

Adventist
Journey
INSPIRATION & INFORMATION
FOR NORTH AMERICA
Special Issue: NAD Year-End Meeting



Adventist Journey

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I want to welcome each of you to *Adventist Journey*. This new journal is produced in collaboration with the *Adventist World* magazine. It's my prayer that as we view God's remarkable grace in lives, and as we see His love lived out through action that we will be inspired to serve Him more fully.

This magazine has been designed to encourage all of us to follow our Lord

on the path that He's laid before us. He described it as "straight and narrow" (Matt. 7:14). While we all have unique experiences in life, as we follow Jesus all our paths merge into His.

Jesus is coming soon and we need to keep on the path. Welcome to the Adventist journey.

—DAN JACKSON, NAD PRESIDENT

My Journey

In my Adventist journey, as a college freshman, I believed that I would graduate with minimal campus leadership participation. Four years later, I have been blessed beyond my wildest dreams to have had the privilege to serve as the executive secretary, executive vice president, and as the current president of the Andrews University Student Association. Visit <https://vimeo.com/242636104> for more of Jessica's journey.

JESSICA YOONG
*Senior Business Administration
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Photo/Cover Photo by Pieter Damsteeg

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ADVENTIST JOURNEY

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On This Journey



I once saw a bumper sticker that read “You’re unique. Just like everyone else.” That’s the wonder and beauty of being human. And it certainly pertains to being a Seventh-day Adventist. We are all unique, but also the same.

Our Adventist journey is a tapestry of stories and events stitched together by experiences, time, people, and divine intervention. My own Adventist journey has often been a cycle of prayer, belief, doubt, prayer, joy, worry, prayer—and not always necessarily in that order.

I was raised as a fourth-generation Adventist, but one of my grandmas was a devout Catholic. One Ash Wednesday when I was 6 I got smeared with an ashen cross on my forehead and, convinced it was the mark of the beast, I prayed without ceasing until I could scrub it off at home.

I’ve attended mostly Adventist schools through college, but I’ve never been on a school mission trip. I planned to teach English in Brazil for a year upon graduation, but the lesson books never arrived. Deflated with the assignment’s cancellation, I prayed and looked for secular jobs. A few months later I started working for the church as a communication intern.

Your journey will not be the same as mine. Yet we all share the same journey as we progress with juggernaut movement toward a deeper relationship with Jesus and a greater understanding of our role in His saving work. We are knit together.

This magazine will help illuminate our journey. These pages will offer community. Inspiration. Information. Fellowship. Dialogue.

I invite you to come along for the journey.

**KIMBERLY
LUSTE MARAN**
Editor

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Jesus 101



NAD DEDICATES NEW HEADQUARTERS

More than 600 gather for ribbon-cutting and dedication.

BY KIMBERLY LUSTE MARAN, *NAD Office of Communication*

Early-morning clouds gave way to bright sunshine on October 26, 2017, as the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America (NAD) welcomed guests to the grand opening celebration and ribbon-cutting ceremony at its new headquarters in Columbia, Maryland.

"This is our home . . . we are delighted you are here," welcomed Daniel R. Jackson, NAD president. Jackson described the purpose of the headquarters, saying, "This building does not stand for human progress, for human ingenuity. It stands to serve the purposes of God."

More than 600 people gathered for the two-and-a-half-hour event. Attendees included state and county government officials; NAD employees; the NAD executive committee, comprised of church leaders from across North America; military chaplains; musicians; former NAD administrators; Adventist Health-Care officials; and other honored guests. A smaller group attended an

evening reception also tied to the grand opening celebration.

The ribbon-cutting ceremony was held at the main entrance of the headquarters. It included prayer by former NAD president Don C. Schneider; acknowledgments and presentation of the state flag from the Maryland secretary of state John Wobensmith; and the raising of the flags with the Allegheny East Conference Drum Corps and the Beltsville Seventh-day Adventist Church Pathfinder Flag Bearers. Once the ribbon was cut by NAD officers and select officials and guests with commemorative scissors, the crowd streamed through the lobby to the building's main auditorium and overflow room.

Jackson welcomed the congregation to the dedication portion of the event. Highlights of the program included remarks by Dave Weigley, president of the Columbia Union Conference (the Adventist Church's mid-Atlantic region); an invocation by G. Thomas Evans, NAD treasurer; a special recogni-

Current NAD president Daniel R. Jackson and Donna Jackson present first NAD president Charles E. Bradford and Ethel Bradford with a gift of gratitude during the dedication service for the new NAD headquarters in Columbia, Maryland.

tion segment by G. Alexander Bryant, NAD executive secretary; and dedicatory remarks by Jackson.

