GIVING THANKS FOR YOU!

It’s that time of year again when we stop to reflect and give thanks for all the wonderful things we are grateful for in our lives. I have my list and I visit at least some of it everyday to rejoice in the ways of God in my life. This year I am especially thankful for the conversations I have with students about their life and faith. One student recently shared with me how she was becoming aware of a new voice in her heart which she differentiated from her mind. It was a new presence bursting forth in her life in which for the first time she knew she was not alone. She was thankful and learning to listen for the voice of the Holy Spirit. Another student shared how thankful he was for new direction from God as he moved from doubt to belief. Now there is purpose and direction in his life. I am also thankful for student leaders who stress about getting more of their friends out to ACF events and Friday night meetings. Spending a few moments with these students as they recount the work of God in their lives is life giving! Jesus is alive and raised again as we speak of Him together. This is ministry. This is the work of God on campus and it is why we do what we do with Jesus and students and for this, I am truly thankful!

Pastor Ron Pickell
ACF Coordinator

News and Events

Campus Catalyst Training: Jump start your campus ministry with the North American Division ACF Campus Catalyst Training (CCT). CCT introduces student leaders, participating church members and pastors to the ten essentials of campus ministry helping launch, grow and sustain Adventist public campus ministry. To learn more about CCT go to: [CCT](http://us2.campaign-archive1.com/?u=7ae0ea6be9ab5c680763331f&id=9a3438d67d&e=498f83c24f)

- Texas Young Adult/CCT, November 15-17
- Atlantic Union Conference Young Adult/CCT, April 18 - 20, 2014

GYC Collegiate/Young Adult Conference: January 1-5, 2014. This years GYC is actually being held the first of 2014 in Orlando Florida.
CRAVE Campus Outreach at NAD Just Claim It Miami, 2014: February 19-23, 2014. Join us for CRAVE campus outreach event at Florida International University, Miami Florida, on Thursday evening, February 20. More information will be coming at: CRAVE

ACF/NAD INSTITUTE 2014: Next year's North American Division campus ministry intensive for student leaders, pastors and volunteer student missionaries will be held in Lincoln, Nebraska at Union College directed toward the University Of Nebraska campus. The dates are May 16 - 25. ACF INSTITUTE will prepare you to be a missionary on your campus. It covers the basics on how to launch a ministry on campus, the nuts and bolts of starting, growing and sustaining an Adventist campus ministry, practical on campus outreach during at the UNL campus, student discipleship and leadership, and Christian apologetics. To register for ACF INSTITUTE 2014 go to: ACF

AMiCUS (Adventist Ministry in College and University Settings), the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist Official Organization For Public Campus Ministry: Recently at GC Committee meetings, job description for a director for public campus ministries as an associate in the Youth Department was approved and a full time budget was also voted. This is a huge step for the thousands of Seventh-day Adventist students attending non-Adventist universities around the world. Please pray for the selection process of who will be asked to direct this very new and important campus ministry leadership for the church.

Resources

4 Steps To Finding Your Calling is some great advice on discerning God's voice in our lives. Check it out at: Calling

Dialogue Magazine: College and University Dialogue magazine is a resource for college and university students published by the General Conference Education Department. Dialogue comes out three times a year and appears in English, French, Portuguese and Spanish. If you are a student and would like to be receiving Dialogue magazine go to: Dialogue and learn how to subscribe or to read Dialogue on line.

Student Leadership Journal: InterVarsity has a great resource for student leadership. Check it out at Leadership.

XP3 College: is a great college ministry web site resource. Pastor and former campus minister, Chuck Bomar, has authored several books on students and college ministry. His latest is Worlds Apart: Understanding The Mindsets And Values Of 18 - 25 Year Olds. Check out these campus ministry resources at XP3.

I Shall Stand Resource On College Sex and Dating: Check out I Shall Stand for books and resources on sex, abstinence and dating in

NorCal Campus Ministry Conference
On October 11 - 13 weekend, students from Northern and

Campus Outreach At Binghamton University, Upstate, NY
Students occupy a booth during welcome week at Binghamton university meeting Adventist students and connecting with other students looking for a Christian group to join on campus.

