

CONNECTION

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NORTHERN NEW ENGLAND CONFERENCE



SISTERHOOD OF CHURCHES VOTES



Message From The President

By Bob Cundiff



At the end of August, staff from the Conference Office descended on Camp Lawroweld for a short retreat. The administration saw value in bringing this group together for a time of worship, prayer, fellowship and some good, old-fashioned summer camp fun! The officers also went up a day early for some administrative strategizing and planning. The retreat ended with a work bee to spruce up the camp in preparation for the child evangelism retreat that weekend as well as the wedding of office staff member, Jackie Gauthier.

Now, in my five and a half years with NNEC, I've been to Camp Lawroweld dozens of times. But, my time there is usually more directly related to work. Ordinarily, you'll find me teaching, preaching, listening, or hiking with kids through the woods as I help with supervision or instruction of some aspect of camp programming.

But, for the first time in many years, I found myself a camper. I forgot how much fun that could be! I got to drive a ski boat, paddle board, hike Tumbledown and even demonstrate a moderate level of athleticism by wake surfing.

On one ski outing we stopped the ski boat in the middle of the lake and

our entire office staff jumped into the water for a long swim with copious amounts of laughter, splashing, dunking and friendly banter. I had a special moment there. Imagine the scene with me. The clear water around me was topped with a jagged dagger of sunlight trailing off to meet the sun. The forests in my field of view were green and lush. The upper panorama was framed with the rugged skyline of Tumbledown. It was one of those moving moments where I was overcome by the beauty of nature, good friends, and a deep sense of belonging and joyfulness.

Something happened to me in that moment. I saw camp Lawroweld in a whole new way. Instead of relating to our camp through the administrative eyes of spreadsheets, capital improvement needs and programming appointments that dot the conference calendar, I saw our camp as this wonderful asset that we use in the building of God's Kingdom. I thought, "What a gem we hold in our hands!" My mind started to whirl with ideas of how we could strengthen this ministry. How can we promote the camp more? How can we encourage more kids to come? What additional departments should be holding retreats here

to encourage ministry in the local church? What are the most pressing needs of the camp? What should be our next capital improvement project?

But there I go again!! Acting like an administrator! And then a splash of cold water brought me back to reality and I swam off to exact vengeance on the perpetrator.

I share this experience simply to underscore the intensity of the appreciation I offer toward each one of you for your faithful stewardship. Your faithfulness allows us to operate ministries like Camp Lawroweld. The truth is that no one church or school in our territory could pull off a ministry like Camp Lawroweld if left to themselves. But when we pool resources, we can do things as a group that we could never accomplish as individuals. That's the genius of the financial structure of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. We are stronger together than apart. I often say that none of us is as smart as all of us. The same thing is true with our economy. We do ministry well when we do it together.

Thank you again for your generous support of our camp and of every aspect of supporting God's Church.

GOOD NEWS OR FAKE NEWS

An appropriate understanding of Biblical truth on the topic reflected in this article is critical to us as Seventh-day Adventists.

Does theology impact church health? Absolutely! Theology has everything to do with church health. The unhealthiest churches are those in which theological controversy and strife are evident. When we argue over points of doctrine and make minor issues into major issues we kill the church. Paul tells us in Ephesians 4, “As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine.”

Theological controversies have been a part of Christianity since the first century. A reading of the New Testament makes that abundantly clear. A student of Adventist history is well versed in the many theological controversies that have characterized our experience over the last 175 years. These controversies distract us from mission, they create division, and they are destructive to Christian unity.

Churches that are theologically unhealthy tend to be unhealthy in every other aspect. Led by unhealthy leaders who specialize in spirituality wrongly understood, they are often motivated by the desire to control rather than the desire to love.

Even relatively healthy people can become involved in unhealthy church situations when their theology becomes inconsistent with God’s truth. Perhaps the belief that most impacts our congregational health is whether or not we have an appropriate understanding of the gospel.

In our conference we believe an appropriate understanding of the gospel is so critical that every single applicant who appears before our

personnel committee to apply for a position in our conference is asked to explain the gospel. So, what is the gospel?

Matthew 4: 23-24 says, Jesus was going throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness among the people. The news about Him spread throughout all Syria...

The Greek word we translate as gospel is *evangelion*. It literally means “Good News”. Jesus’ gospel is and always has been good news!

Unfortunately, there have been many attempts throughout history to replace Jesus’ “Good News” with “fake news”. The great deceiver is of course behind each of these attempts.

Even during the time of Christ, Satan attempted to create fake news with a pseudo god. Notice this inscription from the time of Christ,

Caesar has fulfilled all the hopes of earlier times...in surpassing all the benefactors who preceded him..., and whereas, finally, the birthday of the god [Augustus] has been for the whole world the beginning of good news (evangelion) concerning him [therefore let a new era begin from his birth]. (Richard A. Horsley, Jesus and Empire: The Kingdom of God and the New World Order (Fortress Press, 2003), 23-24.)

The gospel writers intentionally proclaimed that Augustus was not the son of god, Jesus was the son of God. They did so because Jesus



made that abundantly clear in His life and person.

