



Photo: Aron Crews

Official Newsletter for the Michigan Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

MICHIGAN MEMO

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▲ Pastor Chad Bernard presenting on the state of the dead during one of the seminars.

“The driving thrust was to make Jesus a personal and living reality for every teenager.”

Teen Bible Camp: IDENTITY IN JESUS

Communications Team

One hundred and thirty teens from our Adventist schools (grades 8-10), including home-schoolers, and 30 sponsors converged at the exquisite Camp Au Sable for this year’s Teen Bible Camp. The theme for this spirit-filled weekend was “Identity,” and the driving thrust was to make Jesus a personal and living reality for every teenager.

The breakout sessions focused on our uniquely Adventist pillars that entail who we are as a people—the state of the dead, our sanctuary message, the Sabbath, Spirit of Prophecy, and the second coming. A nifty aspect of the breakouts was that Jesus was made front and center for every pillar and doctrine.

During the Sabbath divine message, Pastor Andy Im made an appeal for baptism, and eight teens stepped forward. It’s awesome to witness the Holy Spirit moving upon hearts in mighty ways as the word of God is preached.

The weekend was richly imbued with spiritual fellowship, Bible studies, powerful presentations, communion service, and delectable cuisine from Chef Miguel Larcher.

Praise God for this joint endeavor of the Education and Youth departments. Together they coordinated this awesome, life-changing event!

- EDITORIAL -

Practicing Great Faith



By Jim Micheff

MICHIGAN CONFERENCE PRESIDENT

“It’s important to understand exactly where the centurion expected the power to come from—the Word, and the Word ONLY!”

Faith is absolutely essential in a Christian’s life. That’s why God placed a measure of faith in the heart of every person, but that seed of faith must grow and be cultivated in order to have more. Romans 10:17 tells us that faith grows by hearing the word of the Lord. However, there are many followers of Christ who don’t truly understand what faith is - or how to obtain more of it. The Bible defines faith in Hebrews 11:1, “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” Most Christians are familiar with that definition but still struggle with understanding what real faith looks like in their daily lives.

There are quite a few stories in the Bible that mention the kind of faith God wants His children to have. Many of these stories end with Jesus saying, “Your faith has made you well,” or “Your faith has saved you.” Whatever this kind of faith is, it must be very important, because Hebrews 11:6 says, “without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.”

One of these stories in particular is about the centurion, found in Matthew 8:5-13 and Luke 7:1-10. The centurion believed the Jewish religion was superior to all other religions and had demonstrated his

partiality to it by building a synagogue for the Jews. He had heard about Jesus’ teachings and healing power, and with childlike faith, he embraced the conviction that Jesus was indeed God.

When His servant became sick and lay dying, his faith was stirred to action. Believing that he was not worthy to go to Jesus himself, he asked a delegation of leaders from the synagogue to go and plead with Jesus to heal his servant. Like so many of us, this Jewish delegation had limited faith. Assuming that Jesus would have to be present in order to heal someone, they asked Jesus to come to where the servant was. Jesus agreed to go, but when word got back to the centurion that Jesus was actually on the way to his house, he quickly sent friends to Jesus and asked him to “only speak the word.”

When the centurion learned that Jesus was still coming, he personally went and met Him. Falling on his knees, he confessed that he was not worthy to have Jesus come to his house. As a centurion, he knew a little about authority; and now recognizing Jesus’ authority as God, he pleaded with Him to only “speak the word and his servant would be healed.” The Bible says in Luke 7:9, “When Jesus heard this, he was amazed at him, and turning to the crowd following him, He said, ‘I say to you, I have not found such great faith not even in Israel!’” This was

a teaching moment and notice that Jesus didn't just say "faith," but identifies the centurion's faith as great faith!

Think for a moment about the reason for his great faith. The centurion wanted Jesus to do something for him. But when the Lord said, "I will come and I will do it," the centurion's response was, "Speak the word only, and it shall be done." It's important to understand exactly where the centurion expected the power to come from—the Word, and the Word ONLY!

