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## Adventist Journey

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### My Journey

My journey is one full of miracles, grace, and love from my heavenly Father. I have been able to confirm the words of a famous writer, Ellen White, when she wrote: "We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past."\* My journey continues without fear by God's grace. Visit [vimeo.com/nadadventist/ajevelynrodriguez](http://vimeo.com/nadadventist/ajevelynrodriguez) for more of Evelyn's story.

\* Ellen G. White, *Life Sketches* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1915), p. 196.

**EVELYN IVETTE RODRÍGUEZ RIVERA,**  
M.D., Walla Walla, Washington



Evelyn Rodríguez and family celebrate her daughter's high school graduation a few months ago. *Left to right:* Rodríguez's brother Luis, sister-in-law Mylivette, mother Nazaria, son Daniel, daughter Angelica, father Luis, Rodríguez, and her husband Adrian.

Cover Photo by Dan Weber / Inside Photo provided by Evelyn Rodríguez

**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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#### ADVENTIST JOURNEY

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# Generations of Adventist Health Care

For one family, a legacy that began around 1910 spans four generations of health-care workers.

BY HEATHER QUINTANA

**L**ike the passing of a torch, committed Seventh-day Adventists have passed the privilege and responsibility of working for the church's healing ministry from generation to generation. Within the Adventist Health System, soon to be known as Advent-Health, children in countless families have followed in their parents' footsteps, continuing the legacy of extending the healing ministry of Christ in hospitals and care sites across the country.

For one family, that legacy spans four generations of health-care workers and begins circa 1910 at a camp meeting in

Denver, Colorado. Anna Mardian gathered several of her children and attended a series of evening meetings hosted by the Seventh-day Adventist Church. What she heard in that tent changed her life, and she was soon baptized into the Adventist faith. Little did Anna know how much that decision would influence the course of her family for generations to come, beginning with her daughter, Bernice.

## A Nurse in a New World

Two of Anna's daughters knew they wanted to pursue a vocation in medical missionary nursing. Bernice was the first to set out on this adventure. With a heart for helping others, she registered

in the nurses training school at the Boulder-Colorado Sanitarium, one of the earliest extensions of the Battle Creek Sanitarium, the very first Adventist sanitarium, originally built in 1866. The Boulder, Colorado, facility was built in a cool mountain setting to help miners suffering from tuberculosis.

There, Bernice became a registered nurse and learned the principles of healthful living, such as the healing power of sunshine, water, and fresh air. After graduating in 1923, Bernice did private-duty nursing and accepted an assignment that was an adventure

↓ Bernice Mardian graduated from Adventist nursing school in 1923. Photo provided by Mardian family.



far from home: she packed up and headed into the Wild West to take care of an elderly rancher with a broken hip. As it turns out, that rancher in Rock Springs, Wyoming, needed Bernice as a nurse, and with the passage of time, his son, Edmund Blair, wanted her as his wife.

Later Boulder-Colorado Sanitarium, the facility where Bernice started her nursing career, would be replaced by a new facility six miles away called Avista Adventist Hospital. Today Avista Adventist Hospital remains part of Adventist Health System's Rocky Mountain Region.

## Raising a Family of Faith

In the early 1940s Bernice and her husband left Rock Springs and moved to her home state of Colorado. There they raised their two sons, making sure that Adventist education was a central part of the boys' upbringing. Partly because of this devotion, one of their sons, Mardian J. Blair, would later serve as CEO of several Adventist hospitals—Adventist Hinsdale Hospital, Portland Adventist Medical Center, and Florida Hospital—as well as Adventist Health System. Today Adventist Hinsdale Hospital and Florida Hospital are two of Adventist Health System's longest standing facilities.

As Mardian and his wife continued their commitment to God and church, three of their five children followed in his footsteps and chose a career in health care.

## From Generation to Generation

These days, Mardian's daughter Robyn works as director of mission strategy for Adventist Health System, continuing the development of CREATION Health and expanding the whole-person lifestyle initiative in churches, schools, and hospitals. CREATION Health, which stands for choice, rest, environment, activity, trust in God, interpersonal relations, outlook and nutrition, is a contemporary expression of the same message of biblically-inspired healing that the Adventist Church has held since 1866.



