My Journey

I was in the military for 20 years, I went to seminary when I was 55... My Adventist journey has been challenging at times, but in one word, it’s been awesome. Understanding the love of God written in the Bible, and understanding the truth of what God has done for us, and what He’s doing—it’s just awesome.

Visit vimeo.com/nadadventist/ajdkkim for more of D. K. Kim’s story.

D. K. KIM, chaplain, Kettering, Ohio
Church members in Massachusetts open a restaurant because they want to help people.

**Great Food, Unselfish Service, Genuine Care at the Pulse Café**

**BY SANDRA DOMBROWSKI**

Disinterested benevolence—an old-fashioned term that means helping people with no strings attached—the vision and driving force behind Pulse Café, a new Seventh-day Adventist vegan restaurant in Hadley, Massachusetts.)*

“You started this restaurant because you want to help people?”

Walk into Pulse and look around. High ceilings and a muted gray-and-mustard color scheme create a modern yet inviting open space. A sleek, black grand piano is tucked in the corner. Wood tables and chairs that fill the dining area are crafted from 100-year-old logs salvaged from the bottom of a river—giving each piece a delightfully aged character. A couple stylishly comfortable couches are arranged around gas fireplaces with floor-to-ceiling stone chimneys. Pulse sports a smoothie bar that lines an entire wall of the restaurant, and a room for creating fresh-pressed juices as well.

This is a place that draws 600 to 800 patrons for Sunday brunch alone, each hungry soul coming to dine on vegan “chicken” and waffles, or breakfast burritos, or sweet corn tamales, and more, all made from as organic and as locally sourced produce as possible. This is evidence of a forward-thinking and sophisticated business plan, but Pulse’s real mission is to use its service, menu, and other offerings to benefit the community.

A restaurant as an institution to benefit the community? While this altruistic motivation may astound the general public, it should be a well-known method and standard operating procedure for any well-informed member of the Seventh-day Adventist community of believers. It certainly is for Lance Wilbur and his wife, Evita, managers of Pulse, and the owners, Ted Crooker and Keith Rehbein. Here’s why.

Before becoming an Adventist, Wilbur studied through every major religion in his search for truth—Buddhism, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism—and realized they all had some kind of health emphasis. “Before I started
reading the Bible, I had stopped
spirit of disinterested benevolence,
construction business and, because
notified Ted Crooker, an Adventist
nancies are at some risk." In many
able way that’s not just looking for
things in place [we] can genuinely
and he’s still adamant: “With these
18 years since he was baptized,
reasons for being,” he said. It’s been
ly I was a vegetarian or a vegan, and
I didn’t even know what that was,”
said Lance. “When I became a Sev-
enth-day Adventist, I realized that
there was a message in the Bible that
brought it all together.”

After Lance was baptized, one of the
first of Ellen White’s books he read was Evangelism. In it he en-
countered a practical application of Jesus’ Great Commission to take the good news of salvation to the world meeting people’s needs, physically and spiritually. Various institutions were energized as part of this prac-
tical application: schools, wellness centers, literature work, publishing, media, and hygienic restaurants, now known as vegetarian or plant-
based restaurants.

“I was excited to know that these things existed, and I immediately went out to see them all...and found out that there weren’t many,” said Lance. He saw a need and de-
termined to fill it. “This is one of my major passions,” he said. “It’s been 18 years since he was baptized...and he’s still adamant: “With these things in place [we] can genuinely help the community in a sustain-
able way that’s not just looking for
converts or looking for money, just
genuine...love and interest for a community that’s at risk. In many statistical categories, most commu-
nities are at some risk.”

Enter Keith Rehbein, a Sev-
enth-day Adventist farmer and busi-
nessman in western Massachusetts interested in promoting God’s work.
When he spotted a restaurant that had closed and was up for sale, he recognized an opportunity. Rehbein notified Ted Codder, an Adventist from Maine who had recently sold a construction business and, because
he and his wife were also influenced by the spirit of disinterested benevolence, was seeking a health ministry to
invest in rather than the stock
market. With the intent of creating a plant-based restaurant as a center of influence to bring God’s message of hope and wholeness to the commu-
nity, Codder purchased the proper-
ty. He and Rehbein also purchased
property nearby to create an organic
farm to supply some of the produce for the restaurant.

