

CoNNEction

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The Pope's Recent Visit to America

By Bob Cundiff

Like many of you I followed the Pope's recent visit to America with great interest. How could I not?! Our unique prophetic understanding gives Adventists special insight into the role the papal system will play in the final events of earth's history.

That which we were told was far-fetched a quarter of a century ago grows increasingly less so with the development of the global economy, fear of terrorism and trend toward ecumenical collaboration.

Let me be clear - I'm not one who thinks there is a Jesuit lurking behind every bush, nor am I the sensationalist who predicts that the national Sunday law is but weeks away every time the Pope sneezes. Having grown up Adventist, I've witnessed too many false alarms and have been embarrassed by the premature predictions that have fallen from the lips of some well-meaning but misguided church members (including myself!).

But this last visit was truly unprecedented. As I watched the downscaled version of the pope-mobile (a Fiat!) snake its way through downtown Washington amongst throngs of worshipers and well-wishers, my mind went to Revelation 13:3, "And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast."

To say that Pope Francis has ascended to rock star status is an inadequate word picture only to the degree that not everyone likes rock. After all, who could disagree with his message of

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BORDOVILLE CHURCH CELEBRATES 151ST ANNIVERSARY

By Scott Christiansen

The Bordoville Adventist Church in Bordoville, Vermont, is the oldest purpose-built church in the denomination. In other words, it is the oldest Adventist church that was built as an Adventist church. This living piece of history had its annual meeting on Sabbath, September 19. The service was attended by some 230 people, who gathered in perfect late summer weather to hear the Sabbath School lesson and sermon by special guest speaker Dr. Samaan of Southern Adventist University.

There was a very specific reason that Dr. Samaan traveled from Tennessee to Bordoville to speak. Above and beyond the delight of speaking at the oldest purpose-built church in the denomination, there was the fact that Dr. Samaan is the mentor and former professor of Pastor Cornel Preda, pastor of the Bordoville church, and in the afternoon of this high Sabbath, Dr. Samaan would participate in the ordination of Pastor Preda and would lay upon him the ordination mantle.

As it turned out, Dr. Samaan is also the former professor of conference president, Bob Cundiff and conference secretary, Ted Huskins, both of whom were present for the day. Dr. Samaan enjoyed teasing his former students and "grading" them on various tasks throughout the day. He may have focused his wit on his former students, but with his personable speaking style, it wasn't long before Dr. Samaan made everyone in the congregation feel familiar with him.

Pastor Preda officiated over the annual meeting and told the story of the Bordoville Church, which was built through the conviction of the Bordo brothers, Augustine and Daniel, who were new converts to Adventism. The Bordoville Church, which is in the countryside and quite close to the Canadian border,



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IMPACTING YOUTH IN TODAY'S WORLD

By Ted Huskins

Life is changing at the speed of a gigabyte. Fact is, the world is changing so quickly that many of us from older generations often feel a little bit lost. We are happy to retreat to the sanctity of our church where everything is familiar and we can take a deep breath and relax. This is a subconscious reality for most of us: we take comfort that there is one place that doesn't change too much, and we can be pretty committed to making sure our church doesn't change. While it may feel comforting to protect the environment we want, doing so often creates an irrelevant and even uncomfortable atmosphere for the youth and young adults living in our communities. When they come to our church, they don't perceive the comfort of familiarity, they encounter an environment that feels foreign and without purpose.

We use to think of generational changes occurring every twenty years. The Baby Boomers who brought generational shift to world consciousness was a generation born between the years 1945 and 1965. Generation X was born between 1966 and 1985. But today many researchers are talking about generational and cultural shifts that are now happening in five year increments instead of 20 year increments. Technology and how we relate to it is one of the driving forces of this change in human behavior. How do you think God would have us relate to the rapid changes in our society?

Some of us would quote Hebrews 13:8, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever." Others might quote James 1:17, "Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows." We would quote these texts and sink into the comfort of our church and justify our unwillingness to engage our culture as being a God honoring response. Interestingly neither James nor Hebrews is talking about how we organize and structure our churches, our evangelistic outreaches or our worship services. If they were we'd have to study how the early church organized and structured themselves and how they worshipped. If anyone of us were plucked from our New England environs and transported back to the year 80 AD into the Christian communities of the Roman Empire, we would not feel comfortable. In fact, we would find it foreign and uncomfortable. The language would be different, the leadership style would be different, the clothing would be different, the food would be different, the music would be different, and we wouldn't be meeting in a church building with pews or a piano or organ. In fact there might not be any instruments at all, and we'd probably be sitting on cushions on the floor.

I don't think those texts are applicable to this question. So how should we respond to the youth and young adults who live in our communities? I think there's another text that is extremely applicable. It is found in Matthew 22. A scribe is testing Jesus and he asks Jesus what is the greatest commandment. Jesus' response is found in verses 37

to 39, "LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND." 38 THIS IS THE FIRST AND GREATEST COMMANDMENT. 39 AND THE SECOND IS LIKE IT: "LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF."

If we were to really love our neighbors who are youth and young adults we would ask ourselves, "how can we structure our church, our evangelistic outreach and our worship services in such a way as to make them feel comfortable? Rather than focusing on our own comfort we would instead seek to make others feel comfortable!

