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Adventist Journey

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My Journey

My mother was always taking in someone's kids... we grew up that way. The Lord has led me through many things, and when I was ordained as an elder I said, "I just want to spend my life mending broken people." It may be food, it may be clothing, it may be providing shelter or visiting someone in need. Visit vimeo.com/nadadventist/ajmarylewis for more of Lewis' story.

MARY LEWIS,

retired postal clerk, certified nursing assistant, and elder and community service leader at a church in New Jersey





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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Leaning to READ THE WORD

New structure, methodology is explored for Partners in Mission adult literacy program.

BY NAD OFFICE OF COMMUNICATION

with reporting by Maitland DiPinto

is from Paraná in the La
Unión Department of El
Salvador. He was declared
deceased when he was
born, but by God's miracle he came
back to life. However, he suffered
brain damage that impeded his development, which eventually affected
his ability to learn how to read and
write, even through his teenage years.

Jader José Garcia Cruz

Cruz's teachers stigmatized him and told his mother that it was impossible for him to learn to read and write. The school recommended that he see a psychologist for a further assessment. The psychologist confirmed what everyone had already believed. This led Cruz to abandon school altogether. He gave up hope.

His mother never gave up. She learned of an opportunity through a literacy program offered in her community by the local Adventist church. His mother was particularly impressed with the personalized lessons it offered. She decided to enroll her son.

Now, at 36 years old, he knows how to sign his name, write many words, and read.

"I thank God for this miracle, my mother's initiative, the literacy promoter of the area, and everyone who had a direct and indirect part to play to help me get to this point," said Cruz. "Today I can read and write."

People of the Word

It is estimated that 750 million people worldwide are illiterate. For nearly two decades the North American Division (NAD) has sponsored adult literacy initiatives through its Partners in Mission program. The partnerships have given more than 180,000 adults the gift of literacy.

Before there was Partners in Mission, there was Hope for Humanity, which served as the division's Ingathering effort for outreach. For years Hope for Humanity provided literacy training in Mozambique and India, as well most of the countries in Central America. Leaders found it essential to communicate the NAD's primary purpose to reach the world with the distinctive Seventh-day Adventist message of hope and wholeness.

This led to the creation of Partners in Mission. "This is an initiative of the NAD supported by Hope For Humanity funds in which NAD partners with sister divisions and mission fields around the world on mutually agreed upon mission initiatives—primarily adult literacy," explained Maitland DiPinto, presidential representative for Partners in Mission and director of Hope for Humanity.

A first formal action in the process was the 2017 signing of a Partners in Mission Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) by the president of the North American Division, Daniel R. Jackson, and then president of the Inter-American Division (IAD), Israel Leito. The MOU highlighted the longstanding partnership that has existed between the two divisions and their commitment to addressing adult illiteracy. During that same year a video report at the General Conference Spring Meeting announced that Adventist World magazine had become a partner with the NAD and the IAD in the literacy program.

Today there are Partners in Mission programs operating in 11 countries. Some of these include India, Egypt, Lebanon, and, of course, El Salvador.

"We Adventists say that we're people of the Word, but how can you be 'people of the Word' if you can't read the Word?" said DiPinto. "As a result of these partnerships, thousands of Adventist members have been engaged in life-changing ministry. Many churches have been planted, and several thousand have become members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church."

Eyes on Expansion

Church leaders are seeing how this program helps to fulfill the church's mission and are interested in expanding it to other areas of their territory. But the current program is not entirely financially sustainable.

In El Salvador, for example, there are approximately 200 literacy circles. The cost for the stipends for volunteers alone amounts to \$5,000 a month, which is shared between the local union conferences, local conferences, IAD, and NAD. Local church leaders want to grow the program to more than 900 literacy circles, which would bring the stipend cost to \$22,000 a month.

"The NAD would not be able to partner financially in this expansion, and the union conference and local conferences would find it very difficult to do it on their own," said DiPinto. "The same situation is true in all other fields as well."

DiPinto says a solution is to have the teachers, or "facilitators," work as volunteers and in a less-intensive capacity. He also suggests that literacy circles should be churchbased rather than conference- or mission-based, as is currently the practice in most fields.

