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▲ Craig and Cindy Morgan

“Campers over the years have come to appreciate that Jesus is lifted up in each and every area of the Camp Au Sable program.”

Our Call to CAMP

By Craig and Cindy Morgan
MEMBERS OF THE METROPOLITAN CHURCH

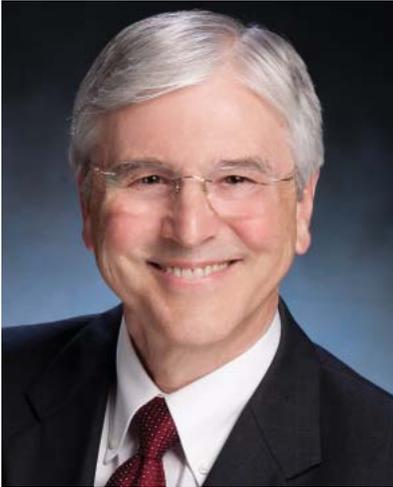
With the winter wind blowing and the snow starting to pile up, this is an excellent time of year to let your mind wander to the bright and sunny days of summer. Here in the Michigan Conference, we are blessed with the beauty and splendor of our very own summer camp located in Grayling, Michigan, and that is Camp Au Sable.

Camp Au Sable continues to greet campers to its over 800 acres of natural beauty summer after summer. Purchased in 1947, and with campers arriving just a few months later in the summer of 1948, this camping season will mark the seven-

tieth year of campers of all ages learning about the wonders of nature and also learning that God has a special plan for all of our lives in service for Him.

Exciting things are in the works for the summer of 2018. Camp Au Sable has been recognized across the country, as well as around the world as one of the leading Seventh-day Adventist summer camps. Campers over the years have come to appreciate that Jesus is lifted up in each and every area of the Camp Au Sable program and campers continue to be blessed by the dedicated Christian young people who make up the staff each year.

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- EDITORIAL -

A Peculiar Treasure Facing A Fascinating Delusion

By Jay Gallimore

RETIRED MICHIGAN CONFERENCE PRESIDENT

“Trying to pit Adventist lifestyle against the teachings of the Bible is like trying to pit the apple against the branch that bore it.”

From the glory engulfing Mt. Sinai, the Lord made this promise to Israel. “You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles’ wings and brought you to Myself. Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special [peculiar] treasure to Me above all people.”¹

From the brilliant light of the resurrection the Apostle Peter declares to the Christian Church. “But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special [peculiar] people.”² And from the shining hope of the Second Coming, the Apostle Paul states His people would be purified “for Himself His own special [peculiar] people.”³

Yet despite this powerful apostolic affirmation, the Christian era is tragically littered with the wreck of churches that chose cultural conformity over being the Lord’s peculiar treasure. It is an age-old illusion from Satan that the Christian can separate sound doctrine from sound practice. It is delusional to think that biblical teaching encourages a worldly manner of life. At the end of time, the seduction of this “fascinating delusion” becomes intense.

Among Adventists, the delusion goes something like this. “I am a theological ‘conservative’ on subjects like the state of the dead and the second coming, but I am constrained and embarrassed at the culture of our Adventist lifestyle.” This shouldn’t surprise us. The biblical lifestyle promoted in the Seventh-day Adventist

Church Manual is and will continue to be increasingly contrary to the world’s culture.

For instance, we practice the Ten Commandments and the Beatitudes, we eat differently, shun jewelry, dress modestly, avoid worldly entertainment, listen to different music, view marriage as a lifetime commitment, see the practice of homosexuality as sin, keep the Sabbath holy all day, practice family worship, read the Bible as authoritative for our lives, believe that the spirit of prophecy is inspired, believe in the historicity of Genesis and reject evolution as false science. That list alone makes us very unique and peculiar in this culture.

Trying to pit Adventist lifestyle against the teachings of the Bible is like trying to pit the apple against the branch that bore it. If the love of the Bible is in our hearts, its culture will be in our lives. Being embarrassed of our Adventist biblical culture is equivalent to being embarrassed of the Bible. After all, it is the lifestyle of the world that embarrasses the universe. Not that of the Bible-believing Christian! In Christ, the Bible and its practical teachings add value to our lifestyle. That’s liberating, not constraining!