One of the churches in our conference is being very intentional about this. When I led the Freeport, Maine Church through a mission and vision seminar, it became evident that they shared a passion for young people. Because Freeport feels a huge burden to reach youth and young adults, both those who have been raised Seventh-day Adventist and those who haven't, they are structuring their church, their outreach and their worship services to intentionally make a place that is relevant and familiar. A place is being created where youth can fall in love with Jesus and enter into a life-changing relationship with Him. At their recent nominating committee they placed two youth on the committee as well as two young adults. They have intentionally placed youth and young adults on the board and are seeking their input and ideas as they create a place where younger generations can find comfort and relevance. Some things are changing.

If your church has a burden to reach young people I encourage you to do the same thing. Your end results may not look like Freeport, and perhaps they shouldn't because every church is and should be different. Start by praying about your church and the direction God would have you pursue. Begin to identify ways that you can support the youth and young adults in your communities and invite members and future members in those generations to a dialog in which you explore what would be meaningful and relevant to them. Carve out a place in your church budget to fund youth ministry. Make sure that your worship service is relevant and meaningful to youth. Finally, give them the reins of leadership. Let them make the decisions and shape the future of the church.

Some years ago I was pastoring a small church, and we were growing spiritually and numerically. By God's grace and through His power we were building real momentum. Our youth and young adult ministries were at the forefront of this growth. We realized that if we were going to keep momentum that some things were going to have to change in our church. I went to see one of my favorite members. Betty was in her 70's, she had children and grandchildren in our church, but she was the matriarch. She was also one of the most spiritual and deeply committed people I have ever known. I explained to Betty what I perceived in our church and what the youth wanted to do and how that would change things. I then asked her the ever important question: "Betty, how would you feel if we made these changes?" I will never forget her response. She said, "Pastor, you don't have to worry about me. I know my Jesus, and I am comfortable that I will be in the Kingdom. My

worry is our young people. If we need to make changes that will enable them to love Jesus and give their lives to Him, I'm all for it!"

Your church can be a congregation that is a comfortable place for youth. You can have an effective outreach to young people. Be forewarned that it may be uncomfortable for you. But then here is the point: are you willing to give up your comfort for the comfort of young people who are struggling to discover themselves and how to fit and survive in an environment of rapid change? If you are, God will bless your willing and selfless heart, and you will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

2015 GRADUATIONS

Okay, we admit that we're late with this list – it should have been in the previous edition. But the list is just too important to leave out, so we're taking a "better late than never" approach. Why is the list important? Just look at the names of the precious young people who are graduating from our schools. Each is a story that is just beginning. Each has potential to shake this earth for the Lord. Each will be tempted and attacked by Satan and thus each should be a focus of prayer for us.

Take another look at the names. Each one represents a success for their home church, for the support that was poured into the child, the family, and the school. In the end, every name on the list is a cause for celebration. And just think: not too many months from now, there will be another list and another celebration at a job well done by schools, churches, families and students.

BROWNELL MOUNTAIN SCHOOL IN WILLISTON, VERMONT

Rebecca Kayembe

CALEDONIA CHRISTIAN SCHOOL IN ST. JOHNSBURY, VERMONT

Asher Chapman

Andrew Konkell

Isaac Dagesse

CAPITAL CHRISTIAN SCHOOL IN CONCORD, NEW HAMPSHIRE

Ana Milano

Mary Thomas

FORREST WARD MEMORIAL SCHOOL IN BENNINGTON, VERMONT

Byrom Jomaa

Ewan Chapman

NORTH STAR CHRISTIAN SCHOOL IN HERMON, MAINE

Mercedes Pomeroy

PINE TREE ACADEMY KINDERGARTEN IN FREEPORT, MAINE

Alana Whalon-Cardoza

Collin Verrill

Elizabeth Egan

Rhett Tyson

PINE TREE ACADEMY 8TH GRADE IN FREEPORT, MAINE

Roseanna Ciminello

Sydney Krueger

Adriana DePalma

Antonia Lombard

Jonah Dunham

Zachary Pelletier

Gabriel Goodman

Renee Pickard

Joseph Hall

Jared Tamaleaa

Magdalyn Hugo

Jobet Tardiff

Marjorie Johnson

Taylor Waterman

PINE TREE ACADEMY 12TH GRADE IN FREEPORT, MAINE

Samuel Delaware

Rebecca Learned

Kimberly Emerson

Krishna Patel

Katelynn Falter

Amelia Pekar

Zachary Falter

Luis Rodriguez

Bosung Gong

Shantel Seeley

Cody Hagget

Kenneth Sweetser

Chloe Headley

Allison Verrill

Franklin Hodson IV

Sarah Waterman

PINE TREE ACADEMY 12TH GRADE IN FREEPORT, MAINE - continued

Haley Johnson

Christopher Wilday

Kathryn Kruzich

Peter Wilkinson

Jakub Krzywon

PIONEER JR. ACADEMY IN WESTMORELAND, NEW HAMPSHIRE

Abigail Lombard

RIVERVIEW MEMORIAL SCHOOL KINDERGARTEN IN NORRIDGEWOCK, MAINE

Leah Gilliland

Jaden Adamson

RIVERVIEW MEMORIAL SCHOOL 8TH GRADE IN NORRIDGEWOCK, MAINE

Isaac Cobb

Joshua Long

Benjamin Gilliland

Alayah Perry

Krysta Krebs

Emily Schlisner

BORDOVILLE CHURCH (continued from pg 1)

turned out to be a frequent destination for such Adventist pioneers as James and Ellen White, who both spoke there on numerous occasions. The church was the launching pad for several missionaries, not the least of which were the Bordo brothers, who worked in Europe with missionary pioneer J.N. Andrews.

