Inspirational Text

"Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity."

- 1 Timothy 4:12 (ESV)

Prayer - Petition & Praise

Japan Disaster: The tragedy of the earthquake and tsunami in Japan has reached more than just those living in the area where it happened. Let us keep all of the lives and families that were affected in our prayers.

Caesar Robinson: The South Eastern Conference Youth Director has been experiencing serious medical challenges. Caesar and his family appreciate your prayers.

Student Missionaries: Many young adults are serving overseas, in areas that have been affected by the recent political disputes and natural disasters.

Bible Summit: CYE’s first Bible Summit, focused on revival and reformation by teaching skills in Bible study and how the Spirit of Prophecy integrates with the study of Scripture, was held on March 25-26. If your conference, like Indiana, wishes to host such an event, contact Jose Bourget.

Personnel Changes

Baraka Muganda: The former General Conference Youth Director has been reassigned as the new Director of Discipleship for the Pacific Union Conference.

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Part of the CYE

411 news is a resource provided by the Center for Youth Evangelism
Ministries Director has accepted the position of Vice President for Ministry at Washington Adventist University, in Takoma Park, Maryland.

**Robert Hines:** On July 1, after serving as the Youth Director for the Southern New England Conference, Robert will be transitioning into his new position as the Associate Youth Ministries Director for the Florida Conference.

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**Ministry Seekers**

**Geert Tap:** Has 14 years of experience working in a private multi-national college, is a minister of religion at heart and fluent in English and Dutch. Interested in pastoring, chaplaincy, or leading worship and is seeking a challenge. More info: Contact [Geert Tap](mailto:).

**Omar Miranda:** With a Masters in Counseling, and over 20 years of ministerial experience, Omar is the founder of Abundant Life Ministries. He is fluent in Spanish. More info: Contact [Omar Miranda](mailto:) , or see his column, Miranda Writes, at [InsightMagazine.org](http://www.insightmagazine.org).

Experienced youth pastors/Bible teachers/chaplains who wish to remain private as they seek for new ministry opportunities can contact [Ron Whitehead](mailto:), or call the CYE office at (269) 471-8380.

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**Ministry Openings**

**College Heights:** SDA church in Lacombe, Alberta, Canada is seeking an energetic pastor who is passionate about young people for a youth pastor position. The position focuses on ages 0-15 and would be involved with Pathfinders & Kids-In-Discipleship. More info: Contact [Pastor Ron Sydenham](mailto:).

**Public Campus Ministry:** Adventist Christian Fellowship, on the campus of the University of Tennessee-Kentucky, is looking for an Assistant Chaplain for the 2011-2012 school year. The ideal applicant is familiar with public campus ministry. More info: Contact [Michaela Lawrence Jeffery](mailto:).

**Youth Ministries Co-Director:** One-year position with food, lodging & stipend provided. Will be part of a team leading out in social and spiritual activities for youth. Includes work on secondary and grade school campuses. More info: Contact Pastor Jim at (208) 249-0086, or email Marie Stratton.

**Youth Ministries Taskforce:** Three-month position with food, lodging & stipend provided. Will be part of a team leading out in social and spiritual activities for youth. More info: Contact Pastor Jim at (208) 249-0086, or email Marie Stratton.

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**Book Review**

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The Case For a Creator by Lee Strobel: Kyle Littell’s* review of this book can be found on CYE’s Book Reviews page.

*Kyle Littell is a third year medical student at Loma Linda University. Kyle has become very interested in the creation vs. evolution debate, especially because of the growing belief in Theistic Evolution.

Adventist Resources

Camp Notes: Career camp specialist, Ken Veal, now offers camp consulting to the organized camping industry. More info: Visit CampConsult.com, or sign up for the free Camp Notes newsletter.

Advent Hymnal Pro: A new iPhone app, provided by the South England Conference Music Dept., containing the entire SDA hymnal. It offers a quick reference directly to the hymn and access to professionally recorded mp3 tracks and music score. More info: Visit MovinPixel.com.