In more modern times Satan has brought confusion and discouragement by causing some to emphasize a false gospel to confuse Christians concerning the true gospel of Jesus Christ.

One particularly confusing form of this has plagued the Adventist church for close to a century. The roots of LGT germinated very quickly following the 1888 revival that brought about the proper emphasis on the centrality of Christ and an understanding of righteousness by faith. That should not surprise us because righteousness by faith lies at the heart of Jesus’ true gospel.

The ideology I’m referring to is often known as “Last Generation Theology” (LGT). LGT “is the view that there must be a last generation of humans who become absolutely sinless and perfect in order to provide the grounds to vindicate God’s character and win the great controversy.” (Moskala & Peckham, *God’s Character and the Last Generation* [Pacific Press, 2018], 17).

Before I delve into the details of

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Message from the Executive Secretary

By Ted Huskins

Good News or Fake News

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this theology and why it has been so divisive allow me to share a high level view of Adventist Theology in general. There are some in the church who are fearful that we are increasingly moving away from our historic theological beliefs. If we as a denomination were to depart from Biblical truth for the sake of culture, convenience, or to find commonality with others, then that would be deeply concerning to me. However, we must be careful that we do not forsake Biblical truth ourselves in the name of tradition. Jesus leveled very strong warnings to the Pharisees for doing just that. As a denomination we have seen a progression in our understanding of truth. That progression can be seen in the life of any faithful follower of Christ, therefore it should not surprise us to find it in evidence in the church corporately, which after all is made up of faithful followers. That progression of truth doesn't concern me, in fact if it were absent I would be quite concerned. As we have grown in our understanding of scripture we have even realized that some things we have traditionally believed and taught have been in error.

There are some who do not feel that we should progress at all. In fact when progress and truth are needed that discomforts them or seems different from their traditional view they proclaim that the historic truth of Adventism is being eroded. They write articles and create videos and cause great confusion. The individuals who are the loudest and boldest with these assertions often do not realize that our church has had a progression of understanding and faith from the outset.

As we consider LGT, you may hear some who reside on the fringe of Adventism say that our theologians



Are we going to grow or decline?

of today are departing from 'historic Adventism'. Such a statement would be completely erroneous. LGT did not come onto the scene in the Adventist church until the late 1890's and did not become a dominant idea until the 1920's (after the death of Ellen White). How and why it become so prevalent is a topic for another day. Suffice it to say that by the early 1950's it was widely believed and accepted within our church. In the 1950's our top theologians, including F.D. Nichol, the editor of *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, began to make the case for the minority position which is in fact the true Biblical position on the topic. Interestingly enough, this was the position of many of our founding members including Ellen White. From the 1950's until today Adventism has been divided on the issue of LGT and thus there have been proponents of both gospels. However, you and I both know there is only one true gospel of Jesus Christ.

This year two ground breaking books, published by our denomination, (Pacific Press), have hit the issue of Last Generation Theology head on in an attempt to show why LGT is fake news and an anathema to the real and true gospel of Jesus Christ. The first book is entitled: *God's*

Character and the Last Generation.

It is a compilation of essays by some of our most respected theologians who teach at the seminary. The second is a much smaller, easier read entitled: *End Time Events and the Last Generation*. The author is retired seminary professor Dr. George Knight. I highly recommend both of these books to any serious student of the Bible who wants to gain an understanding of the gospel as well as an understanding of the progression of Adventist theology from our genesis in the 1840's until today.

So, with that bit of overview, let's cut to the chase: what about Last Generation Theology is erroneous and why is it in conflict with the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and finally why does a belief in LGT create spiritually unhealthy churches?

Last Generation Theology presents a salvific path that is contrary to the gospel. It teaches that Jesus' sacrifice on the cross wasn't enough. That someone we, (humans), must 'bail God out'. In LGT we become the hero of the Great Controversy rather than Christ. I have seen so many Christians become frustrated and actually lose their Christian experience in their

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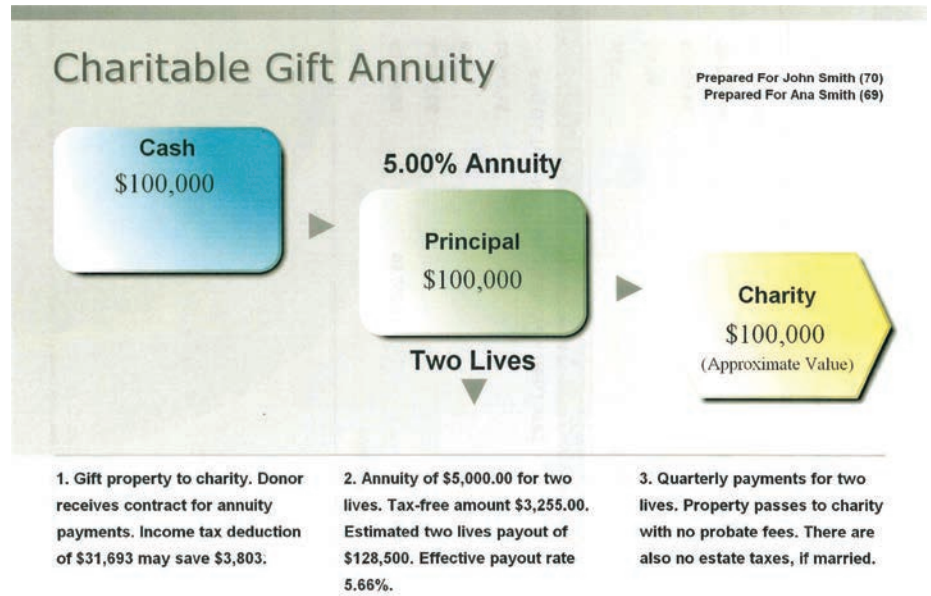
KEEP YOUR TALENT\$ ALIVE