## The Torch Continues its Journey

Just as the overall legacy of Adventist health care continues, so too does the Blair family generational legacy that began in the early 1900s in Boulder, Colorado. Today Bernice's great-granddaughter Jenna, also a registered nurse, works at Avista Adventist Hospital—almost 100 years since Bernice trained in Boulder-Colorado Sanitarium as a nurse.

Jenna remembers the day she fully realized the connection of her work to her great-grandmother's: "I was doing a CPR recertification in a boardroom where there were all of these artifacts from the Boulder Sanitarium" she says. "It was so cool to look around and see these things that I know my great-grandma was a part of and could have touched.

"I feel connected to my great-grandma in the sense that I'm caring for patients similar to the ones she cared for," Jenna continues. "I'm dealing with the same heartbreak and advocating for patients just as she did. I'm doing these things with newer scrubs and computer charting, but it's the same work—bringing comfort and healing."

## A Legacy of Care

Thanks to the steadfast commitment of generations of Adventists such as the Blairs, organizations such as Adventist Health System have offered unique whole-person care for more than 150 years, reaching almost 14 million people each year. With a total of five hospital systems in North America, nearly 100 hospitals, 140,000 employees, and nursing schools across the country, the legacy of health and wholeness lives on.

*Heather Quintana is a freelance writer and editor of Vibrant Life magazine.*

↑ Bernice's great-granddaughter Jenna, also a registered nurse, shows a historical photo at Avista Adventist Hospital.

"It's the same work—bringing comfort and healing."

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# Encounter JESUS, Experience EXCELLENCE

Convention provides 6,000 educators time to learn and network, encourages them to keep Jesus first in their hearts—and in their classrooms.

BY KIMBERLY LUSTE MARAN AND MYLON MEDLEY

**A**lmost 6,000 education professionals gathered in Chicago on August 6-9 for the 2018 North American Division (NAD) Teachers' Convention. At the event, themed "Encounter Jesus, Experience Excellence," those registered could choose from more than 300 presentations divided through six breakout sessions, visit more than 200 exhibits, and listen and learn during several general sessions that included musical concerts and keynote addresses.

"Teachers come to grow, learn, and share. This event is three days dedicated to spiritual and professional growth," said Larry Blackmer, vice pres-

ident of education for the NAD. "There's a certain amount of synergy that takes place when you have a group of professionals come together like this."

Before the breakout sessions began each morning, attendees worshipped together through word and song with Sam Leonor, chaplain at La Sierra University in Riverside, California; singer Angela Bryant-Brown; violinist Jaime Jorge; and soloist Wintley Phipps, respectively.

The evening kickoff program on August 6 included a special thank-you to those who helped with the new curriculum, Encounter Bible; keynote speaker Elizabeth Talbot, speaker/director of



“We just love kids, and we want them to be saved in the end.”

the media ministry Jesus 101; and musician Steven Curtis Chapman. Michael English, solo artist and former member of the Gaither Vocal Band, performed on August 7.

Each day featured general sessions. Eric Sheninger, senior fellow and thought leader with the International Center for Leadership in Education; Manny Scott, writer and founder of Ink International, Inc.; and Brad Giese, analyst and speaker from Education for the Future; addressed the topics of technology, inspiration, and school vision and improvement.

During the last two general sessions, five teachers, including Blackmer, received excellence in teaching awards. Blackmer, upon acknowledging the NAD President’s Award of Excellence, declared that “Adventist education is not just an appendage of the church. Adventist education is the Adventist Church,” he said.

He concluded his remarks by saying to the audience of educators, “You are the heroes of the church. . . . You are the ones who stand in front of those children and make a difference in their lives. You’re the ones who pray with them, care about them and their parents. They come to know Jesus because of you.”

An early-morning anointing service followed by a special commitment service on August 9 by Daniel R. Jackson, president of the NAD, concluded the convention.

“This is the one time you can meet old friends and new colleagues; it’s a little bit of heaven on earth when you get to see all these people who are friends,” said Blackmer.

Below are highlights from the 2018 convention.

