Friday night, the 4th of February, the Student Association had their monthly vespers. We had an unusually high number of students, about 80, who came to listen to Pastor Ed Rosado, a seminary student who works in the PMC youth department. Pastor Ed told the students that when he was young, Sabbath meant a special day of the week when something different would take place. Then as he aged, it became more “boring” and at times he did not look forward to it. He wanted the students to be involved in the service that evening, so he requested that they break out in groups of five and discuss what unity looks like in this school. He emphasized that as a group we are all one body with many different parts. We each have our role to play as recorded in I Corinthians 12.

He reminded us that in the civil war that took place in Rwanda, the Hutu and the Tutsi tribes fought against each other. Nearly all religions including Seventh-day Adventists were engaged in warfare against one another. The loyalty to their tribe overshadowed their commitment to God. There were two religions where that did not occur. Those religions were the Muslims and the Mennonites. In the case of those two religions, their religions united them instead of fracturing them. Pastor Ed suggested that we are to do what we are designed to do; we are here to support one another and we are here to listen to the head. There were in excess of 30 students who went up to pray with Pastor Ed at the conclusion of the vespers and indicated that they wanted to unite this school. These are the ones who do not want other students to be ostracized, who are uninterested in clicks and who want God’s Holy Spirit to work in the lives of all who study, work and play in this environment. May God bless as we engage in committing ourselves to Him.

In the basketball game played on Saturday night, February 5, the alumni of the school won both the girls game (47 to 8) and the fellows game (47 to 42). While it was a training game for the academy girls, the fellows gave the alumni a run for their money. Special thanks goes to Tinelle Jardine and to Jamie Wright for being the contact people in forming the alumni teams. So, in this year 2010-2011, the alumni won every game that they played their alma mater teams in flagball and in basketball. Congratulations to those who have previously walked these halls! Well done!!

In the basketball games played on Tuesday night, February 8, the school girl’s won their game 33 to 8. However, the senior guys would not allow that to happen to their class, so they came back to beat the school 55-44. When asked how the games went, the losing teams responded that we were just having fun. That is the way it was meant to be. After all, these games are for exercise and fun rather than rivalry and best up-man-ship. May God continue to bless Andrews Academy as they seek to prepare the individual in all aspects of life including the spiritual, academic, social and physical.

On Monday morning, Elaine Kamvazaana led us in singing Glory, Glory, after which Pastor Dan Carmona talked about the topic “Into the Future.” He said that God wants to take you farther than you have ever been before. Acts 10 identifies the vision that Peter had regarding clean and unclean animals. In that vision God took Peter to the next level. Pastor Carmona recited a story about a field trip that his three daughters were engaged in. At this time of their lives, they lived in New York. He knew that they needed to be up and ready to go very early in the morning to the city of Albany, New York. There they were to view how state government operates and so everything had to be perfect. Unfortunately, the pastor did not get up until late. So, he quickly jumped out of bed and rushed out into the living room only to find all three of his daughters, Keila, Raquel, and Victoria, all dressed and ready to go. You see they had anticipated correctly the future and were prepared for it. Are you and I prepared for the future? The pastor invited the students to visit him on Facebook. He is very interested in doing anything that he can to make a difference in the lives of students.

He said that perhaps God is not ready to return because our characters are not yet ready. God will transform our bodies, but we must prepare our characters for His return. So, since this week is a week of getting ready for that event, he challenged the students to visit with someone who they might not consider their best friend. He said why don’t you sit with someone at lunch that you do not generally eat with and see what that is like. Pastor Carmona wants to get us out of our comfort zone and take us to the next level.

On Tuesday morning, February 8, Elaine Kamvazaana, Vanna Giddings, Camille Nixon, Lydia Quaye, and Raquel Carmona accompanied by Daniel Mpano on the guitar led the students in song as we together sang Sweet Jesus. Vanna Giddings then accompanied Karla Mulzac as she gave us a vocal solo. Pastor Carmona suggested that if we were to go to another country, we would need documentation to support our entry into the country or our departure from the country. At times people suggest that they are color blind, implying that they are not proud of the color that they have. The pastor said that he praised the Lord for the melanin that God gave him. Human skin color is primarily due to melanin which is responsible for the pigment of our skin. He challenged us to be proud also of our color and thank the Lord that He saw fit to color us the way that He did. In Ephesians 2:19, Paul writes, “Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God’s people and members of God’s household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus Himself as the chief cornerstone.”
Tuesday morning also included an assembly program presented by Pastor Carmona. He began his assembly program by asking each what race are you? When people ask him this question, he answers, “the human race.” There is only one type of human. We are all descendents of Adam and then Noah so we are all of one type. As he illustrated with his family background, there may be different colors of skin but we are all of the same race, the human race.

