

THE ATLANTIC UNION

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14 Northeastern Conference Welcomes New Treasurer

Following an extensive search process, the Northeastern Conference Executive Committee has named Robert Chandler to serve as treasurer of the conference.

20 AdventSource Becomes a North American Division Institution

AdventSource, the official ministry supply center for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America, became a North American Division institution on November 9, 2018, following a vote by the NAD Corporation Board.



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January 2019, Vol. 118, No. 1. The Atlantic Union GLEANER is published monthly by the Atlantic Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists®, 400 Main Street, Lancaster, MA 01523. Printed by L. Brown and Sons Printing, Inc., 14 Jefferson Street, Barre, VT 05641. Standard postage paid at Montpelier, VT 05602. Annual subscription price, \$10.00. NEW OR RENEWAL SUBSCRIPTIONS: Mail new or renewal subscriptions to Atlantic Union GLEANER, P.O. Box 1189, South Lancaster, MA 01561. Adventist® and Seventh-day Adventist® are registered trademarks of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists®.

Looking Back . . . Moving Forward

God has been faithful to His promise of being with us and guiding us as we carry out the mission of hope and wholeness. As we look back at 2018, we can identify the progress made by Atlantic Union Conference in spite of its challenges.

At the onset of 2018, we were faced with the stark reality that the survival of Atlantic Union College was in doubt. The college did not get its long-awaited accreditation, the student population was far below expectation, and at the same time, the college had to maintain a faculty and staff to ensure coverage for the various areas of discipline.

The Atlantic Union Conference Executive Committee commissioned a feasibility study, during which time some of the supporting conferences stopped, threatened to stop, or reduced the subsidy sent to the college. After the completion of the study, the recommendations of the committee were brought to a special constituency meeting of the college. It was decided that the college would suspend the academic program of the institution at the end of the 2017-2018 school year. This was a painful decision, but the institution had to face these realities.

The Atlantic Union had four conference constituency sessions in 2018: New York Conference in April, Greater New York Conference in June, Bermuda Conference in September, and Northern New England Conference in October. These sessions were well conducted, and we pray that the work of the Lord will continue in each conference.

In 2019, the Atlantic Union will move forward boldly with hope and optimism. Some of the issues in our worldwide church that we continue to grapple with include the role and function of women in ministry and unity amidst diversity. While focus-

ing on the mission God has given the remnant church, the Atlantic Union must set its priorities and work assiduously to achieve them. With the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the total involvement of clergy and laity, we will become fully engaged in the proclamation of the Three Angels' Messages of Revelation 14.

There are many crises in this world which we cannot escape. How we navigate them will determine how we make a meaningful impact on the world around us. Let us not expect the people to come to us, but rather meet them where they are and minister to their needs. Ellen G. White said it clearly, "A new element needs to be brought into the work. God's people must receive the warning, and work for souls right where they are, for people do not realize their great need and peril. Christ sought the people where they were, and placed before them the great truths in regard to His kingdom"—MEDICAL MINISTRY, p. 319.

How do we address these challenges facing us today? We need to have a renewed perspective of the mission for which God has called us. While not necessarily using the traditional approach, we must assess where people are and provide practical solutions that will address their needs. People around us are hurting; many are confused, not knowing where to turn for help. Let us provide the source of help for our neighbors. The Lord said, "Behold, I will do a new thing, now it shall spring forth; shall you not know it? I will even make a road in the wilderness and rivers in the desert"—Isaiah 43:19, NKJV.

Our God is the God of the impossible. May we put our trust and confidence in Him to direct our path. ①

G. Earl Knight is president of the Atlantic Union Conference and chairman of the Atlantic Union College Board of Trustees.



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By John B. Ashmeade, Esq.

LIBERTY

AMERICAN STYLE

The unrestrained flow of information via social media has heightened concerns that we, as Adventists, are facing imminent persecution. Some point to the Pope's support for climate change legislation. Climate change is viewed as the pretext for Sunday laws. Others see the escalating conflicts between the West and Islam as the sign of signs. Radical Islam will be the catalyst to motivate the United States to lay down the law worldwide.

Without question, conservative Adventists saw the Obama administration through eschatological eyes as well. Barack Obama was viewed as the lawless one spoken of by scripture. Obamacare would require all to receive a microchip, the tool that would be the precursor to the mark of the beast. Many floated the idea that Obamacare required everyone to receive a microchip implant by 2017. It is 2018 and Obamacare is hanging on for dear life, but many Adventists still fear microchips. Now under President Trump, liberal Adventists certainly see their man of sin. They bitterly complain about his failed marriages, his alleged abuses of women, and his "persistent stretching of the facts."

Ellen G. White offers the best summary of the issues we will face at the end of time. She suggests: "When the churches of our land, uniting upon such points of faith as are held by them in common, shall influence the State to enforce their decrees and sustain their institutions, then will Protestant America have formed an image of the Roman hierarchy"—THE STORY OF REDEMPTION, p.

381. Do we see a uniting of the churches on common points of faith with legislators compelled to pass legislation beneficial to these institutions?

For this scenario to play out there would need to be a radical reinterpretation of the First Amendment freedoms and protections we currently enjoy. In addition to that, the checks and balances that restrain the centralizing of power between the three branches of government would unravel as we know it. Have we come to the tipping point of no return? Are we facing the imminent evolution of the American experiment from a fledgling democratic state into a beastly demagogic terror that will cause the hearts of the nations to fear and melt?

An examination of a few hot-button issues might shed some light on where we are as a nation. Do we see signs of a Protestant/Catholic unity that threatens our democratic ideals? One area where there is unity between Rome and Protestants in America is on the issue of abortion. The *Roe v. Wade* decision by the Supreme Court recognizing that the constitutional right to privacy extended to a woman's right to choose to terminate a pregnancy birthed a conservative movement that ultimately led to the election of Ronald Reagan as president and the selection of hundreds of conservative judges to the bench. Forty-five years later, the right still stands.

The recent retirement of Justice Kennedy and elevation of Justice Kavanagh to the bench creates



the possibility that the crucial vote to overturn *Roe v. Wade* is now on the court. If and when that occurs, the debate will continue to rage. The issue will become a state issue. The conservative states will legislate to end the right to abortion on demand, but the liberal states will continue to affirm the right to choose. Despite alignment between conservative Protestant Christians and Roman Catholics, the resolution of this debate will take years, if not decades, to resolve. While this debate rages, Christians will need to convince a new generation of Americans to support their view in order to maintain the gains they have made in recent years on this issue.

Second in importance to conservative Christians as an issue is the sanctity of the union between a man and a woman: marriage. Without question, Catholics and conservative Protestants are aligned on this issue as well. Despite this strong alliance, the 2013 decision

Instantaneously, many opposed protecting the environment because that would lead to Sunday laws. It didn't help that the president at the time, Barack Obama, was aligned with the Pope on this issue. In 2015, the Paris treaty was signed by the majority of the nations around the world, including the United States. There you have it. Protestant America, the Roman Catholic Church, and the nations formed a treaty.