The Takoma Academy choir and a Spencerville Adventist Academy musical ensemble performed during the dedication. Adventist pastor and recording artist Wintley Phipps, who has performed for several U.S. presidents and numerous dignitaries during his career, sang "Amazing Grace." Three video presentations were viewed, including a greeting and prayer from Ted N. C. Wilson, General Conference (Adventist world church) president; a historical perspective with an NAD time line; and a pictorial perspective of the building's renovation process.

Before Artur Stele, a general vice president of the General Conference, offered the dedication prayer, NAD officers led the congregation in a litany of scriptural passages selected by Shirley Burton, a former communication director for the NAD.

"We dedicate this building to the glory of God the Father, to the honor of Jesus Christ our Savior, and to the praise of the Holy Spirit," said Stele. He concluded with "Lord, bless all activities done here to glorify Your name."

Honored guests included Charles E. Bradford and Don Schneider, former NAD presidents; George H. Crumley, former NAD treasurer; Juan R. Prestol-Puesán, former NAD treasurer and current GC treasurer; Scott McClure, son of Alfred C. McClure, former NAD president (who passed away in 2006); and Bonita Rodriguez, daughter of Barbara and Robert L. Dale, former NAD secretary.

A group of four people (two men and two women) are sitting on a grey sofa in a bright room with large windows. They are gathered around a tablet computer, which one of the men is holding. The room is filled with natural light from the windows. A large, light-colored beanbag chair is in the foreground. The overall atmosphere is warm and collaborative.

LOVE **IN ACTION,** not Words

BY DANIEL R. JACKSON

Actions help us move forward with God's mission.

This article is adapted from the October 28, 2017, NAD Year-End Meeting sermon entitled "Words," given by Daniel R. Jackson. Some characteristics of the oral presentation remain.—Editors.

Words. Words can be a lot like the Choluteca Bridge [in Honduras]—where the bridge stood strong but the river changed course—unless they are followed by meaningful action. The church, unless it speaks with actions, unless it puts action behind the things it talks about, won't move forward with God's mission.

From the very beginning it has been God's plan that through His church will be eventually manifested, even to principalities and powers in heavenly places, the final and full display of the love of God. It's time to quit talking. It's time to start acting.

Love becomes the basis for service to God, and when we really look at the inside of Christianity, that is the reality. Love leads to sacrifice. Here is a corporate mandate *and* a personal call to every follower of Jesus. Allowing ourselves to be used in the days immediately preceding the second coming of Jesus is an intense and challenging task, one that requires the very best of everything you and I have.

The stark reality is that Jesus wasn't crucified in a cathedral between two candles, but with thieves in a garbage dump. And before He died on that cross, He met people where they were, not where He wanted them to be.

Here's a question: If we can't get others into the church, how are we going to talk to them? How are we going to witness to people if we don't have contact with them?

If you and I truly follow Jesus, we will find ourselves where He went: down in the ditches and in the dregs, down in places where people are in huge need. We are needed; we cannot remain aloof. There has been an ocean of change in our world, and anyone who refuses to sense it and see it is in some difficulty.

We must minister in this world. As those who want to share the gospel and influence others, we must understand what the world is about. We need to face reality: We are no longer keepers of knowledge. What-

ever knowledge we possess can be found out by anyone at any time of the day or night. Anyone who knows how to access the Internet can check out the subject matter we are presenting, our philosophy, our approach. They can check out you and me as well.

We must become facilitators of learning rather than keepers of knowledge. We must become coleaders with those we intend to train and influence. On top of learning what they need on the Internet, they can tell the world what they think of you and me, and they often do.

When God's Spirit Moves

As we meet people where they are, love should be the one thing that motivates us to reach out in self-sacrifice. And where does love call us? We'll never discover the answer to that, nor the true basis for effective Christian ministry, with more seminars (as effective as they are), with better personal coaches or mentors, or by looking to others.

Our call places us into direct confrontation with God. Our call isn't meant to be comfortable. It is meant to be personal. There is One we need to identify with. We may struggle with Him. We have to let Him lead us.

The longer we live on Planet Earth, the more we have to acknowledge the insufficiency of humanity. We're not smart enough.

We must become facilitators of learning rather than keepers of knowledge.



Dan Weber

We cannot be content to be Seventh-day Adventists. We need to be *seven-day* Adventists. We must turn the church back into a movement.

We don't have the skills to really understand, unaided by the Holy Spirit, what God is asking us to do.