"This would have several benefits. The financial benefit is that a literacy circle would not start

More than
180,000 people
have become
literate through
the North
American Division
Partners in
Mission program.



until a local church agrees to take responsibility for supervising and supporting the circle, including the cost of the facilitators' stipend—if that territory decides to give one," said DiPinto. "If a church cannot afford to pay the stipend, fund-raising cards would be provided so they could contact local businesses to raise the funds needed. This approach has worked successfully in conjunction with the literacy program in the Dominican Republic."

Today there are Partners in Mission programs operating in 11 countries.

The Proposal

Accessible and effective curriculum are two issues being addressed in order to meet the needs of an expanding program.

"Many of our literacy programs have been in collaboration with the local government education department, which would put together syllabi and offer training to the facilitators," said DiPinto. "Through those relationships most of the books are provided for free. But we don't have that opportunity everywhere."

And while useful, the materials are not tailored to the experiences of the adult learners in their specific contexts, which leaves a gap for a more effective curriculum.

"These issues have been successfully addressed by the Partners in Mission literacy program in Costa Rica," said DiPinto. "They're using an innovative participation approach called REFLECT, which does not utilize traditional literacy primers, but rather the learners develop their own materials based on their real-life situations."

The volunteer-led REFLECT, a 10-month program that meets once a week, allows learners to take the reins on what they want to learn to help with their daily lives. They "reflect" what they've learned in practical terms. Lessons can cover a wide range of topics, including health and spirituality. Adults can also request to learn more about the industries in which they wish to pursue employment.

"This is a participatory methodology that is an outgrowth of what people are interested in themselves and builds upon what they already know," said DiPinto. "With REFLECT you're involved and engaged. You're even doing a little teaching because you're helping one another. It's a much more effective methodology for adult education."

Plans are under way to start the REFLECT methodology in the church's Middle East and North Africa field, the Philippines, Kolkata, Croatia, Macedonia, and Papua New Guinea.

"There will need to be ongoing evaluation and perhaps adaptation to ensure that this approach provides the same level or greater success as our initial approach," said DiPinto. "It shows great promise."

Rosalina's Story

Rosalina Rivas Pineda is one of seven Salvadoran women who have pursued literacy through the Partners in Mission program at the El Riel Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Central El Salvador Conference. The small group decided to persevere "despite the difficulties that arise in their life from not knowing how to read or write, and bring their families forward and achieve their dream of reading the Word of God by themselves," said David Poloche, Adventist Development and Relief Agency director for the IAD, in a recent literacy report. ADRA El Salvador helps manage the program on behalf of the church.

At 42, Pineda had never attended a school, and was completely illiterate. Introverted, she spoke very few words when she began

