DON'T BE AFRAID!

"Be not afraid!, the angel said to the shepherds on the Judaen hill side. But we are afraid. We're afraid of not getting assignments in on time. Afraid we may have chosen the wrong major. Afraid of being alone on a large impersonal campus. Afraid of not speaking up enough about God. Afraid - at times - even of God. I'm not surprised that "Don't be afraid" were the first words from the angel messengers because if I had been those shepherds, I would have been quivering in my sandals to see the night sky lit up in the brightness of angels and the sound of a heavenly choir.

Still, it is so great that the message of Advent is a message of good news of great joy. Good news that God is for us - not against us. Good news that he knows about our desire to succeed and do something great with our lives. He knows about our financial needs, our need for friendship, for study and for being involved with His mission in the world and especially on campus. "Don't be afraid" addresses all these things. It means - relax. I’ve got this. You’re not alone. I am here. I have not come to condemn the world, but to save it. Become acquainted with me. Learn to trust me. Connect with me every day. I will show you how to live a life of God on campus. Or as Eugene Peterson puts it in the Message Bible - "Come to me...and learn the unforced rhythms of grace." Mathew 11:28-30. If we hear nothing else this Christmas season than the song of the angels, the birth of God's Son will have had its way in our lives again this year so... don't be afraid!

Pastor Ron Pickell
ACF Coordinator

News and Events

University Students and the Abolishing Of Apartheid: With the passing of the great leader for civil rights, Nelson Mandela, news also spread on the UC Berkeley campus of the important role of students in a major influence for divestment in the then apartheid South Africa. The recently freed Mandela came to U C Berkeley in 1986 and spoke in neighboring Oakland, encouraging the protest all across the Bay Area in support of South Africa's struggle for equality. This is another important reminder of the influence students can have in the world and the importance for the church to maintain an influence on college and
university campuses. Along with South African's we mourn the loss of a great leader who stood against racial injustice, yet in the wake of persecution was able to lead his country into a peaceful transition that still marks South Africa today. To read more about UC Berkeley Students and Nelson Mandela go to: Mandela

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 Schedules for upcoming CCT events:
-Atlantic Union Conference Young Adult/CCT, April 18 - 20, 2014
-Additional CCT Events are being planned in 2014 for Canada, Virginia and Illinois. Watch for more information as these plans come together.

GYC Collegiate/Young Adult Conference: January 1-5, 2014. This years GYC is actually being held the first of 2014 in Orlando Florida. To learn more go to: GYC 2013

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 years 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 I

Cruise With A Mission: 2014 Cruise With A Mission to the Caribbean is open. The dates for this years cruise is: December 14 - 21. Ports of call include: Montego Bay, Jamaica, Georgetown, Cayman Islands and Costa Maya, Mexico. For more information and to register go to: CWM

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, a 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

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- Adventist Faculty
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Christmas On Campus
Students are gathering this month in their campus groups to welcome and celebrate again the birth of Jesus. This is a great time to invite unchurched friends and international students who have no place to go for the holidays. Don't forget to take advantage of the many wonderful ways to include others and share the story of Jesus on campus!

Adventist Faculty
Adventist Harvard Professor Honored For Contributions To The Field
Dr. David R. Williams is a Seventh-day Adventist professor

http://us2.campaign-archive1.com/?u=7ae0ea6be9ab5c680763331f&id=8bd29e9902&c=498f83c24f[12/10/2013 11:34:22 AM]
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 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 Millennial's 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

You Lost Me!

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?

ACF at JCI4

This years Just Claim It Youth/Young Adult Conference
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.

in Miami, February 19-23 will be much more of a missional event reaching the city of Miami with youth, collegiate and young adult events across the city. ACF will be hosting an outreach event at Florida International University on Thursday afternoon, February 20 from 3 - 5 pm. Students are invited to reach out on campus with Creation Health surveys, spoken word by Nico Hill and evening campus performance. To sign up for JCI4 go to: JCI4

Take ACF TODAY with you and share with others!
Mandela’s death recalls memories of UC Berkeley’s student anti-apartheid movement

Jessie Lau

It wasn’t until a student piped up in the middle of lecture Thursday that South African native and UC Berkeley professor Gillian Hart learned that anti-apartheid revolutionary Nelson Mandela had died at 95.

