cannot stand up for themselves.

That's why men—I'm talking to men on this—we have a marginalized group among us. That group does not have voices in the same places we have voices. God requires us to stand up and be their voice.

### When God Leads

At 39 years old, I had just become a conference president, and we needed to have an executive

committee meeting. There was a departmental position open, and my advisors had told me, "Alex, your first meeting is important, and you can't lose a vote on your first meeting. If you lose, it will set the trend for the rest of your presidency."

So I took the name I was recommending to the committee. Someone else on the committee wanted that position—they were very popular, very well known. I could sense that the committee was uneasy with my recommendation, but my advisors said, "Hold strong. Hang in there. They'll give it to you."

But I had told the committee earlier that I didn't want to play politics, and I said, "I sense that you are uncomfortable with my recommendation. We're going to do a secret ballot; vote as God instructs you."

We had prayer, and when we finished the vote, my guy lost.

At the end of the meeting, as the committee members began to leave they said to me, "We appreciated your leadership today."

"What do you mean?" I said. "I lost!"

They replied, "No, you didn't. You didn't get the person that you wanted, but you won us today."

So where are we today? Jesus is still in control of this church. We may not see how He's steering it, where He's steering it, and where it's going to go, but that doesn't matter. God never called us to see it; He called us to trust that He sees it.

Jesus reminded us that the wheat and the tares are going to grow together. It's His job to identify who is wheat and who is tare (see Matt. 13:24-30).

Ellen White writes, "Enfeebled and defective as it may appear, the church is the one object upon which God

Jesus was all about the underprivileged, the marginalized, and the underserved. In fact, it sounds like social justice to me.

bestows in a special sense His supreme regard.<sup>2</sup> I want to pause on "enfeebled and defective." Enfeebled means it's messed up. Enfeebled means it's weak. Enfeebled means it's gonna have problems. Jesus never said it wouldn't have problems, wouldn't be defective, but He said, *This is My church, and I'm going to see it through.*

I believe it with all my heart: the Seventh-day Adventist Church is the closest church on the face of the earth to the church that Jesus established. And I'm waiting for His return.

I don't know about you, but I know how this is going to end. One day I will sit at the welcome table. One day I will feast on milk and honey. One day I will wear my long white robe. One day I will sing and never get tired. One day I'll sing the song of Moses and the Lamb.

Until then keep looking up! Until then have the mind of Jesus. Until then be faithful and God will take us through.

