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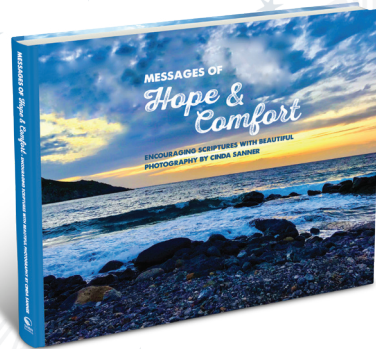
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Adventist Journey

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My Journey

May 1988 was the pivotal moment for me, to have the courage to say to my husband and my family, who were Catholics, that I was getting baptized. God was leading me, helping me, and encouraging me to make that decision. I remember going into that water and coming up feeling blessed and in bliss.

Visit nadadventist.org/ajmilliemojica for more of Mojica's story.

MILLIE MOJICA,
educator and literacy coach living in
New York, New York



Cover photo by Art Brando

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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Email: AdventistJourney@nadadventist.org | Web site: nadadventist.org

ADVENTIST JOURNEY

Editor **Kimberly Luste Maran**

Senior Editorial Assistant

Art Direction & Design **Ellen Musselman / Types & Symbols**

Consultants **G. Earl Knight, Mark Johnson, Dave Weigley, Kenneth Denslow, Gary Thurber, John Freedman, Bradford C. Newton, Ron C. Smith, Carlos Craig**

Executive Editor, *Adventist World* **Bill Knott**

A CHANCE at the MIC

Young adults speak up on church mission initiatives

BY BECKY ST. CLAIR

During the 2021 year-end meeting of the North American Division, facilitators posed groupings of several questions to the pastors and other leaders in attendance. Each of them focused on one of the three strategic focuses of the church in the next several years: Multiply, Media, and Mentorship.

“We chose ‘multiply’ as a broad, overarching approach to mission because it covers the ministry of Jesus in all aspects: His ministries of healing, compassion, and discipling,” explained G. Alexander Bryant, NAD president.

Media use has always been important to the sharing of the gospel message. One example: the early Adventist Church consistently and productively used the printing press—new technology for their time.

“We haven’t yet leveraged what we have now in the same way,” Bryant pointed out. “Even though all of us are using media, we aren’t doing it in a collective way for the greatest impact.”

This is where Bryant and other church leaders feel young adults and youth will play a pivotal role because they see media simply as a way of life. “We need to take advantage of their abilities and use of technology,” Bryant added. “If we allow them to, they could catapult the church.”

With more than 50 percent of Adventist pastors and 65 percent of administrators at the conference, union, and division levels either currently eligible for retirement or reaching eligibility within the next two years, Bryant says mentorship is crucial for the church.



iStock photography/wagnerokasaki

“We need to focus on developing the next generation of leaders,” Bryant said.

As a significant step toward that commitment, leaders at the NAD sent the same list of questions they’d posed to pastors in the fall to student leader groups at each of the colleges and universities within the division in early 2022. Students were asked to gather a group of peers to discuss the questions, record the responses most agreed upon by consensus, and submit them to NAD leadership.

While several student groups followed through (some answering every single question), many did not respond at all, which Tracy Wood, director of Youth and Young Adult Ministries at the NAD, said still speaks volumes.

“We have to earn their trust before they will invest their time in our requests,” he said. “Many of our young people have lost hope in the institutional church, and they don’t feel talking with us will make a difference. It’s up to us to change that.”

What follows is a collection of responses from the various student groups who shared their thoughts on “the 3Ms” with NAD leadership. Not every question is included in this article, nor is every response shown, but each group who responded is represented—and what is included are examples of the most common responses, as well as several unique stand-alone responses.*

How can we increase members’ involvement in the mission of the church?

Adventist Christian Fellowship (ACF) Student Association

People are really busy. Adding yet another program to their already overbooked schedule is rarely welcome, so we need to help people think missionally about what they’re already doing. A book we recommend is *Surprise the World: Five Habits of Highly Missional People*, by Michael Frost.