Hart, a geography professor specializing in Southern Africa and Southeast Asia, was one of many members of the campus community who took the day to reflect not only on the loss but also on the lasting legacy of South Africa’s first black president.

“It’s a moment of intense grief,” Hart said. “It’s an extremely sad moment.”

In 1990, after spending 27 years in prison, Mandela emerged to lead South Africa toward democracy. Three years later, he won the Nobel Peace Prize with F. W. de Klerk, the last president of apartheid-era South Africa, for helping the country peacefully end its system of racial segregation. Mandela became president the following year.

According to UC Berkeley political science associate professor Leonardo Arriola, Mandela oversaw the regime change in South Africa when the country had one of the worst forms of oppression in the region.

“He sets a tradition in South Africa where you need periodic transitions in leadership to make democracy work,” Arriola said. “We need to better understand how we can maybe encourage other leaders and ourselves to make those kinds of decisions.”

Shortly after the announcement of Mandela’s death, Chancellor Nicholas Dirks and UC President Janet Napolitano released statements honoring Mandela’s life.

“He was the ultimate teacher,” Napolitano said in a statement. "He not only changed the world — he taught us how to live together. All of us were his students.”

On Thursday, Dirks asked academic leaders to begin working on an event, to be put on in the spring, that will celebrate and explore Mandela’s life.

“Today, we are all part of a global community united in grief and reverence for a man whose clarity of moral purpose and extraordinary perseverance brought freedom to the oppressed,” Dirks said in the statement. “At Berkeley, we also remember the special ties that will forever bind our campus to this man and his movement.”

The student anti-apartheid movement has roots at UC Berkeley, where the student government voted in the 1980s to divest from South Africa. Upon receiving immense pressure from faculty and students campaigning against apartheid, the UC Board of Regents voted to divest from South Africa in 1986. The city of Berkeley also divested from the region — one of the first U.S. cities to do so.

Hart said that the student movement mobilized and informed a lot of young people about the situation across the globe and that they, in turn, played a crucial role in educating their parents.

“The broader process of self-educating that students went through was enormously important and really did help contribute (to the movement),” she said.

CalSERVE, the ASUC’s oldest existing political party, was formed in 1984 in opposition to apartheid-era South Africa. The party plans to discuss how to pay tribute to Mandela, said CalSERVE Senator Briana Mullen.

“Mandela’s passing is very tragic for all of us but also an important reminder of the work that he did,” Mullen said. “From the stories I’ve heard, (students) really found him to be someone that they felt they could fight for, even a thousand miles away.”

In his statement, Dirks reflected on a 1990 speech by Mandela given at the Oakland Coliseum to a crowd of about 60,000 people in which the revolutionary said that Campaign Against Apartheid, a former UC Berkeley student group, significantly helped quicken the end of South Africa’s white-minority rule.
“That recognition highlights what is, in my opinion, one of Berkeley’s proudest moments,” Dirks said in the statement. “Words alone cannot pay adequate homage to an extraordinary life that so deeply altered the course of history.”

Contact Jessie Lau at and follow her on Twitter @jessielau93.
4 Steps to Finding Your Calling

The Church is full of people who are anxious to hear from God—but hearing God and following through on what He says are two different things. We often pray for God to speak and lead us into the life He has designed for us before we are willing to take those steps forward when He gives the word.

Many of us truly believe God has good plans and purposes for our lives. But how do we discern His purpose? How do we know if where we’re headed is out of selfish ambition, or Kingdom calling? And when we do see the vision He has for our lives, how do we get started?

Stepping into God’s calling for your life is quite a journey, and it all starts with discovering God right where you are.

The biggest reason you can’t discover who you are until you know God is because knowing Him will change you.