In the church today, as long as we keep depending on human ingenuity and human ideas, we will keep failing. We don't find solutions to our problems, or solutions about how to deal with the world unaided by the Holy Spirit. We're not going anywhere unless the Spirit of God empowers and directs.

Paul makes this statement: "And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down

at the right hand of the throne of God" (Heb. 12:1, 2, NIV).

In the book *Steps to Christ* Ellen White writes, "Your hope is not in yourself; it is in Christ. Your weakness is united to His strength, your ignorance to His wisdom, your frailty to His enduring might. So you are not to look to yourself, not to let the mind dwell upon self, but look to Christ. Let the mind dwell upon His love, upon the beauty, the perfection, of His character. Christ in His self-denial, Christ in His humiliation, Christ in His purity and holiness, Christ in His matchless love—this is the subject for the soul's contemplation. It is by loving Him, copying Him, depending wholly upon Him, that you are to be transformed into His likeness."*

We will never achieve what both Paul and Ellen White describe by giving better offerings or by reading more Bible verses, although the Word of God is important. We will find it in personal communication—confrontation—with Him.

The best way for me to understand my life and my service for God is to keep my eyes fixed on Jesus, and to take them off everyone else.

Eyes on Jesus

I saw a film titled *Old Fashioned*, which attempted to examine relationships and the importance of sexual purity. I must share one memorable line in the movie, which is spoken when a young man involved in a relationship goes to his aunt for counsel. He tells her all the problems he's facing with this young woman, and his aunt responds, "If you were any more self-focused, you'd be a dot!"

We have to get our eyes off the church. The longer we waste time on discussions that are significant to us and significant to others who don't agree with us, the longer we keep our eyes where we shouldn't

have them: on ourselves. We have to take our eyes off ourselves and look down the road to see the grander picture. People around us are dying in the streets. People are losing their souls, and we're arguing about how many angels we can get on the head of a pin.

If we were any more self-focused, we would be a dot. That's exactly what happened to Judas. He looked respectable. He was held in high esteem by his colleagues and those who followed Jesus. However, the principle that lay at the foundation of his actions was that of personal expediency. It was an expediency that allowed him to say great words but to keep his focus on himself. It ultimately allowed him to do the worst he could do: betray Jesus.

Rise Up and Carry the Cross

Jesus is coming again. We need to rouse up, to rise up, and start a march in His name. We cannot be content to be Seventh-day Adventists. We need to be *seven-day* Adventists. We must turn the church back into a movement.

When we follow Christ and carry the cross, it must include a willingness to develop new approaches, even when many around us consider anything that is post-1950s New Age.

Carrying a cross means becoming passionate about service within the context of diversity.

Carrying a cross means that I look at my Black brothers and sisters and say, "God made you that way, and He made me this way, and I love you. I will kill the poison that sometimes runs just under the surface of the church and rises up from time to time."

THIS ARTICLE CONTINUED AFTER

**Adventist
World**

Carrying a cross means I need to facilitate fellowship with whomever exists in the church.

Carrying a cross means I will befriend and defend and be a part of any movement in Adventism that calls upon the name of Jesus.

Carrying a cross means I will risk for Jesus' sake, even if it means abusive treatment and rejection. It means I will use my time, talents, and resources for Him. It means I will not be content to go to church for three hours or five hours on Sabbath and consider that I've done my religious duty. It means that when I pray, I will subject myself to the Holy Spirit.

Words in Action

I read a book about Geronimo, an American Indian. He was a prominent leader and medicine man from the Bedonkohe band of the Chiricahua Apache. Geronimo had a dream for his people. And he had tenacity—an unwillingness to give up his dream, even when he was shot, hunted like a dog, imprisoned, and betrayed. He dreamed of having his Chiricahua people living with him in their homeland in Arizona.

He never accomplished it. Instead he was exiled, never allowed to return to Arizona. Just prior to his death at 79 years of age, he whispered into the ear of his nephew, "I wish I had never surrendered."

Friends, we must be tenacious.

We will not finish this work unless we are submitted to the presence, the power, and the authority of God's Holy Spirit.

I'm not where I need to be as a Christian, or as a leader. Without the promise of Jesus and the power of what Paul said in Philippians 1:6, I am merely a broken human being. We all are. We need to ask Jesus to complete the work He's started in our lives.



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I'm not just talking about leaders. I'm talking about everyone in this auditorium, because everyone in this auditorium, as sure as the Word of God exists, is a minister of the most high God.

Read it in your own Bible. We should break, once and for all, from the nonsense that separates clergy from laity. It is time for us to empower our laypeople so that they have the realization and the mandate in their own lives that they are ministers, just like any pastor, president, or anyone else.