The Bordo Church entered a slow decline late in the last century and was not being used for services when Pastor Cornell took over the district a few years ago. Today, some 15-20 people typically meet there on Sabbath afternoon during the seasons when the unheated church is usable. The spirit is moving in Bordoville again, and this last year the church saw five baptisms.

The Bordoville church has been brought back from disuse through dedicated volunteer labor put forth by a small band of volunteers led by Pastor Preda. This band has a big vision for restoring the historic church and they have the enthusiastic support of the recently established Historic Properties Committee at the conference.

The building needs a very significant amount of work done over the next few years, and if the Lord prompts you to support or volunteer for this effort, contact pastor Preda, or contact Ted Huskins at the conference office.

Whether or not you are called by the Lord to help restore this historic church, you really should plan to visit the Bordoville Church annual meeting, which is held every year in September. This little church on a dirt road in the countryside is a piece of living history, built with the hands of some of the first members of the Adventist denomination and, praise God, it still serves as a light for the community around it.

TABERNACLE OUTREACH DURING CAMP MEETING A SINGULAR SUCCESS

By: Scott Christiansen



There were an unusual number of community members walking around Northern New England Conference (NNEC) camp meeting this year, a fact that delighted camp meeting organizers. What drew the visitors was a singular opportunity to see something amazing: a full-scale model of the wilderness tabernacle. The Messiah's Mansion exhibit was set up on camp meeting grounds at Pine Tree Academy in Freeport, Maine, and over two thousand people took the 75-minute tour during the week it was set up. While many camp meeting attendees took the tour, there were also a significant number of community members who responded to radio and internet advertising and drove as much as three hours to see the display.

New England Conference, and it created an immediate interest in the community,” said Bob Cundiff, conference president. “We sent posters to hundreds of churches in Maine and also had a significant radio and internet presence. The response was exciting: we had church groups come, as well as extended families that made a day of attending the exhibit, along with hundreds of individuals and couples from the community. I think this is probably the single most effective outreach effort we’ve had in some time.”

The full-scale replica tabernacle arrived at Pine Tree Academy in a semi-truck trailer, and required a crew of over 20 working two days to set it up. The exhibit included the fabric outer walls, the fixtures in the courtyard, and the tabernacle itself, including all fixtures in the holy and most holy places. The fabric walls of the tabernacle were raised during the tour so that visitors could see and understand what went on in all parts of the tabernacle. Superbly trained Messiah's Mansion tour guides explained the relevance of tabernacle ceremonies to Christ's life and ministry. Of those who took the tour, over two hundred requested follow-up studies, including Bible studies, prophecy studies, and further sanctuary studies.

“We’ve taken the requests for further studies and have separated them by district in the conference and have sent them to district pastors for follow-up,” said Cundiff. “We are really excited by the way the Lord has opened so many doors, and we are being diligent in our follow-up efforts to go through those doors.

The entire theme of NNEC's camp meeting centered on the sanctuary, and the evening speakers (Richard Davidson and Ty Gibson) delivered fantastic lessons on what the sanctuary meant and continues to mean to Christians. Camp meeting regulars and those community members who sat in on the evening meetings received a double blessing.





PATHFINDER FALL CAMPOREE

By Barbara Watson

NNEC Pathfinder Area Coordinator

NNEC Pathfinders hold two conference-wide camporees per year, one in the spring and one in the fall. The location for the camporees rotates around so that pathfinders can see all corners of the conference and so that the

burden of long drives to the camporee is shared around. Fall camporee this year, on the last weekend in September, was held in the extreme south-west of the conference, at Molly Stark State Park in Wilmington, Vermont.

The weather was clear – always a source of praise when it happens – and Pathfinders from all three states in the conference plus a visiting club from Middleton, New York, energetically set up their tents on a chilly Friday afternoon. The theme for the weekend was “God Doesn’t Live in a Box.” The message was loud and clear from guest speaker, Pastor Janelly Pierre from Rochester, New Hampshire. Also speaking on the theme was Mark Tamaleaa, NNEC Youth Director (who led out with our Sabbath School program) as well as a unique message from Paul Watson (Associate Pathfinder Director for NNEC) for our church service. There was also a powerful message presented at flag raising on Sabbath morning by Steven Maringka, a TLT (Teen in Leadership Training), as well as the Pastor, Phil Johnson, for the Portsmouth Living Waters club.

In accordance with Fall Camporee tradition, on Saturday night individual clubs created skits and musical performances arranged around a spiritual theme. In past years the programs have been very, very good, and this year the Pathfinders did not disappoint; their skits, special music and shared readings all showed how God is leading in their lives.