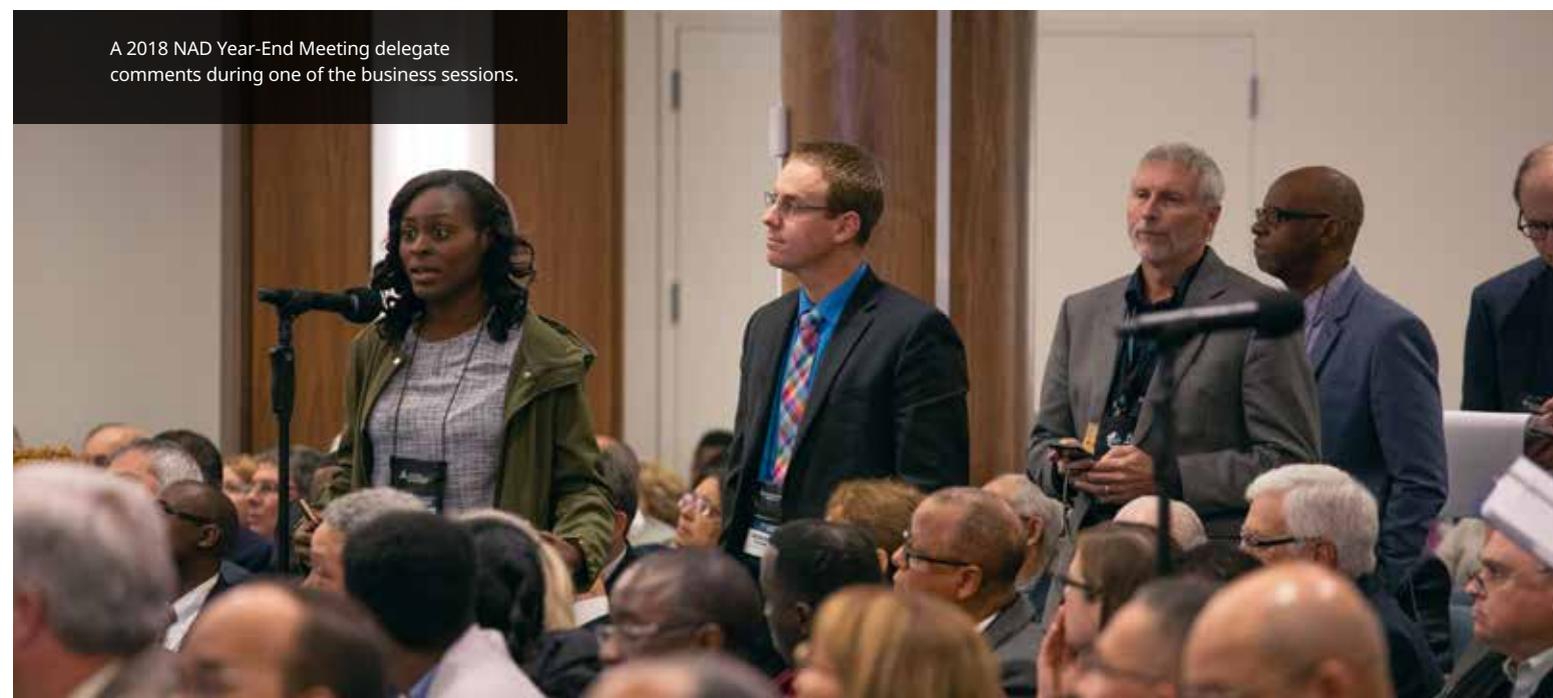
<sup>1</sup> Scripture quotations marked NASB are from the New American Standard Bible, copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.

<sup>2</sup> Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1911), p. 12.

*G. Alexander Bryant is executive secretary for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America.*



John Matthews, stewardship director for the NAD, performs special music on Sabbath, Nov. 2.



A 2018 NAD Year-End Meeting delegate comments during one of the business sessions.



## YEM REPORTS FOCUS ON “WORKING TOGETHER WITH JESUS”

Theme of meeting reenergizes mission emphasis in division.

BY KIMBERLY LUSTE MARAN AND MYLON MEDLEY, NAD OFFICE OF COMMUNICATION

The 2018 North American Division (NAD) year-end meeting (YEM) focused on “Working Together With Jesus” to best accomplish the mission of the Adventist Church in the NAD, which is to reach others with our distinctive, Christ-centered message of hope and wholeness. NAD officers, ministry departments, institutions, and entities gave presentations throughout the six-day meeting. Below are brief summaries from a very small selection of presentations. Visit <http://ow.ly/HtE130mDAVK> for links to articles, voted documents and responses, videos, photos, and reports; look for more on what the division is doing in following editions of *Adventist Journey*.

### President’s Report

In his report on November 1, Daniel R. Jackson, president of the NAD, shared what he terms “our strengths” in the NAD. Following recognition of “our great God,” the strengths include great human resources, excel-

lent facilities, an active laity, able youth, and generous constituencies.

“We’re running 8 percent ahead this year [on tithes],” said Jackson. “We have to praise God for those generous constituencies—members in the pew who are committed and faithful. That really is something to say ‘Praise the Lord’ about.”

Jackson gave quick updates on a sampling of organizations and ministry initiatives, calling attention to both the education and health-care systems. He shared information about the division’s compassion movement, eHuddler evangelistic leadership visioning gathering, and church planting; mentioned the Sabbath School lessons written by stewardship director John Matthews and the increase in church giving; recognized the 2018 start of *Adventist Journey*, the NAD magazine done in collaboration with *Adventist World*; and highlighted the work of Adventist Community Services Disaster Response across the division, as communities recover from fires, floods, hurricane and typhoon damage, shootings, and the volcanic eruption in Hawaii.