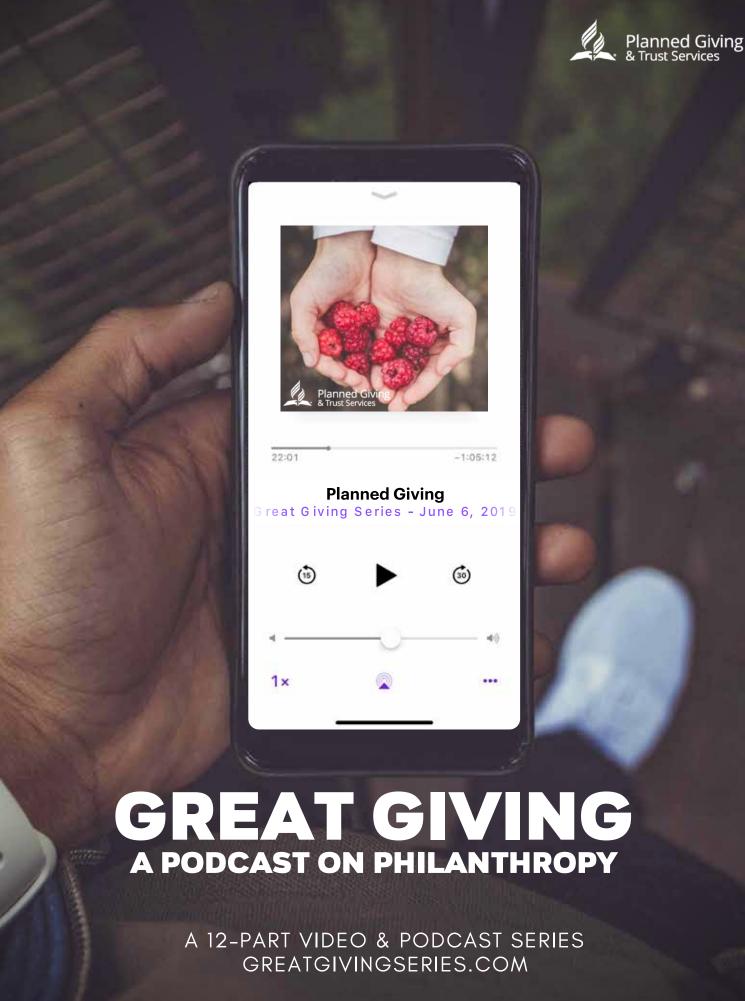


↑ In March 2019, Partners in Mission held an alumni reunion for those who completed the program successfully. This woman (right), with the help of David Poloche, ADRA director for the IAD, shows her elementary and secondary school degrees she earned after completing the Partners in Mission program. Photo provided by Partners in Mission

classes in the literacy circle. In her testimony she thanked God and her facilitators for the opportunity to allow her to learn to read and write, Poloche reported. That was all she said.

Now she is more confident and sociable with members of the church because of her involvement in the literacy class, where she has learned to read and write. "Pineda and the other women in the group serve as examples to their families, community, and church," said Poloche. "This isn't easy at their age, and as members of the church they have provided a good example of perseverance."

The promise shown in Pineda, and around the globe with Partners in Mission and the new REFLECT methodology, centers on working collaboratively. As DiPinto shared in the 2017 GC Spring Meeting video report: "The Adventist Church is a family . . . and we are united in mission to reach the world with the distinctive Seventh-day Adventist message of hope and wholeness. . . . We [have] particular interest in helping to expand the adult literacy initiative that the NAD has helped support for years in a number of countries."



NAD UPDATE NAD UPDATE

DON C. SCHNEIDER, A "FRIEND OF JESUS," PASSES TO HIS REST

Retired president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America served in ministry for almost 50 years.

BY KIMBERLY LUSTE MARAN

on C. Schneider, former president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America (NAD), passed away on May 23, 2019, in Burleson, Texas. He had been living in Cleburne with Marti, his wife and partner in ministry for almost 50 years. He was 76.

Schneider served as NAD president for 10 years. He was elected to the office in 2000 at the General Conference session in Toronto, Ontario, Canada, after serving as Lake Union Conference president from 1994 to 2000.

"Don was 'the Jesus man.' There is no more eloquent statement that can be made," said Daniel R. Jackson, current NAD president. "He traveled throughout the NAD and the world declaring that Jesus was his best friend. His loss will never be equated with being forgotten. He was a one-of-a kind man and leader."

While Schneider was president, he hosted Really Living, a weekly television program on the Hope Channel in which he presented inspirational stories about the lives of people who had personal relationships with Jesus and were experiencing the joy of living with Him. During the course of the program 160 separate interviews were conducted. In 2010 these stories were edited into book format and published in two books by Pacific Press under the same title. The TV program was made available on DVD.

Upon retiring from the NAD, Don and Marti immediately went to "help out" at the Denver South Seventh-day Adventist Church in Colorado. When the church's pastor was reassigned, they agreed to stay for a year. They remained for almost three years, with Don and Marti serving together as pastors.

Passionate about the Reformation and its history, the Schneiders led 42 tour groups across Germany (with some to Rome), visiting sites from the life of Martin Luther. Tour number 43 is still scheduled for 2020, to be led by Marti and their daughter, Carol.

In Ministry

For nearly 50 years Don and Marti made serving God in the Seventh-day Adventist Church the priority of their lives. In 1964, as newlyweds, they moved to Berrien Springs, Michigan, where Schneider finished his master's degree in systematic theology and Christian philosophy, at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary.

