



WHEN ALL HAS BEEN HEARD



Official Newsletter for the Michigan Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

MICHIGAN MEMO

FEBRUARY 2017, VOLUME 29, NUMBER 2



▲ John Bradshaw with *It Is Written* delivering the Sabbath divine message at GYC.

Michigan and the GYC Movement

By Laurie Snyman

ASSISTANT TO THE MINSITERIAL DIRECTOR

“With such an army of workers as our youth, rightly trained, might furnish, how soon the message of a crucified, risen, and soon-coming Savior might be carried to the whole world!”

—Ellen G. White

My husband and I were privileged to attend GYC along with thousands of spirit-filled youth in Houston, Texas.

GYC, which stands for *Generation. Youth. Christ.* was started by Pastor Israel Ramos, who leads the campus ministries department.

This youth-led movement attracts those who desire to be better equipped as disciples and missionaries for Jesus. During the event the youth listen to deep, inspired messages from the main speakers and seminar instructors. The distinctive message of Adventism is a common thread throughout the convention.

One would be shocked to see such an army of youth carrying their Bibles, note pads, iPads, and backpacks rushing to

meetings and workshops. It’s such a thrill to witness this!

Another amazing discovery is to see the involvement of the Michigan Conference at GYC. Our conference invests and sacrifices in behalf of this movement. Some of our pastors, office staff, and teachers are administrators and speakers of GYC.

Moise Ratsara, pastor of the Jackson Church is the current president of GYC. Pastor Taylor Hinkle is the chaplain at Great Lakes Academy and serves as vice president of external affairs. Vice president of programming is Jonathan Walter, pastor of the Grand Haven and Wright churches. The treasurer is Esther Nanasi, a teacher at Tri-City Adventist School in Saginaw.

Other leaders from Michigan serve on the board of directors. They include our

(continued on page 5)



- EDITORIAL -

Does The Bible Have A Wax Nose?

By Jay Gallimore

PRESIDENT OF THE CONFERENCE

“Today, many blindly depend on scholars or clergy to tell them what the Bible means. But is the Bible that mysterious? If the plain teachings of Scripture are locked up in the dungeon of theological interpretation, will the members really know what it teaches?”

Can Scripture be twisted to say anything anyone wants it to mean? For Seventh-day Adventists the answer to that question is found in Fundamental Belief number one. “The Holy Scriptures are the infallible revelation of His will. They are the standard of character, the test of experience, the authoritative revealer of doctrines, and the trustworthy record of God’s acts in history.”¹ In addition, the *Church Manual* urges believers to “devote ourselves to God’s Book. . . If we cease to be the people of the Book, we are lost, and our mission has failed.”²

Paul declares that all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete. Peter states, “For prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.”³

If the Scripture holds the believer accountable to its instructions then it stands to reason that the Bible writers were writing for all members. Certainly the Apostles had an expectation that the reader or listener would understand its meaning by using their plain common sense. In the day of judgment will anyone be able to argue, “But my priest, or my theologian, or my pastor interpreted it for me?” Each believer must “work out his own salvation with fear and trembling.”⁴ Each of us must prayerfully and humbly read the Bible and take it seriously because in its pages we find our Savior. He alone can save us. It’s not Christ in your pastor, priest, or theologian that saves you. It’s “Christ in you the hope of glory.”⁵

Both Peter and Paul insisted that the epistles they wrote be publicly read to the churches. Nevertheless, the papacy long ago abandoned the idea that members could understand the Bible without the Pope interpreting it for them. When the Protestant Reformation provided the common person access to the Bible, suddenly the whole world woke up out of the dark ages.

Today, many blindly depend on scholars or clergy to tell them what the Bible means. But is the Bible that mysterious? If the plain teachings of Scripture are locked up in the dungeon of theological interpretation, will the members really know what it teaches? Much of main line liberal Protestantism have done the same thing as Rome, only in a different way. Utilizing what they call “higher critical scholarship” they have insisted that the plain reading of the Bible is too simplistic and may not mean what it states at face value.

They assume that the inspiration of Bible writers were conditioned by their culture. Consequently, they argue that its plain teachings are not relative or timeless or applicable for our day. In plain language, without their help, they do not believe that the average person can understand Scripture and apply it correctly in our modern world.