After a cold night (with temps down to 32 degrees Saturday night) the Pathfinders awoke to participate in challenging events under a beautiful blue sky. There were team building



events planned and an obstacle course was set up with a challenging climbing wall, a cube with ropes to navigate through, an army crawl, and a unique swivel balance beam built by Ron Mott and family from the Keene, New Hampshire Conquerors Club.

Camporees don’t just happen – they take a great deal of planning and work – and we praise God for the directors and staff who give of themselves tirelessly and make camporees happen. We also praise God for the TLT’s, area coordinators and numerous volunteers who helped make this such a great event for our NNEC youth!

ADVENTIST YOUTH: A CRISIS SITUATION

By Mark Tamaleaa

There is a crisis in the Adventist church: our youth are leaving! This crisis is not limited to just the Adventist church but that is no comfort to congregations that love and value the youth among them. So, why are these precious young people leaving?

According to studies in 2014 by The Barna Group, commissioned by NAD, and the Beyond Beliefs study at Andrews University, our young people aren’t leaving because of doctrinal differences. In fact, according to a recent Oakridge Adventist Church study (2014), young people by and large enthusiastically agree with the fundamental beliefs of the Adventist church.

So why are they leaving? Because they have watched previous generations in the church for some time and don’t like some things they see. More specifically, they feel the church exhibits some characteristics they simply cannot uphold, including:

- intolerance of doubt
- relationships that are elitist
- anti-science belief structure
- over-protectiveness toward members
- shallowness of teaching
- repression of differences

They also feel that they cannot be themselves in church, and so they feel they are being dishonest by not expressing their opinions. Their experiences have lead them to believe that their searching and questioning, their probing and testing, is unwelcome. Essentially, these young people feel alienated because they perceive they are not allowed to make the spiritual journey they need to make.

These perceptions seem harsh, but it is important to understand that these young people are not rejecting previous generations. In fact, one of the things they really want in their church is warm, genuine, caring relationships with all generations. You see, every generation has distinctly different perceptions and opinions, and as we progress into a markedly technological age, these differences are becoming more pronounced. Perhaps the most distinct difference relevant to this discussion is that these youth, “Millennials” ages 18-32, are engaged in a sincere spiritual journey. They probe and test every teaching, every assertion and assumption that is presented to them, and eventually arrive at their very own deeply held beliefs.

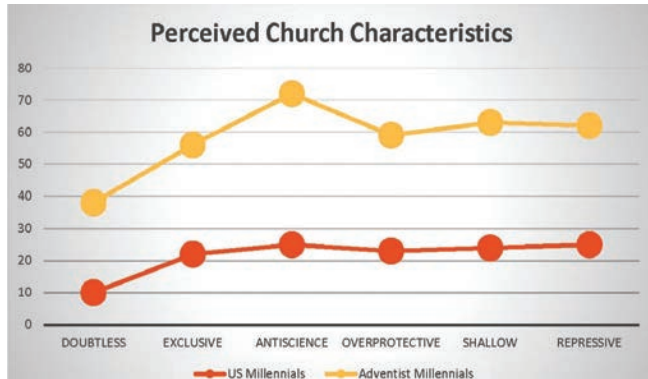
When a young person leaves the church, it is an avoidable tragedy! What these Millennials are looking for are a people who are accepting, supportive, genuinely caring, and non-judgmental. They want a people who will help guide and support them as they go on their spiritual journey.

Whether or not our youth stay in the church is largely a function of how previous generations act toward them and whether or not they are in a safe and nurturing place. Are the Millennials worth making a sacrifice for? Jesus thought so! So what exactly do we do to accommodate Millennials while upholding established beliefs? To answer that question, see the articles on the “Best Practices” page.

Data and Analysis

What Pushes Millennials Away from Churches

Perceived Church Characteristics



Adventist Millennials consistently give their church higher rankings in negative categories, which is to say that what Millennials see is a church that has significant amounts of the characteristics they want to avoid.

Differing Perspectives among Engaged and Unengaged



The above responses are characterizing the childhood church of Adventist Millennials, where percentages of the two groups strongly agree with the characterization of their childhood church. The “engaged” are still involved in church while the “unengaged” have drifted away. The real difference between the two was childhood experiences at the church, and the fact that the “engaged” had at least one good relationship with adult church members or leadership.

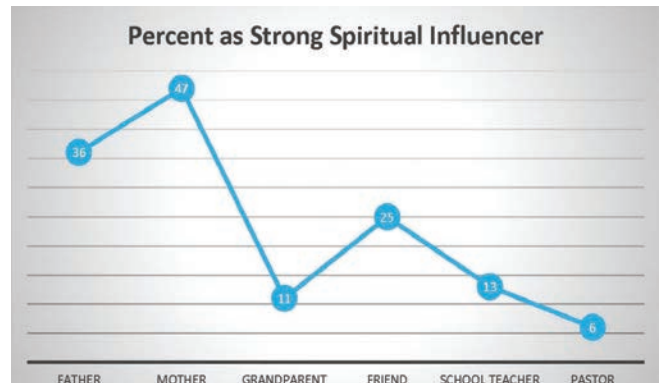
Differing Perspectives among Engaged and Unengaged, Part II



Above are the percentages of people in the two groups who strongly agree with the descriptions of their childhood churches. In this chart, as in the chart above, the point is driven home that Millennials who had genuine and nurturing relationships with adults or leadership in the church came away with a profoundly better view of the church overall.