**EXHIBIT HALL EXCHANGE**

Throughout the teachers’ convention, participants engaged with more than 200 exhibits that featured classroom supplies,



A representative of Encounter Bible Series discusses the organization's resources with two attendees of the 2018 NAD Teachers' Convention. *Mylon Medley*

early childhood education, Adventist ministries, core curriculum services, textbooks, professional development, and online educational resources.

Representatives of Adventist higher education institutions were also present from Andrews University, Burman University, La Sierra University, Loma Linda University, Southwestern Adventist University, Southern University, Oakwood University, and Walla Walla University.

“This was a wonderful time to network, reconnect with alumni, meet new friends from around the world, and even [connect with] our sister institutions,” said Lewis Jones, director of planned giving and trust services for Oakwood University in Huntsville, Alabama. “We just love kids, and we want them to be saved in the end. That’s the ultimate goal.”

The exhibit hall also sparked new relationships forged on the foundation of creating dynamic experiences for students of all ages. One of the largest exhibits showcased the Adventist Robotics League.

“We don’t use kids to build robots; we use robots to build kids. It’s about the experience the kids have, and how they learn and how they grow; and a new way of thinking and a new way of approaching life,” said Mel Wade, director of Adventist Robotics League. “It’s been so much fun to engage with teachers and to talk to them about the [potential impact] this can have on their students and their schools.”

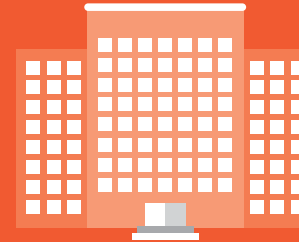
Adventist Colleges Abroad has sent college students across the world to learn new languages and experience new cultures for 55



Two teachers use paints to color Encounter Bible curriculum resources for classroom use this fall. *Pieter Damsteegt*

**11,865**

Five hotels were booked for 11,865 room nights for the convention.



Attendees utilized the **Whova convention app** for updates during the convention.



**125**

There were **125 volunteers and staff** at the convention.



**4**

This is the **fourth NAD-wide convention** for Adventist educators. The first convention was held in Dallas, Texas, in 2000, then in Nashville, Tennessee, in 2006 and 2012.

years, but its director, Sandra Esteves, had a specific message for high school teachers: “I want all the academies to know that students 15 years old and older can go abroad to Adventist schools. We have a system for academy students and minors.” She explained that seven high school students (they can be from different academies) can be accompanied by one sponsor at no cost for the sponsor. Esteves said that it’s important for academy and college students to go abroad because the benefits extend well beyond a new language.

“We have many examples of students growing spiritually, getting baptized, growing emotionally, [and] growing intellectually,” said Esteves. “Now more than ever, we need our youth to become global because we’re all about mission.”

“Now more than ever we need our youth to become global because we’re all about mission.”

**LAMINATION AND BIBLE CURRICULUM RESOURCE MATERIALS**

For three days during the convention a room in the south building of McCormick Place in Chicago was filled with reams of paper, five laminators, packs of colored pencils, pairs of scissors—and 240 Adventist educators. Multigrade teachers of small schools colored, laminated, and trimmed all the resources for five units (half a school year) of the new Encounter Bible curriculum.

Volunteers, both current and retired educators, operated the borrowed laminators, and aided in trimming and organizing about 100 resource pages for teachers who signed up for the “printing party.” These pages accompany



Dan Jackson, president of the North American Division, tells attendees of the 2018 NAD Teachers' Convention, "God bless you in the moments of time when no one sees you, because those make up the bulk of the hours." *Dan Weber*



← Larry Blackmer, NAD vice president for education, accepts an award at the 2018 teachers' convention as his wife, Sandra, an assistant editor for *Adventist Review/Adventist World*, looks on. *Mylon Medley*

"Adventist education is not just an appendage of the church. Adventist education is the Adventist Church."

the curriculum's lessons and the textbook, which is the Bible.

The curriculum, adapted from the South Pacific Division's Bible program in Australia, was rolled out incrementally over four years, with secondary education piloting it first. During those years teachers were trained on how to use the experiential curriculum. They were also trained on how to instruct other teachers. This year is the final rollout.