In 1968-1979, Krister Stendahl, a Swedish theologian and New Testament scholar, served as the dean of Harvard’s Divinity School. He led a reform movement on women’s ordination, gay and lesbian rights, and the ordination of LGBT persons for church office. He pushed for the ecumenism of various denominations

and other religions.⁶ In 1997, he had a discussion with six theologians and religious leaders, and argued that the sin of Sodom was a folk story and stated that to make a Biblical ethics story out of it was not very wise.⁷

Regrettably, Stendahl's methods of Bible study—or hermeneutics—have gained traction with some Seventh-day Adventist theologians and leaders. Ekkedhardt Mueller, recently retired from the *Biblical Research* Committee of the General Conference states, “Stendahl has discussed and defended the concept – that we must clearly distinguish between what the text meant in its original setting and what the text means for us today. This has also influenced Adventist theologians, pastors and church members. Some have suggested that such issues as homosexuality, divorce and remarriage, and the wearing of jewelry, must be interpreted in light of the present cultural situation rather than the context of the ancient texts of Scripture.”⁸

Stendahl's hermeneutics departs radically from the standard approach of Seventh-day Adventists. In 1986, the Annual Council voted on a document called “Methods of Bible Study” (MBS). It clearly rejected the higher critical methods of liberal Protestantism, which places man as the judge of the Bible instead of the Bible the judge of man.

One crucial statement from the MBS states: “Human reason is subject to the Bible, not equal to or above it. Presuppositions regarding the Scriptures must be in harmony with the claims of the Scriptures and subject to correction by them. God intends that human reason be used to its fullest extent, but within the context and under the authority of His Word rather than independent of it.”⁹

The hermeneutics of liberal theologians have given Scripture a wax nose. This makes it possible for them to assume biblical support for whichever way the cultural winds of society are blowing. It's always popular to tell people that their sins aren't really sin.

Ministers twisting Scripture to maintain their status is not new. I grew up in a tobacco economy where few Sunday keep-

ing ministers would dare speak against the evils of tobacco. Similar logic was used by the Sadducees and Pharisees to crucify Christ for the “good” of the nation. Sinful societies have always hated the prophets who reproved them and always appreciated theologians who afforded them the theological grounds to stone them.

Muller continues with a brilliant insight, “Oftentimes behind this question lies the idea and the agenda that the biblical text must be reapplied to our present situation in an absolutely new way. When this is done, biblical vocabulary is still used, however with a completely new meaning. . . . By following this approach we would replace God's original intentions with the authority of the human interpreter and would open the text to innumerable interpretations, running the risk of replacing truth with relativism and pluralism.”¹⁰

Today, it is not unusual to hear of liberal Protestant ministers marrying same sex couples. Some are in such relationships themselves. Many also deny the virgin birth, the miracles of Christ and the six day creation and openly endorse evolution.¹¹

How can so-called Christian ministers embrace such beliefs and practices? It's simple really. They have adopted methods of Bible study that give the Bible a wax nose. With their humanly devised hermeneutics, they are able to dismiss the clearest statements of Scripture and even twist it to condone the grossest sins of society.

Certainly, we want to always understand the grammar and the historical context of Scripture. These elements are important to produce accurate translations. But to construct cynical human devices, which undermine the clear and timeless teachings of the Bible is to impose a new satanic darkness in our modern culture.

Every person, nation, and generation comes to one fork in the road. Will we trust God when He speaks? In the Bible He's not simply speaking to the Israelites at Sinai or the Ephesians in Timothy. He speaking to all of us! Today.

As a church, we've chosen to trust God's Word as true and timeless. Its enduring truths unite us to our Savior. Knowing the Bible is crucial. Critical temptations

will continue to confront us individually and as a church.

Let us determine not to permit our faith in the timeless truths of Scripture be seduced by cunningly devised hermeneutics.

¹ *SDA Church Manual*, p. 156, 2010 edition.

² *Ibid.* p. 137.

³ 2 Timothy 3:15-17; 2 Peter 1:19-21.

⁴ Philippians 2:12.

⁵ Colossians 1:27.

⁶ <http://hds.harvard.edu/news/2011/02/07/kristen-stendahl-1921-2008>. Accessed January 10, 2017.

