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▲ Pastor Jeff Akenberger

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Pathfinders: **A SPECIAL MINISTRY**

By Jeff Akenberger

PASTOR OF THE KALKASKA AND TRAVERSE CITY CHURCHES

There is something very special about the Northwoods of Camp Au Sable. There's a feeling of liberation upon entering that forest on the northeast side of Lake Shellenbarger that causes you to breathe a little deeper. When the Pathfinders are there and you add a campfire and a blanket of stars, well, there's nothing better.

Go there with me for a minute: the tents have been pitched; dinner has been served and devoured. Now everyone converges around the blaze, the heat of the fire warming your spirit. The soft glow illuminating the faces of energetic Pathfinders all gathered around. The popping of the wood. The quiet of that

moment; no phones, no TV, no video games. A point in time when the heart can finally rest and hear that still small voice. I've never heard a Pathfinder ask for anything more than a stick for poking when they're sitting around a fire. This moment right here around the flame and smoke. This is what Pathfinders is all about.

Pathfinder Ministry has been in the campfire business for sometime, having at its core investiture achievement, which has been the premium youth discipleship program for over 75 years in Michigan. The Michigan Conference Pathfinder Ministry is directed by Pastor Craig Harris, and yet like all youth min-

(continued on page 6)



Now Is the Time

By Ellen G. White

Adapted from the book *Evangelism*, pp. 359-363

“Many scriptures will be misapplied in such a way that deceptive theories will apparently be based upon the words that God has spoken.”

Christ foretold that the going forth of deceivers would be accompanied with more danger to His disciples than would persecution.

This warning is repeated several times. Seducers, with their scientific problems, were to be guarded against more carefully than any other peril that they would meet; for the entrance of these seductive spirits meant the entrance of the specious errors that Satan has ingeniously prepared to dim the spiritual perceptions of those who have had but little experience in the workings of the Holy Spirit, and of those who remain satisfied with a very limited spiritual knowledge. The effort of seducers has been to undermine confidence in the truth of God and to make it impossible to distinguish truth from error. Wonderfully pleasing, fanciful, scientific problems are introduced and urged upon the attention of the unwary; and unless believers are on their guard, the enemy, disguised as an angel of light, will lead them into false paths.

Satan can skillfully play the game of life with many souls, and he acts in a most underhanded, deceptive manner to spoil the faith of the people of God and to discourage them. He works today as he worked in heaven, to divide the people of God in the very last stage of this earth's history. He seeks to create dissension, and to arouse contention and

discussion, and to remove if possible the old landmarks of truth committed to God's people. He tries to make it appear as if the Lord contradicts Himself.

It is when Satan appears as an angel of light that he takes souls in his snare, deceiving them. Men who pretend to have been taught of God, will adopt fallacious theories, and in their teaching will so adorn these fallacies as to bring in Satanic delusions. Thus Satan will be introduced as an angel of light and will have opportunity to present his pleasing fables.

These false prophets will have to be met. They will make an effort to deceive many, by leading them to accept false theories. Many scriptures will be misapplied in such a way that deceptive theories will apparently be based upon the words that God has spoken. Precious truth will be appropriated to substantiate and establish error. These false prophets, who claim to be taught of God, will take beautiful scriptures that have been given to adorn the truth, and will use them as a robe of righteousness to cover false and dangerous theories. And even some of those who, in times past, the Lord has honored, will depart so far from the truth as to advocate misleading theories regarding many phases of truth, including the sanctuary question.

The Church to Be Sifted

It is always difficult to hold fast the beginning of our confidence firm unto the end, and the difficulty increases when there are hidden influences constantly at work to bring in another spirit, a counterworking element, on Satan's side of the question.

In the absence of the persecution there have drifted into our ranks men who appear sound and their Christianity unquestionable, but who, if persecution should arise, would go out from us. In the crisis they would see force in specious reasons that have had an influence on their minds. Satan has prepared various snares to meet varied minds.

When the law of God is made void, the church will be sifted by fiery trials, and a larger proportion than we now anticipate will give heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils. Instead of being strengthened when brought into strait places, many prove that they are not living branches of the true Vine, they bear no fruit, and the husbandman taketh them away.