(Messsage Bible)
the college scene. Go to: Stand for more info. Dustin Hall's new book on the subject, The Elephant In The Room: Sex, The Gospel and The Church is coming out this month. To see a video promotion of this book check out: Elephant

Why Trust Jesus? Some basic apologetics that will help students learn why they can trust Jesus for their life and salvation. Author Dave Sterrett encourages students that in a day when the world seems to be crumbling under their feet from economic collapse to moral failure of world and religious leaders why Jesus can be trusted. Sterrett believes that one of the big reasons that Millennials are turning away from religion and the church is a basic lack of trust or uncertainty about who to trust. "Why Trust Jesus" is a reminder of how worthy our trust in Jesus is by answering some of the common most asked about Jesus. Check it out at: TRUST

Come To College And Save Your Faith? Jordan Monge with the Veritas Forum argues that the university may actually be the best place to acquire the necessary knowledge for a faith that can stand the rigor of hard questions in a recent Christianity Today's article: Why Intelligent People Are Less Likely To Be Religious. Monge debunks some of the arguments supporting this theory and blames the prevailing skepticism more on social convention instead of greater intelligence. After all, some of the worlds greatest scientists, philosophers and theologians have been believers. To read more go to: College Faith

Does Bad Company Actually Corrupt Us? This article from Relevant Magazine fits in well with the Romans 10 verse quoted above on how non-believers will never hear the gospel unless we befriend them. Check out: Bad Company.

11 Pieces OF Advise Every Millennial Should Hear. Some good advise for Millennials and pretty much everybody else! Check out ADVISE

ACFLINK.ORG Web Site: ACFLINK.ORG is the best way for staying connected with Adventist ministry on non-Adventist college and university campuses. Another great connecting point is: ACF on Facebook at ACF North America.

Campus Ministry Quick Start Guide: Check out the new Quick Start Guide for campus ministry at AdventSource. Quick Start guides are now downloadable from the ARC Campus Ministry Resources Web Site by going to: ARC.

Veritas Forum: The Veritas Riff Podcast continues to provide relevant, insightful commentary on today's most pressing issues. Check out one of the latest in the series of campus talks on "Why Health Care Reform Needs Spiritual Reform" by Dr. Ray Barfield of Duke University. Check it out at Veritas.

Central California Conferences held their second annual campus ministry conference with approximately 45 students from four different colleges and universities around the San Francisco Bay. Campuses included: Stanford University, Sierra College, Sacramento State, UC Davis and UC Berkeley. The weekend was held at the Berkeley SDA Church.

You Lost Me
NAD Young Adult Life Focus On Retention Study
A recent study of Adventist Young Adults and their faith was commissioned by the North American Division to learn about the current trends in Adventist Young Adult spirituality and their relationship to the church. To learn where Adventist young adults are on the continuum with the rest of their non-Adventist peers check out the report on their findings. The larger presentation can be viewed at: SDA Millennials. To read some of the implications of the Barna research go to: SDA Implications.

The telling question of the Barna findings is - Do we care more about our children or our traditions?
Please send campus ministry news, events, resources and ideas to ACFTODAY. You can also download ACFTODAY as a PDF file.

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Why Intelligent People Are Less Likely to Be Religious

And how our expectations for Christians in education are changing.

Jordan Monge [ posted 8/26/2013 ]

My story is almost always met with surprise: How could an atheist convert to Christianity at Harvard, the bastion of secular intellectual elitism?

Now this reaction has some empirical justification. A recent meta-analysis of studies on religion and intelligence found that yes, overall, people with high IQs and test scores are less likely to be religious. Researchers analyzed 63 studies on religion and intelligence from the past 80 years with differing results to discover the slightly negative correlation between the two.

Unlike previous studies that tried to explain the data by suggesting that smart people simply see past religion's claims, these researchers, led by University of Rochester psychologist Miron Zuckerman, tried to identify other social factors in play. Nevertheless, the hype about their conclusions is overblown, and all of us—the religious and the non-religious—should be wary of placing too much weight on their findings.

There are the standard caveats. Correlation does not equal causation. Just because intelligent people are less likely to be religious doesn’t mean that their brilliance causes them to reject religion. One look at Christians' intellectual contributions throughout history—made by thinkers such as Donne, Newton, Aquinas, and many others—does away with this misconception.

Plus, in spite of presenting a sweeping meta-analysis, the study's authors relied on a limited range of research, as they admit in the paper. They primarily address Protestants, in the U.S. (This highlights a common problem in psychological research, which is heavily weighted toward a particular population that is rather WEIRD—Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, Democratic—when compared to the rest of the world.)