⁷ <http://gptsnews.gpts.edu/2015/09/slippery-slope-swedish-churchs-long.html>. Accessed January 10, 2017.

⁸ Ekkedhardt Mueller, “What the Biblical Text Meant and What It Means,” Biblical Research Institute, <https://adventistbiblicalresearch.org/materials/bible-interpretation-hermeneutics/what-biblical-text-meant-and-what-it-means>. Accessed January 10, 2017.

⁹ General Conference Committee, Annual Council, “Methods of Bible Study,” <https://adventistbiblicalresearch.org/materials/bible-interpretation-hermeneutics/what-biblical-text-meant-and-what-it-means>. Accessed January 10, 2017.

¹⁰ Ekkedhardt Mueller, “What the Biblical Text Meant and What It Means,” Biblical Research Institute, <https://adventistbiblicalresearch.org/materials/bible-interpretation-hermeneutics/what-biblical-text-meant-and-what-it-means>. Accessed January 10, 2017.

¹¹ <http://gptsnews.gpts.edu/2015/09/slippery-slope-swedish-churchs-long.html>. Accessed January 10, 2017.



Sabbath School Making Evangelistic Impact

By Bonnie Oetman & Marion Peppers

MEMBERS OF THE LANSING CHURCH

PRAYER FOCUS

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

FEBRUARY 6-10

Niles Westside
Pastor Darrel LeRoux
Niles Adventist School

FEBRUARY 13-17

Big Rapids/Bristol/Reed City
Pastor Immanuel Roth

FEBRUARY 21-24

Gobles/Pinedale/Allegan
Pastor Tom Hubbard
Gobles Jr. Academy
Community Services -
Linda Klenoski

FEBRUARY 27 - MARCH 3

Livingston/Waterford
Waterford SDA Elementary

A few years ago Elder Jay Gallimore came to the Lansing Church and challenged all the department leaders. He encouraged the departments to “win a soul” to Christ. Lansing’s Sabbath School superintendent, Bonnie Oetman, took that charge to heart.

For years, the Lansing Church had a desire to strengthen their Sabbath School department, but found it difficult to know where to begin. Something needed to change and many began to pray. As the Lord spoke to her heart, Bonnie decided to challenge each Sabbath School class with something very specific. They had already implemented the Michigan Conference’s four Sabbath School goals: study of the word, fellowship, community outreach, and a mission emphasis; but she felt impressed to take it a step further.

She challenged each class to “win a soul” to Christ. It seemed a little daunting, but with some encouragement the members got on board and began praying. Ever since, each Sabbath School class has five goals instead of four. With the support of Pastor Wes Peppers and the elders, this has been a constant theme for every Sabbath School teacher (and now the class members). And God is moving!

The church was inspired by these changes and started two new classes: Young (ages 13-18) and Youth Adult (ages 19-35). Both classes are very active.

The Sabbath School goals of the Michigan Conference have been such a blessing. However, since adding the fifth goal our mindset has shifted, and we have become more than just a class. Each class

is also a small group. Not only do we meet every Sabbath, but many also meet outside of class time. We have socials together, fellowship meals, and nurture new members and visitors who attend.

Attendees are encouraged to invite their non-Adventist family and friends to attend Sabbath School with them and learn together. We’re striving to be an evangelistic and growing congregation. This past year, the Lansing Church witnessed two precious souls that were baptized as a result of Sabbath School.

Not long ago, a Sabbath School class led by Jock McPhee started mentoring April McCreary. She was baptized in 2015, and Sabbath School played a significant role. Through her influence, many of her family members have also been baptized.

This phenomenon is also taking place in our Young Adult Sabbath School class, led by Greg and Rachel Cabose. Through their small group study and fellowship, Chad Emig was also baptized in 2015. Chad is now a faithful member.

Elder Gallimore had no idea that his challenge would produce such an impact. His challenge to win souls for Christ is a vibrant reality today. Sabbath School is essential to building a strong, growing church family. We’ve seen it firsthand; and we’re excited to see what the Lord will continue to do.

In the words of Ellen White: “The Sabbath School is a missionary field and very much more of the missionary spirit should be manifested in this important work than has been manifested in the past” *Testimonies on Sabbath-School Work*, p. 567.