To Keep a Firm Hold on Bible Truth

The Christian is to be "rooted and grounded" in the truth, that he may stand firm against the temptations of the enemy. He must have a continual renewal of strength, and he must hold firmly to Bible truth. Fables of every kind will be brought in to seduce the believer from his allegiance to God, but he is to look up, believe in God, and stand firmly rooted and grounded in the truth.

Keep a firm hold upon the Lord Jesus, and never let go. Have firm convictions as to what you believe. Let the truths of God's Word lead you to devote heart, mind, soul, and strength to the doing of His will. Lay hold resolutely upon a plain "Thus saith the Lord." Let your only

argument be, "It is written." Thus we are to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints. That faith has not lost any of its sacred, holy character, however objectionable its opposers may think it to be.

Those who follow their own mind and walk in their own way will form crooked characters. Vain doctrines and subtle sentiments will be introduced with plausible presentations, to deceive, if possible, the very elect. Are church members building upon the Rock? The storm is coming, the storm that will try every man's faith, of what sort it is. Believers must now be firmly rooted in Christ, or else they will be led astray by some phase of error. Let your faith be substantiated by the Word of God. Grasp firmly the living testimony of truth. Have faith in Christ as a personal Saviour. He has been and ever will be our Rock of Ages. The testimony of the Spirit of God is true. Change not your faith for any phase of doctrine, however pleasing it may appear, that will seduce the soul.

The fallacies of Satan are now being multiplied, and those who swerve from the path of truth will lose their bearings. Having nothing to which to anchor, they will drift from one delusion to another, blown about by the winds of strange doctrines. Satan has come down with great power. Many will be deceived by his miracles.

I entreat everyone to be clear and firm regarding the certain truths that we have heard and received and advocated. The statements of God's Word are plain. Plant your feet firmly on the platform of eternal truth. Reject every phase of error, even though it be covered with a semblance of reality.

Drifting Away From Bible Landmarks

Many know so little about their Bibles that they are unsettled in the faith. They

remove the old landmarks, and fallacies and winds of doctrine blow them hither and thither. Science, falsely so-called, is wearing away the foundation of Christian principle; and those who once were in the faith drift away from the Bible landmarks, and divorce themselves from God, while still claiming to be His children.

New Parties of Professed Believers

The church needs to awake to an understanding of the subtle powers of satanic agencies that must be met. If they will keep on the whole armor, they will be able to conquer all the foes they meet, some of which are not yet developed.

"The storm is coming, the storm that will try every man's faith, of what sort it is. Believers must now be firmly rooted in Christ."

Confederacies will increase in number and power as we draw nearer to the end of time. These confederacies will create opposing influences to the truth, forming new parties of professed believers who will act out their own delusive theories. The apostasy will increase. "Some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils." Men and women have confederated to oppose the Lord God of heaven, and the church is only half awake to the situation. There needs to be much more prayer, much more of earnest effort, among professed believers.



Changing Lives

LIFT

By Andy Im

MICHIGAN CONFERENCE COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR

PRAYER FOCUS

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

NOVEMBER 6-10

Bessemer/Greenland
Pastors Ray Holmes/Sean Brizendine

NOVEMBER 13-17

Central Lake/Gaylord
Pastor Chris Ames

NOVEMBER 20-24

Det Span Calvary/Det Span/
Ebenezer/Pontiac Span Co
Pastor Mariano Arruua

NOVEMBER 27 - DECEMBER 1

Hastings
Pastor Jeff Dowell
Hastings SDA Elementary

DECEMBER 4-8

Belgreen/Ionia/Portland
Pastor Ryan Counsell
Ionia Adventist Community Center
Ionia Elementary School

DECEMBER 11-15

Vassar/Bay City
Pastor Curt DeWitt

DECEMBER 18-22

Holt/Williamston
Pastor Chuck Hanlon

DECEMBER 25-26

Office Closed

It's true, they're only 7th and 8th graders so it's easy to write them off. They're young, energetic, and playful; and it's natural to overlook the fact that they're thinking about really deep stuff.