With a timing that only God
could orchestrate, Lance, while
conducting evangelism training in western Massachusetts, met Reh-
bein, and the two found that they shared a vision for health ministry. To Lance’s surprise, Rehbein told him about the property and said, “We are looking for a ministry to
partner with!”

“Well, we’re a ministry looking
for a business to partner with!”
replied Lance. So Pulse Café began.

From Scratch
Between Lance and Evita, they had
experience in administration,
food service, and catering, but
never all together. They learned on instructions from Ellen White’s books and adapted them to the twenty-first century. “We started
with no one,” Lance says. “We had to develop all of the systems, the
models, and [find] the workers to
pull it off. We traveled to places, scouted out owners and managers of
different restaurants. We brought in consultants to help us.”

The hardest part? Starting. “A lot of people talk, then struggle with concepts and theory,” Lance shares. “So it requires a sound business mind. It requires capital. It requires
construction and knowing how to
order and deal with contractors.
How do you purchase equipment?
Do you get it new or used? What
do you use for point of sale? You
literally learn how to deal with
all that stuff. The only real way
to learn how to do it, is by doing it...It takes you to the church.”

Why all the hard work just to
benefit the community with the
unique Seventh-day Adventist mes-
sage of hope and wholeness? Isn’t
there an easier way?

“Most people are not going to
come to your church...[or] subscribe to your doctrinal teachings.
And that’s not the goal,” Lance
says. He maintains that the goal
is to engage the community
and show people that there is a better
way to live.

At thebedrock of Pulse’s mission
is Christ’s method of reaching peo-
ple: “The Saviour mingled with
[men and women] as one who desired
their good. He showed His sympa-
thy for them, ministered to their
needs, and won their confidence.
Then He bade them, ‘Follow Me’.”

“We’re told that the hygienic
(plant-based) restaurant was
designed by God...to reach people
with the gospel,” says Lance. “It’s the
practical extension of the
concept of God desiring to restore
[humanity]—complete restoration
of health, peace, and...character.”

The restaurant model brings
people in, allowing Pulse employees
to mingle with all classes of people,
show sympathy through caring ser-
vice and Christlike demeanor, and
then minister to their needs.

Customers relax by the gas
fireplace after enjoying a meal.

“What is their need?” Lance asks.
“Food! They come here because they
need to eat. They want to eat. So
if the food is healthful and tasty—
looks good, smells good, tastes
good—and the service is of the same
quality, you win the people’s confi-
dence almost instantaneously. I’ve
never seen anything like it.”

Food is powerful. “However
secular we’ve become in New
England—one of the most secular
regions in the United States—food
is still somewhat intimate,” Lance
continues. “There’s just a different
level of vulnerability and mutual
agreement between patrons and
those providing the service.

Coming Back for More
The food brings people in and
keeps them coming back, and the
Christlike service and atmosphere
warms their hearts. But Pulse also
offers practical solutions to the
health risks of the community just as
Christ did. In addition to offer-
ing a healthy plant-based menu,
Pulse has hosted a cooking class for
children, a breast cancer awareness
event, a health screening expo, and
seminars and workshops on every-
thing from hypertension and heart
disease to reversing diabetes and
arthritis. They also offer one-on-
one wellness consultations.

In essence, Lance and Evita, with
support from owners Codder and
Rehbein, are doing whatever it takes
to make it easy for the general public
to experience health and wholeness.
They sell a packaged juice cleanse,
complete with an insulated tote,
which offers a three-day supply of
fresh, organic, cold pressed juice,
making the benefits of a cleanse
easy to attain and available to all. In
addition to their decadent-tasting
comfort foods and desserts, they of-
fer increasingly popular whole food
rice or quinoa bowls topped with
vegetables. Pulse offers gluten and
other allergens free options on their
regular menu. But if you call ahead,
or are fortunate enough to find
Evita on duty—despite her busyness
as manager of the Café, wife, and
mother of four—when you come in,
she will create a plate tailored to your
specific health needs or allergies.

