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Adventist Journey

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My Journey

In college I got into a lifestyle of partying and gambling. . . . I wanted to get my life back to Christ. Out of nowhere, Walla Walla University sent me an invitation to visit. I did. Finding a community of believers like me who were striving to have a relationship with God really impacted me. I changed schools and majors, and just graduated this spring. Visit vimeo.com/nadadventist/ajjoeybarajas for more of Joey's story.

—**JOEY BARAJAS**,
graduating theology major, Walla Walla University

Joey Barajas

Cover Photo by Dan Weber

Dear Reader: The publication in your hands represents the collaborative efforts of the North American Division and *Adventist World* magazine, which is inserted halfway through *Adventist Journey* (after page 8). Please enjoy both magazines!

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KEEP A SONG IN MY HEART

NEARLY 4,000 PATHFINDERS, COACHES, AND SUPPORTERS descended on the Hawthorne campground of the Southeastern Conference April 20 to 21, for the 2018 North American Division (NAD) Pathfinder Bible Experience (PBE) finals. The annual Bible-knowledge event requires rigorous study. And with numerous clubs represented come numerous methods of retaining the 22 chapters of the Bible that recount the stories of Daniel and Esther. One method employed was song.

Interestingly, using music aligns with the Pathfinder law: “The Law is for me to: Keep the morning watch. Do my honest part. Care for my body. Keep a level eye. Be courtesy and obedient. Walk softly in the sanctuary. *Keep a song in my heart. Go on God’s errands.*”

One Michigan club used this tried-and-true method of memorization. They turned Scripture into music, taking song to heart.

KEEPING THE TRADITION ALIVE

The psalmist David used music to record his spiritual experiences with God. Indeed, oral tradition was the common method of sharing stories about God’s faithfulness during his time. There were no family Bibles that he and his brothers could share, or Bibles they could borrow at the tabernacle. There certainly wasn’t a Bible app David could use on a smartphone.

After Samuel anointed David to be king of Israel, David composed poetry to help him

How music helped Pathfinders to a first-place finish

BY MYLON MEDLEY

stay connected to God until he succeeded Saul. David continued to write songs, or psalms, throughout his life.

Another example of using music to understand and commune with God is found in the story of Daniel. Before Daniel and his three Hebrew friends refused to eat the Babylonian diet imposed by King Nebuchadnezzar, they recalled songs they had learned as youth about temperance and the Word of God to empower their decision.

According to Ellen White, “the instruction given to the people was carefully treasured up, and often composed into song, and taught to their children, that through song they might become familiar with the truths. Daniel and his companions had been educated in regard to Nadab and Abihu and also Abel, Seth, Enoch, and Noah. They cherished the truth that had been given them from human lips passing down the line

from one generation to another. The image of God was engraved upon the heart.”¹

To feel close to His Father, Jesus, too, used music as He grew up on earth. Ellen White wrote: “From the earliest times the faithful in Israel had given much care to the education of the youth. . . . Song and prayer and lessons from the

Scriptures were to be adapted to the opening mind.”² “Often [Jesus] expressed the gladness of His heart by singing psalms and heavenly songs. Often the dwellers in Nazareth heard His voice raised in praise and thanksgiving to God. He held communion with heaven in song; and as His companions complained of weariness from

labor, they were cheered by the sweet melody from His lips.”³

Singing is still an effective and powerful way to connect with God and His Word. In fact, this was the strategy employed by the Ann Arbor Anchors Pathfinder Club in the Lake Union Conference to prepare for the 2018 PBE division finals.



Joshua Gomez (right) reviews a question for teammates during the PBE Division Finals testing. Pieter Damsteegt



“This was a historic one,” said Gene Clapp, PBE coordinator as 185 teams test in Hawthorne, Florida, after months of preparation. Pieter Damsteegt

“Getting ready for PBE was a lot of fun. We got to compose songs for the different Bible verse segments. We listened to them a lot on our way to Florida,” said Joshua Gomez, a member of the Ann Arbor Anchors, who recorded their songs onto CDs.

THE NUMBERS

Since 2012 PBE has been a four-step process. Teams are first chosen by their clubs to compete in their local districts. Those who score within 90 percent of the highest score advance to the conference level. The same pattern continues through the union conference level all the way to the division.

This year drew an unprecedented number of teams. A total of 193 teams qualified, but only 185 of those teams participated in the testing. Nine NAD union conferences were represented, along with 16 teams from the British Union Conference. The president of the South England Conference, Emmanuel Osei, was able to attend the opening events.