By Jennifer Hernandez

I had someone come to my office recently and ask me, "I am looking to invest for retirement and before I go with another company, is there anything that the church can do to help me?" Good question. Lately, I've had several similar requests for information, and I've been able to tell people how to preserve and benefit from their hard-earned savings AND give to the Lord's work. In other words, I've been able to give them some useful options for managing their talent\$.

One of the biggest stressors for people entering into retirement age is worrying about whether they will have enough money coming in to maintain the lifestyle that they are used to. Many people are forced to go back to work after retirement because they are not able to make ends meet. Christians nearing retirement frequently ask themselves these questions: "Have I prepared enough? Have I saved enough? Have I used my resources in a way that is glorifying to God and will allow me to continue to minister in the way He has called me to do so?"

So, how can the Planned Giving & Trust Department of the Northern New England Conference of Seventh-day Adventists ("NNEC") assist you in this area? We can assist by providing you with access to annuities for retirement and trust services for protecting and preserving assets. Annuities are a proven and simple way to create income after retirement and can be fixed or variable, deferred or immediate, and instead of an insurance company getting a cut, the remainder goes to the Lord's work. Please see the visual of what a \$100,000 Charitable Gift Annuity



This educational illustration is not professional tax or legal advice; consult a tax advisor about your specific situation. See data sheets for assumptions.

(CGA) could look like. Of course, this example is for illustrative purposes only and should not be relied upon by any individual as indicative of actual results. Individuals should confer with their tax advisor before investing in a CGA. That being said, with a CGA you get income for the rest of your life and contribute substantially to the ministry of your choice. Trusts can also provide income, whether it is to you or one or more family members. Trusts are sufficiently versatile to also provide a donated income to the Lord's work for a term of years with the principal coming back to you or being inherited by your family members.

Trusts also have some different investment options. Trusts created with the assistance of NNEC can be invested in several ways, one of is with the Atlantic Union Revolving Fund, which at this moment has an annual return rate of 1.25% – better than most any bank. The NNEC also has the capability to work with the Western Adventist Foundation ("WAF") and with BNY Mellon, both of which take into consideration the values of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and are currently averaging

annual rates of return between 4 and 6%. WAF is, of course, run by Seventh-day Adventists and is able to manage the investment of both revocable and irrevocable trusts, including Special Needs Trusts. BNY Mellon is the investment manager that both NNEC and the General Conference use at this time for their investments. They have a very reasonable fee structure, and both NNEC and its members have historically had excellent customer service from them.

The organizations and professionals that the NNEC and General Conference partner with make the annuity contracts and legal documents work for your particular situation. All of these legal contract or document options are what we call "instruments" for accomplishing your financial, estate planning, and retirement goals. If you are looking for the best way to provide for family and also to create a spiritual legacy, and if you are looking for a way to provide for the finishing of the Lord's work (because you realize that He is indeed coming soon), please call our department. We would love to set up

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Message from the Executive Secretary *(Continued)*

Good News or Fake News article continued on pg. 4

quest for perfection. None of us have met a perfect person, none of us have achieved that. To hold it out as the requirement for salvation is very discouraging.

In order to make perfection “achievable” Last Generation Theology presents a very limited understanding of sin, basically defining sin as a known willing ‘act’. That is what the Pharisees tried to do, but Jesus consistently said, ‘No, No, you’ve said this is sin, but I tell you..’. When we realize that our very nature are broken and that we are sinful apart from our actions and choices we realize the futility of LGT. With that fuller understanding of the severity of our problem, LGT just doesn’t work. That sinful nature will not change until we are glorified at Christ’s coming.

Ellen White strongly disapproved when her writings were used to settle theological debates, (“the Bible is the only rule of faith and doctrine.” *Review and Herald July 17, 1888*), but she does make several statements that show that she was not a believer in LGT nor did she ascribe to the works based gospel that LGT proclaims. The first is from an article she wrote that was published in *Signs of the Times*, March 23 1888.

“We cannot say, ‘I am sinless,’ till this

vile body is changed and fashioned into His glorious body.”

The second is the famous Baker letter. If this letter had been widely available in the 1920’s LGT would have never gotten a foot hold in our church. One of the pillars of LGT is the teaching that Jesus was just like us and if he can be without sin, so should we be without sin. In early February of 1896 she wrote to WLH Baker,

“Be careful, exceedingly careful as to how (you dwell) upon the human nature of Christ. Do not set Him before the people as a man with the propensities of sin. He is the second Adam. The first Adam was created a pure, sinless being, without a taint of sin upon him... Let every human being be warned from the ground of making Christ altogether human, such an one as ourselves; for it can not be.” (*Manuscript releases vol. 13 pp. 13-30*)

When we get the gospel wrong everything else is negatively affected. Including church health!