Just before you run off to your underground apocalypse bunker, here are some additional details to consider. Protestant America, at least the conservative wing, the one with political clout, were opposed then (and, to date, remains ardently opposed) to climate change legislation. This liberal triumph evaporated after President Trump rode an evangelical wave into office. He promptly withdrew the United States from the treaty. At least on this issue, there is no unity between Rome and Protestant America. With the

“Are we facing the imminent evolution of the American experiment from a fledgling democratic state into a beastly demagogic terror that will cause the hearts of the nations to fear and melt?”

by the Massachusetts Supreme Court had a rippling effect that resulted in the 2015 decision by Justice Kennedy, a conservative justice, finding constitutional protection for same-sex marriages.

The inability of the Roman Catholic and conservative Protestant political block to dominate the political scene on the issue of abortion and same-sex marriage suggests that their power remains in a nascent stage. This block may soon flex its political might on the issues of abortion and same-sex marriage with the appointment of a more conservative justice to replace Justice Kennedy.

The march to unity between Catholics and Protestants faces additional hurdles. Many Adventist evangelists were alarmed by the Pope's encyclical, *Laudato Si*, where he advocated for legislation that would protect the environment. A few passing statements in the encyclical about Sunday sacredness raised the alarm about the imminence of Sunday laws.

House, Senate, and Presidency under the control of conservative Protestant Christians, there is no chance climate change legislation will have any traction in the United States in the near future.

The “third rail” of American politics, immigration, is another issue that divides Roman Catholic believers and conservative Protestant evangelical Christians. The Pope and the United States Congress of Bishops find themselves facing a wall of opposition built by evangelical Christians, who vigorously support the President's no-tolerance policy on the United States' borders.

Even within the Republican Party there is intense debate on how to resolve this long festering and endless problem. Immigration, more than any current issue, divides Protestants and Catholics. Even where reasonable minds in both political parties see areas where they can agree, the extremes on both sides will not stand for any resolution. Like climate change, it is unlikely

that Catholics and Protestants will come together anytime soon on comprehensive immigration reform, particularly if that reform includes notions of amnesty.

The phrase, “Trial of the Century,” immediately brings to mind such names as O.J. Simpson, Johnny Cochran, and Marsha Clark. But the real trial of the century, the Scopes Monkey Trial, has left in its wake a divide between Catholics and Protestants so deep and so wide that crossing the Tiber—the conversion from Protestantism to Catholicism—appears impossible. The Roman Catholic leadership has been clear that they see no conflict between faith and acceptance of Neo-Darwinian explanations for life on earth. The Roman Catholic Church has been consistently on the opposite side of conservative young earth Protestants. This dispute has played itself out in school districts across the country and is consistently coupled with the dispute over climate change.

Adventists, officially and in the main, support the beliefs of young earth creationists. Politically, this divide has created an alliance between the oil industry, conservative Protestant Christians who reject the apocalypticism of the Roman Catholic Church, and the governments of the world that a failure to address global warming will result in a world on fire. Ironically, oil and holy water do mix.

The venerable wall that separates church and state remains, even though we should be concerned about the foundation. In 1990, Justice Scalia leveled a devastating blow to religious freedom rights when he scaled back the free exercise protections available under the First Amendment. Prior to his decision in the *Employment Division v. Smith* case, courts would assess free exercise cases using a standard called “strict scrutiny.” This standard placed a significant burden on the government to establish why an individual’s free exercise right cannot be accommodated.

Since that decision, the strict scrutiny standard is used only when there is a prior determination of an intent by the government to discriminate on the basis of religion. Efforts by congress to reverse this decision were rebuffed by a later court decision. This stance was recently affirmed by the court in the wedding

cake case where there was a question whether a baker could decline to bake a cake for a same-sex wedding on the basis of religious belief. While the court ruled in favor of the baker, the court affirmed Justice Scalia’s earlier decision scaling back First Amendment protections. This means that the Supreme Court no longer views itself as a check on majoritarian excesses. In essence, minority rights, particularly the rights of minority religions, are less likely to be protected going forward. Additionally, a recent decision by the Supreme Court involving the use of government funds for religious institutions suggests that the court is increasingly willing to permit the use of government funds to assist religious institutions.

“There is still a work for Adventists to do before we will need to run to the hills to avoid persecution.”

What does this all mean? There is still a work for Adventists to do before we will need to run to the hills to avoid persecution. The First Amendment continues to be a bulwark for freedom. While the slow rapprochement between state and church continues to escalate, the constitutional protections remain in tact. The separation of powers among the executive branch, legislative branch, and judicial branch continues to restrain the consolidation of power needed for Ellen G. White’s prophecy to become a reality. Time may be short, but the opportunity to continue to preach the gospel remains open. ①



John B. Ashmeade, Esq. is the Public Affairs and Religious Liberty associate director for the Atlantic Union Conference.



By Beverley Bucknor

Hearing God's Call

"And they brought unto him also infants, that he would touch them: . . . Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God"—Luke 18:15-16.

As Seventh-day Adventist Christians, we have read and heard this text many times. The Bayberry school on Cape Cod experienced a wonderful testimony from the family of a student who, I believe, heard God's call to come and let Him bless her.

The Paul-Joseph family emigrated from the country of Haiti to America to provide a better life for their family. Currently, all five of their children, ranging from kindergarten through seventh grade, are enrolled at Bayberry. Their daughter, Mia, is in the seventh grade.

It is the custom at the school to hold a weekly town hall meeting where students are given the opportunity to share their concerns. At one of those meetings, Mia shared her story with her classmates. Apparently, some people had commented concerning the clothing she and her siblings wore. Mia shared how hard it was for her parents, who work every hour they can to pay for their church school tuition and to improve their lives. Mia saw her parents cry when life became difficult, and told how she cried for them, too, because she knew they were making sacrifices for the good of the family.

Sometime after Mia's testimony, Cindy Santos received an e-mail from Partnering for Eternity (PFE) requesting participating schools to submit the name of a family within the program who exemplified what the organization promotes. Santos, Bayberry's PFE coordinator, submitted Mia's name and story.

Sponsored by Southern Adventist University, Partnering for Eternity provides scholarships to make Christian



The Paul-Joseph family are the recipients of a scholarship from Southern Adventist University's Partnering for Eternity.

education more affordable by pairing students with individually matched elderly mentors, thus facilitating positive inter-generational friendships. The PFE board met within a few hours the same day and voted to give Mia's family a gift of \$700 to spend on celebrating a family Thanksgiving and Christmas. This was such a surprise and blessing for the Paul-Joseph family!

Life is both complicated and interesting. It is a series of observations, communications, decisions, and actions. Children have the ability to communicate with an open heart. Mia's courage to take a stand showed that she believed God gave her the courage to speak.

Life lived from a Christian perspective is mysteriously wonderful. As Christians, we depend on our relationship with God to help us live productive, love-filled lives. A successful life-long journey with Christ depends on hearing His call. Heaven will be ours if we open our hearts to receive God's call and communicate with Him.