(continued on page 5)

Hacksaw Ridge

Opportunity to Witness

By Mike Fracker
MEMBER OF THE IONIA CHURCH

With the renewed interest in the story of Desmond Doss, sparked by Mel Gibson's movie of the Adventist medic who refused to carry a gun, it was a perfect opportunity to share the Adventist faith. Amazing Facts published a book for that very reason entitled, *Hero of Hacksaw Ridge* that provided insights into the biblical understanding of Seventh-day Adventists.

Gary Emelander of the Ionia church and his brother Don of the Frost church, took it upon themselves to speak to the managers of several movie theaters to distribute the books during the showings of the film. Gary received positive responses from managers of two Celebration Cinemas in Grand Rapids.

Gary and Don also made sacrifices to purchase the books. The Ionia church also purchased 1500 books for the project and the Frost, Bauer, and Wyoming churches

also pitched in to add to the collection.

Thirty-six volunteers from Ionia, Frost, Bauer, Wyoming, Lowell and Central took shifts handing out the books and conversing with people over a three-week period.

One man spoke with Gary and Carolyn Rose and said he was in charge of the American Veteran's program at the Amway Grand Ballroom on Veteran's Day. He wondered if they could send someone to distribute *Hero of Hacksaw Ridge* at their event. Kevin Barrett volunteered to go and passed out 200 books!

Mike and Marcela Fracker also passed out books, and Mike mentioned that after one showing, "A woman came out and stood before me and just wept." He went on to say that her father had been in the same company as Desmond Doss and had returned alive. She added, "I can't believe what he went through!" So for her, it was a very personal experience.



According to Mike 10,400 books were distributed in the two theaters. In the words of Gary Emelander, "There were many good conversations and Adventists were put in a positive light because of this effort." Gary also inserted Strong Tower Radio cards in many of the books, and there was an offer for Bible studies placed in every book!

MICHIGAN AND GYC, CONT'D

conference president, Jay Gallimore; Andy Im, director of communications; Ken Micheff, youth director; and Amy Ratsara, attorney.

This year, the main evening speaker was Pastor Jason Sliger and the main morning speaker was Randy Skeete, both Michigan natives!

Each time I was in the hotel elevator, I asked some questions to the young attendees. I discovered they were from all over—Austria, Bahamas, California, Canada, Connecticut, Florida, Mexico, Michigan, Rhode Island, and St. Croix—to name a few! I also asked what their favorite part of the convention was. Many stated that they loved outreach, where they are bussed to neighborhoods to find Bible study contacts. Others said they loved the morning and evening speakers, or the seminar teachers. All seemed to enthusiastically

embrace the messages and the soul-winning opportunities.

Many photos were posted on Facebook page to give others a taste of what was happening. I received numerous comments about how they wished their kids could be there. With each convention, many souls are won to Christ and many accept calls to go as missionaries to all parts of the world.

It's an opportunity I wish was available when my daughter was young. Why wouldn't any church or parent desire to see their youth enthusiastically embracing their Christian life of commitment and service?

Make sure you encourage the young people in your family, church, or sphere of influence to attend next year's GYC! It will be held in Phoenix, Arizona between Christmas and New Years Eve. You can find more information at: GYCweb.org.

SABBATH SCHOOL MAKING, CONT'D

Wouldn't it be awesome if every church implemented the fifth goal to "win a soul"? Sabbath School is more than a Bible study group. It can also serve to connect with church members, and to reach out to those beyond our church walls. It should also be a safe environment for members to invite their non-Adventist friends and family.

Every aspect of our church service is important. But one of the most important is Sabbath School. Time is short. Let's look for ways to reach souls through our Sabbath School initiatives.

Truly, "The importance of the Sabbath-school work is beyond estimate"
General Conference Bulletin, May 21, 1913.



Pastor Wes and Marion Peppers

Don't Miss The Marriage Retreat!

By Marion Peppers

MEMBER OF THE LANSING CHURCH

As a newly married couple in ministry, my husband and I had a lot to learn. We were quick to say “yes,” quick to put off “date nights,” quick to “serve.” After all, isn’t that what ministry is all about? Over the past 12 years, we have learned many things indeed. Unfortunately, many of those things have been learned the hard way.