Seminary Student Forum Think Tank

Personal involvement in church springs from a heart connected to Christ. It is important, therefore, that church leaders prioritize teaching personal spirituality (how to read the Bible, prayer, life decisions, etc.), building friendships for the sake of pure Christian fellowship, and unlearning ineffective church practices and traditions.

Southwestern Adventist University Student Association Ministry VP

Start small! It is vital to develop relationships with people around us, and when we start in small groups,

It is vital to develop relationships with people around us, and when we start in small groups, relationships can grow naturally and comfortably.

relationships can grow naturally and comfortably. Group members will then spread the word and invite more people who can also become involved in the mission of the church. People are the best way to bring in people, not solely advertisements.

AdventHealth University Student Chaplain

Increasing diversity in leadership and being more creative in worship are two huge ways to get a greater number of church members involved. Young adults especially report feeling helpful and needed when they are asked to be involved, rather than being left to find ways to get involved on their own, as that can be intimidating.

Southern Adventist University Student Association

The first step would be to inform people of what that mission is, advertising it from a position of loving others as Christ loves them. Disciples will follow once there is a clearly stated and just mission. Ensure that all members are treated fairly and without judgment or criticism. If the church is not a place of judgment, people both within and outside of the church will feel more welcome and comfortable there. In short: The emphasis of our mission should be more on love and less on doctrine.

What attributes do you believe are currently associated with the Adventist brand in North America, and how can we rebrand?

Pacific Union College Student Association

Words and topics such as conservative, missions abroad, ADRA, the Adventist health message, and



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Give young people keys to the church, and offer them the opportunity to help in a leadership role, where they can learn and grow from their mistakes in a safe environment.

“blue zones.” We need to rebrand away from traditional evangelism, and as a global entity that is focused on our local communities around the world. Honestly, our focus shouldn’t be on branding—we should instead focus on teaching, educating, and healing.

ACF Student Association

Adventism is associated with old churches, old values, and old people. We need to be more engaged with the conversations and issues our neighbors grapple with, instead of designing our social media to reach only other Adventists. We need to identify what non-Adventists want to hear and talk about, then produce that content. It’s not a matter of struggling with equipment and platforms; it’s really that we’re just not saying anything people care about.

Southern Adventist University Student Association

Attributes: conservative, different, weird, cultish, unknown, cliquey, keeps within their own religious and cultural groups, doctrinal, behind the times. To rebrand, the church needs to be where society is looking for brands—multimedia platforms such as video and social media sites. This means greater funding, of course, but if we want more, bigger, and better storytelling collaborations, we have to invest in these tools and those who know how to use them well.

How can we encourage our members to use their social media accounts as evangelistic outreach?

Seminary Student Forum Think Tank

The church should have professional social media platforms, which may involve hiring outside expertise, as the budget reflects priorities where members are invited to participate in different ways. This would require a social media team and may be a good place to involve the youth and young adults in leadership and ministry positions, as it would allow them to work with pastors and elders in the creation of solid biblical content. These leaders would mentor the youth, and in turn, the young people would teach the older leaders their skills and insights.

Southern Adventist University Student Association

If the church itself has a higher social media presence, with posts that are easy for people to share in their own stories, it would naturally become something more people did. Also, having local churches collaborate on events, doing

outreach together, and supporting each other’s events and projects would lend itself to connecting and sharing online. Additionally, greater efforts to increase media literacy would help, perhaps through classes or seminars taught by social media experts currently in the field.

Pacific Union College Student Association

Members must be convinced that outreach doesn’t have to mean traditional evangelism. This means that church leaders must first acknowledge and accept this. And we’re not talking about simply sharing Bible verses on Twitter; sharing God’s love through experiences in our own lives can be incredibly powerful.

ACF Student Association

One example of encouraging our members to use social media accounts as evangelistic outreach is how one of our officers uses their daily devotions to create Twitter posts every day. When getting through a morning devotion simply became another checkmark on the to-do list, they adopted a “freshness goal,” in which they read until they found something fresh to share, then packaged it into 280 characters and shared it on Twitter. Something as simple as this can not only enhance personal spiritual lives, but also be an interesting evangelism tool.