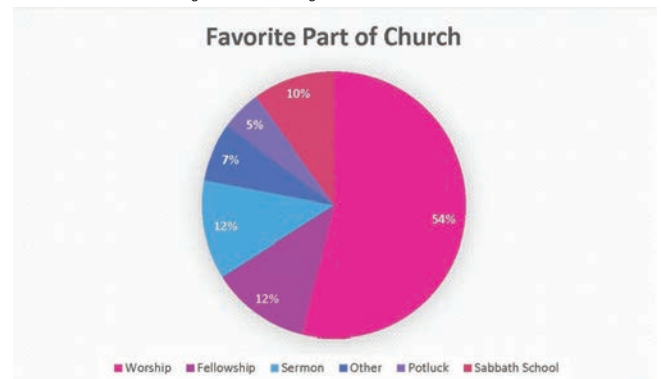
What Draws Millennials to Churches

Primary Sources of Spiritual Influence for Millennials



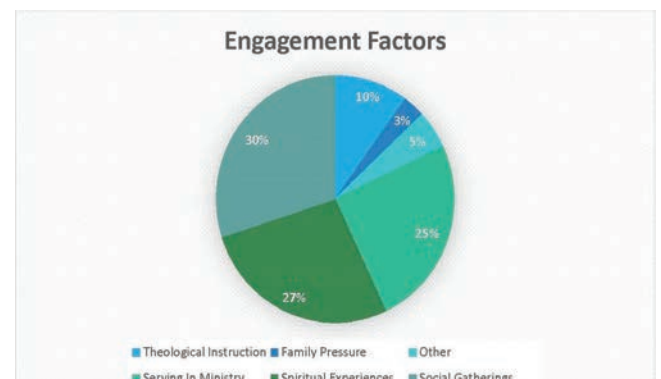
While the father may be priest of the home, it is the mother who most influenced the millennial generation. Curiously, the pastor is the least among spiritual influencers in this ranking.

Favorite Part of Church for Millennials



Millennials who are engaged in church are there to worship, there to learn, and there to engage in fellowship. Millennials who are supported while on their spiritual journey make for strong church members.

What Keeps Adventist Millennials Engaged in Church?



It is clear that the primary things that engage Millennials in our churches – serving others, spiritual experiences, and social gatherings – speak to the values that create strong individuals and strong churches. The Millennial generation can turn out to be one of the strongest generations in church history – if only they are given support, friendship, space, and time while they progress on their spiritual journey.

Flying High with the Portsmouth Men's Ministry



The Portsmouth Men's Ministries group knows that when it comes to planes, all men are boys.

By Doug Berrill

The Portsmouth, New Hampshire Seventh-day Adventist Men's Ministry group attended the Great State of Maine Air Show in Brunswick Maine on September 6.

The men wanted to do something on a social level to spend some time to bond together as men of God from our church. Many of the men brought their sons and grandsons. This was also a great opportunity to reunite with some folks and help welcome newer men into our group.

We have a very active Men's Ministry in Portsmouth. We meet on the first Sunday of each the month. Our meetings consist of a breakfast prepared by "Chef" Kurt Amos, (well, he should be a chef!). We always have a devotional time at each meeting, and take turns so each month one of the men will bring and share a devotional thought. Of course there is plenty of fellowship involved. It's great to spend some quality time with Christian men.

We also believe in community service through our ministry, and have worked together at the Chase Home in Portsmouth. The men went there and helped in their garden and with maintenance of the facility for this non-profit organization which takes in troubled youths.

This past spring the men sponsored a sunrise service at Rye Beach. This was open to all members of the church who wanted to come out early and celebrate that our Lord rose from the grave early on the first day of the week after His crucifixion.

We also sponsored a movie and pizza night for the whole church. This was a fund raiser where the folks could donate to our ministry for future projects and events. We showed a family friendly movie and had some great pizza and some awesome fellowship as a church family!

Our ministry is blessed to have the support of our pastor, Phil Johnson, as well as the elders and other leaders from our church. The men would also like to thank the ladies in our lives for their support of us being a part of this important ministry.

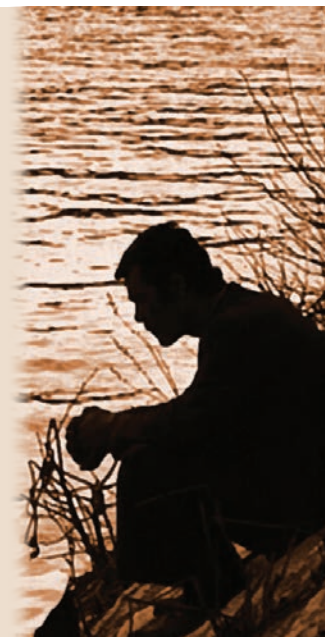
By God's grace this ministry will continue to grow and impact the lives of the men involved, as well as the people we come in contact with.

