



Official Newsletter for the Michigan Conference of Seventh-day Adventists:

# Michigan Memo

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## Miracle on the Beach

— *Wes Peppers*

*Former Pastor of the Traverse City & Kalkaska churches*

Whoever thought of doing beach evangelism? With six kids? And three dogs? Sarah did. Waking early one summer morning, she felt impressed by God to go to a local beach in Northern Michigan. The problem was that she didn't really want to go, and neither did the kids! "Lord, really? You want me to take six kids and three dogs to the beach by myself?" Yet, the more she resisted the impression, the stronger it grew. Sarah was faithful and packed a lunch, loaded up the crew, and took off.

Upon arriving, a young lady with three kids sat nearby. Soon, they struck up a conversation about parenting. Shortly after, the conversation turned to spiritual things. Michelle asked Sarah what church she went to. Sarah replied with a smile that she attends the Kalkaska Seventh-day Adventist Church. Michelle replied, "My father kept the Sabbath, and I always wanted to know what he believed. However, I never really got the chance to talk to him about it before he passed away. I would like to know more about the Sabbath!" Sarah told Michelle that her husband did Bible studies with people in the community, and they would be glad to study with her. Giving Sarah her number, they both departed for home.

Unfortunately, the number was lost between wrestling with kids and dogs. But Sarah and her husband Logan began to pray that

they would locate Michelle. Some days later, Logan attempted to find Michelle's house even though he didn't have the address. Sarah was given a vague description of the house, so Logan prayed that he would find it. To his surprise, when he knocked on the door he thought was the house, it was! God had guided him to it!

As Logan recounted Michelle and Sarah's conversation on the beach and his search for her, both he and Michelle knew God had divinely led him to her house. Logan knew the previous people who had lived there, but had moved out. Now

Michelle's family had moved in. What an answer to prayer! Soon after, they began Bible studies, and Michelle fell in love with the message of the soon return of Jesus. She couldn't get enough. "This is what I have always been looking for!" she said. "This is the part of my life that has always been missing. I want to tell everyone about God's last day message. My Savior redeemed me, and He is coming back for me." So many miraculous changes



*Sarah and Logan Schultz*

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# *President's Perspective*

## **Is the Mythical Jesus Knocking At Our Door?**

— Jay Gallimore  
Conference President

**W**here does our unity come from? How can people from all kinds of countries with different cultural backgrounds and political systems be both brothers and sisters and walk together? How can we be one in Christ?

I can hear someone say, “You just said it – Christ!” Well, I certainly don’t disagree with that, but what does that mean? Just recently a pastor in a group of scholars was promoting a certain mission whose desire is to uplift Jesus as supreme. For sure that is a wonderful thing. He then urged that we have a balance between Jesus and His doctrines. It was then when my yellow lights went on and I said to myself, “Really? Do we really need a balance between Jesus and His doctrines?!”

Is there a tension or division between Jesus and His teachings so that we must create “balance” between them? Is it even possible to separate Jesus from His teachings? Can you be a follower of Jesus without being devoted to His teachings? Wasn’t it Jesus who said, “if you love me, keep my commandments?” (John 14:15 NKJV) Can there really be a relationship with Him without obeying His doctrines? Can you exalt the living Christ as supreme without submission to His teachings? Can you know Christ without His doctrines?

Recently I heard another Adventist leader say that it is no crime to preach Jesus. He said that within the context of defending the mission described above. Of course the Savior must be the center of all preaching and teaching! I have never heard any Adventist minister or leader ever say anything different!

Yet, even Jesus warned us about false Christs. They don’t always show up in white robes or on the internet. A false Christ can be created in the mind. If Christ is taken out of the context of His own teachings, what then? Hasn’t a false Christ been created? It was exactly this kind of false Christ that Jesus warned us about in the Sermon on the Mount.