"The online content is not available to you until you've actually been trained to use it," Blackmer explained. "We're not just passing out textbooks and saying, 'Go teach.' It's as much pedagogy as it is content."

Leisa Standish, NAD's associate director for elementary education, who coordinated the lamination event, explained the setup. Small-

school teachers pick up preprinted resource pages for grades 1 through 8, and either laminate straight-away, or color the black-and-white pages and send them to one of five huge laminators, lent to the event by larger NAD schools. Once the sheets have come out, the teachers trim down to letter size, and stack the units up. On the last day of the convention, the teachers would be given a bag for their supplies and a special gift in a small bag.

Standish said that as soon as NAD education posted it, people signed up. "That shows you how important it is for small-school teachers. Plus, they get to talk with one another, and share ideas. When you're on your own or you've only got a couple teachers, it's really nice to have an event such as this."

Micah Smith's exuberance could not be contained as he paced about, waiting for the laminating films to adhere to his pages. "Lamination is life! It's wonderful," said the teacher for grades 1 through 4 at New Orleans Adventist Academy in Louisiana. "This event is great. I am so glad they're doing this for us. It saves us money and it saves us time."

That joy was evident as Smith talked about using the new curriculum. "I see the potential in the curriculum, and so it's exciting to know that the kids are going to interact with Jesus in a new way. The old curriculum was good, but I think this is going to be even better. It's going to bring kids to Jesus even more so than the old curriculum did."

#### ANOINTING AND REDEDICATION TO THE CALLING

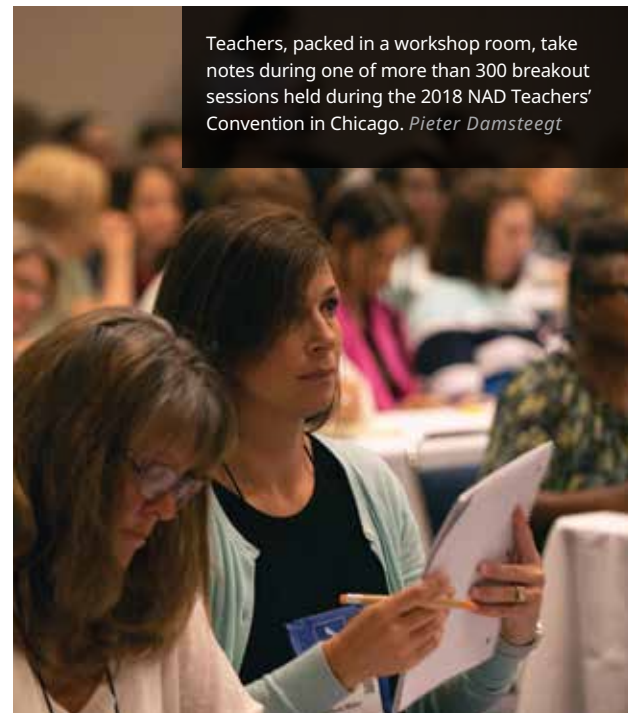
Approximately 250 educators participated in the 6:30 a.m. anointing service on August 9. Sam Leonor, chaplain of La Sierra University, who was also the convention's featured devotional speaker, delivered the early-morning message at the special service.

Leonor took participants through the history of anointing. He went on to say that anointing with oil eventually became used to set someone apart for a specific mission or purpose.

There was no oil present at this anointing, however, just a roomful of dedicated teachers praying for the Holy Spirit to lead and guide in individual hearts, homes, classrooms, and campuses. The teachers broke into groups of six to pray for each other, and to be prayed over by pastors and elders who joined their prayer circles.

"There is no partial anointing, halfway anointing. When we're set upon this service of God, we give God everything," said Leonor. "This is a whole-being anointing."

After the anointing and final breakouts of the convention, Daniel R. Jackson, NAD president,



Teachers, packed in a workshop room, take notes during one of more than 300 breakout sessions held during the 2018 NAD Teachers' Convention in Chicago. *Pieter Damsteegt*

spoke for the convention's last session—the commitment service. "I really do thank you, on behalf of the NAD, for the work you do," said Jackson. "God bless you in the moments of time when no one sees you, because those make up the bulk of the hours."