So, if LGT isn’t the gospel, what is the gospel? The gospel of Jesus Christ includes salvation by grace through faith. We are forgiven of our past, current and future sinfulness as a free gift of unmerited grace. This unmerited gift of grace was purchased at great price on the cross. Jesus died so that we can live. Therefore the gospel also tells us that death doesn’t get the last

word. Christ’s resurrection from the grave means that those who fall asleep before the second coming will also live again. They do not have to suffer the second death. We can live eternally with God. The gospel of Jesus also tells us that God’s kingdom is available to us even now. We can embrace life with Him and make Him our example, with the goal of living as He lived and loving others as He loved others. We have the privilege, even now, in this sinful world to pursue the Kingdom of God. Jesus said, “Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things shall be added to you.” Matthew 6:33

The gospel is God’s free gift of salvation to everyone who believes. Our salvation is not based upon our performance. If it were as Paul says, “we would have something to boast about”. We are saved by grace through faith. Our behavior has no impact on our salvation. However the faith that saves us is also a faith that gives us freedom. It also gives us new life in God’s kingdom in which his will and character are slowly recreated in our lives.

Friends, I encourage you to search the scriptures and do not be easily led into false winds of doctrine. Some believe that spirituality is displayed by the verbal sparring and word gymnastics of theological controversy in which each participant tries to find a scripture or quote from Mrs. White to strengthen their argument. When this is regularly evidenced in church gatherings it is a sign of an unhealthy church. That is spirituality wrongly understood. Spirituality rightly understood is in evidence when our worship, study and fellowship times are marked by love and joy, kindness and peace. The fruit of the spirit in our lives is the true sign that we are being sanctified and that God’s character is being recreated in us. Praise God for the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Keep Your Talent\$ Alive article continued on pg. 5

a time to come visit you in your home and help you find the best financial, investment, and estate planning options to accomplish your goals. We are happy to meet with you and your financial and legal advisors to discuss what options are best for your

individual and family needs. If you are not happy, then we are not happy. Our greatest joy is helping you do the Lord’s will and watching how He works financial miracles in both your life and the lives of those He is calling into the Kingdom. So, I encourage you to keep your talent\$ alive and give us a call at 207-797-3760 X215 or X213 or email us at jhernandez@nnec.org. God bless you!



Spencer and Max pause to admire God's creatures.

STUDENTS BEHOLD GOD AT OUTDOOR SCHOOL

By Trevor Schlisner

Another Elementary Outdoor School is in the books, and it was enriching as ever! Edge of your seat worships, hands-on learning on the property of Camp Lawroweld, group games, fishing, survival classes and canoeing are but a few of the wonderful memories that were made this year. We are happy to report that the theme, “Behold Our God”, was accomplished! Outdoor school wouldn’t be possible if not for the teachers who create dynamic inquiry-based projects that bring the students to all corners of the Camp Lawroweld property. The teachers, each year, offer classes on water, soil, forests, meadows, lakes, ponds, and wetlands. For the older students, they have two choices: survival in the woods or a canoe adventure across Lake Webb including a camping adventure at Mt. Blue State Park.

Over 20 years ago, Trudy Wright, the former NNEC Superintendent of Education, had a vision to bring children to the Creator through engaging activities in His creation.



Camden holding a fish.

This year was no exception, as children caught, identified, and created a three-day habitat for fish, amphibians, insects, and reptiles. Mrs. Wright’s legacy is still being written as she manages the Lawroweld Nature Center located in the loft of the Esther Norzow Barn.

One of the best nature encounters occurred the last morning of outdoor



Heidi, Trudy, and Korben enjoying outdoor school.

school. As the canoe group was making their way back to Camp Lawroweld, a cow and her calf decided to trek across the shallow waters of Lake Webb in close proximity to the class. The students and teachers were so excited to have this once in a lifetime experience. We praise the Lord for a safe, meaningful, and fun outdoor school!

SEVEN THINGS HEALTHY CHURCHES DO

By Scott Christiansen

You've probably seen plenty of "seven things" lists over the past few years. This one, however, could actually be important because it could help you to pause and assess your church. The companion article across the page will help you pause and assess yourself as a church member. Together, perhaps they can help you reflect on the body of Christ in which you are a member.

1: A healthy church looks

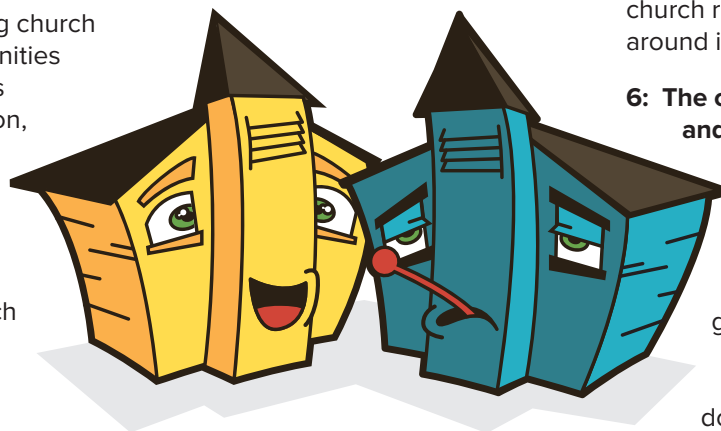
outward. A high-functioning church continuously seeks opportunities to engage with and serve its community. With compassion, it assesses the needs of the community. It seeks to understand the community, and is a familiar, helpful presence in the community. A healthy church considers service to those in need as a core part of its mission.