MEN'S MINISTRY: ALIVE, WELL, AND DEEPLY MEANINGFUL

By Scott Christiansen

Men's Ministry is in the midst of a leadership transition, from the capable and deeply appreciated leadership of former NNEC Youth Director, Harry Sabnani and lay member, Paulo Braga of the Limington, Maine church to the new directions charted by Pastor Leon Twitchell of the Oxford, Maine church, and his core of helpers and volunteers. Men's Ministry Fall Retreat was held October 2-4 at Camp Lawroweld in Maine. The weekend started with a Friday night agape feast, which initiated a weekend-long process of the men in attendance coming together, talking, and growing more open and honest with each other as the weekend progressed. As Sabbath services and meals continued, the men found a common need for God. They also started trusting each other with their individual hurts and joys, and group conversation brought strength and courage to each.

With NNEC Youth Director, Mark Tamaleaa, leading many discussions. The men enjoyed good food, hiking, and the brisk air of early fall in the mountains, in addition to singing, praying and good presentations. The men were challenged to go home and be the spiritual leaders in their homes and churches that God calls every man to be.



Best Practices

Engaging Youth and Young Adults

By Mark Tamaleaa

This year at camp meeting, or if you were at Camp Lawroweld this summer, you might have noticed an intentional focus on the training and empowering of Millennials, otherwise known as young adults. These efforts made at camp and camp meeting can help illustrate what is being done here in our conference to counteract the young adult crisis.

Millennials are typically described as being anywhere from 18 to 35 years of age, so our camp counselors are included at the young end of this group. Our campers, on the other hand, clearly meet the “youth” definition, so the two groups are in different generations. At Camp Lawroweld, we have put in place an inter-generational spiritual mentoring system. We’ve started bringing in a “staff pastor” (pastors/mentors) specifically for the young adult staff, with the purpose of focusing on the needs of the staff. Sometimes the needs can be spiritual, mental, or social. In the same way, we’ve asked the camp staff to invest in the lives of the youth campers. Thus we have three generations all relating to each other and supporting each other. This approach has fostered closer relationships but more importantly, spiritual growth on all sides. It is amazing to see how readily our millennial camp counselors become spiritual counselors once they feel supported in doing so.

At camp meeting, there was an intentional split of youth and young adults due to the wide range of ages, maturity, and interests. We then took 8 of our young adults and tasked them with creating a young adult program that was relevant to themselves and their peers - they came up with the theme, “Keeping Him Relevant.” During the early planning stages, I worked with the young adult leaders as a soundboard and resource. I tried to prepare the young adult leaders for an overall lower attendance due to it being our first year for young adults at camp meeting. I prepared them for a lower weekend attendance of maybe 15 and approximately 6-8 during the

week. By the time camp meeting started, they had created a program by young adults, for young adults, to be implemented and led by young adults. I was amazed and encouraged by the staff’s ability to come together and encourage one another spiritually as they worked towards putting together a Christ-centered program. They created meeting times that were typically later than the other camp meeting times. They also built a young adult village with 4 eight man tents, a propane fire pit, and a “Before I Die” wall. Any young adult that came to the meetings were invited to the village for fellowship, singing, and if needed, a place to camp for the night.

To our surprise, they had a steady week attendance of 15-20 and over 30 on the weekends. I was encouraged by the team’s high spirits and maturity. In one instance, the young adult staff were also willing to make adjustments to the schedule to meet the needs of some who expressed an interest in leading out in early morning devotions at the young adult village. I found the staff’s flexibility as an inspiration in good collaboration and great leadership. I also found affirmation of the idea that what young adults need is space, encouragement, and a few gentle suggestions. They are able to do the rest.

There are some efforts underway to provide increased spiritual support to youth and young adults in NNEC and they are built around the same key principles: fostering intergenerational spiritual support, investing in personal relationships, empowering youth and young adults with opportunities for leadership as well as a safe place to make mistakes and grow. I ask for your prayers for our youth and young adult ministries as we continue to build our community of youth and young adults.

Making Young People Feel Welcome

By Scott Christiansen

The sad truth – the tragic truth, really – is that up to 70 percent of young people leave the church, starting at about age 15. It is possible to see this attrition in most churches today. But not all churches. There are a few churches that are actually growing their youth membership, and these churches are worth studying to see what they are doing that brings different results.

One such church is the Oakridge Adventist Church in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. The church is set in an urban area that is characterized by a heavily secular population. Nothing about the area the church operates in can be described as supporting growth. And yet this multicultural, multi-ethnic, multi-generational church is growing and its youth population is growing vigorously.

Why is it growing? Well, involvement for one thing: the church board is about 50% young adult or youth. As a result, the church engages in activities and worship styles that the young people are enthusiastic about, starting with social justice. Millennials, generally speaking, have a very strong sense of social justice and are pas-



sionate about serving the Lord by serving the poor and marginalized in their community.

So far we have two lessons for churches that want to retain and grow their young adult and youth membership:

1. Let the young people have a hand in the decision-making process.
2. Support them when they steer the church toward more service-ministry activities.