“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of Heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in

heaven. Many will say to me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord’ have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ And then I will declare to them, I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!” (Matthew 7:21-23 NKJV)

Notice that they thought they were following the Jesus of the Bible. They even had miracles to prove it. They were in love with *a* Jesus, but not *the* Jesus of the Bible! Their great distress on Judgment Day was caused by separating Jesus from His teachings in Scripture! So wouldn’t it be wise to ask ourselves, “Are we indeed presenting the biblical Jesus in our teachings and living?”

So what is the ground of our unity in the Seventh-day Adventist Church? The voices of the emerging church movement outside of the Adventist Church would shout one word – Jesus. Many voices within the Adventist Church would shout the same. But we had better ask, which Jesus?

One may ask, what is the emerging or emergent church movement? It is sometimes hard to get a firm definition but when you boil it all down, they are not too keen on doctrine or the authority of Scripture. But they do like Jesus! Since Scripture is not viewed as being reliable for “doctrine, reproof, and instruction in righteousness” (2 Timothy 3:16 NKJV), it is often exchanged for mystical experiences. One can believe anything and be an emergent as long as you believe in “Jesus.” And this movement is having a powerful impact on evangelical Christianity.

If you ask me, these are clever moves by the enemy of souls. If he can’t chain the Bible in the basement of a monastery or lock it away in an unknown language, then he makes it irrelevant to the Christian. What is Satan’s method? Just get everyone to focus on Jesus – an undefined mystical Jesus.

In the book *Quantum Spirituality*, Leonard Sweet, an emerging church leader and popular in certain Adventist circles, positively quotes Jesuit philosopher Karl Rahner stating that “the Christian of tomorrow will be a mystic” (p. 76). Was Jesus a mystic? Would He have been found praying for hours and days

***“The issue that confronts us is not whether it is a crime to preach Jesus, but which Jesus do we preach?”***

in front of the idols of the cathedrals of the dark ages? That is where the Jesuit founder Ignatius Loyola found his spiritual strength. He thought he was following Jesus when he inspired the destruction of countless Bible-believing Christians in the Counter-Reformation.

The issue that confronts us is not whether it is a crime to preach Jesus, but which Jesus do we preach?! We have always believed that the real Jesus can only be discovered in Scripture. Here is the ground of our unity: the Jesus revealed in Scripture and the Scripture that reveals Jesus.

For sure the command to carry the Gospel to the world would bring people from all kinds of culture into the church. But the command also cuts across all of our cultures with the words, “teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you.” (Matthew 28:20 NKJV) In the Great Commission, Jesus refused to allow Himself to be presented as an undefined supernatural mystical being. While He is mysterious and supernatural, He is not undefined. We can know Him through His Word – the Word that He inspired.

Jesus’ own relationship to His Father was built on these words. “I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me.” (John 5:30 NKJV)

Many today want to hide their “lawless” behavior under the belief that they have a “relationship with Jesus.” Any relationship with Jesus that refuses to believe and submit to Bible truth is mysticism. It is a relationship with a false Christ.

So is a mystical Jesus knocking at our door? I believe he is. He wants in and he wants our submission. He may come to you in a Hollywood script, through a medieval labyrinth prayer, wearing a Buddhist monk’s robe, in the Hindu Dharma, by the mystical confusion of the emergent church, or in a thousand other ways that might catch your imagination. But the comfort of his warmth will turn into horror on Judgment Day.

You can be sure that both the mystical Jesus and the Scriptural Jesus are preparing to reveal themselves to the world. Most of Christianity and the religions of the world will be awe struck and thrilled when the mystical Jesus shows up. They already have a relationship with him. But he is not the real Jesus, just that ole serpent in a new disguise with the same poison.

The real Jesus is also knocking at our door. He not only wants in, but He also wants our submission. He wants us to know Him because He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life! And there is another reason: if you know Him now - through His word, you will not be fooled by the mystical Jesus.

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have happened in her life as she has drawn closer and closer to Jesus.

After her baptism, Michelle has been very active at Kalkaska. This year, she is teaching one of the children’s Sabbath school classes. She is also co-leading healthy cooking classes where 10-25 people from the community attend each month.