Each day at home, families present their children to Jesus, and in

Adventist schools, we partner with parents to continue on that vein. This responsibility is taken very seriously, as parents entrust their precious children to our care. It is important for us to give students the opportunity to connect with Christ, both through the daily activities in our classrooms and the personal testimonies of the teachers as they share their relationship with Jesus with their students.

Jesus publicly touched and blessed each child to show that children were important. Their relationships with Him were as important as His relationships with adults. A touch from Jesus helped each of them envision eternal life. Parents just like Mia's father and mother wanted Jesus to bless their children with His touch. They recognized what His disciples could not—that each person, each child, needs to meet Jesus. Each child needs to claim all that Jesus represents and offers. ☺

Beverley Bucknor is the Southern New England Conference superintendent of schools.

GNYC Celebrates Graduates of the School of Evangelism

The Greater New York Conference (GNYC) Youth Ministries Department held its annual Consecration, Investiture, and Graduation Service at the Grand Concourse church in Bronx, New York, on November 17, 2018. Ninety-five graduates, their families, friends, and supportive church members came together to celebrate their achievement, capping off months of training and preparation as youth leaders in various ministries.

Nine certifications under the department's School of Evangelism were represented, including Adventist Youth Emergency Services, Youth Leadership, and Master Guide, as well as photography, preaching, and youth counseling.

Two new classes were introduced in 2018: the Silver and Gold awards, all-encompassing courses to develop the “mental, social, emotional, [and] physical” areas of youth. Drawing from the biblical example of Daniel and his friends, the goal is to encourage well-rounded young adults whose

vigor in various areas will testify that Jesus is our God.

The morning's consecration service featured Pako Edson Mokgwane, an assistant youth ministries director at the General Conference. The Botswanan native encouraged candidates to trust God's plans for their lives, knowing that He is in control of all circumstances.

In the evening, Henry Beras, GNYC president, congratulated the attendees. Graduates donned uniforms representing their respective classes and marched across the stage to affirming applause as they received their certificates of completion.

A special ceremony was held during the program for Ariel Manzueta, GNYC Youth Ministries director, who was commissioned as a Navy Reserve chaplain. Washington Johnson II, assistant director for North American Division Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries and captain in the U.S. Navy Reserve, performed the honors.

—Kaara Baptiste, Youth Ministries communication, Greater New York Conference



Graduates from the Greater New York Conference Youth Ministries leadership certification courses take a group photo with administrators and directors from the Greater New York Conference, General Conference, and Atlantic Union Conference.



Families, friends, and supportive church members attend the November 17, 2018, Greater New York Conference Youth Ministries Department Consecration, Investiture, and Graduation Service at the Grand Concourse church.



Washington Johnson II, assistant director for North American Division Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries and captain in the U.S. Navy Reserve, commissions Ariel Manzueta, Greater New York Conference Ministries director, as a Navy Reserve chaplain.



Lisa Salvodon, Adventist Youth Leadership graduate, left, is one of two youth called to the platform by Ariel Manzueta, Greater New York Conference Youth Ministries director, center, to receive a giveaway from Henry Beras, Greater New York Conference president, right.



Families Learn to Build Healthy Homes



Claudio and Pamela Consuegra facilitated the Warwick church's week-long, family-life seminar.

The Warwick church hosted a week-long, family-life seminar titled “12 Ingredients of Successful Families.” The presenters were Claudio and Pamela Consuegra, North American Division Family Ministries director and associate director.

The seminars, held in 2018, covered relevant and

realistic topics, including “Healthy Marriages,” “Needs of Men and Women,” “Responsibility of All,” “Needs of Children,” among others. Other topics informed or reminded the participants of principles that make them unique as Seventh-day Adventists. Sabbath preparation, modesty in dress, tithing, and

healthy eating, reminded participants of how they stand as a beacon leading others to Christ.

The Consuegras, who first visited Bermuda on their honeymoon 37 years ago, kept the congregation alive with their funny exchanges. The Consuegras also offered useful bits of advice for those who are courting, suggesting they obtain premarital counseling before setting a wedding date.

Each evening began with a light supper followed by a prayer session that included praying for family members. They hung the list of family names on the walls nightly so that other names could be added. Families brought their children to participate in the meetings.

A feature for the week was a nightly name draw taken from the registration cards. The persons chosen received gift certificates for household items.

On Sabbath mornings, Claudio Consuegra preached

twice, first for Ministerio Hermandad, the Spanish company associated with the Warwick church, and then for the service at Warwick church.

The take-away from this seminar is that God still uses families to bring others to Him, no matter what the family make-up is. Most important is the need to grow and become more like Jesus Christ.

Members expressed how necessary the meetings were for new members, as well as for veteran members who need a “brush-up.” The Warwick church Family Ministries department expressed its thanks to the Consuegras for accepting the invitation to share their family life presentations with the participants.

—Dennis and Miranda Lister/Coggie Gibbons, Warwick church



Photos: Ricardo Clarke

The praise team sings during the worship service at Warwick church.



The Warwick church in Bermuda meets the needs of two church groups—the Warwick church and Ministerio Hermandad, a Spanish company.

Bermuda Conference Sponsors Health Fair

About 300 people attended the Medical and Lifestyle Clinic at the Hamilton Youth Center in October 2018. Organized by Leonard Gibbons, Bermuda Conference Health Ministries director, the objectives of the clinic to provide free medical screenings for those who are not financially in a position to get the type of medical service offered; to encourage health professionals to work together and give back to the community, and to generate contact information that can be used to invite attendees to future programs, were realized.

The clinic, the second in 2018, was the vision of Kenneth Manders, Bermuda Conference president, who felt led by God to reach the community with the gospel message of hope and wholeness. Supported by a quote from Ellen G. White in *THE MINISTRY OF HEALING*, p. 143, “The Savior mingled with men as one who desired their good. . . . He . . . ministered to their needs and won their confidence. Then He bade them, ‘Follow Me.’” Manders shared his vision with Gibbons, who brought together health professionals from across the island to offer health services to the people of Bermuda.

Attendees at the clinic first completed a medical and healthy lifestyle assessment that was used to access a range of lifestyle behaviors and health risk factors, and give participants an overall health score from high risk to excellent. They then participated in numerous health screenings, including checks for blood sugar, blood pressure, cholesterol, BMI (body mass index), vision, and

dental. Nutritional, occupational, and physical therapy advice was also available.

Betty Wellman was pleased with her assessment, which indicated she was following a healthy lifestyle. She attended the Eight Laws of Health Fair in March and was excited to attend this one, not only for the healthy tips and food, but also because she could be tested free of charge. “Sometimes,” Wellman explained, “seniors have to choose between going to the doctor, buying medication, or purchasing food.”

One of the aims of the clinic was to encourage attendees to become proactive in their care. Participating physicians consulted with patients and offered recommendations on how they could obtain their goals of healthy living. In some cases, patients were referred to helping agencies. Stanley James, M.D., and Damon Hendrickson, pastor of the Restoration Ministries and Rockaway churches, also prayed with patients who requested prayer.