How are we equipping the next generation of leaders? And how, in a constituency-based system, can we still prepare leaders for tomorrow?

Southern Adventist University Student Association

By empowering and supporting the young people of the church through involvement and mentorship, allowing them opportunities to

be involved in meaningful ways. Beyond pastors and parents, there are other, older members of the church who can and do continuously show their support and offer advice. Having a support system in the church is very important if the church wants its young people to be involved and, ultimately, to stay in the church.

ACF Student Association

Give young people keys to the church, and offer them the opportunity to help in a leadership role, where they can learn and grow from their mistakes in a safe environment. Also, experienced leaders should stop trying to do all the work by themselves and delegate to a less-experienced young adult. Pastors should send young people to conference events to participate as representatives of their congregation. All of these things demonstrate that the current leaders of the church have an interest in young people, and are willing to mentor—and perhaps be mentored by—them.

AdventHealth University

It seems there should be more done to equip the next generation of leaders, and this can be successfully done through continuous involvement and mentorship. We need to feel needed, and we long to be given opportunities. To equip the next generation of leaders, the church must be made into a safe place, where young adults can receive love and support while facing twenty-first-century struggles.

Pacific Union College Student Association

Including young adults in the hierarchy with decision-making would go a long way toward preparing us to fill the shoes of those who have gone before. Put us on committees, intentionally seek greater cultural representation in those groups,

and ask us what we want to do differently. It’s less about preparing us to be leaders tomorrow, and more about allowing us to lead today.

Many Similarities

NAD leadership was surprised to find great similarity between the responses of pastors and church leaders at the NAD year-end meetings last fall, and those of the student leaders this spring.

“The Multiply initiative is, at its core, about getting people involved in the mission of the church by using our specific gifts,” Bryant said. “This concept resonated greatly with both groups, in much the same way.”

Bryant also pointed out that feedback from the pastoral and administrative leaders indicated a need to get more young people involved and to continue developing them—a message that was echoed from the other side in the responses from student leaders.

“There is a huge desire among our youth and young adults to be more involved, and our leaders want them involved, but for some reason we haven’t been able to make this happen effectively,” Bryant said. “So if there’s the desire on one side and need on the other, how do we build a bridge to connect the two?”

The answer may lie in media. Indications from student responses are that youth and young adults are ready and willing to not only be involved in media with and for the church, but to be leaders in this area.

“We offered our young people a chance at the mic, and they spoke

up,” Wood said. “This is the core of youth and young adult ministry: Hear their voice. It’s the heartbeat of everything we do in this ministry, and this is only the beginning.”

NAD leadership, including Bryant and Wood, want to have broader conversations—with questions being asked and answered on both sides. Ultimately, they hope to bring student leaders out to the NAD headquarters in Maryland to talk with administrative leaders.

“We want to listen, learn, and, to use a current catchphrase, ‘lean in,’” Wood said.

Bryant added that he and his fellow administrators want to use the input they receive from young people in the church to shape the infrastructure needed to gain positive traction in mission—together.

“As we’ve conversed, we’ve begun to realize we actually have a lot in common,” he said. “So let’s find some things we can all advance and focus on together, and learn from each other. There seems to be a lot of optimism that maybe we can, in fact, do more together.”

**For a full list of all questions asked, visit <https://www.nadadventist.org/YEM21discussionquestions>. For a report on responses recorded during the 2021 year-end meetings of the NAD administrative leaders, see <https://www.nadadventist.org/news/multiply-media-mentorship-intentionality-growing-church-christ>.*

Becky St. Clair writes from Angwin, California.



MASTER GUIDE CONVENTION CELEBRATES 100 YEARS, “LEADS THE WAY” FOR NEW GENERATIONS

BY RACHEL SCRIBNER

This summer in the Rocky Mountains, something old met something new in youth ministries as the time-honored Master Guide ministry program celebrated 100 years of history, and opened its arms to the next generation of leaders.