Why should anyone be discontented at God’s insistence that His Church is to be uniquely special? Why does it bother some that God is in the business of purifying us from worldly behavior? Forgiveness without cleansing is like soap without water! Rejoicing in the free grace of Heaven but not allowing it to change us

is like tasting food but not swallowing it!

Protestants in the past embraced much of the lifestyle taught in our church manual. So what happened? Using grace and love as their cover, they simply conformed to the world's culture. Staying biblically peculiar takes patient endurance on the part of the saints.

Today, our secular culture creates gender wars instead of cooperation; embraces the sexual abominations and perversions forbidden in Scripture, which used to be loathed in western culture. Many of the intellectual elite in secular universities have embraced evolution and have become confused. So confused that they can't even figure out which gender they are or which public bathroom they should go to. Ten years ago we would have called that nonsense insane.

For sure Seventh-day Adventists are rightly called peculiar when compared to the world's customs. Yes, it was God's grace at Calvary that "elected" us, if we were willing to be part of His family. But we must know that heaven's family is peculiar, unique, and special. It is a fantasy to think that heaven is going to change its culture. No, God's grace grants His new children the power to change from a worldly culture to a heavenly one.

In 1903 the Adventist movement was growing rapidly. Yet the church was in a crisis. It needed reorganization and to become a representative form of church government to handle the worldwide growth. Secondly, Dr. Kellogg was leading a significant movement to embrace pantheism. His influence was so powerful that the Adventists would eventually lose the world famous Battle Creek Sanitarium even as it dis-fellowshipped Dr. Kellogg.

It was at that time that the Lord gave Ellen White a message for His church. But fascinatingly it looked past that present crisis to the final pressures the church would go through before the coming of Jesus. The title of the message was called, "Shall We Be Found Wanting?"

It outlines the Adventist struggle facing God's peculiar people. Here are some excerpts, abbreviated for sake of space. I hope you will read the entire chapter.⁴

"Had we walked in the light. . . our path would have grown brighter and brighter. But many of those who have had special light are so conformed to the world that they can scarcely be distinguished from worldlings. They do not stand forth as God's peculiar people, chosen and precious."⁵

"In the balances of the sanctuary the Seventh-day Adventist church is to be weighed. . . If her spiritual experience does not correspond to the advantages that Christ, at infinite cost, has bestowed on her, if the blessings conferred have not qualified her to do the work entrusted to her, on her will be pronounced the sentence: 'Found wanting.'"⁶

Then we are told why.

"Has not blindness fallen upon the watchmen. . .? Are there not those in positions of responsibility, professing to know God, who in life and character deny Him? Are not many of those who count themselves as His chosen, peculiar people satisfied to live without the evidence that of a truth God is among them to save them from Satan's snares and attacks?"⁷

And then there is this shocking analysis!

"The heavenly Teacher inquired: 'What stronger delusion can beguile the mind than the pretense that you are building on the right foundation and that God accepts your works, when in reality you are working out many things according to worldly policy and are sinning against Jehovah? Oh, it is a great deception, a fascinating delusion, that takes possession of minds when men who have once known the truth, mistake the form of godliness for the spirit and power thereof. . .'"⁸ "Unless the church, which is now being leavened with her own backsliding, shall repent and be converted, she will eat of the fruit of her own doing, until she shall abhor herself."⁹

Now the hope!

"When she resists the evil and chooses the good, when she seeks God with all humility and reaches her high calling in Christ, standing on the platform of eternal truth and by faith laying hold upon the attainments prepared for her, she will be healed. She will appear in her God-given simplicity and purity, separate from earthly entanglements, showing that the truth has made her free indeed."¹⁰

"When this reformation begins, the spirit of prayer will actuate every believer and will banish from the church the spirit of discord and strife. . . One member working in right lines will lead other members to unite with him in making intercession for the revelation of the Holy Spirit. There will be no confusion, because all will be in harmony with the mind of the Spirit."¹¹

As I leave this position of leadership for retirement, this appeal from the Lord through Ellen White is my appeal. Let us not be afraid of the trials and disappointments that will exist until Jesus comes. But, as my dad used to say, "Keep looking up." As Elder H.M.S. Richards used to say, "Have faith in God." As Ellen White has written, "We have nothing to fear for the future unless we forget God's leading in our past history." We have a mighty Savior. As sure as I am writing this, Jesus will come in all of His glory.

"Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it."¹²

¹ Exodus 19:4-6

² 1 Peter 2:9

³ Titus 2:14

⁴ Testimonies to the Church, 8:247-251

⁵ Ibid., 247

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid., 248

⁸ Ibid., 249

⁹ Ibid., 250

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid., 251

¹² 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24



▲ Mike Bekius, Steven Mathews and Jeff Dowell

YouTube Making A Difference!

By Laurie Synman

ASSISTANT TO THE MINISTERIAL DIRECTOR

PRAYER FOCUS

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

FEBRUARY 5-9

Ann Arbor Spanish
Pastor Ronald Costa

FEBRUARY 12-16

Kentwood
Pastor Leeroy Hernandez

FEBRUARY 19-23

Ludington, Shelby
Pastor Ron Mills

FEBRUARY 26-MARCH 2

Saginaw, St. Charles
Pastor Ben Garcia
Saginaw Community Center
St. Charles Community Center

When I attended the Hastings SDA Church, I sat with Steve Mathews at potluck. I am always interested in testimonies, and when I heard his, I became really excited. Steve told me, “I was a former member and I knew I should come back, but I just never had the motivation to walk back through the church doors after having been away for so many years!” But that changed when he started to listen to meetings held by Elder Jeff Dowell. How had he not come through the church doors, while ending up listening to Elder Dowell’s prayer meetings? Here’s the story:

When Mike Bekius, a Hastings church member, attended camp meeting in 2015 he was inspired by a speaker that encouraged everyone to pray for one person they could bring to Christ that year. He says, “I took on that challenge by praying that God would make this happen. But shortly after I started praying, I was impressed that I was not to limit God by only asking for one person. The Bible says, ‘You have not because you ask not.’ I began to pray that God would use me to bring many people to Him.”

A couple of months went by and Mike did not know how his prayer was going to become a reality. Mike attended a prayer meeting where his pastor, Jeff Dowell, was presenting on the book of

Daniel. He thought to himself, “If I don’t video tape these classes, I will forget all of this great information!”

He did some research and bought some used equipment to record the classes. Eventually the pastor began a new series on the book of Revelation. Whenever he was at the meetings, Mike would record, edit, and post the content on YouTube. But, he wasn’t able to record all of them, and it was taking a lot of his time.

Just when he was about to give it all up, he saw a comment on YouTube from a man in New Zealand. The man said, “I got mixed up about the lunar Sabbath issues and started to lose my faith, but when I came across these videos, Pastor Dowell helped me straighten out these issues. Pastor, you wouldn’t know what these videos have done to my faith. You just saved my soul with all these videos. Thank God, your videos have clarified every doubt for me. God bless you. . . We are following you from New Zealand.”

When Mike read this, he was so encouraged that he decided this project was worth his time.

One night Steve Mathews walked through the door at the Hastings Church to attend the Wednesday night prayer meeting. What the members didn’t know was Steve and his parents had attended

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Choose to Lose

By Dotti Lambert

MEMBER OF THE MESICK CHURCH



▲ From the left: Mike Lambert, Dotti Lambert, Pastor Robert Benson, Lori Semsta, and Tim Zemsta

Mike and Dotti Lambert, members of the Mesick Church in Michigan, have been presenting the health message to the public for over 20 years.

On Sept. 9, 2017, they began a 12-week health/weight loss seminar titled, *Choose to Lose, Continues*. They held the first *Choose to Lose* in 2013 with 53 participants registering. They held this series for an entire year and at the end of this series there were 10 faithful participants that graduated. This year (2017) they decided to hold a shorter seminar and had 15 participants and all of them completed this series and graduated on December 9, 2017.

At the very beginning we weighed each participant, took their body measurements, and measured their BMI and Fat Ratio using a special machine. This was repeated again at the end of the series to get their results.

Each session began with weigh-ins, followed by special breathing exercises. Our muscles need oxygen to burn calories, so we do this before regular exercises. These exercises are led by the other half of our team, Tim and Lori Zemsta. Participants were asked to take a deep breath in and hold it for 10 seconds

while Tim kept track with a stop watch and Lori read a short statement about health. This was done 10 times.

Next came 30 minutes of exercise in which the participants could choose what exercise they would want to do. They could choose from chair exercises, led by Lori; walking aerobics, led by Dotti; floor exercises, led by Mike; or outdoor walking (weather permitting), led by Tim.