Diane Barlow, superintendent of schools, says one of the more popular seminars at this year's LIFT (Lifestyle Improvement For Teens) was the one entitled, "Nothing to Fear for the Future," because our kids are more fearful today. That's probably not what we want to hear, but it's true. Over the past months our young people have witnessed fires, hurricanes, and shootings, to name a few, and God only knows what's going on in their minds.

Cindy Peterson, who taught a seminar on Bible studies, said this year was "the best" in terms of having students that were spiritually minded, and really excited about the class. God is clearly moving upon hearts and minds in these last days, and that includes our children!

The reality is, our kids are growing up faster. By the time they hit 7th and 8th grade, they're arguably more aware of what's taking place in the world than they have been in the past.

LIFT is designed to provide biblical and practical solutions to this current milieu. It's an "interactive retreat," that both inspires and equips attendees to face multifaceted challenges at the spiritual, social, and physical levels.

There were breakout sessions on Bible studies, devotions, witnessing, relationships, hydrotherapy, cooking, and auto care to name a few! Sprinkled in were special features such as the talk that exposed the physical and spiritual dangers of drug use.

One of the highlights this year was having Pastor Chad Bernard as the keynote speaker. Asher, a 7th grader, appreciated that Chad's sermons were simple, in-depth, and short. He also learned, "If anything is blocking your relationship with God you need to take it away, and get more close to Him." Reflecting further he added, "I have a few things I need to do when I get home!"

On Tuesday night, Chad made an appeal for baptism, and 57 youngsters responded.

Isn't that awesome? We typically don't associate our "in-house" events with evangelism, but when hearts and minds surrender their lives to Jesus, that's exactly what it is.



Jeremy Hall, associate superintendent of schools, agrees. "When you have (about) 60 kids that give their hearts to the Lord and want baptism or rebaptism, that's powerful evangelism over a three-day period."

(continued on page 7)

Small Church Makes Big Impact

By Laura McKinley
CADILLAC CHURCH MEMBER



Long lines of eager people waiting to get into an event is pretty typical at concerts and sporting events. We have all seen pictures of people camping outside of retail stores waiting for the doors to open so they can grab a new device or a black Friday special.

But could those same long lines be seen for a church event? Every church dreams of such a response, but that kind of turnout is something we think isn't possible. At the Cadillac Seventh-day Adventist Church, we have been privileged to see this type of thing happen in our community, and you can too!

Jesus spent more time healing than preaching, and we are privileged to help do the work that He did here. In the past two years we've had three health expos, each one adding a new major component. This year we were excited to add optical to our free clinic and health expo.

Our church isn't large with a lot of means, yet the Lord has blessed us with the ability to have a lasting impact on our community. Leading up to the event I had people from the community contact me (business owners, medical personnel, lay people, community workers) about how excited and touched they were about what we were doing.

Many simply wanted to know how they could get involved and help. Some of the services we were able to offer to the 250+ people were: free dental care, fillings, extractions, crowns, root canals, wisdom teeth removals, eye exams, screenings, eyeglasses for only \$10, free hair cuts, and free blood draws.

Over the course of two days, we provided over \$150,000 worth of free services, and it only cost our church around \$5,000. All of our advertising was donated: TV, newspaper ads, and other printed materials. Our newspaper reporter covered all three of our events and this year he gave us the front-page article with the headline, "We are called to be His disciples."

There is truly nothing more satisfying than working for the Lord. Driving in the parking lot of our little school and seeing hundreds of people lined up, seeing the smiles and appreciation, hearing their stories, seeing those in need get help, feeding those we could with a healthy lunch, witnessing the dentists and hygienists pray with their patients, the thank you cards and all the wonderful feedback, is just a taste of the measureless blessings we were able to receive! It truly is more of a blessing to give than to receive. No one who came, volunteers included, left untouched.

In a couple of years our little church has gone from being a relatively unknown church, to a church the whole town is talking about. And, it's not just our local church. It's making a name for our church as a denomination. Each one we hold makes more of an impact. It's thrilling to see how the Lord is using it. We truly are able to be God's hands and feet to serve His children. The community is learning that we are here for them.

When people are willing to be used and attempt great things for God, the doors will open. God asks, "What do you have in your hand?" Then, He multiplies that into something greater than we can even expect.