She is active in outreach as the assistant personal ministries director. She simply wants to tell others about Jesus, His last days message, and His last day church. “People need to know that this church is fulfilling prophecy, and it has a message of hope for all the world.” It’s been amazing to witness the



*Picture here from left to right: Susan Athearn, Doug Jenkins, Pastor Wes Peppers, Michelle Ingersoll and Dan Carlson.*

transformation in Michelle’s life through God’s grace. She has been a real inspiration to our church.

What about you, friend? Do you really believe that Jesus is coming soon? The Seventh-day Adventist Church is not just another church. It is God’s movement in the final days of earth’s history. It

has been prophetically raised up to proclaim to the world a wonderful message of hope found in Revelation 14:6-16. Would you join Michelle in doing all you can to share with others the Everlasting Gospel? God is ready and willing to help you get started today.

# Causing the Lame to Walk

— Justin Kim  
Sabbath School Director

Though there are other under-appreciated workers in the Lord's work, there is a particular category of laity that should be recognized. Sabbath School (SS) superintendents and teachers are individuals who prepare all week for adult, youth, and children's lessons. They brainstorm prayerfully on how to best teach the lesson creatively, spiritually, and effectively. Not only do they work during the week, in most churches, they come early to participate and lead out in the SS program, sometimes braving morning weather conditions, cold sanctuaries, and microphones that echo their voices a little more than during divine service.

Children's divisions especially have a challenging work, trying to keep the attention of children who are newly-born to teens



addicted to technology. Their teachers have also put a considerable amount of time and energy into lessons and activities preparation. They go through attendances and absences, seeking to create a child-friendly, parent-

approving, Spirit-sensitive environment where that Sabbath's turn out are encouraged to be happy, eager, and interested to learn about Jesus.

Surely these members are the hardworking foot soldiers of the Gospel. Whereas pastors and elders have myriads of administrative obligations, those involved in the SS work are committed to teaching the Word of God, discipling implicitly and/or explicitly principles of fellowship and evangelism, and all the while pushing global missions forward.

The design of Sabbath School calls for the training of male and female workers in God's vineyard. Sometimes, however, it is easy to put certain programs on "Laodicean-Automatic-Maintenance-Easy," or LAME, mode. The same practices are done in the same way, without taking a look at purpose, goals, or even efficacy of programs. Therefore, God's people are not trained, no burden for the vineyard is developed, and things continue on as they always have been in a ineffective way.

Therefore, some Sabbath Schools require booster shots to prevent the LAME mode from attenuating the Gospel message. Here are five ways in 2015 to use the wonderful agency of both adult and non-adult SS workers to strengthen and to bolster the Gospel instead.

## 1. Establish Sabbath School Councils to revive the original purpose of Sabbath School.

Not that more board meetings are necessary, but especially if your local church hasn't had one in a while, establish an annual schedule of SS councils. Send notices and the agenda before meetings, have the SS secretary take minutes, and send them out afterwards.

Ideally once a month, topics of discussion should be around the purpose of Sabbath School as well as supporting the SS staff. For example, they could look like:

January	What is the purpose of SS? Are we there or not there? How did we do last year?
February	How can the Word of God be studied/ incorporated more?
March	How can SS promote church fellowship more?
April	What is our local SS's role in world missions? What can we do to improve if needed?
May	What can we do to take evangelism and discipleship to the next level?
August	How we incorporate the youth, the children, and the adult classes in the SS work?
September	How can we plant a church using our SS agency?
October	How can we train our teachers better?
November	What can we do to support the superintendent?
December	How can we incorporate VBS with the SS work?

## 2. Have a Commitment Service to dedicate all SS workers.

Select one Sabbath in January to dedicate all the SS workers to the Lord for the whole year.

For example, one idea is to place an empty vase in the church. After

an inspiring charge from the superintendent, teachers and other staff would place one flower into the vase, followed by a personal commitment statement to the SS work. After singing a hymn or reciting a hymn together, that bouquet would now be a symbol of the individual's role in the corporate work of SS. More information and ideas can be found at [www](http://www).