This was followed by a very informative health lecture, via DVD, by Dr. David DeRose from *LifeStart Seminars*.

Vegetarian food demo was next and all the participants really enjoyed learning how easy it is to fix healthier food. They especially enjoyed tasting the finished product.

At the end of each session, Pastor Robert Benson shared with everyone a special Spiritual Health Nugget with encouraging words and prayer.

This seminar has been very successful in that all the participants want to continue on with this new lifestyle that they have been experiencing. Mike and Dotti plan on continuing to work with them next year. We also have 2 participants that have asked for Bible Studies.

The health message is the right hand of the message and we all need to do all that we can to get these messages out to as many people as we can before the door closes.

If anyone is interested in presenting a *Choose to Lose* seminar, in your area you can contact Mike and Dotti for more information at 231-889-6119; dottilambert.12@gmail.com

OUR STORY, cont'd

Camp Au Sable director, Ken Micheff, is the first to let campers know that it is God who chooses the outstanding young people who lead the campers in all the various activities and classes that bring all who come to a closer walk with Jesus.

The summer camp experience is for all ages, Adventure, Junior, Tween, Teen, as well as Family Camps. Exciting campfire programs, as well as daily worship thoughts at camp counsel by the shores of sparkling Lake Shellenbarger and cabin worships each morning and evening, find hundreds of campers giving their lives to Jesus and many requesting studies, which lead to baptism.

My wife and I have had the privilege of being part of the Camp Au Sable staff for the past thirty-two summers. We have seen our lives changed by the young

people we have worked with as well as the thousands of campers who have become part of our Camp Au Sable family that now stretches all over the world. We feel honored that God has called us to this special ministry and has used us at this special place for so many years.

Now, God has called us to a new form of ministry at Camp Au Sable. In June, we will be retiring from a life-long career in Adventist education, spanning forty-six blessed years, and will be making Camp Au Sable our year-round home. This way, we will be able to assist not only with groups that come to camp in the summer, but with groups who attend the scores of other programs that are held there throughout the year.

We will be looking for you to discover or rediscover the blessings that are waiting

for you and hundreds of others at this special place dedicated to helping us all have a closer walk with Jesus. May God's Spirit continue to be felt and treasured by each and every one who enters this "Little Piece of Heaven" known as Camp Au Sable.

Craig Morgan currently serves as the principal of Metropolitan Junior Academy. He along with his wife Cindy, also serve as Pathfinder Area Coordinators. They have dedicated their lives to youth ministry and have been a blessing to countless young people throughout our conference and beyond.

YOUTUBE, cont'd

their church when Steve was a small child. He was somewhat acquainted with the Adventist message.

One day, after finding out he was facing a serious medical issue, he decided to look up his former church website and stumbled upon a link to the church's YouTube videos. He began watching the ones posted by Mike and became very convicted.

According to Steve, "As I continued to watch the presentations, I became more and more moved," and "I felt I had to start attending these meetings in person. I feel so blessed and thankful that Jesus

would open an opportunity like this that would persuade me to return to my church. I had always felt there was something missing in my life and now I know the answer."

Eventually Steve began Bible studies with the pastor and was baptized.

Mike is so happy to know that these videos are convicting people out there like Steve. Currently they have thousands of hours of video content on YouTube. His persistence has paid off and they have over 112,000 views.

Pastor Jeff Dowell remarks, "I just want

to say that Steve and Mike have been such a blessing to the Hasting Church. The meetings started as a burden on my heart to prevent people from leaving our churches, and I do not want to see anyone lost."

Although Mike is not a professional, God has blessed his work and they are discovering that the impact is reaching not just those in Michigan, but the world!

Praise God for technology that enables us to reach those who otherwise would not be reached. God is awesome!

We Have Moved!

We are excited to announce that we have officially moved into the new Michigan Conference office building located at 5801 W. Michigan Avenue, Lansing, MI 48917. We apologize for any inconvenience and delays in providing services that may have occurred during this transition period. You are welcome to visit the new office, and certainly the brand new Adventist Book Center (ABC). The Lord has graciously provided a wonderful building that offers an ideal working environment to better serve the needs of the Michigan Conference. Praise God for all He has done and will continue to do as we seek to spread the everlasting gospel in the state of Michigan.