Pastor Carmona made an interesting comparison of skin color to earlobe attachment. Some people’s earlobes are attached to the side of the head; others have their earlobes detached. For a few moments he imagined how amusing it would be if people started to discriminate others based on attached or detached earlobes—people would be left out from the group, or denied work due to earlobe arrangement. His imagery helped us see how absurd it is to discriminate people based on earlobe arrangement, yet people do this based on skin color.

He concluded his presentation with what he considers three myths about African-Americans. One, African-Americans were the only people who were ever enslaved in the New World. Many native Americans and even whites were enslaved in various places of North, Central and South America. Two, The Myth of Absence. As we watch movies or read written accounts often minorities are not properly mentioned. For example, 30% of cowboys were black, but too often pictures or movies about cowboys only depict them as white. Three, The Myth of Wayward Workers. Too frequently society depicts blacks as lazy workers. It was a very informative and thought provoking assembly program.

For the Wednesday morning devotions, Pastor Carmona continued to emphasize the concept of Into The Future.

He said that all history is under attack; we need to provide a basis for unity and affirm our commitment to the brotherhood of all; and finally we would all agree that the achievements of all races including the Blacks will inspire everyone to a better future. In his remarks he invited all to consider how to commemorate other minorities and identify the contributions that they have made to society.

At the conclusion of devotions, Dr. Brent Geraty, Chair of the AA Operating Board stated, “I am pleased to announce that Robert Overstreet has accepted our invitation to become principal at Andrews Academy. Mr. Overstreet currently is serving as vice principal at the Forest Lake Education Center in Florida, the largest Adventist elementary school in North America. Prior to his current position, Mr. Overstreet served as principal of some smaller Adventist academies. The search committee and operating board have been impressed by Mr. Overstreet’s creative and visionary leadership, his effective communication style, and his gentle and warm Christian spirit. Mr. Overstreet will officially begin his responsibilities early this summer, but he and I already are in the process of developing plans.” At the conclusion of Geraty’s remarks, Mr. Overstreet was placed on the phone and delivered a few remarks regarding his excitement to join us for the next year. He closed his remarks with prayer for us as we continue through the end of the current school year.

Thursday we explored the life of J. H. Laurence, who was born in the Caribbean into an Episcopalian home in 1885 and lived for 102 years. He was only eight years of age when he began to understand some of the teachings of Adventism. His family and especially his mother could not understand why he was so taken with this strange new religion. He had planned to be baptized on Easter Sabbath 1900, but his clothes for the occasion had been hidden on purpose to dissuade him joining the SDA church. Finally, two weeks later he was baptized. He went on to Oakwood college and actually heard E. G. White speak on that campus in 1904. In a private meeting with her, she counseled him against further relationship with a certain girl. It soon became evident that the goals of that girl were not the same as his goals. He continued in his evangelistic efforts and finally after 44 years of hoping and praying, he had the best Christmas present ever when he was able to baptize his mother on Christmas Day 1937. Our devotions concluded that morning with a vocal solo by Jasmine St. Hillaire.

“Life is just one long vacation to people who love their work” – Anonymous

❖ The Citrus Fruit delivery scheduled for Friday, February 18 has been cancelled due to the small amount ordered.

❖ The second and final blood drive is scheduled for Friday, February 18, from 8:00-1:00 pm. Students as young as 16 years of age may now donate blood with written permission from their parents. For all who wish to participate, the advice is to have a good breakfast and drink plenty of water.

❖ No school on Monday, February 21 for Presidents’ Day.

❖ Senior portfolios are to be submitted to the academy office by 8:00 am on Wednesday, February 23. This is one of the final major assignments for seniors to fulfill graduation requirements.

❖ The Chorale/Silhouette/Bells group will tour the greater Chicago area this year. They will be staying at the Hilton Suites in Oakbrook. The group is scheduled to leave campus at 2:00 pm on Thursday, the 24th and return to the academy parking lot by 5:00 pm on Sunday, the 27th. Thank you for praying that the group will have a successful tour.