Schneider used his keen leadership abilities as he worked in various church administrative roles. He began his ministry in the Arkansas-Louisiana Conference. In 1969 the Schneiders were called to pastor in the Minnesota Conference. From 1970 to 1977 Schneider was a departmental secretary in the Oklahoma Conference, Oregon Conference, and the Central Union Conference.

He became Wyoming Conference president in 1977, New Jersey Conference president in 1978, Arkansas-Louisiana Conference president in 1982, Rocky Mountain Conference president in 1985, and Northern California Conference president

♦ Don C. Schneider, former NAD president North American Division



in 1989, serving there until the Schneiders joined the Lake Union Conference in 1994.

While Schneider served in the NAD, Marti worked as the Shepherdess director (now the NAD's Ministerial Spouses Association). In 2005 Marti joined the Adventist Mission of the General Conference (GC) as director of programs while still coordinating NAD Shepherdess, SEEDS Church Planting conferences, and ChurchWorks conferences.

Schneider approached life and ministry filled with gusto. "I'm a person who loves Jesus, has a great time with life, enjoys every day," he said in a 2000 interview with then *Adventist* Review editor William G. Johnsson.

In the interview Schneider shared how his father, who had been a heavy drinker, met the head elder while building a furnace for the local Adventist church. He was impressed that the work was stopped to honor the Sabbath, and all the congregants went to a very cold church the next day. His father bid on a furnace job for the head elder and ended up learning more about the elder's faith and lifestyle. The elder conducted Bible studies at the Schneider home for a year. Then Schneider's father started to visit the church. Eventually the family-Schneider, his sister, mother, and father—came to church. The entire family was baptized.

When he was a senior in high school Schneider recommitted his life to Jesus. Accused of being a hypocrite by another student, Schneider told Johnsson that he thought about it for a time. "Then one Friday night in Room 139 in the academy dorm I gave my life to Jesus," Schneider said in the interview. His life also had a new direction: Schneider decided to become a pastor.

In college at Southwestern Junior College in Texas, Schneider met

Marti. The couple both graduated from Andrews University and moved from place to place, serving in ministry. Once their children were in school, Marti worked in various roles in ministry. Eventually, while at the NAD/GC, she coordinated the church planting conference SEEDS.

Schneider brought passion and joy to his work, and he made the effort to share that enthusiasm with those around him—in the field and in the office. He said to Johnsson, "I want the office to be a happy place where people love to come to work and all do the one job together. We're all on the same team together; you may have a little different task than I do, but it's the same kind of job."

In Memoriam

Several friends and former colleagues shared the following words upon hearing of Schneider's death.

Hal Thomsen served as assistant to the president under Schneider from 1989 to 1994 at the Northern California Conference, and as assistant to the president from 2003 to 2010, during Schneider's term as NAD president. "Don was one of a handful of administrators who never allowed the pressures of administration to crowd out his love and care for people," said Thomsen.

G. Alexander Bryant, NAD executive secretary, shared that "Don Schneider's greatest passion was to introduce people to his best friend, Jesus. He sought to model this to his colleagues in many ways, but one comes to mind: he routinely had block ice-cream parties for his neighbors to try to show love and genuine compassion for them. I don't know how he managed this with his hectic travel schedule, but he did. He truly lived what he preached.... He was my friend; he will be missed."

"It was a shock for Shirley and me to hear of the passing of Don



↑ Don and Marti Schneider North American Division

"Don Schneider's greatest passion was to introduce people to his best friend, Jesus."

Schneider," said G. Thomas Evans, recently retired NAD treasurer. "I have known Don for many years and worked with him at the NAD office for two and a half years. Don had a great memory and could work effectively with committees and in meetings from his vast knowledge. I will remember his fervent faith and his love for his friend, Jesus. Our prayers are with Marti and the family as they mourn their loss."

Schneider is survived by his wife, Marti; a daughter, Carol, principal of Joshua Adventist multigrade school in Texas; a son, Don, Jr., a physician in Alaska; and a sister, Diane Ketchum.