Royland Samms, optometrist at Atlantic Vision Care, expressed that he would like to have done more, but was limited by time. He serviced 52 people.

Bermuda Hospitals Board physician, Francene Gayle, saw the clinic as an opportunity to give attendees “a baseline assessment of their health situation.” She said that middle-aged to elderly patients committed to staying active, losing weight, and keeping their parameters within range so that their future years fill with quality, and not ill health. She observed that some people requested copies



Tables with educational literature on various topics line the Hamilton Youth Center during the Bermuda Conference-sponsored health fair.



Photos: Ricardo Clarke

The individuals seated are waiting for their opportunity to participate in the health-fair screening.

of the screening tools to share with family members whose current lifestyle practices need to improve.

Gayle also saw young people whose primary need was weight management. She noted they had a significant family history of obesity and diabetes and wanted to break that cycle. She referred them to YouTube videos for aerobics and high-intensity impact training, smartphone exercise and calorie counting apps, as well as local gyms and personal trainers.

Giveaways included healthy bites, oral care products, educational materials, and nutritional tips. Comments from participants, volunteers, and attendees were encouraging

and will be used to improve future health initiatives.

The Bermuda Conference Health Ministries Department acknowledges all volunteers, the Department of Health, the Bermuda Hospitals Board, Bermuda Wellness and Outreach Center, Atlantic Vision Care, In Touch Therapy, Arches Dental, Northshore Medical and Aesthetics Center, Hope Health Care, Premier Health and Wellness, health ministries leaders, community services departments, Pathfinders, the Adventist Book Center, and others who helped make the Medical and Lifestyle Clinic a success.

—Joi Tyrrell, communication director, Bermuda Conference



Genesee Park Boulevard Church's Youth Are on the R.I.S.E.

Recognizing the needs of its young people, Genesee Park Boulevard church in Rochester, New York, dedicated three days to empower and inspire its youth with the purpose of impacting the community. Starting on October 5 and ending on October 7, 2018, the church served as the location for the R.I.S.E. Youth Convocation, a special program that served as the platform for the church's youth ministries relaunch.

R.I.S.E., which stands for Rescuing Individuals from Sinful Emptiness, is the ongoing purpose of the youth movement and its activities in the church. Charles Blythe, the guest speaker for the meetings, reminded the church about the importance of reclaiming its youth and getting them involved in ministry. "I want to challenge you to be young people who will love to R.I.S.E. for Jesus, blessing others with the gospel message," said Blythe during his Sabbath-morning message.

Yashen Stewart, the church's newly-appointed Youth Ministries coordinator, was instrumental in getting the youth of the church involved in the planning and development of the R.I.S.E. youth movement and its convocation. "Thank you for your support and your prayers for this wonderful ministry," Stewart said at the end of the last session on Saturday night.

Other Adventist churches in the city were invited to join the convocation. Dozens of young men and women attended the event, especially Friday's sessions



Some of the volunteers stop to take a photo before visiting a nursing home on Sunday afternoon during the Genesee Park Boulevard church's R.I.S.E. Youth Convocation weekend.



Charles Blythe speaks to the attendees at R.I.S.E. Youth Convocation on Sabbath afternoon.

held at the church's gym, which provided a good environment for a spiritual and relevant youth service.

Organizers designed the convocation to be a blessing to the families and institutions surrounding the church, as well. During the early afternoon hours on Sunday, R.I.S.E. and We Are His Hands (Genesee Park Boulevard church's Personal Ministries outreach program) visited a local nursing home to proclaim the gospel truth through uplifting songs. The group blessed the patients with songs and gave them flowers as a gift.



Standing from left after the Friday-night session at the Genesee Park Boulevard church's R.I.S.E. Youth Convocation are Reynolds Rodriguez, the church's senior pastor; Charles Blythe, guest speaker; Yashen Stewart, the church's Youth Ministries coordinator; and Emarina Sibomana, a R.I.S.E. worship team member.

"Our hope is that our youth will keep the R.I.S.E. Youth Movement as their lifestyle and not as a one-time event," said Reynolds Rodriguez, Genesee Park Boulevard church's senior pastor. R.I.S.E. meets twice a month on Sabbath afternoons and once a month on a Friday evening for its R.I.S.E. Connect Group, which is a one-hour meeting that gives attendees the opportunity to learn how much they can do for the gospel's sake when they become friends and active members.

"Friending" is the theme for the R.I.S.E. Connect

Group during the winter season. The meeting allows the participants to get to know more about each other and to become better connected to the church.

In January 2019, in combination with New York Conference's Youth Ministries Department, R.I.S.E. has planned a second Youth Convocation with Dan Whitlow, the conference's Youth Ministries director, and Jeremy Garlock, the conference's associate Youth Ministries director, as speakers.

—Communication department,
New York Conference

Gary Wagner Retires After 43 Years of Ministry

After 43 years in pastoral ministry, Gary Wagner, D.Min., pastor of the Union Springs church in Union Springs, New York, announced his retirement effective January 31, 2019. Wagner served the Seventh-day Adventist Church in various roles in eight countries.

Wagner served as a student missionary in Korea, and then Cambodia. He later returned to Union College in Lincoln, Nebraska, to finish his degree. It was there, in the registration line, that he met Deena, who later became his wife.

Throughout his ministry, Wagner served as country director of the Seventh-day Adventist World Service (now known as ADRA) in Thailand; church and school director in the Marshall Islands and in the Chuuk Islands; pastor in Nebraska, Kansas, New England, and New York; and mission president and ADRA country director for the Congo. In total, he pastored about 35 churches in various districts and congregations of at least seven different language groups.

Here's an excerpt of a recent interview with Wagner:

REYNOLDS: *When and how did you know God had called you into pastoral ministry?*

WAGNER: In my sophomore year as a biology major at Union College, sitting in the back row of a chemistry class, I was bored. Suddenly, I felt as though I was rising up above the classmates sitting on either side of me. I looked at them to see if they



Gary Wagner is retiring effective January 31, 2019, after 43 years of ministry.

were surprised at what was happening. They seemed not to notice that I was looking down at them. A voice said very distinctly, "You don't belong here." Then I was set back down in my seat. After class, I went to the church and found a quiet place to sit and pray and cry. I knew God was calling me to something. I surrendered to whatever He wanted. That began the process of changing my major from biology to theology.

REYNOLDS: *What's been your biggest joy in ministry?*

WAGNER: My biggest joy has been working with university students (through Public Campus Ministry). On Friday nights, Deena and

I invited them to our home. She made bread and I made a pot (or two) of soup. After we ate and visited, we gathered for a Bible study on any topic they wanted to study. We all learned so much and grew so close.

REYNOLDS: *Knowing what you know now, what would you say to a new minister?*

WAGNER: Do a lot of building—be sure that you build a strong personal worship schedule for yourself and stick to it. Pray more, study more, listen to God more, relate more to your spouse, and visit your members.