2: A healthy church

enthusiastically embraces the great commission. In Matthew 28:19-20 (and in Mark 16:15) is recorded this commission: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen." Actually, teaching and baptizing all people is contingent on the sound practice of the first item on our list – being part of the community. In healthy churches, the two go hand in hand, so that as we get to know people – and as they get to know us – they get to know Christ.

3: A healthy church prays together. In prayer, we talk to Jesus and where

we are best able to listen for His response. Prayer is thus the center of our personal Christian life. After all, what is a relationship where those in it hardly talk to each other? By extension, praying together as a church family should be a central part of our church experience. When we pray together, concerns and opportunities for intercession are raised that we would not otherwise know of. So also are testimonies of prayers answered. Praying together



draws our church family ever more closely together.

4: Healthy churches are focused on the present and on the future, and have a plan and strategy for realizing their vision of the future.

Churches that focus on the past, who dwell on what happened "back in the day" and who speak excessively of heroes of previous days are looking in the wrong direction. By focusing on those who are doing the Lord's work in our churches right now, we are better able to support these heroes of faith. And by assessing our current effectiveness in real time we are better able to sharpen our strategy and maintain our relevance.

5: The church looks like the community. Where a church makes an effort to reach the members of the

community with relevant, effective outreach, that church will look more and more like the community it is in. To put it another way, the demographic traits of the community will be reflected in the church. This also means that the whole church is active in witnessing, because it is young people who are best able to win young people for Christ. And it is members of ethnic communities who are best able to win over members of ethnic communities. But in the end, and to the extent possible, a healthy church reflects the community around it.

6: The church has a clear purpose, and the activities of the church are organized around that purpose.

Where a church has come together and has made an intentional decision to grow Christ's kingdom, be Christ's supporting hands to the marginalized and downtrodden, and facilitate growth in every member, all its activities can then be weighed by the degree to which they support those goals. It becomes easier to make decisions as a group about activities, priorities, and budgets. At the same time, individual participation of members in activities becomes more purposeful and goal-oriented, adding meaning at every level.

7: The giving of the church supports its goals and activities.

Where a church has decided to engage in an array of activities that support the great commission and the spiritual growth of its members, the members also support that vision with their time, money, and energy. Where there is a collective vision, this giving is not a burden but a duty happily undertaken. This broad participation

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SEVEN THINGS A HEALTHY CHURCH MEMBER DOES

By Scott Christiansen

Churches are made up of individuals. And while churches are more than the sum of their individuals (it's a synergism-through-fellowship thing), it is still true that you can't have a healthy church without having at least a majority of healthy individuals in that church. Toward that end, here are seven things healthy church members do.

1: Communes with Christ. A healthy church member knows Jesus, has a one-on-one relationship with Him, and tries daily to have the character of Christ. In practical terms, that means a healthy church member deepens their knowledge of Christ and His character by studying His word. It also means they spend time in prayer and meditation (the meditation part is important – it is not enough to say our piece and dash off; we should linger after prayer for Christ to reveal more of Himself or to otherwise impress His will or His message on us). The healthy church member also puts their study and meditation to practical effect by trying daily to be Christ-like. In other words, they try to act, speak, and love as Christ would so that those around them might glimpse Christ.

2: Prays for their church leaders and fellow members. A healthy church member is a little like a white blood cell, in that they keenly desire to eliminate disease from the body. There is a significant difference though, in that a healthy church member intervenes on behalf of the body through prayer, leaving the healing to God. Just to make sure there is no confusion, a healthy church member does not consider it their duty to point to other church

members and accuse them of being diseased. Actually, that is something an unhealthy church member does. A healthy church member consistently engages in intercessory prayer on behalf of the whole body, especially leaders in their church.

3: Brings unity and joy to the body. A healthy church member engages in the life of the church through discussions and action, and consistently seeks to bring unity to the church by speaking gentle affirmation in support of the most biblical and Christ-like ideas and initiatives, and points out how these are consistent with our Savior and His teachings. A healthy church member helps to lead from the pews, and helps to bring joy by gently pointing to scripture, letting the Spirit do the rest through His urgings.

4: Considers it a joy to engage in group worship. For a healthy member in a healthy church, group worship is a joy. Seeing friends and leaders they have prayed for during the week is a joy. Seeing children and youth engaged in the service and praise is a joy. The healthy church member is mindful of the blessing they have been given through church, and counts it as joy.

5: Grows the body. A healthy church member reaches out to their family and friends and tries to bring them into fellowship in the body. The healthy church gains when it grows. New members gain enormously by joining a healthy church. A healthy church member works to help make these blessings happen by seeking to include their friends and family in the process of discovering more about Christ and praising Him.