1) Discover God

Before you can begin to understand who you are, you must have a revelation of who God is.

We are often self-focused. Whether you have a high or a low view of yourself, such self-concern is sinful. Not only will it prevent you from truly loving others, but it will prevent you from standing in awe of God and worshipping Him—the highest calling that we have on our lives, however that might differently play out.

God is not made in our image. We are made in His. And if we are His workmanship, then we can’t really discover much about ourselves unless we first know Him.

Getting to know God means, at the most practical level, spending time with Him. It means spending time in His written Word and in prayer, and allowing His Spirit to fill us and reveal truth to us.

2) Discover Who You Are in Christ

The biggest reason you can’t discover who you are until you know God is because knowing Him will change you. When you allow the Holy Spirit to dwell in you, you will be transformed and restored—growing closer to the original reflection of God you were created to be.

“You are the only one who is qualified to do what God created you for, but without Christ, you lose your qualifications.”

Your purpose as a believer is to build the Kingdom of God. This is the calling of every believer, but each person has a different role in this
project. God must reveal to you what your part is.

Your role in His Kingdom work will utilize your natural gifts and talents, but it will also require His spirit to empower you. Your work is impossible without Him. As my pastor’s wife once said, “You are the only one who is qualified to do what God created you for, but without Christ, you lose your qualifications.”

But what if you aren’t sensing God’s leading?

If you aren’t sure how God is specifically leading you, then it’s important to remain faithful in the things you are doing right now and continue to move forward in your relationship with Him. Keep moving, one step at a time—don’t get stuck at a standstill. It could be that you are in the right place already! Ask Him to fill you with peace if you are right where you need to be, and to lead clearly if you need to pursue elsewhere.

3) Get Started

Once you sense God leading you into a specific purpose, you need to learn to move in the Holy Spirit to carry out that purpose in the everyday.

When a person begins to walk into their calling, you can expect spiritual warfare. If you were hoping for a life of ease, you will be disappointed. In choosing to live a life of purpose, you won’t be spared from hardship—but you will learn to rise above it. It’s so much better to conquer your fear than it is to run away from the hard situation. But don’t worry—it isn’t all bad! There are hard times, but there is also a deep sense of satisfaction and fulfillment, paired with a burning desire to move forward and know even more of God and His plan.

But don’t let all this keep you from getting started. As you face challenges, equip yourself with resources and surround yourself with godly people who are also following God’s call. Along the way, you’ll need a few things.

You need mentors to guide you, offer advice and let your know if your direction is sound and seems to be in line with God’s plans.

You need peers for the journey to keep you grounded and remind you that you aren’t alone.

And finally, you need “mentees” (for lack of a better word), or people you can reach out to who aren’t as far along as you. It’s important to build the next generation, and we should hope to bring them even further than we are.

4) Press on Toward the Goal

Starting out on God’s calling for your life is an adventure, but there will also be times when you have to settle into a routine. You might get bored, or you may find that you aren’t as consistently excited as you were when you began.

In times of boredom, it’s important to preserve your focus and direction in the path God is leading you.

You can do this by practicing discipline. Stay rooted in prayer and biblical study to keep you pressing forward, even when you are tired and losing motivation.

You can also keep focus by learning to rejoice in the success of others. The more you allow yourself to be invested in the lives of others, the more joy and excitement will be cultivated in your life. Let their lives inspire and propel you to keep moving forward.

And lastly, you can remember what God has done for you so far. Look back and remind yourself how far He has brought you—and get excited all over again about where He’s leading you next.
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 Furserdi. He questioned the value of such a project, where "social science research turns into advocacy research."

Furserdi'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.
11 Pieces of Advice Every Millennial Should Hear

By Jesse Carey
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.
Dr. David R. Williams is a Seventh-day Adventist professor currently teaching at Harvard University. Previously, he taught at the University of Michigan where he supported and served as a role model for the Adventist student organization. His resume is so extensive, that the abbreviated version is more than 40 pages long. At the second annual GYC convention, Dr. Williams held a plenary session on racism in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Years later, GYC invited him to hold a workshop on the same topic which is available on AudioVerse.