“This was a historic one,” said Gene Clapp, PBE coordinator. “The most teams that we’ve ever had at the division level has been 128. We were hearing of a groundswell of the teams participating this year. I think [they were excited] because of the stories of Esther and Daniel. The kids really got into it.”

The 185 teams were comprised of six members each. The teams were asked 90 questions based on the biblical books of Daniel and Esther, worth a total of 170 points. Those that scored within 90 percent of the highest score were awarded first place, which was given to 114 teams.

The Ann Arbor Anchors scored high enough to win first place. Beyond winning, however, studying for PBE yielded another reward.

“It’s a great opportunity to hide God’s Word in your heart, and to be able to give an answer for your faith,” said Gomez.

PBE coordinator Gene Clapp (center) reads a testing question based on Esther or Daniel.

Mylon Medley



INCORPORATING MUSIC INTO A LEARNING PROCESS HAS BEEN SCIENTIFICALLY PROVEN TO INCREASE RETENTION.

OPPORTUNITY TO GROW SPIRITUALLY

According to NAD Pathfinder Ministries, the purpose of PBE is “to promote and encourage in-depth Bible study and memorization by Pathfinders, so their understanding of Scripture will increase and their relationship to Christ will grow.”

Said Armando Miranda, Jr., an associate director of NAD Youth Ministries: “With the knowledge they are getting from studying the Bible, and the support [they’re receiving] from their leaders and parents, we know we have many present and future leaders in our midst.”

Organizers also hope PBE will help the Pathfinders grow spiritually, both in their personal walk with Christ and as they minister to others.

“I hope they were encouraged to take the opportunity to always connect with someone else when studying God’s Word,” said Vandeon Griffin, an associate director of NAD Youth Ministries. “Something happens when we share the Word of God with one another; it deepens the impression. When it comes to the Word of God, we all win.”

THE PROCESS

Every year between 40 and 50 chapters of the Bible are assigned for PBE testing. Pathfinders are also required to study relevant introductory texts in *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*. Fewer than 10 percent of questions, however, are based on content from the commentary.

Sample questions include: “According to Daniel 2:24, why did Daniel ask Arioch to take him before the king?”

“True or false: according to Esther 5:9, Haman was filled with thankfulness toward Mordecai?” “According to the *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* theme section for Daniel, volume 4, page 750, how many major lines of prophecy are set forth in the book of Daniel?”

Answering the questions required full comprehension of every word in the books of Daniel and Esther, as well as the corresponding information in the *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*. Months of study and memorization were required for Pathfinders to navigate the levels of PBE successfully and make it to the division finals.

“It was exhausting. It was a whole family effort. We made songs for everything,” said Julian Gomez, coach for the Ann Arbor Anchors. “Even our 4-year-old daughter got involved. She could sing the songs; she could answer the questions. It was very exciting.”

Incorporating music into a learning process has been scientifically proven to increase retention. “Music can also create a highly focused learning state in which vocabulary and reading material is absorbed at a great rate,” says Chris Brewer a musician and educator in his book *Music and Learning: Seven Ways to Use Music in the Classroom*. “When information is put to rhythm and rhyme these musical elements will provide a hook for recall.”

The Ann Arbor Anchors know that using music is effective, because that was how they were able to absorb and apply the Word of God.

“It’s amazing how much a child’s mind can retain if it’s put in the right purpose with the right tools,” said Julian Gomez. “God has made us with such a tremendous mind to soak up information and use it for His glory.”



Members of the Ann Arbor Anchors Pathfinder Club sing their composition of Daniel 4:33. Pieter Damsteegt

Find What Works “I really enjoyed the whole experience,” said Juan Mendez, second-year member of the Ann Arbor Anchors. “It was fulfilling, exciting, and hard to believe. I worked very hard for this. . . . It was very exciting to have such a supportive team.”

Mendez said his team had tremendous encouragement from family and church members throughout the testing levels. “They did so much to enable us to help us get this far. . . . There were a lot of people who contributed to this,” he said. “You see us when we walk up here and get the [certificate], but there’s more people behind us who picked us up [so we could get] the paper.”

While singing was the method that worked for the Ann Arbor Anchors, it may not work for every club. But Mendez says that’s OK; the key is to find what works.

“Be flexible, and be willing to try different ideas,” he said. “Sometimes you can get intimidated by the method your club is using, but lots of different things work. There [are a lot of] different teams here

that used different methods. Every method is very different, but they all worked, because we’re all here.”

Mendez emphasized the effectiveness of his club’s study method with team-building and music, especially with passages for which he was unfamiliar.

“I [was assigned to memorize] Daniel 9-12. I really appreciated learning that, because I didn’t know it existed. I was able to dig deep into it,” he said.