The Word has in itself the power to accomplish what it says. We must recognize that the word of God is filled with creative power because it is an extension of God Himself. There's a difference between the word of God and the word of man. When man speaks, his words are without power to execute the command. If what he says is to be accomplished, man must do something in addition to merely speaking the word.

But this is not true when God speaks, for when God gives a command . . . it is done. It is not necessary for the Lord to do something in addition to what He said. For example, in Psalm 22:6, we're told, "By the word of the Lord the heavens were made," and in Psalm 33:9, "For He spoke, and it was done." Hebrew 11:3 says, "By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible." This is why it is impossible for God to lie – because when He makes a statement—it becomes reality.

So, let's carefully examine the source of great faith. We know that faith has its roots in God's Word. It is knowing that in the Word of God there is power, but more than that, it is expecting the Word of God to do what it says. But if that alone was our understanding of faith, we

would be in trouble, because James 2:19 clearly says that even "the devils believe and tremble." Even Satan himself, who is a student of prophecy, is expecting God's Word to be fulfilled, because he knows "his time is short." So, there must be another component of faith that is missing; perhaps something we even at times claim to have. But what is it?

True faith must have a component of depending on or a surrendering to God that is demonstrated by "actual practice." Combining our faith and our works is not as easy as it sounds. In fact it can be downright frustrating. Paul puts it this way: "The things I want to do are not the things I do." There are many Christians who may say, "We just have to try harder." But herein lies the secret to great faith. Not all effort is alike. Even when we put forth our best effort, we will fail. This is because we are selfish beings and all our effort is motivated by our selfishness.

God is motivated by unselfishness. It is impossible for our selfishness and God's unselfishness to work together for a common goal. We must surrender our will to God's will, and when we do, He will sanctify our effort, setting it apart to carry out His will. Philippians 2:13 says, "It is God who works in us both to will and do of His good pleasure." We must realize that without God, we can do nothing good. John 15:5 declares, "For without Me you can do nothing," and in Matthew 19:26, we're told, "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

Our unworthiness is further described in Isaiah 64:6, "All our righteousness is like filthy rags." And the apostle Paul tells us in Romans 3:10, "There is none righteous, no, not one." Once we recognize that we by ourselves are completely unworthy, there is a realization of our need to be totally dependent upon God and

trust that He will do what He said He would do. So, great faith combines these three essential elements . . . knowing, expecting, and depending on God to do what He said He would do in His word.

Faith and works are so intricately connected that they cannot be separated. When by faith we surrender our will to God, He takes that will and carries out the promise in His word to "cleanse us from all unrighteousness." He puts unselfish love in our hearts that provides the motivation and power for us to obey His commands, enabling us to practice righteousness.

God wants us to know, expect, and depend upon the Word of God to do what it says. First Thessalonians 2:13, tells us, "When you received the Word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the Word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe."

Friends, the key to practicing great faith is simply a daily surrendering of our will to God's will. As we realize how dependent we are on God, our "daily" surrender becomes "moment by moment" until by faith we are "continuously" connected to God. It is faith that connects us to God. It is God's Word that gives instruction, and when we accept the truth that we are nothing and God is everything, we become changed and no longer depend on self. Instead, our greatest joy is to glorify God, and when that happens, then Jesus' prayer in John 17:23 becomes fulfilled: "I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one." I want to encourage you today to put your full faith and trust in God. In other words – practice great faith!



▲ Lansing Sabbath School Class

A Little Goes A Long Way

By Penny Ancel

MEMBER, LANSING CHURCH

PRAYER FOCUS

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

APRIL 2-6

Rockford, Sparta
Pastor Daniel McGrath

APRIL 9-13

Grand Blanc, Holly
Pastor Daniel Ferraz
Holly Community Services
Adelphian Junior Academy

APRIL 16-20

Buchanan
Pastor Roberto Gonzalez

APRIL 23-27

L'Anse, Marquette, Munising
Pastor Tony Ludwig
Marquette Elementary School

APRIL 30-MAY 4

Boyne City
Pastor Chris Ames
Boyne City Community Services

After my father's death in 1996, I found in his check book that he had been donating to four Seventh-day Adventist missions: *Faith for Today*, *The Quiet Hour*, *Camps for the Blind*, and *The Voice of Prophecy*. As I realized his desire, I decided to continue donating to the same missions myself.