We all have different personalities and different characters, and we all think through issues differently. Let's ask Jesus today to finish the work in us; prepare us to be participants of the final movements of human history.

If you feel that way, stand with me.

Going Forward

Words. Words can be the most useless of all human communication. You're standing today. Your stance is for Jesus. You're saying to Him, "Do what needs to be done, because I can't do it."

I praise God for your decisions. I praise God for His goodness and His grace. I praise God for what He's already doing.

I'm going to pray now, and what I'm going to pray is this: *Lord, don't allow our words to be useless.*

I end with these words by George

We will not finish this work unless we are submitted to the presence, the power, and the authority of God's Holy Spirit.

McCloud: "I simply argue that the cross be raised again, at the center of the marketplace as well as on the steeple of the church. I am recovering the claim that Jesus was not crucified in a cathedral between two candles but on a cross between two thieves; on a town garbage heap; at a crossroad of politics so cosmopolitan that they had to write His title in Hebrew and in Latin and in Greek . . . and at the kind of place where cynics talk smut, and thieves curse, and soldiers gamble. Because that is where He died, and that is what He died about. And that is where Christ's own ought to be, and that is what church people ought to be about."

*Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1956), pp. 70, 71.

Daniel R. Jackson is president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America.

Pieter Damsteegt



Pastor Furman Fordham II (right) and Pastor Ken Wetmore talk about Imagine Nashville, an evangelistic outreach effort that partners their two churches, during the NAD Year-End Meeting.

divisions combined, and 93 are from Adventist Frontier Mission. Hernandez also reported that 55 percent of volunteers

overall are less than 30 years old.

YEAR-END MEETING REPORTS FOCUS ON “NEW PERSPECTIVES”

Theme of meeting reenergizes mission emphasis in division.

The 2017 North American Division (NAD) year-end meeting (YEM) focused on developing “new perspectives” on how 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. Stories of pastor- and member-led initiatives were also shared. Below are brief summaries from some of the many presentations. Visit <http://ow.ly/ErHA30grEEX> for links to articles, videos, photos, and full reports.

Secretariat Report

G. Alexander Bryant, executive secretary, shared that there has been growth or steady membership in all of the nine unions and one mission

conference in the division. In 2016, 36,226 people were baptized. The growth rate overall in 2016 was 2.97 percent; in 2015 the rate was 3.07 percent. Bryant said that while no other denomination in North America enjoys this kind of growth, the statistics are deceiving. When losses (based on deaths, and dropped or missing members) are factored in, the numbers shift to 1.53 percent in 2016; and 1.42 percent in 2015. “That’s the door we need to close,” said Bryant. “By God’s grace we can do something. . . . Our Christianity is often an arms-length approach to reaching out. We have to connect better with people.”

Ernest Hernandez, processing and communications coordinator for the Office of Volunteer Ministries, shared that the total of long-term missionaries serving one to two years, from around the world, is 1,073—434 of those are from the NAD, 546 are from all other

Treasury Report

The report from G. Thomas (Tom) Evans, NAD 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 the first time ever, tithe exceeded \$1 billion, with the exact amount of \$1,002,275,749. That is an average of \$18,910,863 per week for 53 Sabbaths in 2016. Tithe distribution percentages and NAD expenses were also given.

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.

Ministerial Association

Five members of the Ministerial Association team offered reports: Ivan Williams, Ministerial Association director, and associate directors Dave Gemmell, Esther Knott, José Cortes, Jr., and Brenda

Billingsy. Adjustments to continuing education for pastors, church planting, mentoring leaders, training lay pastors, and an update on the Women in Ministry initiative were shared. Williams wrapped up the report by thanking God for the more than 4,400 credentialed ministers in the NAD. He urged young people sensing God's call to consider pastoral work; and he shared that the next CALLED convention will be on June 21-24, 2020, in Lexington, Kentucky.

Youth and Young Adult Sabbath School

In a collaborative presentation, Tracy Wood, Armando Miranda, and Sherry Uhrig described the gap in Sabbath School as one reason youth and young adults disconnect from church. Wood, director of youth and young adult ministries, said that youth Sabbath service is an orphan with little resources and training available. Miranda, youth and young adult associate director, talked about meetings held in February that addressed the youth Sabbath School challenge. Miranda said, "It's easier to build strong children than to repair broken [adults]."

Two days after this report, Debra Brill, NAD vice president for ministries, referencing this presentation, brought this motion, which was seconded and voted: "Recommend that NAD Youth and Children's Ministries develop resources for Sabbath School to provide options for the diverse needs of churches in the North American Division."