### 3. Transform Sabbath Schools to be visitor-friendly, visitor-promotional, and training grounds for future church planting campaigns.

The wonderful reality is that the Adventist world church is growing. However that growth is found in Central and South America, Africa, and Asia. In Europe, Australia, and North America, that growth has halted or receded. Though the trends are multi-factorial and complex, one stark difference is the church's dependence on the pastor.

One side of the church has great growth patterns where the lay members are trained, active, and discipling others. Branch Sabbath Schools are being started by members in their own homes, grown to companies, and then eventual churches.

Another side of the church has hesitant growth patterns where members, though are sacrificial and committed, generally depend on the efforts of the one main preacher. Sabbath Schools become mere retention grounds for lifestyle Adventists, resulting in exponential decreases.



The Greeters are the front-lines of the church. They are to be encouraged, winned-and-dined (with non-alcoholic drink!), and trained to be the sincere first-impressions of Sabbath School, and ultimately the church.

Members should take tours of their own church, as if they were wearing visitor shoes; or sister churches could “mock-visit” each other, completing friendly but honest evaluations of each other afterwards.

Moreover, SS workers should map out their territories to see where, how, and when church plants through Branch Sabbath Schools could be established. “Wait what? I thought Sabbath School was just studying my Quarterly.” No, the Sabbath School Bible Study Guide is just a means. The larger goal is to get our communities in the study of God's Word. Let us find the best local ways to do that.

4. Transform Vacation Bible Schools to be potential evangelistic projects.

Vacation Bible Schools are wonderful programs for children. The primary hidden potential is bridging its summer guests into an annual VBS program, or in other words, the Sabbath School Children's divisions. Often the hard work and energy invested in VBS evaporates after its completion. But strategies and connections need to be made into the Children's divisions by VBS and SS leaders together.

For example, why not advertise the continuation and/or sign-up

of a wonderful VBS program throughout the year to the guest attendees? Because the children go to school, the meetings times are to be moved to Saturday morning at 9:30 AM. Their parents would be welcome



to attend a variety of adult Bible study classes that would include studying the quarterly Bible study, another book of the Bible, prophecies, pastor's Bible studies, how to be a better parent classes, new members' classes, etc. Obviously this would need to be intentionally prepared before the summer VBS program, but imagine the possibilities and new purpose and fervor for SS!

### 5. Attend Conference Training Programs and Rallies for Sabbath School.

Last, but not least, there are a variety of Michigan Conference training programs and rallies for the Sabbath School work. Workers are not alone to do the work themselves in their local churches. Most likely, their difficulties and challenges are shared by others; accordingly, the success of local SS could and should be reproduced elsewhere in Michigan too. There are many resources to help LAME SS programs “to walk” again, for example:

The Children's Ministries Department gathers the most resourceful and economic materials for summer programming and provides it to VBS leaders at no-profit costs. Different techniques, programs, and theories are presented to make VBS enjoyable as well as evangelistic. The next VBS workshop is on **April 24-26, 2015** at Camp Au Sable.

Camp Meeting at Cedar Lake from **June 12-20, 2015** brings together various departments to infuse good biblical training to SS workers. In years past, training was prepared for SS superintendents, SS teachers, and for churches struggling with weaker SS programs. Plan to come in 2015 to be trained and inspired, if not for all the other programming going on as well.

The three Sabbath School Divisions (Adult, Children's, and Youth) of the Conference are planning to bring some cohesive training for all the divisions on the local level. Last year, we had a good representation across Michigan share insights, learn about the heart of Sabbath School, and to be inspired to transform the local church into hubs of Gospel activity. The next SS training is planned for **October 30 to November 1, 2015**.

In addition, local rallies are currently being planned for future district training Sabbaths. If your district of multiple churches is in need or in want of a Sabbath School Revival Rally, or has any other suggestions or ideas of successful Sabbath School initiatives, contact the Conference Sabbath School Department for more information at [jkim@misda.org](mailto:jkim@misda.org).