Any successful 100-year celebration will, and should, attract seasoned veterans of the ministry, but for Armando Miranda, North American Division Pathfinder director and NAD Youth and Young Adult Ministries associate director, it was important to create an event that young leaders would want to attend as well. And so, instead of the

standard indoor convention center model, Miranda and the NAD Youth and Young Adult OneTeam decided to hold the convention in the town of Estes Park, Colorado—a common base camp for exploration in Rocky Mountain National Park.

“Younger generations . . . they’ve got to be doing stuff, they’ve got to be somewhere that inspires them,” Miranda said. “This spirit of adventure, this spirit of going out and finding things—young people are hungry for adventure, for discovering places.”

The 2022 Master Guide Convention was held on August 3-6, 2022, with the theme “Leading the

Way.” The event allowed dedicated youth leaders from all across the North American Division to meet new and old friends, worship together, enjoy a wide range of outdoor activities, and participate in roundtable discussions about the past, present, and future of Master Guides in ministry.

During the evening general sessions and on Sabbath morning, attendees heard from speakers that included vanguard leaders of the past and young leaders looking forward. One speaker, Ezra Jean-Baptiste, was not yet 10 years old.

Bob Holbrook, former youth and Pathfinder director for the

← A group of Master Guides wearing the official convention T-shirt celebrate at a mountain viewpoint in Colorado. *Pieter Damsteegt*

world church, and long-time youth ministry leader in North America, opened the convention with a look back at where God has led Master Guide ministry over the years. “He mentioned that when he was young, someone told him, ‘If you want to lead or if you want to engage young people, you’ve got to be an outdoorsman,’” Miranda said, adding that he believes youth ministry is “heading that direction again.”

And true to his word, Miranda’s team filled the convention with such outdoor challenges as shelter building and water purifying, sports, community outreach, and more. The event location meant attendees could also easily try other local activities, including boating, bike rides, horseback riding, and an adventure park, to name a few. Activities were book-ended by leadership discussions, and inspirational addresses by Miranda, Holbrook, Jean-Baptiste, young adult Kristen Zollbrecht, conference youth ministry leader Paula Olivier, and world Pathfinder director Andres Peralta.

Dixie Plata, veteran Master Guide and Pathfinder historian, set up the mobile Pathfinder Museum at the convention, with a special focus on Master Guide history. “One hundred

↓ An attendee wears a Pathfinder scarf emblazoned with the 100-year anniversary Master Guide convention logo. *Pieter Damsteegt*



↑ Armando Miranda, NAD Pathfinder Club director, addresses the audience from the Master Guide Convention stage. *Pieter Damsteegt*

The 2022 Master Guide Convention allowed dedicated youth leaders from all across the NAD to meet new and old friends.

years, and we’re still here and not in heaven,” Plata said, noting that the first Master Guide (then called Master Comrade) was invested in 1922. “Of course, I’m not 100 years old, so I wasn’t [around] way back then, [but] I knew people that were, and so it makes it very personal,” she said.

After 40 years of working with young people, Plata has many stories to tell—one young man admitted he’d been threatening to murder his mother until his life was changed on a Pathfinder trip that Plata led. The mother called later to confirm the story, and to tell Plata her son was now “the sweetest kid,” stating that “the difference you made is unbelievable.”

For Miranda, too, the heart of Master Guide ministry is in making a difference for others. He named two main goals for the convention: encouraging Master

Guides to learn about nature and share the outdoors with kids, and cultivating an attitude of service and leadership development in Master Guide ministry.

Miranda hopes veteran leaders will invest even more in mentoring younger leaders in the future. “That is what we’re looking for during the 100 years—leading the way in leadership development, leading the way in outdoors,” he said.

For attendee Lily Hernandez, there was something special in the convention’s natural setting. “Being connected with nature, seeing the beauty of what God has made. It just gives me more hope,” she said, adding, “Wow, if this is what [the Rocky Mountain scenery] looks like, imagine what heaven must look like.”