Imagine Nashville

Pastors Furman Fordham II and Ken Wetmore talked about their joint evangelistic effort Imagine Nashville [Tennessee]. With passion the pastors described

how they've had similar experiences growing up in the church and attending Adventist schools, marrying, etc.; and how they currently share many of the same situations as pastors working at churches geographically close to one another with one major difference: Fordham works for a regional conference, and Wetmore does not. Providentially, according to the pastors, they connected through text messages and developed a collegial relationship with accountability.

Both shared that the more they cared about each other, the more they cared about each other's congregations. They decided to "throw out the script" and try something new: hold outreach activities together. Five hundred people attended their first joint-church event; 800 showed up at the second event, which was based on a workshop model. "People are hungry for this," said Fordham. "We're starting to see ourselves as one body of Christ working in action. ... What can your city become?"

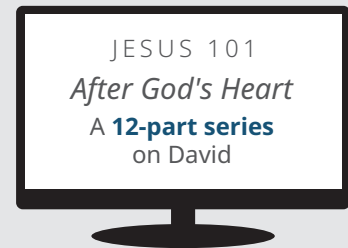
Adventist Media Ministries

Each of the seven broadcast media ministries of the NAD gave fast-paced, 110-second video reports. Highlights included details on both live and broadcast evangelistic series and new outreach tools for Breath of Life, Faith for Today, It Is Written, Jesus 101, La Voz de la Esperanza, LifeTalk Radio, and Voice of Prophecy (just a small sample is included on infographic). Gordon Pifher also announced that Carlton Byrd, speaker/director of Breath of Life, was asked by NBC to provide its 2017 Christmas program. Said Pifher, "That's millions of dollars of airtime we are not paying for. It's free—what a blessing!" —*Kimberly Luste Maran, NAD Communication*

ADVENTIST MEDIA MINISTRIES BY THE NUMBERS

BREATH OF LIFE

55 Fifty-five baptisms at Oakwood University



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BY DAN WEBER

Rules Versus Grace

My early 20s found me living and working as a student missionary in Iceland. For a young man in a foreign land, rules helped me find my way as I struggled to serve as boys dean for a group of 14- to 16-year-olds, many of whom were living away from home for the first time. Most of these young men came from split homes and were being exposed to Adventism for the first time. Add in the language barrier, and I suddenly found myself lost, far away from home, and searching for something to give me guidance.

I took solace in a new “point system” set up by the school principal. Tough rules were established, and I was to give points for lawless behavior. I took pride in catching my students as they struggled to adapt to the rules. I handed out points like medicine in an infirmary. Punishments were handed out weekly, based on the accumulation of points from the previous week.

As I became more confident with my supervisory role of dorm police officer, young men in my care drifted further away from me. I didn’t notice that they were struggling with life away from their parents and siblings; I was focused on bringing them into alignment with school rules and forcing them to live the life we expected of them. For both parties involved, it wasn’t a healthy way to maintain a living and learning environment.

Then the “incident” happened.

One night several boys, none of whom had gotten into serious trouble before, decided to sneak out of the dorm and visit the cafeteria for a snack. They were caught red-handed, and I quickly added up the points as I tracked each one of their transgressions. By the time I finished tallying up the total, each young man had accumulated enough points to be suspended for a week—or even expelled.

I took this evidence to the principal and proudly presented the facts of the case. His face fell as he read the list of their sins. I was instantly shocked at the principal’s words: “Sit down; we need to talk about this.”

The principal carefully shared with me the history of each offending student, explaining their family history, why they were being sent to the school, and, for a few of them, that this was their

last chance at not only a Christian education but even to finish school at all.

I struggled with my “rule-based” self as I slowly saw each student for who they really were. The comfort provided by enforcing rules was actually keeping me from getting to know each student on a personal level. What they really needed wasn’t a police officer waiting for them to break the rules. They needed someone to love them, listen to their worries, and give them hope when they needed it. Of course, the boys still needed to follow the rules set up by the school, but they also needed grace to give them a reason to follow the rules.

The next day the school principal got rid of the points-based system and instead asked the faculty to focus on establishing close relationships with each student. We still had trouble occasionally, but over a short period of time the behavior and attitudes of our students changed. Mine did as well.

Today I cherish each one of the relationships formed during my two years in Iceland. I am still in contact with many of the students on social media, and on the special occasion when we have the chance to meet up, time seems not to have passed as we relive our many school experiences.

Rules are important, but so is grace. God affords us His never-ending forgiveness because He loves us. I pray that in our own Christian lives we will pass that grace on to others and develop relationships instead of relying on rules to define who we are.

Dan Weber is communication director of the North American Division.

Rules are important, but so is grace.

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