6: Helps carry the burden. A healthy church member is involved in the functions of the church. You have heard it said many times that twenty percent of the people do eighty percent of the work. But healthy



church members do not shirk work, nor do they hog work. Rather, they try to join their hands to the work at hand, even routine and tedious work. The principle extends to supporting the church through tithe and offerings.

7: Doesn't make church about them. A healthy church member sees value in fellowship and group worship, and seeks to make the experience about God. In practical terms, this means the healthy member does not demand to have their way with any particular aspect of the group worship process, nor do they seek to turn the attention being given to Christ into attention given to them.

How do you compare?

*Seven Things Healthy Churches Do
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in support then leads to joyous celebrations in the church body as the church advances toward its goals.

It takes intentionality, focus, and prayerful seeking of the guidance of the Holy Spirit for a church to gradually become a healthy church. But the rewards vastly outweigh the effort required.

How does your church compare?

Quadrennial Constituency Session



CONSTITUENCY SESSION – A BUSINESSLIKE SUCCESS

By Scott Christiansen

Sometimes, a routine and unsurprising governance process is a very good thing. At least, that is how many delegates and leaders were viewing the recently concluded Constituency Session.

A conference is nothing more than a sisterhood of churches in a region providing structure and leadership for their joint operations. Those churches appoint their joint leadership, as well as fine-tune the documents that describe the functioning of their joint efforts, and this appointing and fine-tuning is done every five years at something called a constituency session.

The sisterhood of Seventh-day Adventist churches in Northern New England recently held its constituency meeting in the gymnasium of Pine Tree Academy in Freeport, Maine. Churches from across the region sent delegates (with the number of delegates based on the membership of the church) to the session. There were also delegates-at-large from

conference and union leadership. All told there were 393 delegates at the session who were deeply informed on the issues at hand, then brought to the same place at the same time and organized for the purpose of discussing and voting.

Preparations for the session began months and months prior to the event, with committees such as the Articles and Bylaws Committee working to identify fine-tunings to the documents that govern the sisterhood of churches. Logistics preparation also began many months in advance with the Executive Secretary, Ted Huskins, and his team quarterbacking the extensive preparations. They worked with each church to make sure the delegate-election process went smoothly and that delegates had all necessary background materials.

Perhaps because of the extensive and collaborative preparation process, there were few actual surprises on the day of Constituency Session. Everyone in attendance knew what officers and directors had been put forward by the nominating committee

(a committee that itself was made up of a cross-section representative of the sisterhood of churches). Everyone knew what tweakings the Articles and Bylaws Committee had suggested. And everyone knew what other recommendations were on the agenda. That left just two unknowns: the content of the reports to be made by the officers, and the motions that could be made by any delegate in attendance.

Individual delegates to constituency session have a sacred responsibility to be informed, pray, and vote their conscience on the important items that will shape the direction of the sisterhood of churches over the next five years. They also have power. For instance, when the nominating committee presents its report, any individual delegate can move that the report be referred back to the nominating committee, which then immediately convenes to hear concerns and receive questions pertinent to any leader on the slate (personnel matters are not discussed in open session, only in nominating

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EVANGELISM GAINS MOMENTUM ACROSS NNEC

By Scott Christiansen

In terms of evangelism, there is a steady increase in activity in NNEC, and that is a very, very big deal. The sisterhood of churches across Northern New England is either maintaining or increasing their community outreach and community services – things such as food banks, healthy living classes, healthy cooking classes, etc. At the same time, more and more churches are practicing some form of cyclical evangelism, which is to say that they plan and carry out a systematic effort of sowing, growing, and reaping events. The cyclical approach to evangelism has been proven to be far, far more effective than an ad-hoc approach and reflects a growing level of determination and sophistication across churches in the conference.

That churches are increasing their levels of activity is remarkable in terms of the context: The Northern New England Conference is by far the most secular (or “post-Christian”) place in the United States. Some sixty percent of the people in the conference either have no use for churches, or treat churches and Christians with disdain and avoid going in anything that looks like a church. In other words, our churches are increasing their outreach in a hostile environment. That takes guts and determination. It also takes planning, strategy, and an appropriate set of tools.

I'd like to tell you a little of what the conference is doing to help churches as they move forward in evangelism. First, there is the evangelism fund. This fund, managed by the Evangelism Committee, reviews



requests for assistance from churches. Churches can ask for up to seventy percent reimbursement on their evangelism expenditures. The more a church practices cyclical evangelism and plans ahead, the higher their rate of reimbursement.

The conference is also helping churches take the “next step” in building spiritual relationships with community members. Sometimes, the “next step” can be pretty hard to figure out: if a church has a food bank, or cooking classes, or some

other service activity, what do they do to build that initial relationship into one that leads to spiritual discussions? For churches asking such a question, the conference offers The Healing Project.

The Healing Project essentially helps a team from a church learn how to teach hydrotherapy to community members. Hydrotherapy was widely practiced in the period from 1850 to 1900 when medicine was less advanced and people needed help

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Evangelism Gains Momentum Across NNEC

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with joint pain, insomnia, muscle soreness, sinus blockage, etc. Now medicine is quite advanced but, counterintuitively, the majority of people still need relief from joint pain, insomnia, muscle soreness, sinus blockage, etc. The Healing Project teaches community members how to practice hydrotherapy at home. But, it also does much more than that: it builds relationships.