Jackson's message was based on 2 Kings 6:13-23, which contains a story from the life of Elisha. The passage described the time when the nation of Aram was at war with Israel. Whenever the king of Aram would plan an attack, God would tell Elisha where the attack would take place, then Elisha would alert the king of Israel. This happened enough times that the king of Aram wanted to take Elisha captive. When the Aramean army was sent to get Elisha, he was able to see that an army from heaven was sent to protect him and Israel, but the army was unseen to the naked eye. He had to pray for his servant's eyes to be opened.

"Don't be afraid," the prophet answered. "Those who are with us are more than those who are with them" (2 Kings 6:16).

Elisha prayed for the Aramean army to go blind so he could lead them away from the city. Then Elisha prayed for God to restore the army's sight once they were out of the city.

Jackson presented three observations from this passage. He first remarked that "it is only a miracle of God's power and gracious intervention in our lives that enables us to see into the spiritual world—that is, to see as God sees. Unless God opens our eyes, the thing we may see is the relentless pressure that comes with the morning—how much work we must do, our own ineptness, our own inabilities. We may look at the board, the students, the constituencies. We may want to throw up hands, but we do not see what God sees."

"God's realities are different from my realities," said Jackson as his second observation. "Our vision is dim because we fixate upon human limitation, human errors, human problems. . . . In God's great, calm eternity He has an answer, and He knows."

In his final observation Jackson said, "When we place ourselves at the center of God's reality, we place ourselves in the center of God's power." While teachers juggle many factors and uncertainties when it comes to education, Jackson reminded them of one constant they can always count on, both inside and out of the classroom.

"As you go back to your place, whenever that will be, may you go with the knowledge that a good and gracious God is on your side, that He sees the things you see," said Jackson. "And that if you and I will allow ourselves to be taken into the palm of His hand, He will guide us to joy."

*Kimberly Luste Maran is editor of Adventist Journey; Mylon Medley is an assistant director of communication for the North American Division. Visit [nadadventist.org/news/2018-nad-teachers-convention-coverage](http://nadadventist.org/news/2018-nad-teachers-convention-coverage) for a more in-depth look at the convention.*

“There is nothing more calculated to strengthen the intellect than the study of the Scriptures.”

Ellen White, *Steps to Christ*, p. 90

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## Former Miss Alabama Joins Church After Reading *The Great Controversy*

BY EDWARD SKORETZ

On Sabbath, August 4, 2018, members of the Summerville Seventh-day Adventist Church rejoiced as they witnessed the baptism of Paige Phillips (now Parnell), 1980 “Miss Alabama” and 1981 “Miss America” first runner-up, and her husband, Hayes Parnell.

The couple joined the congregation in Georgia after Parnell rediscovered a copy of *The Great Controversy*, by Ellen G. White, cofounder of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, that Parnell placed in her attic 34 years ago. The book came from two teenage boys who visited her and her first husband’s home in Arizona in 1984.

### Road to Miss Alabama

When Parnell graduated from high school in Leeds, Alabama, she wanted to enroll in a religious college. Not having sufficient funds, she was told that if she entered the Miss Alabama pageant, which is part of the annual Miss America beauty competition, she might receive a scholarship, even if she did not win. Parnell went on to win first place and was crowned Miss Alabama in 1980 at age 17.

She moved on to represent the state of Alabama in the 1981 Miss America pageant. She entered with double talents—ventriloquism and vocal—which led her to place as first runner-up.

For three months, Parnell enjoyed touring with the Bob Hope Miss America USO



↑ Hayes and Paige Parnell (left, center) smile alongside Edward Skoretz after their baptism at Summerville Seventh-day Adventist Church. Photo courtesy of Edward Skoretz

shows, performing for thousands of soldiers at U.S. military bases abroad.

### Life After Pageants

After her first marriage ended in divorce, Parnell moved back to Leeds, where she married her high school sweetheart, Hayes, who operated a bank he established, and had also gone through a divorce.

Sometime later, while Parnell was in their attic, she felt drawn to a box, which happened to contain *The Great Controversy*. When she began reading, she couldn’t stop. Parnell went on to read other books by Ellen White, including *Patriarchs and Prophets*, *Prophets and Kings*, *The Desire of Ages*, *The Acts of the Apostles*, *Steps to Christ*, and *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*.