The Michigan Conference places much emphasis on marriage and family retreats. My husband and I were very impressed when we came to work here and have promoted them immensely in our churches. I’m sad to say, however, that in 12 years of marriage, we never took the time to attend ourselves. The excuses were many: we were newlyweds and had no problems, we were too busy traveling and doing ministry, we had no child-care, and on and on.

In November everything fell into place, and we were finally able to attend our first marriage retreat at Crystal Mountain Resort. It was a tremendous experience, and I can only say that I’m sorry we hadn’t done it sooner.

Some might describe it as a vacation of sorts. It certainly was, but oh, so much more! For my husband and I, it was a time to reconnect without the distractions of our children or church members. Marriage can be trying at times, especially when busy in ministry. It can be easy to forget to connect with our spouses on a daily basis and to communicate the important things; not just “church things.”

Jim and Gail Micheff, along with many others, do an amazing job making

these retreats special and meaningful. The accommodations and food were top notch, the schedule was relaxed, and the little details were exquisite. But, of course, the most meaningful of all were the seminars conducted by Pastor Buford and Carmen Griffith. Their talks were spiritual, practical, and humorous. Whether you were married for six months or 40 years, there were blessings to be had for everyone.

I would encourage every married couple to attend one of these retreats. Strong marriages make strong churches. Take advantage of these weekends to recharge with God and your spouse.

Many thanks to the Michigan Conference for caring about our marriages and our families! I have been personally blessed by their prayers and sacrifice!

“To gain a proper understanding of the marriage relation is the work of a lifetime. Those who marry enter a school from which they are never in this life to be graduated.”

— Ellen G. White

Marriage is a Journey

Time to re-check the Roadmap?

Info: To register for the Marriage Commitment weekend, or for more information, call Alyce at 517-316-1543. You can also download an application by going to www.misda.org (family ministries dept.)



March 10-12, 2017
Camp Au Sable Grayling, Michigan

The Courageous Man

Date: April 29, 2017

Location: Great Lakes Adventist Academy

No Registration Fee: The day will be funded by a freewill offering.

Lunch: Available on a donation basis. To register for the meal, call 517-316-1581.



Main Speaker: Jim Ayer

Jim Ayer is an international speaker whose greatest passion is introducing people to a lifesaving friendship with Jesus Christ. His travels have taken him to at least 75 countries. Jim has authored eight books including his personal story, *Second Chance*, and the 12 week study guide, *Your Daily Journey to Transformation*. He served as a Vice President for *Amazing Facts* and *Adventist World Radio*, as the Assistant to the President at *Hope Channel*, and is now the President of *Better Life Broadcasting Network*.

Seminars with:

- Jay Gallimore
- Darryl Bentley
- Roy Castelbuono
- Cory Herthel

Upcoming Event: August 18-20, 2017—Camp Out at Camp Au Sable Northwoods

MICHIGAN MEN OF FAITH 2017



Vacation Bible School Workshop April 28-30, 2017

VBS Program: "A Week On the Farm"
where children will learn how:

- * Jesus Guides My Path
- * Jesus Always Loves Me
- * Jesus Takes Care of Me
- * Jesus is My Provider
- * Jesus is My Shelter

Children will learn these spirit-filled lessons through farm life and God's eight laws of healthy living and Bible stories!

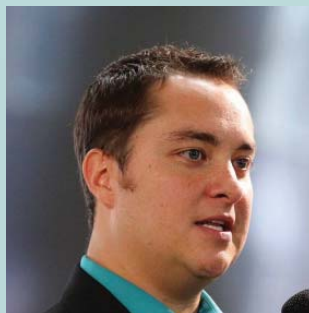
Transitions in

MISSIONS



CHAD BERNARD

Chad Bernard will be the new associate youth director for senior youth and young adults. He is currently the principal of Weimar Academy and will be joining us June 1.



NATHANIEL OREGON

Nathaniel Oregon is the new pastor for the Belleville Church and Adrian Company. We welcome him and his family to the pastoral team.



DEB FITZPATRICK

Deb Fitzpatrick has joined the office as the administrative assistant to Elder Leroy Bruch in Treasury. She has 20 years of experience in the banking industry.