# BCA Hosts Prayer Breakfast

— Charlotte Erickson

*Battle Creek Tabernacle Communication Director*

Parents and grandparents of Battle Creek Academy (BCA) students recently gathered in the gymnasium for the school's first prayer breakfast. Organizers planned the event to remind families that nothing is more important than praying for our children.

Beginning at 7:30 AM, the 45-minute program allowed attendees time to visit with each other, eat a nourishing breakfast, enjoy the program, and still get to get to their jobs on time. The breakfast foods – cereal, fruit, breads, and milk – were all donated, and the table decorations were made by elementary students. Special music was provided by an elementary girls' chorus and the BCA band under the direction of Shelly Stark. The academy staff had earlier chosen the theme "Abide," for this school year, and several of the songs emphasized the importance of abiding in Jesus.



*BCA band, directed by Shelly Stark, played several numbers for the prayer breakfast.*

Denry White, pastor of the Battle Creek Berean Church and Kalamazoo Trinity Temple, gave an inspiring devotional on faith. Using the story of Jesus sleeping soundly in a boat while his disciples feverishly battled a storm, Pastor White emphasized that nothing is too hard for Jesus. Even though we live in a time of fear on many fronts, he pointed out, Jesus will get us through the most difficult storms in our lives. We can count on Him because His word is true.

Parent Micky Porter said the devotional was very meaningful to her. "While most people focus on the 'Peace be still' part of the story," she said, "it was refreshing to hear someone put emphasis on the assurance Jesus gave – 'Let us go to the other side.'"

At the end of the program, each family was given a copy of the book, *Creating Circles around Your Children*, by Mark Batterson.

Parents and teachers both expressed appreciation for the prayer breakfast and how helpful it was to have it near the beginning of the school year. "It helped set the spiritual tone for the school year," said one grandparent.

Principal James Davis hopes the prayer breakfast will become an annual event. "The first annual BCA Prayer Breakfast was intended to bring the focus of our school and community towards prayer. It is extremely important that we realize how helpless we are to accomplish anything without Christ. As parents

and educators, we have incredible responsibilities and are in constant need of prayer. It is very nice to be able to redirect our focus and to be reminded of the power that is available when we ask." He added, "We hope that this event will be one that is repeated for years to come."

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

## December 15-19

Holland  
Pastor Gene Hall  
Holland Elementary - Sari Butler, principal/teacher,  
Angela Boothby, Melissa Harley

## January 5-9

Troy/Troy Korean  
Pastors Travis Smith, Hyunsoo Kim  
Community Services - Albert & Loretta Green  
Troy Adventist Academy - Rebecca Wade, principal,  
Terri Morgan, Carli Sullivan

## January 12-16

Grand Rapids Korean  
Pastor Young Kim

## January 20-23

Adrian Spanish/Ann Arbor Spanish/  
Detroit Shalom Spanish  
Pastor Leonardo Munoz

## January 26-30

Detroit Korean/Farmington  
Pastor Beett Kwon  
Lapeer Community Services - Kenya Cadell-Kerr

# Transitions in Mission



Originally from South Korea and a graduate of Pacific Union College, William Lee pastored in California, St. Louis, and Collegedale before coming to be the new Andrews Korean pastor. He and his wife Laura have four daughters. He replaces Sung Chul Kim who is pastoring in the Ontario Conference.

Wes Peppers will be pastoring the Lansing church, replacing Justin Ringstaff who is a new Associate Ministerial Director for the Michigan Conference.



Erwin Nynasi is the Bible teacher, chaplain, and choral director for Great Lakes Adventist Academy. A gifted concert pianist, he studied in Germany and at the Berklee College of Music. Before coming to Michigan, he worked for It Is Written, Weimar, and the NEWSTART program.

Joe Reeves is the new youth pastor for the Berrien Springs Village Church. He steps into Cesar Perozo's former position, who now serves in the Southern New England Conference.