In terms of preparing for his section and PBE in general, Mendez said, “I loved it all: doing flashcards, making songs, singing songs, meeting once a week. It’s been a very positive experience that has been a positive factor in my life.”

¹Ellen G. White, manuscript 122, 1897.

²Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1898, 1940), p. 69.

³*Ibid.*, p. 73.

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

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DUMPSTER DIVING FOR GOD

BY BRAD BROWN

One day as he sat in my office, I asked Tom, a new volunteer chaplain, why he had chosen chaplain services out of all the other places he could have volunteered. Tom leaned back in his chair and, over the next few minutes, told me the following story:

“I think cigarettes were my brother Stan’s first love. It all began when he was a teenager. Once he acquired the taste, he just couldn’t seem to get enough. He tried to quit a few times; but when life turned rough, cigarettes were the friend he could count on.

“As the years went by, my brother and his ‘friend’ remained close. Then about a year ago my brother went to see his doctor because he wasn’t feeling well. The diagnosis was not what he expected: stage 4 lung cancer. His ‘first love’ had finally let him down.

“Because of the advanced stage of his cancer, the prognosis was poor. We were told that the best thing for Stan was to keep him comfortable. So we talked about where he

should spend the last days of his life. We finally decided on Adventist Health Feather River’s Hospice House—a place that consisted of a six-bed inpatient, state-of-the-art facility that specialized in nursing care, 24-hour access, and spiritual and bereavement support.

“Everything we learned about the hospice house made us feel comfortable about sending him there. Dr. An, the medical director for hospice, was compassionate but clear about my brother’s prognosis; we were not given any false hope.

“I came to visit my brother two to three times a day, and what I saw unfold during the month he was at the hospice house was nothing short of miraculous. The staff showered all of us with compassion and care. Dr. An would push my brother out to the garden, and pray with him while making sure our family was updated daily about my brother’s health. The staff would tease him and perform unpleasant tasks happily. The care was like no other place I’ve ever seen.

“The ‘cherry on top’ came the day my brother’s dentures disappeared. The staff searched the room extensively for hours until, finally, a nurse concluded it must have gone out with the trash. She called her husband to bring a ladder, which she expertly used to gain access into the belly of the dumpster. After opening multiple trash bags, she excitedly exclaimed, ‘Eureka, I found it!’ After a thorough sterilization, the dentures were delivered to my brother along with a big hug from the nurse.

“Through the years I’d attempted to share with my brother about God, but he’d always found a way to change the subject. Then, in the last month of his life and with the help of a volunteer chaplain [Don Bean], Dr. An, Stan’s gardener, a variety of staff members, and me, my brother Stan accepted Christ as his Lord and Savior.

“The experience makes me think of the scripture that says, ‘Some plant, some water, but the Lord gives the increase’ [1 Cor. 3:6, paraphrased].

“To answer your question, Chaplain, from that experience of the

“I came to visit my brother two to three times a day, and what I saw was nothing short of miraculous.”

love and care given to my brother, I want to give back by being a part of team that would dumpster-dive for God.”

Brad Brown is director of chaplain services for Adventist Health Feather River in Paradise, California.



← A panel of church leaders and film professors discuss the role of film in addressing social issues that challenge society and the church during the 2018 Sonscreen Film Festival. *Pieter Damsteegt*

SONSCREEN FILM FESTIVAL SHOWCASES AND CELEBRATES YOUNG FILMMAKERS

KIMBERLY LUSTE MARAN, NAD OFFICE OF COMMUNICATION

The North American Division (NAD) welcomed 225 student and professional filmmakers and guests to the 2018 Sonscreen Film Festival. The three-day festival, sponsored by the NAD, screened 47 official selections from student filmmakers. The event concluded with an awards ceremony and closing reception. Eleven student films garnered awards.

“Sonscreen has continued to grow steadily each year both in film submission and attendance,” said Julio Muñoz, director of the Sonscreen Film Festival and associate director of the NAD Communication Department. “A record 61 films were submitted to this year’s festival. And as we are limited by the

number of films we can program, we have seen the quality of official selections continue to improve.”

“This was my first time at Sonscreen, and I really enjoyed it,” said sophomore film and biology major Averie Alexander from Southern Adventist University. “I liked seeing the variety of films that played. Having high school films, college films, professional films, you saw a wide range of expertise, which was interesting because it showed the growth, the potential.”

Alexander added, “A lot of film festivals can make a person feel that filmmaking is unattainable. But having the mix of people [students and pros] makes you feel like you’re on par, or a few steps ahead or behind. We can all learn from each other.”