“We’re not perfect. The outcomes? Pulse Café was
awarded number-one plant-based
restaurant in the area within six
months of opening. They’ve shared
both health and spiritual informa-
tion with many people. “But the
most tremendous element is the
relationships,” Lance shares. “We
have regular customers...who are
literally like family...you connect
with people in ways that you would
have never connected with unless
you had a restaurant.”

Then what?
“People ask questions,” Lance says.
“What are you closed on Sat-
urday, the busiest day of the week?”
Why is everybody so happy? “What
is this music [that] you’re playing—
hymns?” According to the Spirit of
Prophecy, these are the questions
that will be asked, and these are
the questions that Lance, Evita, and
crew are asked without solicitation.

And the Adventist community has
answers to share! With help from
the Florence Seventh-day Adventist
Church in Massachusetts, 12 Bible
studies are under way.

A Serving of Disinterested Benevolence

The world is hungering for a
better way to live. People crave
acceptance and fellowship in a
loving community—and are ready
to receive answers that God has
to offer. Lance cites the evidence:
“What is the fastest growing indus-
try? Health food, supplements, a
plant-based lifestyle, veganism.”
The Seventh-day Adventist Church
has answers for the needs of body,
mind, and spirit, and proven ways
of sharing these answers with success.

Plant-based restaurants such as
Pulse Café is just one of these ways.
“Come and see!” invites Lance.
Drop by, sample the food, ex-
perience the service and atmo-
sphere, ask questions—get a taste
of Christ’s method for reaching
people. There is a need for more
workers—from investors, business-
people, chefs, farmers, and wait-
staff, to Bible workers, literature
evangelists, and prayer warriors.

Answer God’s call, seek training,
and get involved in twenty-first
century disinterested benevolence!

Sandra Dombrowski is a free-
lance writer based in Connecticut.
Visit www.pulsecafe.com for more
restaurant information.

Journey
12 / 19
w ww.nadadventist.org
BY KIMBERLY LUSTE MARAN

The Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary Chapel on the campus of Andrews University was full during the afternoon and early evening on September 4, 2019, the first day of the North American Division’s (NAD) 2019 enditnow Summit on Abuse. This was the division’s third summit, broadcast over two days in English and Spanish—and the first to be held on a university campus.

The two-day summit was organized to give pastors, seminary students, teachers, volunteers the tools and knowledge to help end abuse within their spheres of influence. The summit featured a number of experts ranging from church leaders, administrators, professional advocates, educators, and women who shared their stories of abuse.

“This is a very sober and serious subject facing our society and our church,” said G. Alexander Bryant, NAD executive secretary, during an introduction to the summit. “It is my prayer that you leave this summit more equipped, informed, and motivated to address abuse in the sphere of your influence—where you work, where you socialize, and even where you worship.”

In addition to the live audience gathered both days in the chapel, according to Jamie Domm, digital media strategist for the North American Division, more than 3,600 registered to watch the Facebook livestream event both days. More than 500 on average continuously viewed the livestream video presentations on Facebook.

Before the summit’s experts made their way to the platform, Ivan Williams, NAD Ministerial Association director, welcomed the audience, and on- and online audiences participated in a survey on abuse. During both days presenters—attorneys, pastors, and Adventist Risk Management representatives—were available to answer questions generated on Twitter and Facebook after their lectures.

“Why is addressing this incumbent upon the church?” asked first presenter René Drumm, who then shared the second part of Jesus’ words in John 10:10. “Living a life of abuse is not abundant living. . . . One person is too many.”

The topics covered during day one of the Summit on Abuse included “Relational Abuse and Violence in the Seventh-day Adventist Church,” Drumm, professor of social work; “Spiritual Abuse: Let’s End It Now,” David Sedlacek, professor of family ministry and discipleship; “The Silent Victims of Domestic Violence,” Ruben Muriente, outreach coordinator for the Family Justice Center (Tennessee); “Peer Abuse: Prevalence, Prevention, and Protection,” Mindy Salyers, educator, counselor, bullying prevention specialist; “Pornography and Violence,” Stanley Stevenson, social services regional director, Mississippi Department of Health; “Double Abuse and Its Consequences,” Sarah McDougall, abuse recovery coach; and “The Heart of Abuse,” with the coordinator of the Psalm 82 Initiative.