MELISSA YOUNG

Melissa Young has joined the conference office as part-time receptionist. Her husband David works with the Publishing Department.

- **Sean Brizendine** is the new pastor at Houghton and the new assistant pastor of Bessemer and Greenland churches.
- **Tony Ludwig** is the new pastor of the L'Anse and Marquette churches.
- **Bruce Moore** has come out of retirement to be the interim pastor for the Livingston and Waterford churches.
- **Wendy Welch** is the new administrative assistant for Elder Jay Gallimore.

MICHIGAN CONFERENCE OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS
 PO Box 24187
 Lansing, MI 48909
 PHONE 517.316.1500 FAX 517.316.1501
 jclark@misda.org
 www.misda.org
 www.facebook.com/miconf

MONTHLY CALENDAR

FEBRUARY

- 5-10 | Blind Camp Winter Camp -
Camp Au Sable
- 17-19 | CAMPUS Winter Retreat -
Camp Au Sable
- 20 | President's Day - Office Closed
- 22 | Camp Meeting Directors
- 22-26 | GLAA Home Leave
- 25 | K-12 Board of Education - GLAA
- 23-26 | Teen Bible Camp -
Camp Au Sable
- 28 | MI Conference Executive
Committee - Conf. Room

MARCH

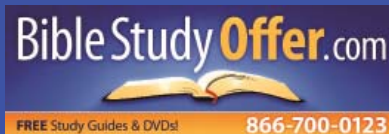
- 1 | Camp Meeting Registration
Begins
- 3-5 | Personal Ministries -
Camp Au Sable
- 4 | Pathfinder Bible Experience -
Conference Level Cedar Lake
- 5 | Women's Ministries Board
- 8 | ACS Executive Committee
- 10-12 | Marriage Commitment -
Camp Au Sable
- 16-26 | GLAA Home Leave
- 18 | Pathfinder Bible Experience -
Union Level - AU
- 19 | Lay Advisory Coordinating Com

2016 EVANGELISM REPORT

We are pleased to report the results of 2016, now that the year is over.

In the Spring of 2016, churches across Michigan and throughout the Lake Union teamed up to present the *Unlock Revelation* series on Bible prophecy. As a result of this series and additional evangelistic endeavors, a fast-growing refugee community, and the special blessing of the Spirit of God, the Michigan Conference finished 2016 with 815 baptisms and professions of faith—**an increase of 62% over 2015**. Praise the Lord! Let's not forget that our work has only begun, as we now mentor and train these new members to grow into active disciples of Christ.

We hope to continue this positive trend in 2017 as we aim to generate multitudes of Bible studies in preparation for a rich harvest in round two of *Unlock Revelation*. Currently, over 1200 people in Michigan have signed up for free study materials on BibleStudyOffer.com! To keep up with the latest evangelism happenings, check out the 2017 "at a glance" calendar below:



- Jan-Jul | BibleStudyOffer.com Internet advertising (currently generating an average of 6 new Bible study requests per day across Michigan)
- Feb 13-Mar 13 | 35 BibleStudyOffer.com billboards go up (dates may vary slightly)
- Mar 1-5 | *Unlock Revelation* speaker/coordinator training at Camp Au Sable
- Mar 11 | Just Ask! Sabbath (every member to offer Bible studies to at least one person before the following Sabbath, Mar 18)
- April | Literature Emphasis Month: GLOW-a-thon, plus book of the year distribution (*Story of Hope* with/special Bible study offer)
- Apr 30 | Deadline for churches to take advantage of the 50% subsidy on Bible StudyOffer.com mailings, up to \$400 total subsidy per church
- July | Recommended month for church-wide compassionate service project
- Aug-Sep | Recommended period for health ministry events including invitations to *Unlock Revelation*; also *Unlock Revelation* Internet advertising period
- Aug 28-Sep 25 | Approximately 75 *Unlock Revelation* billboards go up
- Sep 25 | *Unlock Revelation* begins! – conference-wide prophecy series

MICHIGAN MEMO is a monthly publication of the Michigan Conference of Seventh-day Adventists for its constituents. Andy Im editor; Julie Clark, assistant editor; Hamblin Company, printer; special thanks to Candy Clark and Jody Murphy. Comments may be submitted by emailing jclark@misda.org