We are blessed immensely that the Lake Union makes this type of an event possible for small churches like ours. If you want to bring life to your church and show your community who Jesus is in a practical way, I would highly suggest contacting the Lake Union to see how you can bring the Free Mobile Dental & Optical Clinic to your area.

You will be blessed beyond measure and touch lives for all eternity!



Christmas Stroll

Historic Adventist Village

Would you like to experience a 19th century era Christmas? Here's how, The Historic Adventist Village Annual Christmas Stroll is December 2 at 6 PM sharp.

You can visit a period home, log cabin,

two churches, and a one-room school house, sit in a sleigh for pictures, give to Toys for Tots, and of course an evening stroll.

Again this year we are joining with Battle Creek Police Department for the Toys for

Tots program. The Christmas tree goal is to raise \$500 this year. Please bring a donation or an unwrapped gift for a child.

The Village is located at: 411 Champion St., Battle Creek, Michigan 49037 or call (269) 965-3000. RSVP is helpful for preparation.

PATHFINDERS, *cont'd*

istry in Michigan, it is a team effort, with youth director Ken Micheff, associate youth director Chad Bernard, and administrative assistant Judy Ramos close at hand. Their hard work and vision have continued to foster growth in both Pathfinder and Adventurer Ministries and beyond.

One of the unique aspects of Pathfinder Ministry, though, is its inherent dependence upon lay people. Many ministries of the Adventist church are heavily dependent upon the paid personnel whether they be pastors or departmental employees. But not so with Pathfinders.

The various areas of our state are divided up amongst lay people who function as coordinators that evaluate, facilitate, and provide support to local club directors, who are also lay people. These area coordinators assist Harris with planning and coordinating conference events.

Local club directors lead out with their staff in all facets of Pathfinder Ministry

including investiture achievement, weekly meetings, planning local events, and discipling the young people in their clubs. Included in their staff are Teen Leaders in Training (TLT). TLT's are teenage staff that have requested to learn how to carry the burdens of leadership and become leaders in their club, in the local church, and in the world church. The primary goal of Pathfinder ministry is to lead young and old into a saving relationship with their forever Friend and Savior, Jesus.

Setting your gaze over the Northwoods of Camp Au Sable, you would see campfires dotting the landscape. Over 1,200 Pathfinders were there for the "Be Still" Camporee, a time to come apart and start the Pathfinder year off on solid footing. Yet it is so much more than this.

For many it is a time when they decide to start a new life, a life with Jesus. Peeking in around that campfire, what you see are lay people, your average "Jesus-loving Joe," overcoming their fear that so

often brings hesitation, and asking with quivering voice and tears in their eyes if a young person would decide to give their heart to Jesus in baptism and join them on the path of the Master Guide. With the quiet crackling of fire, he looks out through the smoke at the glowing faces of the young people. The ones he has been praying for and loves so dearly. His heart, though trembling before, is quickly filled with great joy as he sees the entire club rejoice when one of their friends makes a decision for Jesus.

Looking out over campfire after campfire we see another one and another one with nearly 1,000 young people making that decision and being baptized over the last five years through the effort of Pathfinder Ministry in Michigan. We look out and see another and another and another and recognize that Pathfinders is truly a ministry like no other.

Reflecting on GYC

By Jonathan Walter

MICHIGAN PASTOR, SERVES AS VP FOR PROGRAMMING, GYC



Photo Credit: Caleb Rayne

I was exposed to Generation. Youth. Christ. (GYC) even before I knew what GYC was. It was 2007, I was in high school back in Austria and a student from Bogenhofen Seminary invited me to help with the live-streaming service for the very first *Youth in Mission Conference* in Mannheim, Germany. Little did I know that this conference would change my life forever.

The conference in Germany was organized by young people, many who had been inspired by GYCs in the states. It was at this conference that I was exposed to a side of Adventism I had never really experienced before in churches I had attended—seeing excited young people taking hold of their Adventist identity, seeking revival and reformation, and sacrificing for service and evangelism. This conference, and the many that followed, impacted my life deeply. There the Holy Spirit spoke to me, and it led me on a journey that was truly guided by God.

In 2011, through a set of divine appointments, I was given the privilege to be part of the GYC Europe pioneers. The theme for the first conference that was organized in Linz, Austria was: *The Hour Has Come – Rekindle the Dormant Embers of the Reformation*.