During this time the Parnells started attending the Summerville church. The warm and accepting interactions with church members, and the happiness Paige found through her readings, led Hayes to begin reading the books as well.

The couple is now actively engaged in church life. Parnell uses the talents she once relied upon for pageantry to minister to members. She’s used her gift of public speaking to deliver her testimony and has led children’s stories with her ventriloquism.

### New Outlook, New Community.

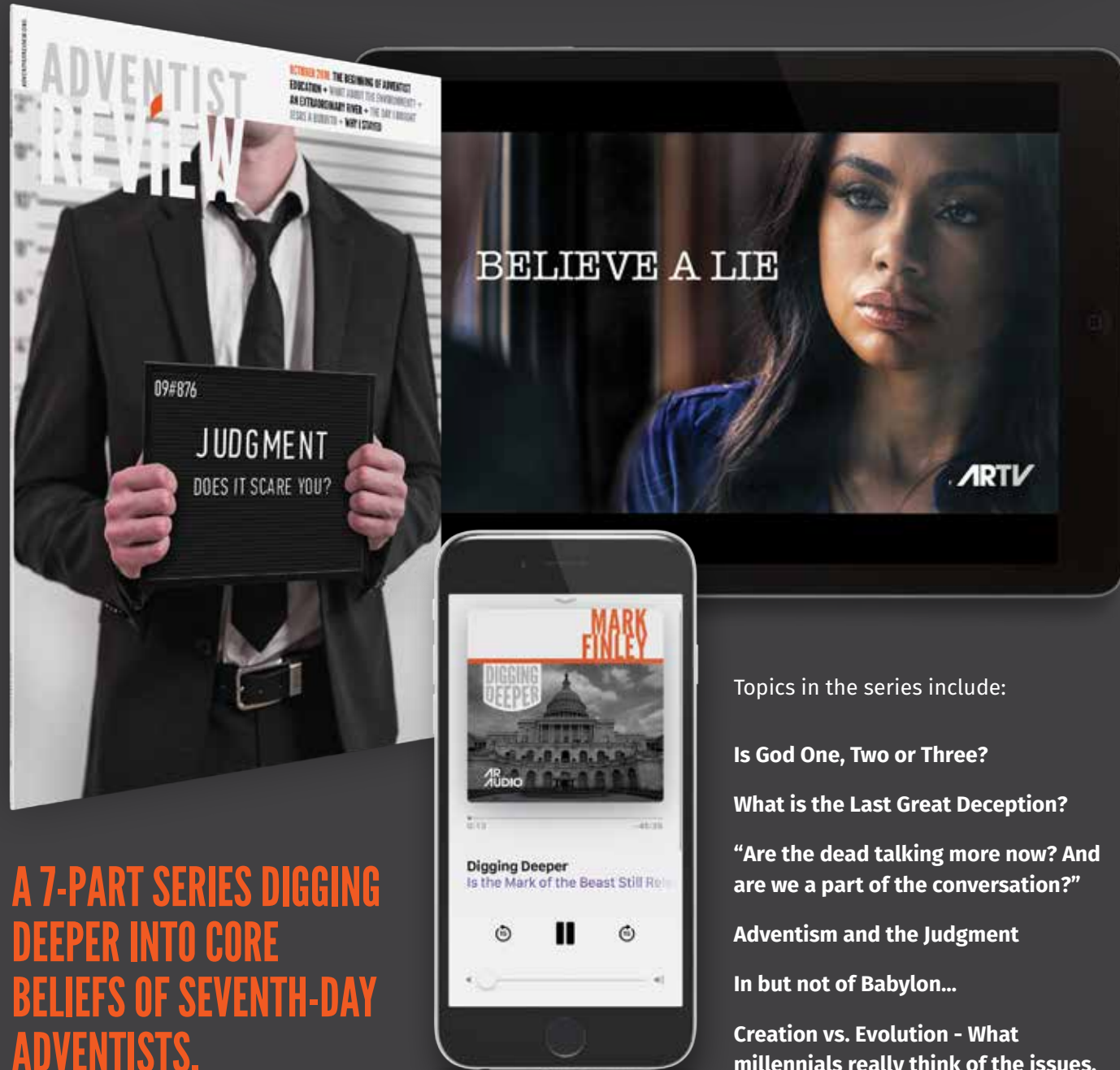
The couple readily expresses that what they truly need in life could not be obtained through money or glamour, nor could it grant them what God has offered as a gift: salvation and community.