As I continued, in 1997 I asked our Sabbath School class if they would like to start a special mission offering, apart from the regular one taken up in Sabbath School.

Our class instructor at that time was Elder Arnold Kraner and he and the class were very enthusiastic about the idea. At first, we received mostly change but soon it developed into dollars. That first year, we raised \$352 which was enough to build a children's room onto a church in India. We received a picture of the church and the room added with about 50 smiling children.

For several years, we had a "counting party" in December. We would have a contest to see who could guess closest to the amount collected. Often, we had a "white elephant" sale with the proceeds adding to our total. And, of course, we had a variety of food to enjoy and would sing Christmas carols.

After we found the total, the class would decide what projects to support. Usually,

we divided the total into two or three projects, after our funds increased.

As time has passed, we have been able to assist in building jungle chapels; a skinny cow project in Africa; tsunami relief; mosquito nets; air drops in the Phillipine Islands and in the Palawan jungles; evangelistic meetings in Cuba; living water in Gyanaja; Alaskan radio station; women's slavery fund; Strong Tower Radio and several others. For many years, we have been sending funds to orphanages in India, Ethiopia and one in Russia where the children were only having warm water for supper.



The most raised in one year was in 2015, with a total of \$1,581. The total for the past 20 years is \$22,671.35. I have a couple friends who are not of our faith and want to support orphans and have generously added to our funds. God has blessed our efforts. We truly believe that "God loveth a cheerful giver."

Sow and Grow 2018



By Wes Peppers

PERSONAL MINISTRIES DIRECTOR

Jesus is coming soon! We have heard it before, possibly all our lives. However, only when we experience righteousness by faith are we moved to action. Such faith produces in us good works of telling others the good news. More than 120 people from 55 churches attended the Personal Ministries Weekend March 2-4 at Camp Au Sable to have such an experience. It was a very special time rich with prayer, miracles, training and equipping.

This year, the Michigan Conference has placed a special emphasis on the *Preparing the Soil and Planting the Seed* phases in the larger *Grow Michigan* cycle of evangelism. Very simple and practical ministries were shared that both local churches and individual members could take home and implement corporately and personally. Recipients also received the new *Sow and Grow Manual* that gives several ideas for community outreach designed to meet needs of neighbors while also building bridges to share spiritual truth. Some of the training included Reclaiming Missing Members, Gifts that Glow (creative *Glow Tract* sharing), Adulting (ministry that meets the daily needs of millennials), successful supper clubs, compassion projects, prison ministry, and much more.

Pastor Mark Howard, Director of Emmanuel Institute, shared on Saturday night how to use Christ's Method Alone

to bridge from compassion into spiritual truth sharing. While compassion for the sake of compassion is important, Jesus always sought to lead the minds of the people to whom He ministered to greater heights of Biblical truth. He wanted them to be directed to an eternity with Him. Thus, His intention was continually sharing spiritual truth when showing compassion. The greatest compassion we can demonstrate to a person is pointing them to the Author of compassion and salvation. From "friend to faith" is the desire of our hearts for every person we meet, though our friendship and compassion to them is not deterred even if they never choose faith.

The United Prayer time was also very powerful. Each morning and evening, we pressed together to pray for the Holy Spirit, plead for renewed hearts, share the burdens on our hearts, and fellowship with Christ. The presence of the Holy Spirit was felt at every session. Petitions for the salvation of loved ones and community interests were poured out before the Lord all weekend.

Attendees were encouraged to write down 5 people they would like to pray for and ask to give Bible studies to through Bible-studyoffer.com. As the people prayed and called, God answered those prayers, and several left the weekend

with answers of "yes" to Bible studies from people they would have never expected. God works miracles!

Local lay members like you were equipped and challenged to go back to their home churches and labor for those all around them in the full cycle of discipleship. As God's people, we want to do more than just plant the seed. We want those seeds to sprout into cultivating Bible studies and be harvested and disciplined into more seed sowers. This can only happen through the Holy Spirit working through us. More and more people are experiencing revival as they go to their Bibles, receive power on their knees in prayer, and go forth in that power to share the the message of righteousness by faith and Christ's soon return.