The most significant issue comes with the very question these researchers chose to explore. The way they framed their study suggests an implicit bias in the way scholars think about religion. "Secular researchers are likely to discover what they already suspect which is a co-relation between their values and high levels of intelligence," noted atheist sociologist Frank Furerdi. He questioned the value of such a project, where "social science research turns into advocacy research."

Furerdi's point echoes something I've previously argued about religion among academics: Intelligent people don't simply reject religion because it's wrong; they reject it because their social environments lead them to think it's wrong.

We choose which questions to grapple with on the basis of how important they are to us. When society keeps repeating that "smart folks reject religion," then religion becomes an object no longer worthy of investigation. Everyone finds questions really worth their time and leaves religion to the fools who just don't know any better.

Rather than the result of a causal correlation, the researchers' findings on religion and intelligence seem to fit inside a particular cultural narrative. In the U.S., we assume that intelligent people grow up, then reject faith. Faithful teenagers go off to secular colleges, stop attending church, and become skeptics. As individuals situate themselves in this narrative, the story becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.
This has been the story in academia for some time now. Jean Bethke Elshtain, a political philosopher from the University of Chicago who recently passed at age 72, came back to the Christian faith after abandoning it during college. She described her youthful transition away from religion using a narrative you could easily hear today:

I had slowly but surely inched over to join the company of those who chided those who believed. I decided I was not gullible, like those folks, and if they wanted to cling to wishful thinking, they could certainly do that, but I was at university, after all, where I had learned skepticism, and indeed I had decided that I had become a skeptic myself, joining most of my professors in that designation.

Fortunately, much work is being done to improve the situation in the academy. InterVarsity, Cru, Navs, Chi Alpha, Christian Union, and countless other campus ministries continue to help Christian students navigate their university context and lead non-believers to faith. Their discipleship helps raise a new generation of brilliant Christian thinkers.

I’m proud to work for The Veritas Forum, where we partner with campus ministries and Christian professors bring together students and faculty for open conversations about their religious beliefs. As we help to expose students to the most credible and articulate Christian intellectuals, often in dialogue with secular peers, so we have the opportunity to change the narrative surrounding faith.

And things are changing. The Social Science Research Council stated in 2007, "the academy is no longer the bastion of secularism it was once assumed to be." Those who attend college are actually more likely to stay religious now than those who forgo higher education. Note that Zuckerman and his research team found that intelligent people who don't attend college reject religion at the same rates as those who do, so education itself can no longer make the difference.

If these trends continue, I can imagine a world in which the prevailing narrative is not "go to college and lose your faith" but "come to college to save your faith." For just as the university taught me to think rationally, to question well, to delight in knowledge, it was the best place I could come to learn how to worship God with all my heart, soul, strength, and mind.

Jordan Monge is the northeast regional director of The Veritas Forum and a regular contributor to Fare Forward.
Does “Bad Company” Actually Corrupt Us?

By Karen Yates
October 17, 2013

Karen E Yates (@KarenYates11) is a writer, blogger, dabbler in book marketing, and sushi addict. A mother of three children, two by birth and one via adoption, she writes on spiritual formation, adoption, books and church culture. She blogs at KarenEYates.com.

I remember too well the day I quit my non-Christian friends.

I was just 17, a senior, cheerleader, and popular at school, and my youth pastor preached a sermon on 1 Corinthians 15:33: “Bad company corrupts good character.” Here Paul is rebuking the people of Corinth for being influenced by those who taught bad doctrine—specifically those who were claiming the resurrection of Christ did not take place.

But my pastor took this verse and used it to warn us, impressionable teenagers, of choosing the right (and not choosing the wrong) friends. He urged us to pick friends who would build us up and not tear us down. He made the legitimate case that “you become like those you hang out with.” He argued the dangers of evil and the ways the enemy can suck us asunder without our even realizing it. He successfully planted in my heart the reality: I am corruptible. And I am particularly corruptible by friends who aren’t Christians.

And so I made a choice.

At that time I had a considerable amount of non-Christian friends. I had done an “OK” job walking the line between my “church life” and my “school life.” But I began to withdraw from the people that did not know Jesus, people who I had invited to youth group for years, friends who I had talked with about my faith more times than I could count.

I’ve always wondered if I did the wrong thing. When I pulled back from those friendships, did I lose their influence on me? Or did they lose my influence on them?

Many of us who grew up in church may have heard similar warnings. We know we’re supposed to reach out to non-Christians, to invite them to church and tell them about Jesus, but we’re warned not engage too far, to beware their influence on us.