At the start of the festival the Sonscreen Vision Award was presented to Debra Brill, an NAD vice president. Brill, as Dan Jackson, NAD president, said during the presentation, “has been faithful to the call to help get the movement off the ground and sustain it.”

Jackson added, “When finances were short, Debra kept talking. When there were criticisms, she kept defending it. Debra has been a champion for this cause.”

Special Features

Four professional films were screened at this year’s festival, with question-and-answer sessions conducted after film block screenings and guest presentations. Special guests to the festival included Aar-

on Adams, animator; Chris and Tatia Cibelli, film editors; Joshua Weigel, director/cowriter of “The Butterfly Circus”; David George, producer of “Life After Film School”; Sven Fockner, vice president of content, Stimme der Hoffnung (European Media Center of the Seventh-day Adventist Church); and Dan Jackson.

In addition to the film screenings and question-and-answer sessions, two panel discussions gave filmmakers, professors, and church leaders the opportunity to share insights about life after film and address the role film plays in some of the social issues facing society and the church.

“Attending Sonscreen reminds me how special a program we have,” said Rajeev Sigamoney, film program coordinator at the Department of Visual Arts, Pacific Union College. “As varied as all our backgrounds are, we all seem to be cut from the same cloth. Individuals striving to do something significant within the realm of our faith and our communities.”

“The filmmakers at this year’s festival showcased many superb, relevant films that dealt with serious themes in an honest manner,” said Muñoz. “We want Sonscreen to be an inclusive community where young filmmakers are affirmed as artists and feel safe to use their craft to truthfully reflect the world they live in.”

For 18 years Sonscreen has provided young adult filmmakers the opportunity to share their work, learn from professionals, network, and be recognized for their work. The 47 official selections were divided into six categories: animated short, art/experimental short (new category), dramatic short, documentary short, comedy short, and high school short.

The festival concluded with the presentation of 11 Sonny Awards: best animated short, best cinematography, best documentary short, best high school short, best comedy short, best dramatic short, best original screenplay, jury selection, audience choice, and best in festival. Honorable mention awards were also given for art/experimental, comedy, drama, documentary, and animated short films.*

Student Representation

Schools and student groups represented at the festival included Andrews University (Michigan); Hawaiian Mission Academy (Hawaii); La Sierra Academy, La Sierra University, Loma Linda Academy, Loma Linda University, and Pacific Union College (California); Plantation Seventh-day Adventist Church (Florida); Rio Lindo Academy (California); Spencerville Adventist Academy (Maryland); Southern Adventist University (Tennessee); Southwestern Adventist University (Texas); and Walla Walla University (Washington).

“I was nervous about the festival screening, but excited too because [the audience] got to see some of the talent God’s given me,” said Ethan Madding, a senior at Spencerville Adventist Academy. “Film is a way to express what you believe, whether

For 18 years Sonscreen has provided young adult filmmakers the opportunity to share their work, learn from professionals, network, and be recognized for their work.

that be political views or spiritual views. It is also a way to tell a story that other people might not have heard. If you’re interested in telling that story, you can do that through film.”

“I converted to Seventh-day Adventism later in my life, and I was always worried about it because I felt like the church didn’t accept



↑ Arik Amodeo, from the Plantation church in Florida, accepts an honorable mention award in the category high school short for the film “Life of Earl.” *Pieter Damsteegt*

the arts and people who are not necessarily in the traditional Christian box,” said Alexander. “I felt as if we artists and filmmakers were not included. But to hear [Dan Jackson] speak about how they value us and how they want to include us, it touches me. It makes me feel as if my community cares about me. That’s amazing, and that’s beautiful.”

*Visit <http://ow.ly/duzK30jZEzd> for a list of the official film selections and award winners.

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A Starting Point

This month, our guest perspective comes from four students who participated in the North American Division's (NAD) third live-streamed event "Is This Thing On?" held on the campus of Walla Walla University in College Place, Washington, on May 12, 2018. In this article, the students offer their perspective on the conversation.—Editors.

Katie Folkenberg, junior social work major

I appreciate that NAD leaders are willing and doing their best to seek out our voices. I think they will need to prove themselves for a lot of the youth in the church to show that, yes, they heard our voices, and they're going to try to make some changes within the church. That would be great.

But more specifically, having more tangible ways to see young people (not necessarily college students, because I understand that you have to climb the hierarchy to be on a lot of these boards), even just more 30- and 40-year-olds, involved higher up in the church, and then communicating that with college students and high school students, would be a good next step.

There's a discussion going on between administrators of the Adventist Church and its members, especially youth members. It's encouraging for sure, and also provides some good education for what the church is doing.