It was inspiring to see 1700 young people from over 50 nations join us for the first ever GYC in Europe. My heart was set on fire. There are few things so inspiring than seeing a large international group of young people in love with Jesus, fully surrendered to His will, totally committed to God's mission, and sold out to the belief that by God's grace our church can finish His work *in this generation*.

This is in fact the driving pulse of the Adventist church. Nothing should overshadow that mission! No theological, political, or cultural debate, and no personal disagreements should paralyze that prophetic purpose and goal that we

have been given. The church of God was organized for that mission!

It has been the privilege of a lifetime to serve with GYC in the United States for the past two years. Nothing brings me more joy than to facilitate opportunities for other young people to experience revival, to find their identity in Christ, and to surrender all for God's mission.

Every year at GYC I witness the miracle of what can happen when we set aside pride, and focus solely on Jesus, His Word, unity, prayer, and our mission. It is my dream to be part of the generation that will see Jesus come without seeing the grave.

And it is my prayer that by God's grace this generation of Seventh-day Adventists will take hold of our high calling and give *all* for Him who gave *all* for us.

LIFT, cont'd

In fact, Diane Barlow sees the education department as “one big evangelistic program,” that starts in August and ends in May. She has a deep burden to make our schools a place where young people are won to Jesus and the Adventist message.

If there ever was a time to prepare our young people for the imminent return of Jesus, it's now. “He wants us to be prepared for the future and give our hearts

to Him, and tell others about Him,” says Daisy, an 8th grader attending the Holland school. “It's kind of a hard time for us because we want to go along with what the world says, but we have to go by God's words and not others.”

It's this kind of thinking that needs to penetrate every young person. This is why the home, Adventist education, and events like LIFT are so vitally important.

The stakes couldn't be higher. We have 38 schools and four academies in the state of Michigan that need our prayers and support and the ramifications are eternal.

May God continue to bless our young people, that they might be inspired and equipped to take God's message of warning and mercy to the world!

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MONTHLY CALENDAR

NOVEMBER

- 3-5 HI-C Retreat - Camp Au Sable
- 10-12 Crystal Mountain Marriage
Retreat
- 10-12 Personal Ministries Workshop -
Camp Au Sable
- 22-24 Thanksgiving Holiday -
Office Closed
- 23 Thanksgiving Day
- 29 Camp Meeting Directors

DECEMBER

- 1-3 Father/Son Retreat -
Camp Au Sable
- 4 Office Christmas Fellowship
- 5 MI Executive Committee
- 7 Camp Au Sable Committee
- 22-26 Christmas Holiday -
Office Closed
- 29-31 New Year's Holiday -
Office Closed

JANUARY

- 1-2 New Year's Holiday -
Office Closed
- 12-14 Teen Snow Outing -
Camp Au Sable

LOOK FOR THE PINE SISKIN!

By Dr. Gordon Atkins
CAMP AU SABLE NATURE DIRECTOR

Many bird feeders in Michigan have been visited by flocks of over 200 of these tiny birds. Pine Siskins are small brown-streaked finches with very sharp pointed bills used to extract seeds from everything from dandelions to pine cones! Their call is similar to the sound of slowly tearing a sheet of paper, only a bit more musical. Siskins are nomadic—they wander widely and erratically across the continent each winter following seed crops. You may have hundreds one year and none the next.



Usually a scout or two will visit your bird feeder (or other natural source of food) in fall or early winter. If they like what they find, they will tell others, and before you know it, there is a crowd!

Research conducted at Camp Au Sable, including an experiment done by students

of our Outdoor Education program, shows that when these large flocks significantly impact the feeding of other species of birds at that feeder—particularly the much loved Black-capped Chickadees. In some cases, large flocks of Siskins will reduce the number of

Chickadee visits by over 80%. I don't think Pine Siskins are bad, but their invasion and effects on the chickadees reminds me about how Satan works in our lives. He first tries out a few temptations to see how we respond. If we

do not ask God to defend us, before we know it we are inundated by temptation and sin. Like the displacement of the Chickadees by the Siskins, the good things in our lives become replaced by sin. Let us pray each day for deliverance from the invasions of the devil.