The Parnells are thrilled to have been baptized into the Seventh-day Adventist Church; to become members of a family that circles the earth, and to identify themselves with a people who are looking for the imminent return of Jesus.

Edward Skoretz is senior pastor of Summerville Seventh-day Adventist Church in Georgia.

# THE DEAD TALKING TO THE LIVING AND THE LAST GREAT DECEPTION

Seventh-day Adventists have a unique belief on the state of the dead, but what happens when reports of communication with loved ones are increasing around the world?



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BY IVAN L. WILLIAMS SR.

## Camp Meeting: Still Here After 150 Years!

**F**rom the very first camp meeting of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, held in 1868 on the farm of E. H. Root in Wright, Michigan,<sup>1</sup> to the 111 camp meetings held in the North American Division (NAD) in 2018, the benefits of these gatherings are still countless.

Having preached at many camp meetings the past few years, I am encouraged—and amazed—that many members still attend. What attracts church members to drive for miles with tent or camper, stay in on-site cabins or off-site motels, bring food for picnics, and bear the dusty, hot summer heat to attend a camp meeting? Most campgrounds are in remote, rural places in conference territories. Most of our members live in urban places. Why do we keep holding camp meetings? Why do urbanites keep returning?

Here are five of my observations about camp meeting, and why Adventists still attend.

### **It solidifies our biblical faith.**

From Palau to Bermuda, from Alaska to Newfoundland to Florida—and everywhere in between—Adventists in the NAD still have the hope that Jesus is coming again soon. That hope is forged and solidified when we come together to open God’s Word and are reminded that this world is not our home. Faith in God is renewed at camp meeting and, as quiet as it’s kept, it is a great place to deal with, or combat, errant theology. Ellen White wrote that camp meetings were “to promote spiritual life among our own people. . . . We need to meet together and receive the divine touch.”<sup>2</sup> Camp meetings keep us spiritually focused. They also give us an annual, corporate, and personal renewed-faith possibility.

### **Day to day living is encouraged through fellowship.**

This annual gathering encourages cross pollination with like-minded believers from many congregations. Whether in cities or in rural towns and neighborhoods, our fellowship helps us relate to each other’s common struggles and victories. Fellowship is like iron sharpening iron (see Prov. 27:17). It was huge in the early church as they *broke bread together and prayed* (see Acts 2:42). Isn’t it just as important today?

### **It helps keep the focus on mission.**

Camp meetings done superbly require significant time, energy, and finance. The investment given by conferences to camp meeting yields significant spiritual optimism, evangelistic momentum, and mission feedback that can be felt throughout the entire year. When conference churches or constituencies join together, new-found stories and experiences are shared and mission is solidified.

### **Most church members attend on weekends.**

Camp meeting attendance is largest on the weekends. Because of this, some conferences conduct only weekend seminars and preaching services. But even in these situations, it is an annual occurrence of focus and intentionality.

### **The Lord blesses abundantly.**

It’s true that you get what you desire or expect from camp meeting. But one thing is certain: the Lord blesses human efforts on these dusty grounds. When I hear such things as “I’ve been attending camp meeting for 32 years” or “I’ll never miss camp meeting again” or “I was baptized at camp meeting,” I know the Spirit of the living God accompanies our human frailty in a meeting that’s been around a century and a half.

What spiritual benefit have you discovered at camp meeting? What urbanite friend could you invite to experience the concentrated exposure to nature while listening to practical seminars and powerful preaching? I invite you to experience at camp meeting the refreshing outpouring of God’s Spirit on your life.

<sup>1</sup>Arthur W. Spalding, *Origin and History of Seventh-day Adventists* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1962), vol. 2, p. 10.  
<sup>2</sup>Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1948), vol. 6, p. 32.

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Camp meetings  
 keep us spiritually  
 focused.



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