Earlier this month, Dr. Williams received the Stephen Smith Award for Distinguished Contributions in Public Health from the New York Academy of Medicine.

The Stephen Smith award is among those that NYAM presents annually at its Anniversary Discourse and Awards Ceremony, which pays special tribute to individuals who have made distinguished contributions to health policy, public health, medicine, and scientific research. NYAM honors innovators in their respective fields that have made a profound difference—e.g., basic science investigation, in therapeutic discovery, in helping shape critical health policy, and in public health impact at home and abroad.

The award is given every year “to pay special tribute to individuals with distinguished accomplishments in health policy, public health, medicine, and scientific research.”

Dr. Williams has made a deep impact in his field of study and serves as a genuine example of spiritual and academic/professional excellence.

Here is a video of him addressing racism at a university in MA.
Seventh-day Adventist Millennials

Up or Out?

NAD Conference  |  Nov 2013
Barna Group

Knowledge to navigate a changing world
Barna Labs is a full-year learning experience, with diagnostic surveys and practical training from David Kinnaman and the Barna team.

Visit barna.org/labs for more info
Overview

Process
- Ages 18-29
- Survey (N=482)
- Online discussions (N=24, 3 days)

Insights
- You Lost Me comparisons
- Engaged vs. Unengaged
- Spiritual beliefs

Recommendations
- Inter-generational relationships
- Stories of renewal and transformation
- Acceptance
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<th>SDA Percentage</th>
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<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repressive</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>37%</td>
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</table>
Engaged v Unengaged

Engaged
- Attend services at least monthly
- Church is relevant to them

Unengaged
- Do not attend at least monthly
- Church is not relevant to them
Engaged v. Unengaged: Attitudes

- Compassion for those less fortunate
- Teaching is relevant for life
- I can be myself at church
- Helped me understand
- People are authentic
- Doubts are tolerated

Unengaged

Engaged

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Engaged v. Unengaged: Attitudes

- Leaders are repressive of ideas
- The church is overprotective
- Like an exclusive club
- Teachings seem shallow
Engaged v. Unengaged: Behaviors

- Sabbath School > 1 per month
- Church social functions
- Youth group > 1 per month
- Tithed regularly
- "Share your faith" activities
- Held church office

Unengaged vs. Engaged behaviors comparison.
Engaged v. Unengaged: Beliefs

- the second coming of Jesus
- the state of the dead
- the Sabbath
- the heavenly sanctuary and the 2300 days
- Ellen White is a true prophet
- Adventist Church is the true church

Bar chart comparing engaged and not engaged individuals on their beliefs.

- Engaged: High belief in all aspects.
- Not engaged: Lower belief in all aspects, especially in Ellen White's prophecies.

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Engaged v. Unengaged: Lifestyle

% agree strongly

- Not using tobacco: Engaged 85, Unengaged 52
- Keep Sabbath holy: Engaged 90, Unengaged 51
- Not using illegal drugs: Engaged 90, Unengaged 56

Engaged vs. Unengaged.
Engaged v. Unengaged: Lifestyle

% agree strongly

dressing modestly: 55 (engaged) vs. 33 (unengaged)
no alcoholic beverages: 65 (engaged) vs. 22 (unengaged)
sex only within marriage: 84 (engaged) vs. 38 (unengaged)

Barna Group
Examine. Illuminate. Transform.

CLINT JENKIN PHD | barna.org
Engaged v. Unengaged: Lifestyle

% agree strongly

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
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<td>Cosmetic jewelry</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rock music</td>
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</table>
What’s Next?

Intergenerational Relationships

• Mentoring
• Apprenticeships
• Openness

Bianca | I love my home church.... Our older members are VERY supportive of our youth.

Laura | When I was younger and we started putting on Christmas plays, there were a group of elderly women who would travel to Florida every year for winter, and they would stay...long enough to see the play.