(continued on page 7)



▲ Vicki Griffin sharing on the union of health with our Adventist Message.



The Men's Ministry Department is working to assist pastors and local churches in the development of Seventh-day Adventist men who will be leaders in their home, church, and community. In addition to the annual Michigan Men of Faith Sabbath, we have created a newsletter that goes out

Update on Men's Ministry

By Gene Hall
MEN'S MINISTRIES ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR

bi-monthly to more than 500 men. The newsletter contains a devotional, articles on marriage and parenting, and announcements.

We have formed an advisory board made up of pastors from selected areas of the state. Plans are in progress to sponsor regional men's prayer breakfasts and other activities focused on helping our men to reach the ideal God has set for them.

Another area of focus is community outreach projects, in the spirit of the deacons in the early Christian church. By organizing talents and resources, the men of our churches can help those in their community and church with projects that they would otherwise be unable to accomplish.

In the book *Education*, Ellen White wrote: "The greatest want of the world is the want of men — men who will not be bought or sold, men who in their inmost souls are true and honest, men who do not fear to call sin by its right name, men whose conscience is as true to duty as the needle to the pole, men who will stand for the right *though the heavens fall.*"

It is our mission to help men, through the power of the Holy Spirit, to answer this call to be God's man!

If you would like to receive the Men's Ministry Newsletter via email - send your name and email address to Jody Murphy at jmurphy@misda.org.

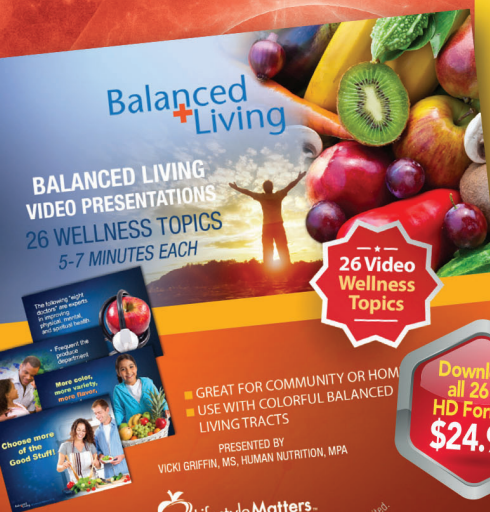
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2. Stories from Sunnyside, by Marian de Berg	20.13	16.25
3. Refreshed Parables, by Charles Mills	12.71	8.50
4. Dino Hunter DVD, by Awesome Science Media	21.18	15.50
5. Send Them Away, by Rudy Hall	8.47	2.00
6. Mission Stories Bundle	53.97	13.75
7. 40 Days of Prayer & Devotions for God's End-time Church	13.77	9.25
8. WWII Stories Bundle	46.60	30.00
9. Together With Jesus, by Kay Collins, RN	15.85	7.25
10. Desire of Ages (Illustrated), by Ellen G. White	7.41	6.00
11. Unforgettable Stores, Stanborough Press	9.53	7.50
12. Story of Jesus DVD, by Advent Heralds	T.BA	T.BA
13. Stacey Piontek CD Echoes of Mercy	10.59	6.00
14. Boldly Brave, by Kristen Roggenkamp & Heather Blaire	15.89	10.50
15. My Favorite Courage Stories, by Joe L. Wheeler	16.95	12.50
16. Is Genesis History? DVD, by Compass Cinema	21.15	15.50
17. Out of Babylon, by Joseph Kidder	15.89	12.50
18. Time With God, by Judy-Ann Neal	18.01	12.00
19. Spirit of Prophecy Study Set, by Ellen G. White	52.97	46.75
20. A Syllabus for Holy Living, by Julius Gilbert White	10.55	4.25
21. Return of the Latter Rain, by Ron Duffield	26.45	17.50
22. Live More Active	10.59	6.75
23. Seekers, by Bradley Booth	16.95	11.25
24. Family Spirit of Prophecy Set, by Ellen G. White	38.15	36.00
25. The Receding Floodwaters DVD, by Awesome Science Media	21.18	15.50
26. Health Smart, by Walter C. Thompson, MD	58.30	7.00
27. John Byington, by Brian Strayer	31.79	21.25
28. The Devotional Clear Word, by Jack Blanco	42.39	28.25
29. Naturally Gourmet, by Karen Houghton, RN	16.95	16.00
30. My Bible Storybook, by Charlotte F. Lessa	10.59	8.50
31. The Gift of Prophecy, by Carlyle B. Haynes	10.55	4.25
32. Longing for God, by Frank M. Hasel	24.37	16.25