And in a lot of ways, it’s a wise warning that we be friends with the “right kinds” of people. I’ve heard it said that you become like the five friends you hang out with most.

But I’ve begun to wonder if some of us have swung too far in the direction of disassociating with those who are not believers.

I’m ashamed to admit that up until five or so years ago, I didn’t try much to befriend people who were outside my Christian circles. Oh sure, I was kind when we bumped into each other. I said hello on the baseball field, that kind of thing. But did I invite them over for dinner? Did I ask them to coffee? Did I invite them to see a movie? No, I never engaged them beyond a cordial “Hi, how are you?”

The truth of it is, they made me anxious. I was concerned about whether they would be a good influence on my children. What did we have in common, anyway? I stuck very closely to making sure my relationships were centered around people whose morals I thought I could trust, which was based on whether someone was a Christian or not.

Is this the example Jesus modeled? Yes, He had a close group of friends with whom he spent considerable amounts of time. But He frequently engaged in new relationships, sharing a meal and conversing with people who did not believe. Many of those people, actually, were societal outcasts—prostitutes, corrupt tax collectors, thieves, Samaritans.

Some of Jesus’ last words to His disciples were not “stay away from those that might corrupt you.” Instead, they were to go out and make more disciples, baptizing new believers, inviting them into the joy that is salvation.

Are some of us so guarded, surrounded only by Christians, listening to Christian music, children attending Christian school, reading
Christian books, a Facebook and twitter feed full of Christians who talk, think and act just like us, that we now cease to be able to engage and interact in the world of non-Christians?

After all, it’s not only non-Christians who are “bad company.” In that Corinthians passage, Paul is warning about other religious people. Is it possible, even, that a Christian could be “bad company”—that a fellow “believer” could corrupt our character?

Consider the very legalistic “Christian” who has attended church for decades but does not live in a life-giving, vibrant, authentic faith. Or what about the “Christian” friends who are culturally Christian and pray occasionally, but do not spend much time pursuing the spiritual disciplines, reading Scripture or submitting their days to the Father who goes before them. Perhaps the title “Christian” alone is not the best measure in determining whether or not a friend is “bad company.”

How then, do we keep ourselves from being “corrupted”? First of all, we must recognize that our corruption comes from within ourselves. Our hearts are prone to wander, and we can’t blame that entirely on others. But there are ways we can practice resting in God, a posture that will keep us from being misled by others.

It is easier to be tempted away and enticed if we are not actively pursuing and nurturing our relationship with Jesus.

To be honest, I am most easily influenced down a negative path when my own disciplines are lacking. John Ortberg said: “Habits eat willpower for breakfast.” At the risk of sounding legalistic, the harsh reality is, it is easier to be tempted away and enticed (by anyone, even fellow Christians) if we are not actively pursuing and nurturing our relationship with Jesus. This includes the spiritual disciplines of prayer, communion, Scripture, meditation and many others.

When we are moving about this world in community with Christians and non-Christians alike, we are more likely to be swayed when operating out of our own flesh, when we are not abiding with the One who is in us.

And I’ve also learned it is easier to be corrupted when I am in isolation, including physical, emotional and spiritual isolation. I believe Jesus sent out the 72 in Luke 10 two-by-two because He knew they would need a companion for the journey.

We hear this idea throughout Scripture: “It is not good for man to be alone.” “Two are better than one because they have a good return for their work.” “As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.”

Sometimes we need a friend we can confide in—a friend in the flesh who wants God’s best for us. Often we need prayer—and we cannot receive prayer from a friend who doesn’t believe. We need wisdom, insight and the encouragement of people who are walking beside us in this journey of faith—who are coming from the same point of reference, with Scripture and the Holy Spirit as their guide.

We are corruptible creatures, and we are never “safe” from the Enemy trying to lure us away. But we are also His answer to reaching those that don’t know Him. We must learn the art of engaging with those He loves.
By October 22, 2013

Jesse Carey is a contributing editor to RELEVANT and a mainstay on the weekly RELEVANT podcast. He’s also a really funny guy, as evidenced by his Twitter account.

Millennials are in a challenging phase of life: navigating professional challenges, long-term relationship choices and spiritual questions, all while trying to live up to the social expectations of what an adult should be.

But no matter where you are in your young adult life, it’s always helpful to hear wisdom from people who have been there before. That’s why we’ve compiled this list of 11 pieces of advice that every Millennial should hear.