What else? Well, the worship style at Oakridge is quite musical. And, yes, that means praise music that the millennial generation identifies as spiritually meaningful and relevant. It would be hard to find a church where everyone agreed on all worship music choices, so maybe it is unrealistic to expect to please everyone with one type of music. Maybe the solution is to have youth and young adults selecting music for parts of the service.

Also, the millennial generation, when engaged in church, is quite sincere in their study of the Bible and Sabbath-school lessons. Thus the lesson is simple and it is a repeat of what we've already learned: let millennials and youth lead out in Sabbath School classes. Maybe their class will end up being a young-adult class. That's okay.

Finally, there are the expectations that the young adults and youth have for their fellow members of all generations: they expect us to be supportive and non-judgmental. They expect church to be a safe, caring, spiritual place where they can learn more about God while being "themselves." And if this can be achieved, they will come. They will bring their friends. They will try to make friends with everyone else in the church – all generations included.

The Oakridge Church is a safe place for young adults. It is also a place of serious study of God's word and respectful worship. Perhaps most important for the purposes of this "Best Practices" article is the fact that 95 percent of the young adults polled in the church agreed with each of the following statements:

"I am proud of my church."

"My church cares about its members."

"My church is a hospitable place to visitors."

If we build a church for which our young adults and youth can make those statements, they won't just come, they will continue building it.



GOD'S PRINCIPLE OF GIVING STILL WORKS

By Pastor Cliff Gleason

Many of us have long believed and applied in our personal lives the principle that Jesus taught in the sermon on the mount: In Luke 6:38 it states, "Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you." We have found that God has honored us by meeting our needs in a special way when we provide for the needs of others before our own. But does this principle work for a whole church family? The Concord and Laconia New Hampshire churches have found that it does indeed. Praise the Lord!

For several years now both churches have put the following into practice: when the local church needs some repair, remodeling, or expansion that has a cost far beyond the financial resources on hand, we pray for direction in finding some other part of God's family that needs money more than we do. In the past, this has led us to take on projects such as building churches in India with the coordinating help of Harry and Judy Sabnani, providing home heating stoves for the poor of Central America, etc. Then we find that the Lord sends us more than enough funds to provide for the projects at our own church.



Last fall someone at our Concord church noticed that the roofing shingles were looking pretty worn. Upon closer inspection we found that it was so bad that wood could be seen through the shingles. With winter approaching fast we felt we could not wait until spring and be good stewards of God's house. Estimates presented us with a cost of \$36,000 for a new roof. We only had \$8,000 on hand in various appropriate funds.

After prayerful consideration, we decided to give away \$2,000 of what we had. At the time the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) was offering to use matching funds to make each dollar donated become seven. We decided to add whatever the church offering brought in during the month of November to the \$2000, and that came to almost \$1,000. So, in early December

we sent almost \$3000 to ADRA, which became about \$20,000 with the matching funds. Praise the Lord!

At that point we had only \$6,000 for the new roof. In order to make a down payment we needed some help. The Layman's Fund at the Conference is designed for just such help. We voted to borrow the balance needed from that fund and to take up to 5 years to pay it back. The roof was installed just before Christmas, just in time to be faced with a very hard winter. What damage would have occurred to the inside of the sanctuary only the Lord knows.

Then the miracles began. In one month donations came in to the extent that half the total cost of the roof was covered. In only six months the full amount was received, and we ended up owing nothing for our new roof.

This past summer the Laconia church grappled with how to repair or replace walkways, a ramp for the handicapped, and the parking lot. We first decided where to give some of our money to help another part of God's work. It was decided we would take \$1,000 from the funds we had, add to it what church offerings came in during the month of August, and contribute the sum to completing the new pavilion at the Washington, New Hampshire church. The total came to about \$1,350. Then we spent \$7,000 on the first phase of the outdoor improvements. The next thing we knew a donation of \$9,000 came to our building fund.

It is said, "You can't out give the Lord." We are finding that statement is true not just for individuals or families but also for churches. What a wonderful God we serve.

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL AT MOUNTAIN VIEW CHURCH

By Mary Miller

Vacation Bible School at Mountain View Church in Vernon, Vermont, is a big production! It takes a big team, with each person taking on serious responsibilities, to make the production unforgettable for the young people who attend. But the Mountain View team responded to the challenge and mounted a fantastic program for the many kids who attended.

This year church member, Gary Brodis, designed and constructed a large "ark" that set the mood for the theme "What Floats Your Boat." Each night Gary also dressed as Noah to bring the story from Genesis to life.

Nearly 30 children attended; many of their parents found



The "ark" designed and constructed by Gary Brodis

it so interesting they stayed and assisted with the variety of stations and activities. Teens from the church and community, and other young adults from the church added to the spirit of joy and anticipation each evening.

In place of a closing program, the families were invited to attend church Sabbath morning where the children sang some of their songs while pictures of the participants were projected on the screen. For the high Sabbath sermon, Pastor Art Miller spoke using FLOAT as the acronym: F stood for faith; L for listen; O for obedience; A for accept your mission; and T for team work.



Each night, each child added their handprint to the rainbow

Throughout the program the Lord blessed, allowing relationships to be built with young people and families from the community – relationships that the Lord may use to urge His children into greater truth and conviction in preparation for His soon coming.