REYNOLDS: *What's your strategy for consistent Bible reading and prayer?*

WAGNER: Get up early enough in the morning and begin immediately to pray. It was when I started to pray for an hour in the morning that my life and ministry really started to make sense and make a difference to me, in my family, and in the church. I keep some kind of writing pad and pencil beside me and listen. When God speaks to me, I write it down. If not, I will forget it. I do the same with reading the Bible after I pray. This is not sermon prep time. It is devotional time. Of course, much of it will get into sermons in the future.

REYNOLDS: *What one book, other than the Bible, has most influenced your life?*

WAGNER: THE GREAT CONTROVERSY is among the most insightful books. I sold it as a colporteur before I read it. I knew what the sales canvas said about it, and it caused me to want to read it. I guess I sold myself on it. The prophecy, the history, the future intrigue—all fascinated me. It showed me the intimate role God was playing in the plan of salvation, and in my own life.

The next phase of Wagner's post-retirement ministry is open to the leading of the Holy Spirit. We thank God for Gary and Deena Wagner and the blessing they have brought to the Lord's work.

—Reynolds Rodriguez, communication director, New York Conference

Northeastern Conference Welcomes New Treasurer

Following an extensive search process, the Northeastern Conference Executive Committee named Robert Chandler to serve as treasurer of the Northeastern Conference. Chandler currently serves as associate treasurer for the South Central Conference, headquartered in Nashville, Tennessee. Prior to that assignment, he served the New Jersey Conference for nine years as associate treasurer.

Chandler graciously accepted the call from Northeastern Conference and looks forward to somewhat of a homecoming. Originally from the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, Chandler migrated to the United States at a young age, and his family settled in Queens, New York.



Robert Chandler is the new treasurer of Northeastern Conference.

In his formative years, he attended what was known as the Springfield

Gardens church before heading off to Oakwood College (now Oakwood

University) and obtaining a bachelor's degree in business administration with a concentration in accounting. Following graduation, Chandler worked in corporate America for nearly three decades, mostly in the state of Texas, before entering denominational service in 2008.

Chandler has been married to the former Rose M. Goldsborough for 22 years and they have seven children. The Northeastern Conference administrators cordially welcome Chandler as he serves the Northeastern Conference family in this capacity. He assumes the office on January 1, 2019.

—Daniel Honoré, president, Northeastern Conference

Solid Rock Church Youth Serve Far Rockaway Community

The Pathfinder and Adventurer clubs at Solid Rock church in Queens, New York, joined other members of the church on November 22, 2018, to pack containers of food for distribution to the community.

Every year at Thanksgiving time, the youth at Solid Rock church undertake a community service project. The project entails cooking, preparing, packaging, and delivering hot meals to families, homeless shelters, and other facilities around the

community where such meals are appreciated.

This project helps to teach the youth the importance of giving back. "This instills a sense of civic responsibility in the youth and helps them embrace the joy of giving," said Lawrence Brown, the church's pastor. "It also reminds them that the universe does not revolve around them or their electronic devices, and that we must always have a willingness to be of service for the Lord."

—Nadya Jones, communication director, Solid Rock church



Solid Rock church youth package food to distribute to the community during the Thanksgiving season.

Members Participate in Workshop on Brain Health

The Golden Jet Setters of the Berea church in Dorchester, Massachusetts, held a workshop titled “Exercises for a Healthy Brain.” The workshop was another in a series of community-awareness activities designed to combat the debilitating effects of Alzheimer’s. Karin Schon, Ph.D., assistant professor in the Department of Anatomy and Neurobiology at Boston University’s School of Medicine, was the guest lecturer.

Schon gave a brief description and history of Alzheimer’s and the risk factors associated with this disease (cardiovascular problems, lifestyle, genetics, inflammation, and more), highlighting these issues with a PowerPoint presentation. She shared the importance of exercise and its benefit in reducing stress, improving memory, reducing slips and falls in older adults, and how it can be an antidepressant.

Four doctoral students accompanied Schon; two

“The presenters suggested that older adults get at least 150 minutes of moderate exercise per week, which should include muscle strengthening and balancing.”

of them discussed and explained research they are conducting in the area of exercises for the brain in older adults and the need for more participants. The students divided the attendees into several groups and rotated them through five different stations for a set period of time. They performed aerobics, balancing exercises, and strength building. The presenters suggested that older adults

get at least 150 minutes of moderate exercise per week, which should include muscle strengthening and balancing.

This interactive workshop was sponsored in collaboration with the Massachusetts Alzheimer’s Disease Research Center, Boston University Alzheimer’s Disease Center, and the Jet Setters of Berea church.

—Barbara J. Defoe, member, Berea church (Boston)

14 Baptized Following Evangelistic Series



Candidates prepare for baptism at the Dorchester Portuguese Mission.

The Dorchester Portuguese Mission is growing at a fast pace. With the blessing of God and the work of the Holy Spirit, the congregation is fulfilling its mission of proclaiming the third angel’s message. Luiz H. Sousa, the mission’s pastor, challenged the leaders and members to start small groups in their homes to reach their neighbors, relatives, and friends. As a result, five small groups were established and have been actively working since then.

During the week of October 19-27, 2018, Raimundo Goncalves, evangelism director of the Southeast Union in Brazil, with the support of Sousa, conducted a series of meetings and baptized 14 people. Very soon the Northeastern Conference administrators will organize the mission as a church.

—Marcos Seifert, pastor, Taunton Portuguese church

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Rutland Church Hosts Thanksgiving Fundraiser

The Rutland church hosted its annual Thanksgiving dinner on Saturday evening, November 17, 2018. The church's dining hall, decorated in fall colors, served as the venue for the event. Church members took great delight in preparing their tastiest vegetarian dishes for the three-course dinner that included a combination of traditional Thanksgiving cuisine along with a holiday loaf, which served as a turkey substitute for the church's largely vegetarian congregation.

Many visitors attended, and every available seat in the dining hall was filled. Before dinner, the church's new pastor, David Kim, went around the dining hall greeting everyone. A spirit of joy and thanksgiving permeated the room as guests and



Daniel, one of the servers at the Rutland church's Thanksgiving dinner, shares juice with the guests.

members conversed at their tables while enjoying the food.

The highlight of the evening was the service. The younger children of the

church, wearing personalized aprons, were the evening's servers. They went from table to table, attentively serving drinks to guests and, after the meal was over,

cleared the plates. The little ones were rewarded for their hard work by generous donations from the diners. Over \$700 was collected.

The church donated the proceeds to the WSYB Christmas Fund. WSYB is a local radio station that, since 1972, has sponsored a Christmas Fund for the community. The Rutland church has contributed to the fund for several years. Each year, the WSYB Christmas Fund, through the recommendations of schools, churches, and other community-based organizations, provide thousands of dollars in Christmas gifts to families in need in Rutland County.

—Karrie Etzler, communication secretary, Rutland church

Washington Church Celebrates Communion



For the third year in a row, visitors to the historic Washington church in New Hampshire can participate in an annual Communion service.

In 2017, Ken Brummel, site director for the historic Washington church in New Hampshire, and his wife, Marsha, decided to offer a Communion service at the church. They had no idea when Communion was last held at that location, which is now a historic site rather than a church with a congregation. However long since the last Communion, it seemed like the blessing of Communion was overdue.