Kimberly Luste Maran is editor of Adventist Journey and an associate director of communication for the North American Division.

COMMENTARY COMMENTARY



Is Adventism **Relevant Anymore?**

Those of us who have reaped the rewards of Adventism have a responsibility to the church.

BY ADAM FENNER

wo of my best friends left the church during the past year. Both went through Adventist education from kindergarten through graduate school. Both come from Adventist families that have been members of the church for generations. Both are financially successful, respected, and well liked by their peers, colleagues, and former church communities. They were active in their local churches, never let meat touch their lips, never consumed alcohol, and generally were shining examples of traditional Adventism. But recently, quite independently, they stopped going to church and informed their communities they no longer considered themselves Seventh-day Adventists.

My friends told me, "The church is no longer relevant to my life." For them, Adventism became spiritually and mentally draining rather than sustaining.

For the most part they continue to believe the 28 Fundamental Beliefs in some capacity, but have been so dismayed by the church's execution of the gospel commission that they simply have lost faith in the church.

You probably know someone who has had a similar church journey. Maybe you can relate yourself. The relevancy issue is a common problem in our

church and in Christianity in general throughout North America. According to the Pew Research Center, each year approximately 1 percent fewer American adults "describe themselves as Christians."1 The inability of our church and its members to demonstrate the relevancy of Seventh-day Adventism is one of the greatest challenges we face as a denomination in this territory. There's nothing wrong with the gospel message or the Adventist interpretation of it, but how we represent our beliefs is limiting us.

Relevance

Seventh-day Adventism has a rare set of applicable beliefs that can be readily put into action in our day-today lives. Like other Christians, we are called to be Christlike and share Christ's love with others, but our doctrines about how we do so are so amazingly poignant for our modern world it strikes me as only divinely inspired. Whether you're rich or poor, Black or White, educated or illiterate, Adventism has something remarkably special to offer.

Seventh-day Adventism, as inspired by God, has many answers to society's and our own individual challenges. The answer starts with Iesus Christ. As our Lord and Savior, He wants the best for us in all things, and that doesn't mean just in heaven. Jesus wants the best for us in the here and now, not only in the hereafter. The Seventh-day Adventist interpretation of the Bible gives us an extremely pragmatic road map for how Christ's love can show us an alternative to the world's pain and suffering today, right now.

One of our core beliefs as Adventists is in the value of physical and mental health. You might not be able to see it when you look around at the people who congregate in your church sanctuary, or sense it when you read how your fellow members interact on social media.

www.nadadventist.org

Yet the Adventist value of protecting and developing the health of the whole person is an incredible foundation for mitigating pain and suffering in this life.

I recently learned that 71 percent of the people who live in the county where I live in Michigan are either "overweight or obese." 2 Now consider for a moment what that means for nearly three out of every four people who are my neighbors. This means higher rates of diabetes, cancer, heart disease, gallstones, and depression—just to name a few of the problems associated with obesity.3 The Adventist health message, if properly shared and modeled, has an answer to some of the most undesirable health issues a person can face. This is not something to be taken lightly; this is a national problem Seventh-day Adventists can directly help with.

the Sabbath. It provides a solution to so many of the crises we face in the twenty-first century. Here are several distressing statistics on American society's challenges that the Sabbath and our health message can help alleviate. Stress causes 1 million Americans to miss work every day.4 Suicide is the tenth leading cause of death in the U.S., with 47,173 suicides taking place in 2017. In 2017, 1.4 million people attempted suicide in the U.S.5 Nearly one in two people report "strong feelings of loneliness and a lack of significance in their relationships."6 We are a stressed-out, lonely, and sad people in need of a Savior.

One of my favorite doctrines is

This is why I'm so thrilled about the Sabbath. I get stressed out, I get lonely, and I'm disposed to negative thoughts just as everyone else is. But for an entire day once a week I focus on God, rest, family, and friends. Because of the Sabbath and the health message, my mind, body, and spirit are clear, rested, and rejuvenated. My God knows what I

need to be healthy, and the community my church has given me supports me and those I love from so many of the crushing relational and stress-related issues we face.