Seka | I think it is key for there to be support between the younger and older members. It has to be BOTH WAYS because we all need support.
What’s Next?

Renewal and Transformation

- Platform to share
- Challenge to experience
- Organic, not forced

Elaine  |  I almost died when I was young due to an infection. I remember waking up in the middle of the night and hearing my dad cry as he whispered prayers into my ear…. I also remember the doctors telling my parents that they didn't understand what happened, but I that I was healed.

Bianca  |  Time passed and [my cousin] was able to come back to church even more pumped than before. She would give her testimonies at youth rallies and encouraged others… I was on the sidelines observing.

Jonathan  |  God spoke to me in such an amazing way that night. I was standing in the sand, out of reach of the encroaching water, looking up at the stars and talking with God. I asked Him a question, and that if His answer was "yes," that I would know without a doubt. As soon add I said that, the water touched and went passed my feet. This was a big moment in my life.
Forgiveness and Acceptance

• Accentuate the contrast
• Leverage experiences
• Never discard!

Effy | One thing I've appreciated about going to church is the sense of camaraderie. It's nice to feel accepted and to belong. Not having to explain why you can't participate in an activity or why you don't eat certain foods is really liberating.

Kecia | In one of my past relationships I let my boyfriend take me too far...and I really can't forgive myself. I am praying God helps me forgive myself. It is tough to overcome something that has gone against your beliefs and I was stupid enough to let it happen. Each day I pray I can overcome this.
Recently, I overheard someone talking about a young man who was coming to the church and was trying to get a career as a bartender. I really admired the way she spoke very neutrally with him, despite thinking that he should not become a bartender. She didn't even let on that she thought it was wrong. She just welcomed him to come closer to Jesus. **She knew that Jesus could do so much better of a job leading the young man on the path his life needed to take than she did.**

I once visited a church near my home church which has a reputation for being really liberal. Everyone was so welcoming and casual (everyone was wearing jeans) and I felt so free from peer pressure. They sang a song that said "There is freedom in the house of the Lord" and I just started crying. That afternoon I went back to my home church and one of my dad's friends came up to me ask me why I was wearing jeans and why I didn't go to church.
Do you care more about your children, or your traditions?
Engaged and unengaged SDA Millennials show stark differences in how they perceive their childhood experiences with local Seventh-day Adventist congregations. They also exhibit strong differences in the extent to which they currently subscribe to the distinctive doctrines of the SDA Church. However, even among engaged Millennials, some key doctrines enjoy more widespread support than do others.

### Attitudes

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Engaged SDA Millennials are those who attend services at least monthly, AND who say that church is still relevant for them.

1. Teaching seems SHALLOW
2. Like an EXCLUSIVE club
3. OVERPROTECTIVE of young people
4. REPRESSIVE of ideas
5. DOUBTS are tolerated
6. The people are AUTHENTIC
7. Helped me UNDERSTAND my faith
8. Can be MYSELF
9. Teachings are RELEVANT
10. COMPASSION for others

### Beliefs

<table>
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<tr>
<th>% agree strongly</th>
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Beliefs: Engaged Church is the true church, Ellen White is a true prophet, the heavenly sanctuary and the 2300 days, the Sabbath, the second coming of Jesus.
Barna's research into the spiritual journeys of Millennial adults (18-29 years old) shows that many of them carry six grievances against Christianity in America. This study shows that Seventh-day Adventist Millennials share these perceptions at even higher levels than the national norms.

**WHAT TO DO NEXT:**

### Implications

**How can the local church respond?**
The key steps are to facilitate positive intergenerational relationships, emphasize stories of renewal and transformation, and practice acceptance. Finding a willingness to show God's heart and not just His judgment.

#### Relationships
- Foster mentoring relationships
- Develop apprenticeship opportunities

#### Renewal and Transformation
- Platform to hear and share stories of transformation
- Opportunities to experience transformation

#### Forgive and Accept
- Accentuate the contrasts between the Church and the World
- Value life lessons instead of stigmatizing them

#### Show God's Heart
- What's more important: our traditions or our children?