Rachel Scribner writes from Portland, Oregon.

NAD NEWS BRIEFS



ADVENTIST HEALTH TRAILER TO SUPPORT DISASTER RESPONSE IN CALIFORNIA

Adventist Health Simi Valley has donated a command center trailer to the Hope Crisis Response Network (HCRN) that will be used as an operations center during statewide disaster response.

During the past six years more than 1.7 million families in California have had to evacuate from their homes because of wildfires alone. When disaster strikes, life can change in an instant, leaving people in need of even the most basic services.

To help during these times of crisis, HCRN mobilizes its Hope Disaster Resource Village to provide services for individuals, families, and communities. Since 2015, HCRN staff and volunteers have helped communities near more than 50 major wildfires in California. HCRN will use its new command center trailer to organize and deploy equipment, volunteers, and a variety of targeted resources including information technology.

A special event was held at AHSV on August 11 to pray for the work of HCRN and to officially hand over the keys to the trailer. "Our mission is to live God's love," said AHSV president Jennifer Swenson at the dedication event, "and I can't think of a better way to do so than to be a part of something so meaningful."

—Kim Strobel, Mission and Spiritual Care at Adventist Health

Walla Walla University Library Receives \$10,000 Grant for Diversity Research

The Walla Walla University Peterson Memorial Library received a \$10,000 grant from the Washington State Library. The grant will provide updated literature and resources to support student research on diversity and belonging.

The grant was supported by American Rescue Plan Act funding, provided by the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services and administered by the Library Services and Technology Act, through the Washington State Library, a division of the Office of the Secretary of State.

In addition to supporting updates to the library's collection,

a portion of the grant has been allocated to host book discussion groups. "Peterson Memorial Library, in partnership with the university's Donald Blake Center, would like to build bridges with our underrepresented students and community members," said Cheris Current, director of the Donald Blake Center and WWU professor of social work and sociology. To do this, Current says they plan to host "read-along book discussion groups designed to build engagement through shared inquiry."

—Kiersten Ekkens, Walla Walla University Relations student

← An event to bless the donated trailer featured a team of leaders from AHSV and HCRN, including John Schroer, Adventist Health Global Mission manager (center, in blue); Jennifer Swenson, AHSV president (in pink); and Taylor Laurie, AHSV director of mission and spiritual care (green jacket). *Adventist Health Simi Valley*

Southern Adventist University Impacts Community Through Record Freshman Service Day

With more than 640 students participating, this year's Freshman Service Day was the biggest Southern Adventist University has held so far. The incoming class is the third largest in the school's 130-year history and the largest since the annual event began.

On August 18 all new students joined together on 33 different projects throughout Chattanooga and the surrounding communities. From trail maintenance at Red Clay State Park to preparation for the university's local food distribution, and to helping neighbors with their yard work, the required event provided opportunities for campus newcomers to venture into nearby neighborhoods and make a difference.

"Freshman Service Day allows students to grow in their walks with Jesus as they model Him," said Julie Devlin, service learning and community service coordinator. "This can be a real eye-opener for most of them in understanding what's needed right here in the university's backyard."

—Amanda Blake, Southern Adventist University student

↓ Students assemble bunk beds for Sleep in Heavenly Peace during Southern Adventist University's annual Freshman Service Day. *Southern Adventist University*



BY BONITA JOYNER SHIELDS

The Spiritual Discipline of Gratitude

OK, Johnny, tell the class what you're grateful for this Thanksgiving season."

Teachers and parents alike seek to instill a sense of gratitude into their students' and children's minds. But gratitude is more than just a nice exercise at Thanksgiving. Gratitude is a weapon in the Christian's arsenal of faith.

And as Christians, we need it in our arsenal (see 2 Cor. 10:4, 5).

Ellen White states the importance of gratitude as follows: "Nothing tends more to promote health of body and of soul than does a spirit of gratitude and praise. It is a positive duty to resist melancholy, discontented thoughts and feelings—as much a duty as it is to pray."¹ Wow! As much as a duty to pray—that's powerful.