They gathered supplies, baked the bread, and on the Sabbath morning of the service, they heated water to take to the church for foot washing, rather than relying on the cold water from the creek, which was the usual tradition.

"As we arrived at the church, it hit me that perhaps we hadn't really thought the thing through. Who was going to do all the things that needed to be done for a Communion service?" said Marsha Hammond-Brummel. "I pictured myself running around serving bread and juice, dipping up water in basins, and serving in every capacity. For a moment I wanted to turn around and go home!"

After thinking the problem through, she made an announcement at the end of Sabbath School asking for people who were willing to serve in the Communion service. There were about 50 people in the congregation

that day. “To my delight, enough volunteered so that every task was taken care of. I felt such relief and joy that once the tasks were assigned, I was able to sit in my pew and enjoy the service while others ministered to me and the rest of the congregation,” Marsha said.

In 2018, they again had a Communion Sabbath. This

time, Marsha typed up a list of the tasks that needed to be done and invited the guests who attended to sign up. Again, there were enough people to serve; the work was taken care of—from passing out the emblems to special music. And many of the visitors said they felt honored to not only participate, but to serve.

“For me, there is something special about having Communion in the historic Washington church and meeting God there as so many have over the years of the great Adventist movement,” Marsha said. “We will again have a Communion Sabbath in the coming season. It will be on the third Sabbath of July—July 20,

2019. Please consider joining us! We will bring the warm water, juice, and bread. And we’ll take care of the towels afterward. But there will be a place for all who will serve or be served.”

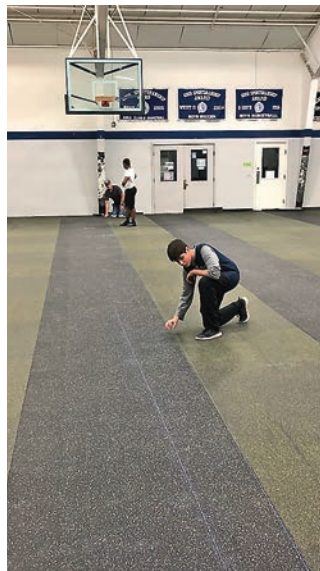
—Information provided by Marsha Hammond-Brummel, volunteer tour guide, Washington church

Pine Tree Academy Undertakes Significant Gymnasium Restoration Project

Pine Tree Academy (PTA), the flagship school of the Northern New England Conference, has for several years grappled with what to do with its aging gymnasium. Problems with the building range from a cement floor that has resisted all attempts to coat or finish it, to small leaks in the ceiling.

Given Maine’s long winters that require indoor athletics, as well as the heavy schedule of events that use the gymnasium as a venue, the building is subjected to heavy use as well as a punishing environment. The whole building is showing signs of age and wear, and yet the school is not currently in the position to replace it outright.

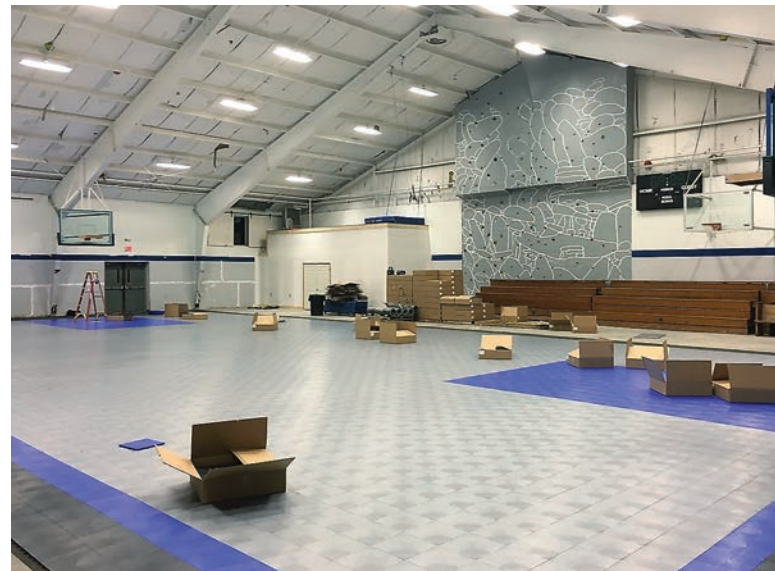
After considerable thought and investigation, the school launched an ambitious restoration project aimed at restoring all functionality to the gym and extending its life. According to principal Brendan Krueger, the “Gym Restoration Project” includes installing a new flooring system, new drainage, some wall replacement,



Workers lay down the soft, impact-absorbing base layer of the new gym floor.

new bleachers, new paint, and upgraded insulation. “The renovations will provide a safer environment for our students and constituents,” said Krueger. “This means no more peeling paint and no dust. And with the new flooring, there will be less of a chance of slipping and sliding. It will also be more forgiving than the current concrete floor, if a student falls during an athletic event.”

“This is an important project,” said Krueger. “We



Workers affix the playing surface of the floor in the Pine Tree Academy gymnasium.

have many members of the community that attend our concerts, plays, and sporting events, and pretty much the gym is what they see. It is our public face. And for our school family, this is where we meet and interact. It is the center of school life.”

Krueger hopes to have the work, which has already started, done by the spring of 2019. The school has launched a \$75,000 fundraising campaign and has already raised more than \$52,000. When the

project is complete, the gym will not only be safer, brighter, cleaner, and more functional, it will also be more aesthetically pleasing and “more intentionally PTA,” as Krueger puts it. “The restored gym,” says Krueger, “will show everyone who enters that we care about our students and want to provide for them a school of which they can be proud.”

—Scott Christiansen, communication director, Northern New England Conference

Pleasant Street Church Honors Men and Women in the Military

Pleasant Street Adventist Youth Ministries (AYM) recognized those who have served and are currently serving in the armed forces during a full day of military-focused events on November 10, 2018, at the Pleasant Street church in Worcester, Massachusetts. The day culminated with a special National Service Organization (NSO) program in the afternoon, hosted jointly with the Massachusetts Adventist Youth and Young Adult Federation (MAYYA) from the Southern New England Conference (SNEC).

Pleasant Street Pathfinders and Adventurers hosted the El Shaddai Pathfinders from the Worcester Central Spanish church and other honored guests for the NSO program.

The Pleasant Street youth and young adults, dressed in army-like camouflage pants and black T-shirts, led out in the morning worship service with an emphasis on the armor of God as described in Ephesians 6:10-18. The afternoon NSO program began with the Pleasant Street Doves of Peace Drum Corps and SNEC Medical Cadet Corps presenting the colors. El Shaddai Pathfinders provided special music.

David Dennis, SNEC president and a former Marine, shared his testimony, along with words of encouragement and spiritual counsel for those considering joining the military. Levarr Brewster, former Army combat medic, who



During the Sabbath worship service, Pleasant Street church youth and young adults salute those serving in the military.

served in Iraq, and Master Sergeant Roy Aylward of the Massachusetts Army National Guard and Reserve shared personal stories of their time in service and why they joined the military. Aylward, who has been in the military for 42 years and currently serves as a victim's advocate in the Military Family Program office, presented the Pleasant Street church with a certificate of appreciation for their support of men and women serving in the military, as well as a new American flag.