Mariela Smith, freshman business major

It's a good thing that they came here. It definitely shows, to us as a university community, that you guys are attempting to do something. A way that we could

partner up would be having more of the youth attend [NAD] meetings and share their voices with leaders and other young adults.

They call us the future of the church, but the way things are looking sometimes you don't know if there's going to be a future to the church.

Anna-Marie Vargas, junior industrial design major

As a church, young people are frustrated with several main topics, including women's ordination, treatment of LGBTQ and

minorities, as well as Second Amendment rights debates and things like that.

Young people get frustrated with the fact that they feel that the church isn't listening to them. They feel that the church is too far removed, that it's a group of older people, typically men, who don't realize that young people have a lot to say. This event was good in helping to alleviate some of that.

The conversation is still going on after the cameras have stopped rolling. They're still talking to students and answering questions, and people are narrowing down those questions. People are going to share this; they're going to send it to their friends, and it's going to create a wave that shows young people: "Wow, we really need to do something about this." It's also going to spur more involvement from young people at higher levels of the church, which I think is going to be a major need within the next couple years.

Andrew Yamada, junior electrical engineering major

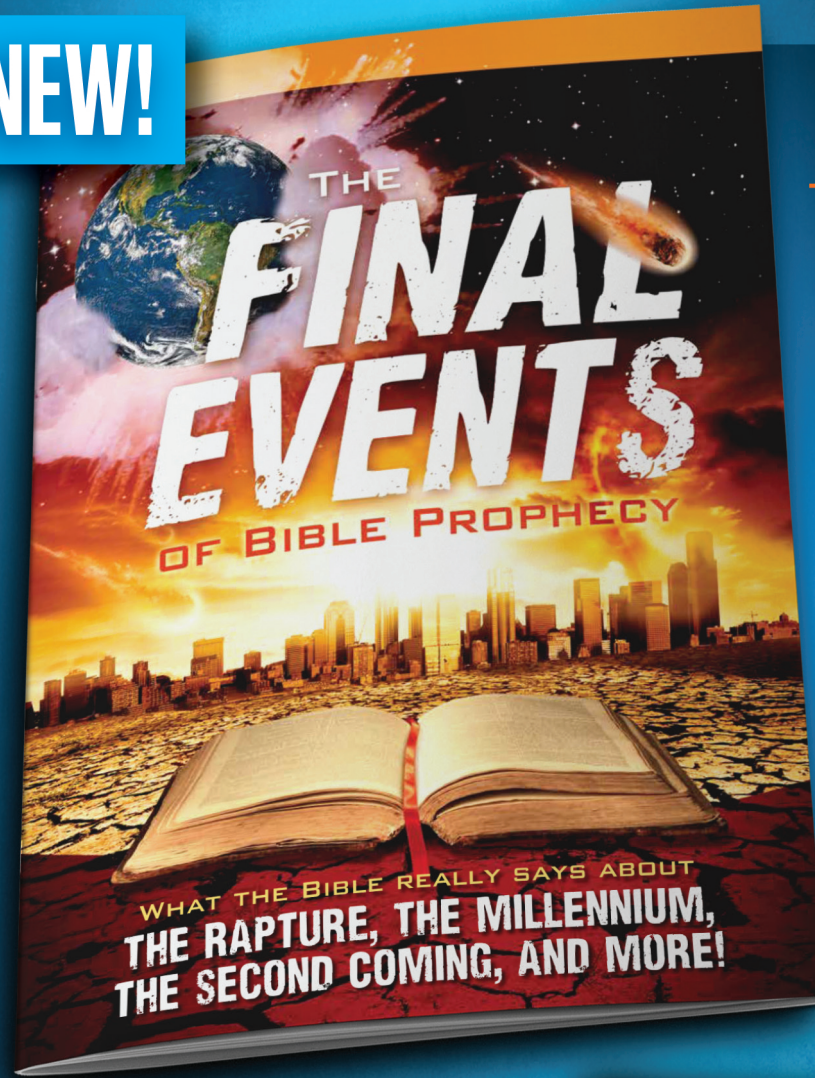
When students walked into the gym and saw how serious the NAD was taking it, with all the production values such as cameras, lights, music, and social media, it made us feel that they care about what we have to say, that we have a voice for the NAD and can express our concerns.

I enjoyed the involvement students had with the event: the musicians were students, the social media ambassadors were students, and they were taking a lot of questions from students.

A lot of students are next going to wonder, *What is the change happening with this?* We appreciate the willingness of the NAD to come and listen to anything we have to say. But we're looking for change. What's going to happen after this? What are they going to do specifically to address some of the issues we talked about?

From the questions asked, it's obvious that the collegiate community cares. . . . This was a good starting point.

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