A former colleague of mine used to say, "We in North America have it so good that, after a while, the good starts looking bad." While many people in North America truly experience bad, some even tragic, situations in their lives, gratitude and praise can give all of us the power to endure—and to thrive. Satan is the destroyer. He seeks to destroy everyone that he can. If he can't destroy us, he'll work on us to destroy ourselves.

"Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, 'Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down. And they overcame him *by the blood of the Lamb* and *by the word of their testimony*, and they did not love their lives to the death'" (Rev. 12:10, 11, NKJV).²

Like you, I have challenges in my life. At times they have threatened to overwhelm me. And I have fallen for Satan's lies and accusations. But I have a spiritual discipline of gratitude that is giving me the strength to overcome them. Not that the challenges aren't still there. But my overcoming involves being able to trust God more and live by the truth that I am loved by God, He is my provider, and I don't have to know all the steps in my future. I just

place my foot in the footprint right in front of me. When it's time, He'll reveal the next step.

What is this spiritual discipline of gratitude?

Each morning, as part of my devotional time with the Lord, I write down seven things I'm grateful for. (I started with 10, but that was a struggle *every day!*) Since seven is my favorite number—and I believe it's God's favorite number, too!—I chose seven.

My gratitude list includes my loving, faithful, and supportive husband; family and friends; safe travels; my NAD family; the privilege of ministering; home, hot baths, waking up with no aches and pains, and uninterrupted sleep (those of you who struggle with these, you understand!); and it even includes crisp apples, fresh bread, homemade granola; opportunities, choices, abilities. And the list goes on.

It's not always easy to think of seven things each day, but that's one of the benefits of this discipline because it stretches me to look deeply at my life and learn to appreciate *all* the ways the Lord blesses me. It calibrates my mindset for the day.

As we express gratitude for the blessings we have and focus on God's promises to us, we will discover firsthand that this is not only a good exercise. This is a powerful weapon in the arsenal of faith.

I am loved by God,
He is my provider,
and I don't have to
know all the steps
in my future.

¹ Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing* (Mountain View Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1905), p. 251.
² Bible texts credited to NKJV are from the New King James Version, Copyright © 1979, 1980, 1982 by Thomas Nelson.

Bonita Joyner Shields is an associate secretary at the North American Division.

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—Tony Cash

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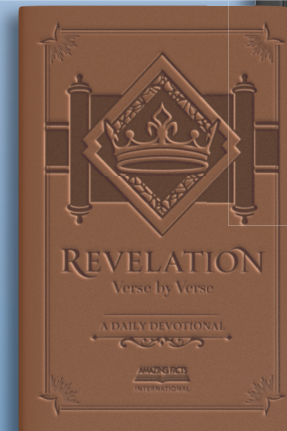
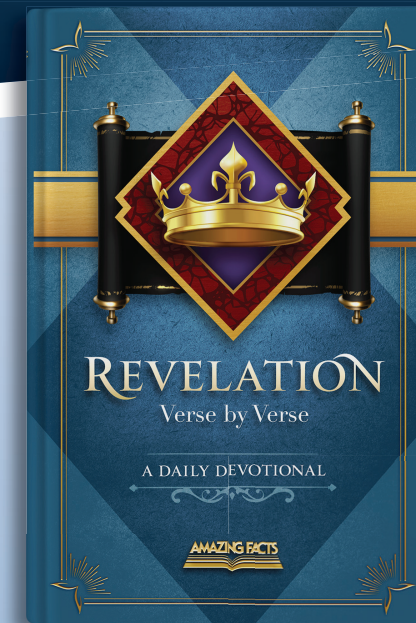


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*For more research, visit southern.edu/100reasons.

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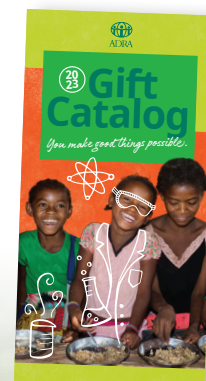


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