The Healing Project is designed to be highly interactive, with a class setting taught by Martin Raj, director of The Healing Project, followed by practical sessions where church members and community members practice one-on-one the techniques learned. Such sessions usually result in a great deal of camaraderie and humor, and trust-based relationships result. During the practice session the

pastor and prayer warriors also make the rounds, greeting and offering to pray specifically for the community member in the week ahead. Early data indicates that some seventy percent of Healing Project attendees go on to engage further with the church, either through Bible studies or counseling or regular church attendance.

The challenge for The Healing Project is marketing, but where a church has already formed a relationship with a group of people – through a food bank or cooking classes, etc., - then The Healing Project is a logical “next step”.

For churches that have a group of people with whom they have good relationships, the conference also has a short evangelism series that can help accelerate study and discussions. This series is titled “The Twisted Kingdom” and the premise is fairly straightforward: it attempts

to tell the story of the war between Christ and Satan using solo scriptura – the Bible only. Community members are often fascinated as the story is traced through the Bible. Adventists, on the other hand, also tend to be fascinated by the series because it comes at things they already know from a dramatically fresh perspective, allowing them to discover new learnings or see familiar things in a new light. Thus far, churches that have hosted a Twisted Kingdom series often plan to raise up a new group of interested people, then repeat the series. In other words, they plan to practice cyclical evangelism.

The fact that we live in the most challenging of mission fields in the North American Division does not decrease our responsibility to prayerfully build God’s kingdom. If anything, it increases it. Fortunately, the Lord is providing determination and new tools to meet the challenge!

Constituency Session – A Businesslike Success

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committee). The referral back to nominating committee almost always occurs, and such was the case at NNEC’s meeting, resulting in hours of passionate discussion pertaining mostly to one decision made by the committee. After hearing concerns, the committee eventually returned with its nominations unchanged.

There were no other significant surprise motions from delegates, meaning if there were to be any surprises at all, they would come during the reports from the officers. And in fact there were surprises – good surprises. President Bob Cundiff compared the current meeting to the previous Constituency Session in 2014. At that time, troubles abounded: the conference was

mired in budget woes and led the North American Division in tithe loss. Conference schools were shrinking or closing and were also mired in budget woes. Recruiting staff to fill open positions in the foundering conference was incredibly difficult.

But President Cundiff’s report was pretty much the opposite of the 2014 situation. In the intervening four years, faithful giving by members had reasserted itself and, in 2018, the conference was seventh in the North American Division on a tithe-per-capita basis. Conference schools have stabilized and are increasingly becoming examples of excellence. And the understanding has been established among job seekers that the sisterhood of churches in Northern New England is a mission-driven and supportive place to work.

The picture of a resurgent and

focused conference became even clearer when the Executive Secretary, Ted Huskins, gave a report outlining an aggressive and unique effort to plant over 20 churches using young, tent-making missionaries as planters. The sisterhood of churches, he showed, is returning to its mission of vigorously and innovatively proclaiming the gospel.

A presentation by Treasurer Daniel Battin rounded out the good news, showing growth in the worthy student fund and significant recovery of working capital.

All in all, it was a fairly quiet, well organized, business-like meeting that advanced the Lord’s work. And it seems that for the quiet, well-organized, business-like people of Northern New England, that’s exactly what they wanted.

MEET TIM RAYMOND, YOUR NEW YOUTH MINISTRIES DIRECTOR

By Scott Christiansen

Pastor Tim Raymond is returning to his roots, and that excites him. For some 17 years, Pastor Raymond was the chaplain at Union Springs Academy in New York. He thrived on working with teens and helping them into a closer walk with Christ. Now, with the constituency session election as the new Youth Ministries Director, he's returning to familiar ground. "I feel like everything is coming together," he said in a recent conversation. "I feel like I'm being freed to influence and minister to more people than ever before. And given the times in which we live, that's an awesome responsibility."

Pastor Raymond will be in charge of all aspects of Youth Ministry, including Camp Lawroweld, and will be taking up the duties previously held by Pastor Mark Tamaleaa. "It's a privilege to be following Pastor Mark Tamaleaa. I plan to be building on the foundation he laid down, including ministering to young adults."

"One thing that I want to emphasize in all my interactions with youth and young adults is the perception and understanding of the dueling narratives that shape our world," said Pastor Raymond. "I want to help young people understand and identify the philosophies that the world is trying to recruit them to, and I want to do that by helping to anchor them in the word of God. I want to help them adopt the attitude that 'if it's not in the word of God, then I'm not interested in it'."

There is one thing about Pastor



Raymond that becomes immediately obvious to anyone who talks to him: he is a man in a hurry. "I want to run toward my tasks," he says. "I don't want to run ahead of God, but I want to run with God. There is so much to do, so much that needs to be accomplished in this battle we are in,

and I want the battle to be completed as quickly as possible so we can all go home."

Tim is married to Melanie, and together they have two sons, Kyle, who is a recruiter at Newbold College in England, and Kurt, who is a freshman at Andrews University.