MAYYA staff Elaynel Rivera and Murielle Gelin hosted panel discussions and question and answer sessions for those considering enlisting for military service. Panel guests included David Dennis; Kristy Hodson, associate pastor at Stoneham church in Stoneham, Massachusetts, who also served in the



Photos: Mero Mgeri

El Shaddai Pathfinders from the Worcester Central Spanish church provide special music during the afternoon program honoring veterans at the Pleasant Street church.

Navy; and Milton Marquez, SNEC Youth Ministries director.

The National Service Organization, a division of the Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries, aids Adventist youth in understanding and dealing with issues related to the military. The NSO also provides spiritual support and information for

anyone who is anticipating or actively serving in the military. The Seventh-day Adventist Church advocates a non-combatant position, but does not require it. For more information, visit auyouth.com/nationalserviceorganization.

—Communication department,
Pleasant Street church

Hudson Church End-of-Year Highlights

Family Fun Day

Successful events, such as the Southern New England Conference's Family Fun Day, combined with a generous spirit of sharing lessons learned are great opportunities for local churches, like the Hudson church, that have a passion for wanting to get to know their community. On August 26, 2018, after months of prayer, dreaming, and cost analysis, the Hudson church members saw the results of their labor in organizing their own Family Fun Day. They hoped it would be a non-threatening environment in which to get to know their neighbors, who may not come to church.

All activities were free and included kids' games, live music, a bounce castle, face painting, tug-of-war, arts and crafts, animals to pet, and more. Also available was a table with baked goods representing many ethnicities provided by the church family, vegan food sold for a small fee to help offset the cost of the event, and a table with free health literature.

For the church families who volunteered, the day was a success. One woman said, "Anything this church does is wonderful—we're going!" It was a day of meeting new friends and visiting with old friends who have attended other outreach programs organized by the Personal Ministries department. With the Lord "on board," the church accomplished its goal of making



The children enjoy playing tug-of-war at the Hudson church Family Fun Day.

friends and having a day of family fun.

16 Graduate from HIStory Study Series

Sixteen people gathered on September 8, 2018, at the Hudson church in Hudson, Massachusetts, with hugs and smiles, sang the song "Bearers of Light," prayed, and received their own flash drive and timeline scroll after completing the HIStory study series. The HIStory study series created by Mark Gagnon, pastor of the Leominster and Athol churches, is an alternative to traditional Bible studies.

Back in 2016, Cheri Drew, a member of the Hudson church, attended a personal ministries training event organized by the Southern New England Conference where she was introduced to the HIStory study series. That evening, Cheri shared her interest in this outreach method with her husband, Jim.

They both decided to attend the training program in 2016 presented by Gagnon for 20 consecutive weeks at the Leominster

church. At graduation, they received the gift of a flash drive with all the program slides, and a timeline scroll, beginning with the Tree of Life in Genesis and ending with the Tree of Life in Revelation.

In 2017, after much prayer, the Drews, impressed that the Lord was leading them, invited the Hudson church family to participate in the HIStory presentations every other Sabbath after lunch.

During the year of study, the group became tight, supported one another during life challenges, rejoiced for prayers answered, established new and deeper friendships, and even experienced a birth.

Now that the program is completed, it is time for the graduates to share HIStory with others. Hudson members are sharing HIStory, taking the words of Ellen G. White in *EARLY WRITINGS*, p. 61, to heart, "Messengers should speed their way to them as fast as possible, to give them the light. Many all around us only need to have their prejudices removed and the evidences of our present position spread out before them from the Word, and they will joyfully receive the present truth."

—Cheryl McMaster, communication coordinator, Hudson church



Pictured are some of the graduates who completed the HIStory study series at the Hudson church.



AdventSource Becomes a North American Division Institution

AdventSource, the official ministry supply center for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America, became a North American Division (NAD) institution on November 9, 2018, following a vote by the NAD Corporation Board.

With this vote, AdventSource joins Seminars Unlimited, Pacific Press Publishing Association, Oakwood University, and Christian Record Services as NAD institutions.

“AdventSource is an integral and indispensable provider of ministry resources and services for the North American Division. Their call center and website have become the place to find everything ‘Adventist!’” said Debra Brill, NAD vice president for ministries. “We are delighted to welcome AdventSource into the family of NAD institutional providers.”

“In 1992, when Tom Evans came to the Mid-America Union, one of the first things he said to me was, ‘We need to make AdventSource a North American Division organization.’ We became a Seventh-day Adventist denominational institution in 1997 and are excited to become an NAD organization in 2018,” said Brad Forbes, president of AdventSource. “AdventSource is proud to be part of the NAD and we look forward to helping churches in this division do great things for God.”

Located in Lincoln, Nebraska, AdventSource’s mission is to provide local church leaders with quality



AdventSource, located in Lincoln, Nebraska, is the official ministry supply center for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America.

Christian resources and excellent customer service. AdventSource sells more than 5,000 products designed to empower local church ministry. AdventSource’s selection includes leadership books, seminars, Vacation Bible School programs, Pathfinder and Adventurer club supplies, and more. In addition, AdventSource provides support for Adventist Church Connect, the NAD’s network of websites available at no charge to churches in North America. AdventSource also handles registration for many Adventist church events.

AdventSource began in 1982 as a partnership between the General Conference Youth Ministries Department and Union College. First named North American Youth Ministries (NAYM),

the goal was to establish a central distribution center for Pathfinder club supplies in North America and provide employment for college students. In 1997, the ministry was rebranded as AdventSource, incorporated, and obtained denominational status under the Mid-America Union.

Today, AdventSource employs 25 full-time staff and 30 students who work part-time between classes. AdventSource’s office includes a call center and teams responsible for resource development, accounting, technology, production, and shipping.

A continuous resource development process allows AdventSource to create and distribute resources that equip pastors and local church leaders for ministry. Whatever ministries are happening at a local church,

AdventSource has something to support and encourage those ministries to grow. To learn more, visit www.AdventSource.org.

—Source: AdventSource



A student worker picks up an order in the warehouse at AdventSource.