The second day’s topics included “El Sutil Poder del Abuso Spir- itual,” Jorge Mayer; “Aprendiendo lo que es violencia doméstica,” Melissa Ponce-Rodas, professor; “Dándole voz a las victimas se- cudarias de la violencia doméstica,” Muriente; “Cómo reconocer los tipos de hostigamiento contra un niñ@,” Gerry Lopez; “La relación entre la pornografía y la violencia doméstica,” Claudia Consuegra; and “Cómo evitar el abuso doble,” Melissa Ramos-Mota.

Testimonies were shared by Latoya Wright (English) and Dalia Padró (Spanish), survivors of abuse. One Facebook viewer, Nicole Crosier Parker, shared her appreciation for the summit via comment: “This. Was. Amazing,” Parker wrote. “Thank you to all of these awesome presenters, and everyone else who put so much work into this! This is how change happens!”

After the livestream concluded, in another first, presenters and at- tendees were invited to a reception and question-and-answer session. There audience members asked the presenter panel questions, and got to hear about real-life situations and solutions.

Presenter Perspective

The first presenter, René Drumm, Ph.D., has been doing research on domestic violence and intimate partner violence (IPV) in the church for decades. She said she believes that the Adventist Church is uniquely poised to be a world leader in the area of abuse response and prevention.

“The first study in the early 2000s showed that our rates of IPV are about on par with U.S. national statistics,” said Drumm. “The second study took an in-depth look at Adventist victim/survivors of IPV, which captured my heart and energy. The pain from the survivor’s stories con- vinced us that the most pressing need was to train pastors to respond to disclosures of abuse. From there the Lord opened the doors for our research team to train the pastors in our area (then Georgia-Cumberland Conference) on abuse response. We developed a four-hour training that the conference mandated for all of their pastors with amazing and lasting results.”

Drumm concluded, “Because a significant number of people in our church are suffering with this silent affliction, we need to act. We have the data, we know what needs to be done, and we have a proven path for improvement!”

Another presenter, Ruben Muriente, said that he was participating in the summit because he wants to equip the Adventist Church with the best available re- sources and education and awareness possible to battle abuse head-on. Muriente, outreach coordinator for the Family Justice Center in Tennessee, spoke both days of the summit, presenting in English and Spanish.

“My goal is to eradicate abuse in our church,” said Muriente. “At the summit I will be presenting on the effects of abuse on children who witness abuse. I want the audience to be equipped with the knowledge of what they need to know.”

The two-day summit was organized to give pastors, seminary students, teachers, and volunteers the tools and knowledge to help end abuse within their spheres of influence.
The Adventist Church has a responsibility to create safe churches.

Sedlacek believes that the enditnow NAD Summit on Abuse has provided information, testimonials, and strategies to help deal with abuse and violence of all sorts. “It will help to move our church forward….This is an essential element of the healing mission of the church as we prepare for the second coming of Jesus,” added Sedlacek.

“The enditnow Summit on Abuse is crucial for the Adventist Church because it is long past time for us to take the subject of abuse seriously,” shared Sarah McDugal. “We carry a gospel mandate to accurately represent the loving character of God to those who are vulnerable and wounded. Properly dealing with abuse and abusers is an evangelistic imperative, because poorly handled abuse situations is one of the overwhelming contributors to young people leaving the church.”

McDugal hoped the audience would come away from the summit with a healing awareness that there are people in the church who care about countering abuse; a sense of more freedom to speak out about pain and find support; and a connection to practical tools to be used to increase education on abuse topics.

From the NAD

While many North American Division administrators and leaders have supported the summit in myriad ways—from hosting to planning to presenting—two gave presentations at this year’s event during the Spanish-language broadcast.

Gerry Lopez, associate director of NAD’s Children’s Ministries, said, “It is time for our church to talk and inform about these topics, to put them out there in the open. We need to educate our leaders and members and make them aware that this is a real problem that exists in our church. We really have to educate everyone so that we all can know how to identify the problem and help the victims.”