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## Steps for Successfully Starting an Adventurer Club

— *Craig Harris*  
*Associate Pathfinder Director*



### Step One

Counsel with the Conference Adventurer Specialist or Children's Ministries Director. That individual is responsible for guiding all clubs in the Conference.

### Step Two

Present the plan to the church board. Plans

should be submitted to the church board by a local church member for authorization to organize an Adventurer Club, and the Conference Adventurer specialist should be invited. It is important that parents of Adventurer-age children support the plan to organize a club.

### Step Three

Inform the congregation during the worship service. A Conference Adventurer person qualified by experience to speak in behalf of the Adventurer Club and the needs of children, should make a presentation to the entire church preferably during the worship hour.

### Step Four

Call a special organizational meeting. Invite all Master Guides, parents in the appropriate Sabbath School divisions, and others

interested in working with children. An appeal should be made for volunteers to help in the Adventurer Club, and an informal questionnaire could be circulated.

### Step Five

Teach the basics of Adventuring. Request that the Conference Adventurer specialist teach a staff training course to all club leadership personnel.

### Step Six

Elect a director and associate directors. The church board should become familiar with those who are best qualified to lead out in the Adventurer Club and recommend to the church the club officers as needed: director, associate directors, and counselors.

### Step Seven

The Adventurer Club Executive Committee. The group sets major policies for the operation, goals, and objectives of the club, and selects counselors and instructors. Membership should include the Adventurer Club leadership, pastor, Primary Sabbath School leader, church school teacher(s), and an Adventurer mother and father. The Adventurer director is chairperson.

<http://www.adventurer-club.org/resources/list/9-articles/87-steps-for-successfully-starting-a-club>



## December

- 16 MI Executive Committee
- 18-Jan 4 GLAA Home Leave
- 24-26 Christmas Holiday -  
Office Closed
- 31-Jan 4 GYC - Phoenix
- 31 New Year's Eve -  
Office Closed

## January

- 1 New Year's Day - Office Closed
- 2 Office Closed
- 5-8 Ministerial Retreat -  
Camp Au Sable
- 9-11 Teen Snow Outing-  
Camp Au Sable
- 15 K-12 Board of Education
- 16-19 Martin Luther King Day -  
Office Closed
- 16-18 Pathfinder Coordinator  
Retreat - Camp Au Sable
- 21-25 GLAA Home Leave
- 21 Camp Meeting Directors
- 27 MI Executive Committee
- 30-Feb 1 Father/Son Retreat -  
Camp Au Sable

## February

- 13-15 CAMPUS Winter Retreat -  
Camp Au Sable
- 13-16 President's Day - Office Closed
- 18-22 GLAA Home Leave
- 24 MI Executive Committee
- 26 K-12 Board of Education

# The Power of an Oil Change Sticker

— Tom and Brenda Mejeur  
*Wyoming Church Family Life Ministry Leaders*

I have heard it said that regular oil changes are one of the most important car maintenance tasks you can do. There is a significant correlation of oil changes to long engine life.

I am totally amazed how the little oil change sticker has improved my punctuality and regularity of this life-giving maintenance. The suggested date and the mileage imprint help remind me to schedule the important fresh friction reduction and new filter medium.

The November Crystal Mountain Marriage Retreat and the March Camp Au Sable Marriage Enrichment weekends are our marriage oil change stickers. Regular intentional maintenance is good for cars and even better for our relationships with our spouses.

For Brenda and I, we do not allow anything to trump these church-sponsored marriage weekends. We consider them a date, meaningful, fun, and yes, vital.

One car mechanic in an oil filter commercial used to say, "Pay me now or pay me later." Similarly, here is your marriage retreat sticker. Maybe you should put a sticker in the upper left-hand corner of your windshield. Save the date in your calendars or better yet make your appointment now. Email [ablackmer@misda.org](mailto:ablackmer@misda.org) saying, "Reserve the March 13-15 Marriage Enrichment Weekend for Mr. and Mrs. \_\_\_\_\_."

Hint: Men can get extra credit with your wives if they suggest going; double points, if they reserve the date themselves. See, the Marriage Retreat is working already.