Sunset Table

February 2019	1	8	15	22
Bangor, ME	4:44	4:54	5:04	5:14
Portland, ME	4:53	5:02	5:12	5:21
Boston, MA	4:59	5:08	5:17	5:26
South Lancaster, MA	5:01	5:10	5:19	5:28
Pittsfield, MA	5:07	5:17	5:26	5:35
Hartford, CT	5:07	5:16	5:24	5:33
Providence, RI	5:01	5:10	5:19	5:28
New York, NY	5:14	5:23	5:31	5:40
Albany, NY	5:07	5:17	5:26	5:35
Utica, NY	5:14	5:23	5:33	5:42
Syracuse, NY	5:18	5:27	5:36	5:45
Rochester, NY	5:23	5:33	5:42	5:51
Buffalo, NY	5:29	5:38	5:47	5:56
Keene, NH	5:00	5:10	5:19	5:28
Manchester, NH	4:57	5:06	5:16	5:25
Portsmouth, NH	4:54	5:03	5:13	5:22
Brattleboro, VT	5:02	5:11	5:20	5:29
Burlington, VT	5:00	5:10	5:20	5:30
Rutland, VT	5:02	5:11	5:21	5:30
Hamilton, Bda	5:52	5:58	6:04	6:10

Eastern
Standard Time

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NORTHEASTERN

The Northeastern Conference Global Prayer Line is open 24 hours a day for prayer and study. The telephone number for the prayer line is (641) 715-3660 and the access code is 888974#. For more information, visit the website at www.globalprayerministries.com.

NORTHERN NEW ENGLAND

Join the Northern New England Conference Morning Prayer Line from 6:00-7:00 a.m., call (605) 468-8026 (toll charges apply), access code 310654#. For more information, visit the website at www.nnecprayerministries.com.

OUT-OF-UNION

The Association of Seventh-day Adventist Librarians

invites all Adventist librarians and friends of libraries to attend the 39th annual conference in Silver Spring, Md., June 24-27. The conference will explore "Librarians Outside Libraries," with a special emphasis on what Adventist librarians are doing professionally outside their offices, such as collaboration, teaching, research, mentorship, and more. Papers, posters, and presentation proposals accepted at kvanarsdale@puc.edu by Feb. 15. For more information about the conference, visit www.asdal.org/conferences.

Save the Date: Uchee Pines Institute's 50th Anniversary, June 23-29. Speakers include Mark Finley and John Bradshaw. Ucheepines.org or (877) UCHEEPINES.

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EMPLOYMENT

UNION COLLEGE seeks Seventh-day Adventist, full-time nursing faculty member. Teaching and/or clinical

experience in medical-surgical nursing and pathophysiology preferred. Additional information can be found at www.ucollege.edu/faculty-openings. Send CV and references to Dr. Nicole Orian, nicole.orian@ucollege.edu.

UNION COLLEGE invites applicants for a computing teaching faculty position beginning Fall 2019. Qualified applicants will have a master's degree and excellent communication skills, and should be a committed member of the Adventist Church. Ph.D., teaching/business experience desirable. Find more information at www.ucollege.edu/faculty-openings or contact Lisa Forbes at lisa.l.forbes@ucollege.edu.

UNION COLLEGE, Lincoln, Nebraska, seeks applicants for Director of Records/Registrar. The director will ensure the integrity, accuracy and security of academic and educational records of students and ensure compliance with regulatory agencies. Contact Dr. Frankie Rose at frankie.rose@ucollege.edu, or call (402) 486-2501 for more information.

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Contact information for conferences is in the shaded box located on the bottom right of page 23.

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The Official Publication for the Constituents
of the Seventh-day Adventist® Church in the
Northeast United States and Bermuda

Established January 1, 1902

Atlantic Union Conference
400 Main Street, South Lancaster, MA 01561
Phone (978) 368-8333, Fax (978) 368-7948
Website: www.atlantic-union.org

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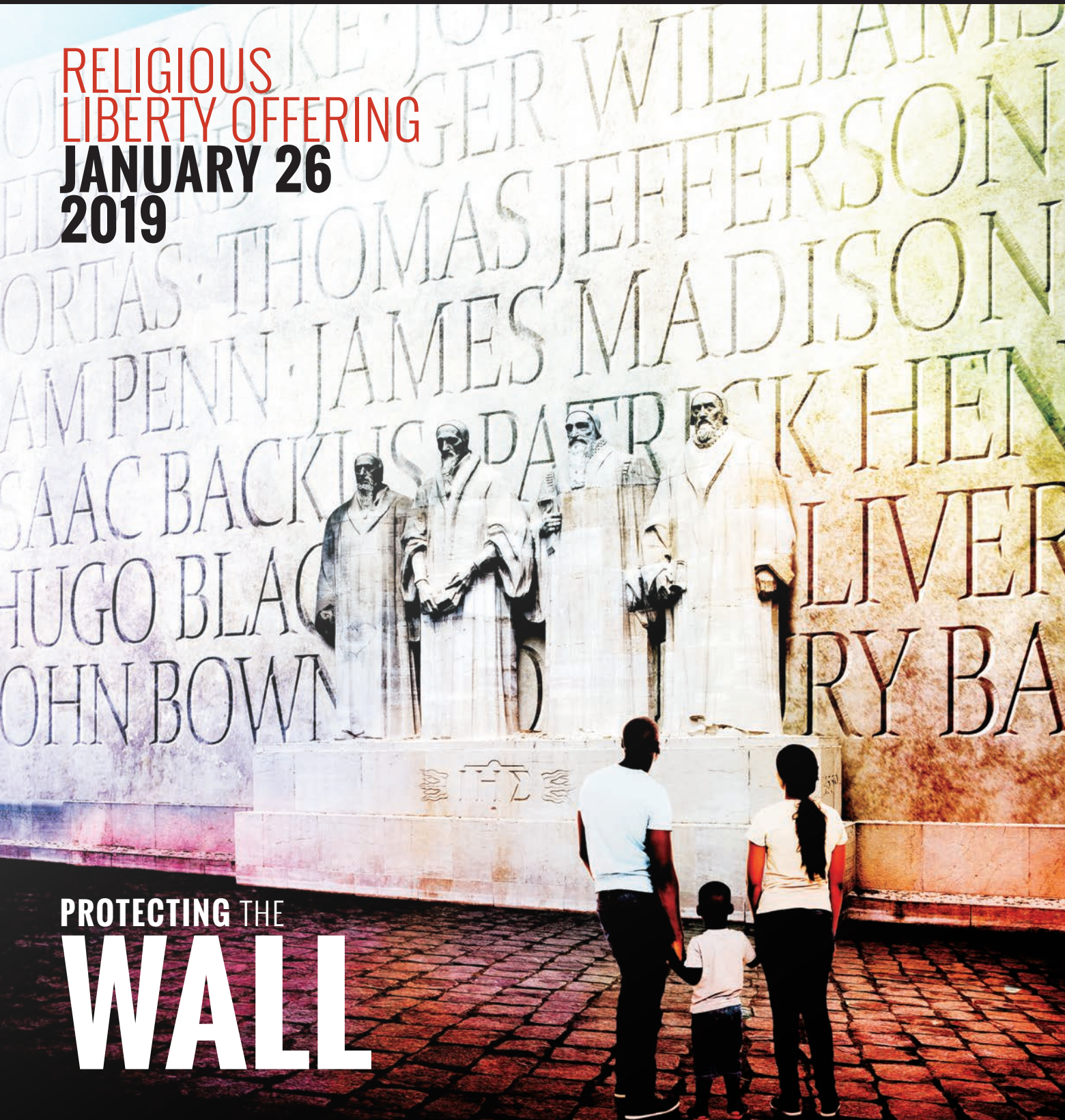
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