The Grand Rapids Central Seventh-day Adventist Church will present a very special Maranatha Mission Sabbath on March 3, 2018. Staff

members from Maranatha International will be sharing about building projects from around the world and volunteer opportunities for future missions. Sabbath School begins at 9:20 AM and Church at 11:00 AM. There will be a potluck fellowship noon meal and then an afternoon presentation. Everyone is invited!



Due to conflicts with scheduling, we are changing the date for the Michigan Men of Faith Sabbath. We will **NOT** be meeting on Sabbath March 24, 2018. Instead, the date for our meeting will be Sabbath, September 8 at GLAA. Please make a note of this. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause you. More details about the day will be sent in the coming months.

Grow Michigan Personal Ministries Training Weekend

- When:** March 2-4
Where: Camp Au Sable
What:
- Learn principles for soil preparation & seed planting
 - Step by step instruction on effective community based outreach
 - Learn to make transitions from compassion ministry to spiritual fruit
 - Learn methods to transform friendly chats into Bible Studies
 - And more!

Who: Pastors, Elders, Personal Ministries Leadership, & Church Members

Cost: \$25-\$75 depending on lodging

Call/email Nancy Larsen for info/registration (nlarsen@misda.org or 517-316-1587)

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MONTHLY CALENDAR

FEBRUARY

- 2-4 CAMPUS Winter Retreat -
Camp Au Sable
- 3 Pathfinder Bible Experience -
Area Level
- 4-9 Winter Blind Camp -
Camp Au Sable
- 19 President's Day - Office Closed
- 22 MI K-12 Board Of Education
- 22-25 Teen Bible Camp -
Camp Au Sable
- 27 MI Executive Committee
- 28 Camp Meeting Directors

MARCH

- 1 Camp Meeting Registration
Begins
- 2-4 Personal Ministries -
Camp Au Sable
- 3 Pathfinder Bible Experience -
Conference Level - GLAA
- 4 Women's Ministry Board
- 6-8 New In Ministry
- 9-11 Marriage Commitment -
Camp Au Sable
- 17 Pathfinder Bible Experience -
Lake Union Level -
Berrien Springs
- 18 Lay Advisory Coordinating
Committee

CHRIST'S KINGDOM NOT OF THIS EARTH

By Ellen G. White

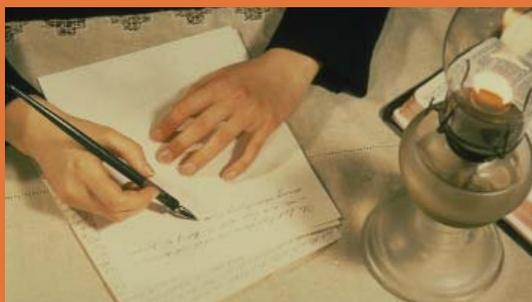
The kingdom of God comes not with outward show. The gospel of the grace of God, with its spirit of self-abnegation, can never be in harmony with the spirit of the world. The two principles are antagonistic.

But today in the religious world there are multitudes who, as they believe, are working for the establishment of the kingdom of Christ as an earthly and temporal dominion. They desire to make our Lord the ruler of the kingdoms of this world, the ruler in its courts

and camps, its legislative halls, its palaces and market places. They expect Him to rule through legal enactments, enforced by human authority. Since Christ is not now here in person, they themselves will undertake to act in His stead, to execute the laws of His kingdom. The establishment of such a kingdom is what the Jews desired in the days of Christ. They would have received Jesus, had He been willing to establish a temporal dominion, to enforce what they regarded as the laws of God, and to make them the expositors of His will and the agents of His authori-

ty. But He said, "My kingdom is not of this world." He would not accept the earthly throne.

Not by the decisions of courts or councils or legislative assemblies, not by the patronage of worldly great men, is the kingdom of Christ established, but by the implanting of Christ's nature in humanity through the work of the Holy Spirit. Here is the only power that can work the uplifting of mankind. And the human agency for the accomplishment of this



work is the teaching and practicing of the Word of God.

Now, as in Christ's day, the work of God's kingdom lies not with those who are clamoring for recognition and support by earthly rulers and human laws, but with those who are declaring to the people in His name those spiritual truths that will work in the receivers the experience of Paul: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me (Galatians 2:20)."