← Kyoshin Ahn, undersecretary of the NAD, brings a report back from the Year-End Meeting writing committee. *Pieter Damsteegt*

Jackson also shared what challenges face the NAD. These include a failure to place the mission as the top priority, the potential disenchantment of all age groups, financial ability to fuel the mission in the NAD, the potential of decreasing funds, and pluralism inside and outside the church.

Despite the challenges, Jackson is excited about what is happening in the NAD. He drew his report to a close by reciting 2 Peter 1:19.

### Nominating Committee

On November 2 the first report came from the nominating committee. Five employment candidates’ names were brought to the floor for discussion and vote. All five names were voted.

Randy Robinson will serve as the NAD treasurer following the retirement of G. Thomas Evans in January, and pending a vote by the General Conference executive committee. Robinson has served the denomination for 36 years, and is treasurer of the Southern Union Conference, where he has served for 11 years.

Arne Nielsen was voted to serve as the division’s vice president for education, following the retirement of Larry Blackmer. Nielsen is NAD director of secondary education and accreditation.

Carl McRoy was elected to serve as literature ministry director, a position that has been vacant for seven years. McRoy is the publishing director of the South Atlantic Conference, where he also serves as an interim pastor.

Ernest Hernandez will serve as the division’s new director of volunteer ministry. In 2018 Hernandez led the team as its interim director. Prior to that position he was the ministry’s processing and communications coordinator.

Bonita J. Shields was voted as new director of stewardship ministries, following the retirement of John Matthews, making her the first woman to occupy the role. Shields was associate director of the department.

### Secretary’s Report

G. Alexander Bryant, executive secretary for the NAD, opened his report with highlights from a few departments and initiatives of the division, including the Office of Volunteer Ministries (OVM).

Hernandez, new director of OVM, shared that the total of long-term missionaries serving one to two years from around the world is 1,708, 441 of whom are from the NAD, 1,174 are from all other divisions combined, and 93 are from Adventist Frontier Mission. Hernandez also reported that overall two thirds of volunteers are under 30 years old. He urged those in attendance to remember that they should treat their own division as a mission field. “We have a huge number of individuals desiring to serve. They need more opportunities,” Hernandez said.

E. Douglas Venn, director of Urban Missions in the Global Missions Department of the General Conference, was invited to share videos and stories about how NAD church leaders and members are helping to change lives through Mission to the Cities by operating centers of influence across the division. Church plants, restaurants, community groups, day-care programs, and tutoring programs

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are just a few of the ways Adventists in the NAD are reaching out to those in cities.

Bryant reported statistics on church membership as of December 2017: 1,249,715 members, 5,561 churches, and 852 companies.

In 2017, 36,179 people joined the church through baptism and profession of faith. The growth rate overall in 2017 was 2.92 percent; in 2016 the rate was 2.97 percent. In the past six years, the new membership total is 184,287. But Bryant said that there have been losses. When losses (based on deaths and dropped or missing members) are factored in, the numbers shift to a 61,982 net gain of members in six years.

### Treasury Report

The report from Tom Evans, treasurer, began with the division's financial statements, sharing dollar amounts and percentages for NAD assets, liabilities, net assets, working capital, and liquidity. Evans shared that for only the second time tithe exceeded \$1 billion, with the amount of \$1,020,674,628. That is an average of \$19,628,358 per week for 52 Sabbaths in 2017. A stronger dollar, low interest rates (but rising), and a continued balanced budget for the NAD are a few things that helped the financial picture for the church, according to Evans.

↓ On Nov. 1, 2018, the first day of the NAD Year-End Meeting, delegates start the business session in prayer. *Photo by Dan Weber*



Evans was joined by reports from Dave Weigley, Columbia Union Conference president and audit committee chair; Raymond Jimenez III, NAD retirement president; Robyn Kajiura, General Conference Auditing Service associate director, North America; and Michael Jamieson, undertreasurer, who explained "where your money goes" during his in-depth report on tithe moneys.

### NAD Response to GC Document

On November 4, a three-hour discussion ensued on the document "Regard for and Practice of General Conference Session and General Conference Executive Committee Actions," which was voted during the General Conference Annual Council meeting in October. The GC document outlines a new compliance process to assist with the need to implement church policies and voted actions.