Gary Brodis playing the part of Noah

Genesis 9:16

Whenever the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and all living creatures of every kind on the earth.

BENNINGTON CHURCH CREATES A UNIQUE SERVICE PROJECT

By Jane Coulter

Editor's note: At this point in earth's history, when we see prophecy being fulfilled daily and can feel the shortness of time, every individual and every church should be engaged in outreach and service. There are a thousand things the Lord will show us to do that will touch souls and open doors that would have remained closed. In the short article below, Jane Coulter recounts a thoroughly creative (and fun!) service project that touched people who would not otherwise have been reached. What creative and fun outreach does the Lord have planned for you and your church? Ask Him!

On August 29th the Bennington Church family launched an outreach called "Trail Magic." The church family prepared food and gathered along the Appalachian Trail at the bottom of the Stratton Mountain trail on the Kelley Stand Road in Arlington, Vermont. The effort began early Sabbath morning and lasted until about dusk. Hikers that came through were provided a hot meal of hot dogs, hard-boiled eggs, apples, carrots, snack packs, brownies, water, and other food items. The church group fed over 24 hikers that day. Some had been on the trail since March, and others had just started heading south. The "magic" was the look of gratitude on their faces for a hot meal and some company.

Church member Jim Howe, Jr. got the idea of "Trail Magic" from the Shaftsbury postmaster, Mike Ryan. Mike had hiked the Appalachian Trail himself and had received meals in the same way the church was giving them out. Mike wanted to give back to fellow hikers so about a



month ago Mike and his wife went to the same spot and fed over 40 hikers. The church family had a wonderful day sharing food, showing compassion, and listening to the stories of the hikers.

The Pope's Recent Visit to America

(continued from pg. 1)

caring for the poor, protecting the environment, protecting religious freedom and caring for immigrants who seek a better life elsewhere? Francis' pastoral and gentle demeanor puts a new and attractive face on Catholicism.

But one of the glaring inconsistencies with which I take issue is that while his language is riddled with rhetoric about the need for religious freedom and tolerance, he also attempts to straddle the dual and incompatible roles of politician and religious leader. It was confusing for

me to listen to a religious leader talk more about politics than faith (in front of a joint session of Congress no less). A lack of this awareness in the news coverage left me with the sense that it had not dawned on anyone in the media that this was a bad idea. As far back as the Old Testament, God counseled his people that the work of the priest and the king must be separated.

Numerous other biblical examples come to mind. First, though Moses was called "the greatest of prophets" and served as the head of state, God still called Aaron to be Priest and assigned him to manage the sanctuary, its services and a throng of priestly helpers.

Second, when King Saul gathered his troops to fight against the Philistines in 1 Samuel 13, he waited 7 days for the prophet Samuel to come and offer a sacrifice to the Lord. When Samuel didn't come according to the King's schedule, he offered the sacrifice on the Prophet's behalf. This act of sacrilege was the final straw that sealed Saul's fate and insured he would lose the Kingdom.

Finally, 2 Chronicles 26 tells the story of the once successful King Uzziah who became elevated in his own eyes. This arrogance led him to go into the temple and offer incense, which only the priest was allowed to do. His punishment was that God struck him with leprosy until the day of his death. These examples demonstrate that the old adage "power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely" is still true.

Note how Ellen White cautions us in *The Great Controversy* p. 564: "All that she (the Papacy) has done in her persecution of those who reject her dogmas she holds to be right; and would she not repeat the same acts, should the opportunity be presented? Let the restraints now imposed by secular governments be removed and Rome be reinstated in her former power, and there would speedily be a revival of her tyranny and persecution."

Again she warns...

"She is employing every device to extend her influence and increase her power in preparation for a fierce and determined conflict to regain control of the world, to re-establish persecution, and to undo all that Protestantism has done." *Great Controversy* p. 565.

How should we respond? First, a return to the scriptures to be sure we accurately understand what the Bible teaches about the role of the papal system in Bible prophecy. Second, I would encourage a re-reading of *The Great Controversy*, especially the last seven chapters. Understanding and submitting to the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy are the best defense against the religious and moral confusion that will mark the final moments of earth's history.

The Pope's visit should serve as a reminder that difficult days are ahead for God's people. But God has given us the promises of His word and every assurance that those who trust in Him will not be ensnared or deceived by these confusing times.

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

The 2016 Conference Calendar has not been officially approved. Please check our website periodically for updates.

December

22 – 29 NNEC Closed
Christmas Holiday Break

January

1 NNEC Closed
New Year's Day

18 NNEC Closed
Martin Luther King Holiday

February

4 – 6 Art Clinic
Freeport, Maine

15 – 19 Elementary/Academy Winter Break

20 Southern Bible Bowl &
Pinewood Derby
TBD

March

5 – 6 Northern Bible Bowl &
Pinewood Derby
TBD

31 – 4/2 Music Clinic
Freeport, Maine

Northern New England Conference



Music Clinic 2016

March 31-April 2

Save \$10 - Register by December 1, 2015

Final Piano Registration - February 1, 2016

Final Registration for all others - March 1, 2016

Art Clinic 2016

February 4-6

Register by January 11, 2016

Both events hosted by
Pine Tree Academy, Freeport, Maine

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