By emphasizing a vegetarian lifestyle and the belief that God cares about His creation and doesn't want to see it meaninglessly destroyed, Adventists, sometimes unknowingly, espouse environmental stewardship. About three quarters of Americans believe global warming is taking place, and "53 percent believe it is attributable to human activity."7 Regardless of your views on global warming, caring about our planet (aka God's creation) is something most people take seriously, and something that we Adventists should be proud of.

Education isn't necessarily a doctrine, but it's something we Adventists take seriously. Every year Adventists invest billions of dollars in uplifting students to know their Creator and to be ministers in a host of different professions around the globe.

Adventist investment in education is an incredibly consequential, service-oriented, and socially minded ministry. Education reduces poverty, increases income, improves health, strengthens economies, decreases infant mortality, makes countries more peaceful, improves gender equality, and combats serious disease.8 In short, Adventist education, one of the largest systems in the world, changes the lives of millions of people every year.

Although there are a host of other ways in which Adventism is relevant to the world, there's one that resonates with all of us who are hurting, broken, anxious, and depressed: hope. The "Advent" in Seventh-day Adventist comes from our belief that Jesus will soon return to earth and take us to heaven. We don't live a nihilistic existence, where good things happen only by accident and nothing

Adventism has something remarkably special to offer.

really matters. We know God's return is imminent, and all our pain and suffering are only temporary.

The Responsibility

I believe in the aforementioned blessings offered by Adventist doctrines, yet I would be lying if I didn't admit that I, too, am sometimes frustrated by the corporate church and its members. There are times when I am tempted to walk away, and it would be easy to do so, because Adventism has equipped me with the values, traditions, and general personal foundation to allow me to live a happy, healthy, and productive life.

But those of us who have also reaped the rewards of Adventism have a responsibility to the church to repay what it has given us. The responsibility is to try to be a blessing to the community of faith that we benefited from and continue to benefit from on a daily basis. I refuse to turn my back on something that has given me so much, especially in its hour of need.

People come and go, but truth remains. I can work with truth.

Adam Fenner, Ph.D., is director of the Adventist Learning Community.

¹ Pew Research Center, "America's Changing Religious Landscape," www pewforum.org/2015/05/12/americas-changing-religious-landscape/, accessed May 12, 2015.

² John Matuszak, "Berrien Obesity Rates Are Alarming," The Herald-Palladium, www.heraldpalladium.com/localnews/berrien-obes ty-rates-are-alarming/article_19de58c3-0e8f-5859-8415-e70607e94bbd

⁴ www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/03/08/workplace-stress-1-million-americans-skip-everyday n_1332172.html.

⁶ Arthur C. Brooks, "How Loneliness Is Tearing America Apart," New York Times, Nov. 23,2018, www.nytimes.com/2018/11/23/opinion/loneli-

Josh Kurtz, "Millennials' Climate Views Could Sway 10 House Elections This November," E&E News, March 5, 2018, www.scientificamerican.

⁸ www.qlobalpartnership.org/education/the-benefits-of-education.



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A Camporee **Experience**

hat if I told you that spending a full five or six days in an open field, surrounded by 50,000 people or more, walking five to 10 miles per day, having to go to porta potties and bathe in shower houses, and sleeping in a tent and trying to keep up with a group of teens and preteens would be the best experience that you could ever have this summer? This is what happens every five years at the Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA) airfields in OshKosh, Wisconsin.

For the past 34 years the Pathfinder Club ministry of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America has gathered in different places.1 From Colorado to Pennsylvania to its current location in Wisconsin, this gathering of young people and leaders has continued to grow at an amazing pace and has become the event for anyone and everyone who enjoys being a Pathfinder. You might ask: "What is Pathfinders; and why do you want to 'suffer' for almost a week, sleeping on the ground and dealing with preteens and teens?"2

Getting to Oshkosh

Let me tell you the story that helped me understand this ministry. While pastoring a small two-church district in south Texas, I had the opportunity to revitalize the Pathfinder Club ministry. The churches, with a combined Sabbath attendance of 80, hadn't had a Pathfinder ministry for years. As soon as I arrived in early 2008, we started to dream about having a Pathfinder Club, and also about going to this big event occuring in Wisconsin. We had about a year to prepare, fund-raise, get our tickets, and plan our 30-hour bus trip. We started looking at budgets and we realized that to get to Oshkosh in 2009, we would have to work hard to raise the money.