ALSO LOOK FOR SUPER SAVERS ON FOOD SOLD BY THE CASE.

SOW, cont'd

Will you join in the lay driven soul-witnessing revolution that is taking place in Michigan? He that has an ear, let him hear. And when we have truly heard, God's graces transforms us to be doers and not hearers only. Will you receive the fullness of God's incredible grace and allow Him to use you in the building of God's kingdom through sharing your

faith with others daily?

There are several other opportunities for you to receive training this year:

- April 20-28 — Grand Rapids District 4 BSO Training
- Camp-Meeting — Amazing Disciples with Amazing Facts & Emmanuel Institute

- August 1-14 — Emmanuel Institute Summer Session
- November 9-11 — Personal Ministries Weekend at Camp Au Sable.

Please call the Personal Ministries for more information at 517-316-1587 or go to www.emmanuelinstitute.org

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MONTHLY CALENDAR

APRIL

- 6-8 Women's Ministries Retreat I -
Camp Au Sable
- 13-15 Women's Ministries Retreat II -
Camp Au Sable
- 15-17 Prayer & Fasting
- 18 Camp Meeting Directors
- 20-22 Women's Ministries Retreat III -
Camp Au Sable
- 21 Pathfinder Bible Experience -
Division Level - Orlando
- 22 Lay Advisory Coordinating
Committee
- 24 MI Executive Committee
- 27-29 Vacation Bible School
Workshop -
Camp Au Sable

MAY

- 9 Camp Meeting Leaders -
Great Lakes Adventist
Academy
- 13 Mother's Day
- 17 K-12 Board of Education
- 18-20 Pathfinder Fair -
Au Sable Northwoods
- 22 MI Executive Committee
- 25-27 Hispanic Camp Meeting -
Camp Au Sable

STRONG TOWER RADIO REACHING HEARTS

By Tom Mejeur

Strong Tower Radio's (STR) slogan, "Where God's Character is Proclaimed," receives echoes from listeners across Michigan. Here is a sampling of recent testimonies and experiences:

Carla from Grand Rapids called for a recording of the brand new STR "Balanced Living" radio program produced by Vicki Griffin. She said that Vicki's 6-minute "Balanced Living" grief segment was more helpful and accurate than the help her two counselors and local church had given her over the last four years.

Bryan, a listener from Gaylord, informed me that STR has convinced him that he "will most probably become a Seventh-day Adventist." This conviction has come without any SDA contact up to this point. Wow, what an impact!

Maureen from Mason called requesting a free copy of *Ministry of Healing* for herself and her psychologist son for his counseling practice. She shared that her son, a former Sunday minister and a Christian counselor in Grand Rapids, may use it in his counseling

practice. She later sent a generous appreciation donation saying she "supports ministries that bless me."

Another "Balanced Living" segment prompted Armand from Grayling to call. He struggles with giving up smoking, and wanted the list of ideas that can help him overcome. We had a heartfelt conversation about his

spiritual walk. He may show up at the church soon!

These wonderful contacts represent hundreds of other listeners. In summary, the responses to our programming are

coming in faster than I can write them up!

STR supports the local church by introducing seekers to God's final day message. This radio ministry is currently broadcasting to over half in the state of Michigan. If you would like regular weekly and monthly updates e-mail Tom@StrongTowerRadio or call 231-468-2087.

Finally, we are looking forward to meeting you, our friends and supporters this year at both the Cedar Lake and Camp Sagola camp meetings!