The NAD YEM executive committee approved a writing committee to craft a response to it. The writing committee received recommendations for the response document from the floor; they also received dozens of e-mail suggestions. On November 6, NAD delegates approved the official response, entitled "North American Division 2018 Year-End Meeting Response to the Regard for and Practice of General Conference Session and General Conference Executive Committee Actions" with a vote of 176-48.

### Motion Accepted for Financial Parity Discussion

On November 5, Jackson opened the floor for a discussion on finances.

The first person to the microphone was Terry Shaw, president/CEO of Adventist Health System, who made a motion that the NAD work with the General Conference to move to some type of a different arrangement for financial parity. "I do not want to hurt the world church, but at the same time there are so many ministries right here locally that we can't get to," Shaw said.

After a few speakers, it was reported that the NAD currently gives 6.35 percent of its tithe to the GC, with a gradual reduction to 5.85 percent by 2020; the other divisions of the church give 2 percent.

The motion on the floor was then amended: "To recommend the NAD administration to discuss with the General Conference the issue of financial parity, with parity to be accomplished in two to three years." After a discussion that included a variety of opinions, the motion was adopted with a vote of 121-90.



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BY KRIS AKENBERGER

# Hearts Are Hurting, But Hope Still Abounds

**A**s a gospel worker I share Jesus' warnings to those who live at the end of the age. The Bible speaks of a time of trouble such as the world has never seen before, a time no one can buy or sell. Many of my friends believe that time has arrived in Saipan.

Super Typhoon Yutu destroyed our tiny island. I could tell you about the 300 power line poles down because of the 178-mile-per-hour winds, or that more than 1,000 homes that were destroyed, or the dozens of flipped-over cars and buses. But the hurt in our hearts, seeing our friends homeless and our church destroyed, cannot be enumerated.

The morning after the typhoon, I checked in with all my church members, finding them wherever I could. I was shocked to discover that not just my home had been damaged, but essentially every home I encountered was damaged to some extent. I often saw people alone, sitting in piles of debris that used to be their home with their faces in their hands crying.

I went to see the churches and school. The main Adventist church was flooded and the school severely damaged. The San Antonio church was destroyed. The walls had collapsed and the roof was gone.

I climbed over broken pieces to get to the sanctuary. Here, too, the roof was gone, and water was pouring in. I wanted to save what I could—Bibles, hymnals, or something—but everything that hadn't blown away was swollen with water. Seeing God's house ruined, the church I love and helped build, was too much. But just before I lost control of my emotions, God sent "Elder Eric" Mahinay and his son, Michael. They came in at just the right time with smiles and encouragement. "It is bad," Eric said. "But with God's help we will rebuild."

The mad scramble to set a place back in order can be overwhelming. But God's people gathered at the church and school to clean and make repairs, everyone smiling, shaking hands, and working hard together. People with machetes and chainsaws attacked the fallen trees, children gathered garbage in bags, all the water was shop-vacuumed from the central church. Broken glass was removed without a drop of blood being spilled.

I am thankful to God. Through the typhoon experience He's teaching me that He can provide for me in every circumstance, and when that time of trouble comes, I will trust Him, because I'm trusting Him now.

### Gathered Together

A few days after the typhoon Sabbath came, and the church members gathered for worship. I drove the church van, picking up people for church. I thought it was going to be a sad occasion, but there was joy like I've never seen.

Everyone was happy; everyone was praising; everyone was even singing. It was the influence of the Holy Spirit as I've never seen before. When I got to church, I found the Holy Spirit present in a powerful way: people were smiling, singing, and hugging. It was the highest, holiest Sabbath I've ever experienced.

During the service I offered the pastoral prayer. I was able to look at the people's faces as we sang "He Leadeth Me." I watched people give their hearts to God, loving Him even in adversity. Hope abounds.

It may be months before life here resembles what would be considered normal. But I'm so happy I'm here in Saipan. I'm so happy I'm a Christian. I'm so happy Jesus is coming soon.

I watched people give their hearts to God, loving Him even in adversity.

*Kris Akenberger is the Guam-Micronesia Mission Bible worker in Saipan. He wrote this after Typhoon Yutu ripped through portions of the Guam-Micronesia Mission, devastating Saipan, Tinian, and Rota.*

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