There were moments when the leaders and parents asked whether we'd make it. There were church mortgages, local church expenses, and many other important things to pay for, and sometimes we didn't know where the money was going to come from. But lo and behold, we raised enough money to take 31 people (15 Pathfinders and 16 staff members).

"Church"—but Different

The trip was long, expectations were high, and anxiety was heavy, but the moment we got to the place and lined up to enter the camp premises as part of the 40,000 people gathering there, it became the experience of a lifetime for many of those Pathfinders and parents. Yes, we walked a lot; yes, we slept on the floor; yes, the bathrooms were not what we were used to; but the youth had fun! They connected with young people like them from all across North America, and even from other parts of the world. They experienced "church" as they could not have in their church back home. They learned about Queen Esther in a different way, and their worldview was transformed.

We were all tired at the end, but after this camporee the kids and their parents were never the same—in a good way. Youth ministry impacted and revitalized at my local churches because of this event.

I have no doubt that a similar thing will happen this month as Pathfinders gather again on the EAA airfield.

Wouldn't you want that to happen in your church? Support your Pathfinder

Club and the Pathfinders in it. If you don't have a club in your church, contact your local conference youth ministry department and ask for help to start one.

The camporee became the experience of a lifetime for many.

It isn't too early to start thinking about the 2024 International Pathfinder Camporee!

Visit vimeo.com/153679819 for a Pathfinder camporee history video. ² See www.pathfindersonline.org to learn about Pathfinders; visit vimeo com/265203931 for the 2019 camporee promotional video

Armando Miranda, Jr., is Pathfinder director and associate director of Youth and Young Adults Ministries for the North American Division.

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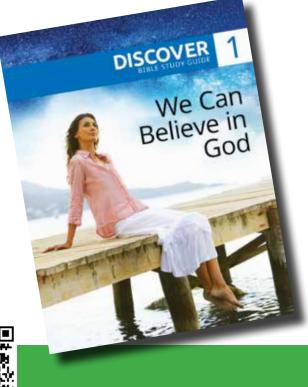
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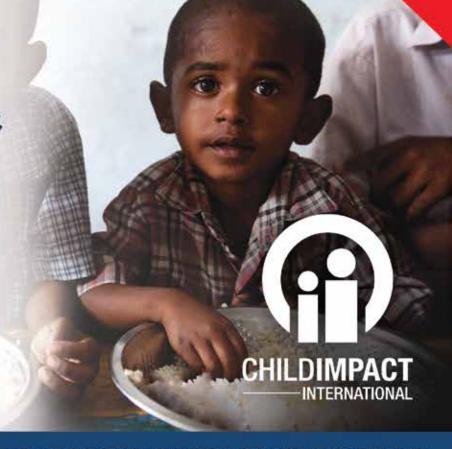
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Catastrophic floods & now high food costs for Mission schools in Bangladesh!

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Last year we had a special rice appeal following the catastrophic Bangladesh flooding in 2017. We are repeating the appeal as foods costs have remained high and Adventist Mission schools are still struggling with costs. Because of high food costs, non-sponsored children's parents are having trouble paying fees, leaving Mission schools unable to purchase food and incurring debt. The threat of closure is still real. Your gift to the "HUNGRY MONEY" fund will provide rice & vegetables ensuring food for the children and critical financial relief for the school! The Adventist schools in Bangladesh (with over 9,000 students) are the key outreach for the school in Bangladesh. PLEASE HELP!

: www.childimpact.org | Project "HUNGRY MONEY"

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: Mail check to Child Impact, PO Box 763, Ooltewah, TN 37363

Child Impact International (previously Asian Aid) is a supporting ministry of Seventh-day Adventist church.

*The Child Impact HUNGRY MONEY fund Bangladesh appeal will only be used to purchase & deliver rice & vegetables to Seventh-day Adventist schools in Bangladesh

Permit No. 2351