DEAR NNEC FRIENDS, ACQUAINTANCES AND MINISTRY PARTNERS

By Tonya Turcotte

I am grateful for this opportunity to tell you how much I appreciate you, and to thank you for the 10+ years in ministry that I have been blessed with in the Northern New England Conference.

It is with mixed emotions that I say goodbye to you, and this chapter in my life – working at the conference office. I have been truly blessed by YOU, the people that I have grown to love that are part of my “family”. My husband and I are moving to upstate NY in November to be near my mother. It has been an honor to have been able to do God’s work in this conference, and an even greater honor to now be able to have this gift to be near my mother and help her.

I have had the privilege of working with and meeting so many wonderful people in my role as Administrative Assistant to President Bob Cundiff and Youth Director Mark Tamaleaa (and I can’t forget Mike Ortel and Harry Sabnani, whom I started out with). It has been a pleasure serving your kids, our pastors and their wives, and our camp staff. It has also been a blessing to work with the different ministries: adventurers, pathfinders, children’s, men’s and women’s. The leaders and volunteers in these departments are truly dedicated – and amazing! I will especially miss our Camp Meeting. I have many fond memories of working with my team and working for you, the members of this conference. Thank you for your kindness and patience throughout



the years as we have connected and worked together in some form or another. Remember, without you, this conference would not be as it is!

Last, but not least – many thanks and

much gratitude to my office family. It has been an honor knowing and working with you. I hope to see you at one of the *awesome* NNEC events in the future. God bless you!

The penultimate page is the one right before the last one. But here it means something extra, as we live in the penultimate age – the one right before the end. This page will feature a variety of writers talking about the fulfillment of prophecy.

DID YOU FEEL THAT?

By Scott Christiansen

Did you feel that? Did you feel the whole world tilt on its axis toward anger, anxiety and anarchy? Did you feel the natural world shift another degree toward decay, decline and dysfunction? Did you feel the waxing waves of fear and dismay that are washing over the vulnerable and downtrodden of the world? Have you read the recent news of once abundant animal life simply fading away all over the world? (See Isaiah 56:1)? Have you observed the way the foundations of life on this planet are eroding at a frantic pace (see Jeremiah 23:10)?

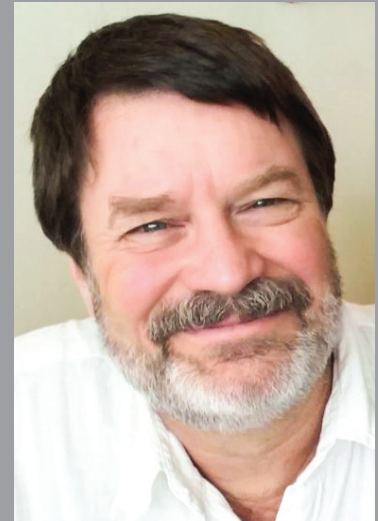
It's not that times are changing. It is that times have changed. By every indication available, we are living in the final days of the earth. By any standard, that is a jolting, remarkable realization. But here is good news: Many of your fellow church members are assessing the world, sensing the hour, and responding by turning their focus to missions. They understand the sands of time are running out and that this extraordinary moment in earth's history calls for a focus on fulfilling the great commission.

And they are not the only ones who are taking note. The citizens of this world have a vague understanding

that things are increasingly amiss, that something huge and ominous is in the offing, that there will be a reckoning. With this inkling comes an increased willingness to discuss prophecy and spiritual concerns. The dynamic is of God: as church members make a significant commitment to personal evangelism and increased support for missions, so also is there a simultaneous increase in receptiveness.

This dynamic extends to the Northern New England Conference. More churches are engaging in relationship-building programs with community members, and then offering follow-on Bible studies. At the same time, there seems to be an increase in the number of members who are reflecting on the moment in history and seeking to both engage in personal ministry and vigorously support missions activities.

What we expect to see during the final days, and what I think we are beginning to see now, is the sheep more fully becoming sheep and the goats more fully becoming goats. By this I mean that those who have made a choice for God are ever more fully expressing His character in their focus, their actions, and their words. And those who have rejected Christ are ever more fully expressing a



character of rebellion and selfishness. The world is dividing into two camps, and those who have not yet committed to one camp or another are dwindling in number. But while even one person remains undecided, our effort to reach them and show them Christ's love should be full-throated.

So, here then is the question for you: As you feel the world move toward its fate, as you see decay and destruction increase, as you see cruelty and conflict wax the world over, what will your response be? Will you turn increasingly toward Christ and commit your talents and resources to proclaiming him? If and as you do, you will discover that you are not alone; as you step out in faith, so will the Spirit step with you, and so will many of your fellow church members.

**For upcoming events
calendar, please visit
www.NNEC.org
or find us on...**



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January 31-February 2

Register by January 9, 2019

Music Clinic 2019

April 4-6

Register by December 1, 2018 - Save \$10

Final Piano Registration - February 1, 2019

Final Registration for all others - March 1, 2019

Above events hosted by
Pine Tree Academy, Freeport, Maine

FMI & to register please visit us at www.nnec.org/Education