Lopez presented on bullying with the hope that viewers would gain a better understanding about not only what bullying is and how to prevent it, but also how to help kids deal with it. “As pastors, Sabbath School teachers, children’s ministry leaders, school-teachers, and parents, we must be the people that the victims of bullying can go to for help and protection. The only way that will happen is they can trust us enough to come to us; the only way we can help is if we ourselves are informed on what to do.”

“I spoke about the relationship between pornography and intimate partner abuse,” said Claudio Consuegra, D.Min., NAD Family Ministries director. “Our hope is to shed some more light on the growing problem of pornography with our churches and communities”

*Both days of the Summit on Abuse are available to watch on the enditnow website, enditnownorthamerica.org/watch2019.

God in Shoes Coordinates Widespread Outreach to Serve Women and Their Families

BY MYLON MEDLEY

Following months of planning with Orlando area services, the women’s convention participants volunteered at several locations, including organizations that address homelessness; organizations that combat hunger and food insecurity; safe spaces for girls and women and their families; an organization that addresses systemic problems related to hygiene health; and a center for grieving children.

In addition, each location received a donation of supplies specifically curated for the organizations’ services that had been accumulated in the months leading up to the convention. This extend- ed opportunities for service to those who were unable to physically volunteer on September 27.

“I thank them, because those gifts are going to help the facilities much longer than the one day we were there,” said Dubs.

The type of work the volunteers participated in varied from sorting clothing and food, to preparing meals, to providing such spa services as hand massages and manicures, to writing thank-you notes, and even to landscaping.

“I did not know a place like this existed,” said Juliet McFarlane from the Greater New York Conference who volunteered at New Hope for Kids, an organization in central Florida that has helped children since 1996 deal with grief and pain associated with illness and death. “As soon as I go back to New York, I am going to find one of those centers, and I’m going to be a volunteer. I picked up so many brochures, and I’m going to share with my local church’s women’s ministries and youth department so that we can become a part of this work.”

God in Shoes began in 2004 in response to a challenge issued by the president of the Georgia-Cumberland Conference to ministry leaders to find ways to make their ministries more evangelistic. The anchor text for the ministry is Romans 10:13-15.

“For me, God in our shoes is the opportunity for us as Christians to represent God in our shoes,” said Dubs. “No, we are not God, but as Christians we represent God in who we are, the places we go, and the places we serve for Him.”

Visit https://ow.ly/mypK50wQPCz for more of the story, including a video report.

Mylon Medley is an assistant director of communication for the North American Division.

Kimberly Luste Maran is editor of Adventist Journey magazine.

*God in Shoes volunteer scopes match to help refresh the landscaping of the Orlando Union Rescue Mission. Mylon Medley
The Best Gift

One of the best gifts I’ve ever received was our first baby, born less than two weeks before Christmas (on my birthday). That was and is a wonderful, wonderful gift. The best gifts we ever get are gifts of family, friends, and loved ones. It’s incredible that we sometimes lose focus on the fact that our friends and families mean the most to us, and we begin to focus on other things—and that’s too bad.

The first text I want to share is Galatians 4:4-7: “But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ (KJV).”

When the fulness of time had come, God sent forth His Son. What an amazing gift! We are talking about the presence of the omnipotent, omnipresent, unchangeable God! It always blows me away to contemplate why He would do it. It’s so incredible—I believe we will study the plan of redemption of the human family throughout the “ceaseless ages of eternity.”

Why would He do it? Why would He leave the beauty of heav’n to come and identify with the human family? What great and unfathomable love! When the fulness of time had come, God sent forth His Son. What a gift.

Tied in with this is Romans 8:31: “What then shall we say to those things? If God is for us, who can be against us?”

If God is for us, who can be against us?

That’s what you call a gift! God giving Himself for us.

For me the joy of Christmas comes, of course, with the birth of a Child, but it comes primarily because I know that that Child has given all human beings a need and a reason for joy.

As we enter the Christmas season, I don’t know who’s coming and who’s going. But may God bless you through this season. If you are lonely, reach out to someone and allow them to minister to you.

I pray that God gives each of us a song in our heart, hope, and joy—that we will give God all the praise for His wondrous gift.

Daniel R. Jackson is president of the North American Division. This article is based on a devotional talk at an NAD staff worship.
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