No one ever “arrives,” so enjoy where you are right now

Don’t let ambition and contentment become mutually exclusive qualities. Sure, you may want to end up in a better job, a different city or a new relationship, but if you’re always looking forward to the next thing, you’ll never enjoy where you are right now.

No matter how successful you become, there will always be more goals you’ll want to accomplish. There’s nothing wrong with looking ahead to what’s next in your life, but don’t let plans about the future prevent you from living in the moment.

The Internet never forgets

Too many people have learned this lesson the hard way. Before you tweet that seemingly funny (but possibly inappropriate) joke, post pictures from a party you’d rather forget or engage in a political discussion that gets a little too heated, remember that even if you later try to remove what you’ve posted that can be nearly impossible in the Internet age. Think before you post—it could save you some serious stress down the road.

It’s never too late

“I feel like it’s just too late to launch my own business, go back to school, start a family, travel the world ...” Fill in the blank. Julia Child didn’t attend cooking school until she was 36. Harrison Ford’s breakout role (Han Solo in Star Wars), didn’t happen until he was 35. Colonel Sanders launched the KFC franchise at age 65. Whether it’s a dream job, the degree you always wanted or an unmet life goal, it’s never too late to try and do the thing you’ve always wanted.

Always be able to (respectably) answer the question, “What book are you reading right now?”

This doesn’t mean you can’t spend time reading the latest paperback thriller, graphic novel or Onion collection. But, it’s always good to also be able to answer with something dignified that can also lead to engaging conversation. Need help finding your next thought-provoking Kindle purchase? Goodreads has lots of recommendations from a variety of topics and custom lists. And of course, you can always check out our weekly recommendations.

Regret is pointless

Just because it may sound cliché doesn’t mean it isn’t true: No one’s perfect. Too often we forget that there’s a difference between repentance and regret, and we don’t let ourselves move past mistakes. The only thing regret does is prevent you from moving forward. The difference between people who are successful and people who aren’t is who made the least amount of mistakes—it’s who was able to learn from them and move on.

Turn off your phone

According to new research, modern smartphone users check their devices up to 150 times a day on average. Clearly, we have a problem. In his now famous rant against smartphones on a recent episode of Conan, Louis C.K. says it best: “You need to build the ability to just be...
yourself and not be doing something. That’s what the phones are taking away—is the ability to just sit there ... That’s being a person, right?” Don’t lose the ability to observe stillness. Sometimes being alone is uncomfortable—and that’s not necessarily a bad thing.

Be really careful with credit cards

Some experts say you shouldn’t use them at all. Others suggest that if you do, you need to exercise extreme caution. Credit cards can have their benefits—they help build credit, offer monetary rewards and give users some financial flexibility. But if used irresponsibly, they lead to a cycle of debt and bad credit that can haunt users for years. If you do decide to use credit cards, do so with extreme care. Don’t spend extravagantly. Always pay your bill on time. And make sure you know the dangers of getting into debt.

Don’t be afraid to ask for help

Values like pride and self-reliance have been ingrained in hardworking young adults for generations, but they can be a double-edged sword. It’s noble to try to overcome problems on your own, but at some point, we all need help from someone wiser than ourselves. If you’re fighting an addiction, going through a difficult time professionally, having relationship issues or just need to talk to someone, don’t be afraid to find a family member, pastor, mentor or counselor and ask for help. Too often, we think of asking for help as a weakness, when, in reality, it’s the ultimate sign of strength.

Be present

We’re all busy, so it’s easy to be distracted by other commitments, that email that just came into your phone or thinking about that next meeting. But no matter how much you have going on in your life, one of the keys to being successful and happy in everything that you do is to actually take the time to enjoy what you’re doing. Stay focus on the conversation you’re having. Work hard while you’re at work. And have fun when you’re out with your friends or family. Take some advice from someone really smart, “Do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself.”

Do not let the sun go down on your anger

Another piece of timeless wisdom from someone extremely wise, it’s especially applicable in the digital age where it’s easy to reach out and make amends with anyone. Anger and unforgiveness are no-win emotions. Take the advice of Scripture, and don’t live with hostility toward others—at the end of the day, you are the one who really suffers. (This is especially true if you are engaged in a fiery online debate —trust us, there’s just no winning some arguments.

Pray more

Maybe you pray throughout the day. Maybe you hardly ever pray. But no matter how frequently you do pray, you can still never pray too much. Praying throughout the day isn’t just a good a way to remind yourself of God’s purpose in your day-to-day life; it’s also a way to seek divine guidance in even the smallest situations.