SDA News App: Created by Jader Feijo, an Adventist artist, this iPhone & Android app provides access to articles, pictures and videos from around the world, allowing you to always know what God is working on around the globe. More info: Visit the iTunes or Android app store.

Life In Color: Tony Wuerfel, a young adult, Adventist teacher and worship leader, shares how God has been at work in his life. An inspiring devotional for youth groups, Sabbath school classes, or small groups. More info: Visit BlueprintForJonas.com.

Revival and Reformation: A new website created by the Seventh-day Adventist Church. This site offers resources, devotionals, and an iPhone App, allowing viewers to learn more about what "Revival & Reformation" means to the SDA Church. More info: Visit RevivalAndReformation.org.

Non-Denominational Resources

Online Photo Gallery: If you have a small website with limited technical support, you may want to consider secondary photo sites like these for people to view your photos: Flickr.com, Photobucker.com, and Picasa.google.com.

Reach Out, Don’t Freak Out: A 4-week small group video curriculum to help transform evangelism from something intimidating and scary into something instinctive, natural and rewarding. More info: Visit SimplyYouthMinistry.com.

motion backgrounds, 50+ Bibles and extensive media playback with a clean, intuitive workspace, enabling Mac or PC users to create beautiful presentations in minutes. More info: Visit MediaShout.com, or call 888-829-7168.

**Student Devotionals:** Doug Fields & Josh Griffin have written a compilation of topics worth some consideration and experimentation entitled *Live Large. Be Different. Shine Bright: 12 Contagious Qualities for Healthy Relationships.* More info: Visit SimplyYouthMinistry.com.

**Joe Shirt:** Customize T-shirts for your youth group, retreats, mission trips, etc. All orders receive free shipping. More info: Visit JoeShirt.com.

**Research**

As a partner with Roger Dudley and the Institute of Church Ministry, CYE will be featuring research in the area of youth and young adult ministry.

Some significant themes that ICM gathered from the comprehensive book *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers* by Christian Smith and Melinda Lundquist Denton:

- No one characterization of American adolescents can be accurate, since there is such a wide range of spiritual experiences.
- A significant number of teenagers do find religion and spiritual matters to be important in their lives.
- Among the more religious teenagers, their faith is not simply a matter of identity, but they actively practice their religion both in private devotional life and in public or corporate behaviors.
- Contrary to some general perceptions, most adolescents are not “spiritual seekers.” They do not consider themselves “spiritual, but not religious.”
- While many teens are intelligent about their faith, a significant number are inarticulate and confused over what they really believe.
- Many factors compete for attention in the lives of contemporary adolescents. In an attempt to find balance, teenagers try to overlap religious activities with other areas, such as family, school, social events, friendships, etc.
- In spite of outside influences, parents and other adults continue to have a great effect on the religious choices of youth, either for good or for ill.
- Adolescents to whom religion is important tend to perform better and to have more success in other areas of their lives.

*This book reports on the National Study of Youth & Religion. 3,290 teenagers between the ages of 13-17 were interviewed.*
IGNITION Summit: April 4-6, 2011, in Dallas/Ft. Worth, Texas. Calling all young adults and those who minister with them. Experience best practices, equipping seminars, dynamic worship, and affirming relationships. More info: Visit ignitionblog.wordpress.com. (Sponsored by the NAD Young Adult Ministries Dept.)

iServe Youth Congress: April 6-10, 2011, in Orlando, Florida. The theme, "iServe," reflects the emphasis on youth engaged in service to others for Christ, with inspiring worship, empowering workshops, and a multitude of service opportunities. More info: Visit iServeMovement.org. (Sponsored by BAYDA)

Proclame sa Grace: April 9-16, 2011, in Cergy-Pontoise, France. The theme of this French youth festival will be "Proclaim His Grace." More info: Email jaffn@adventiste.org, or visit the event page. (Sponsored by the Northern France Conference)


Standout: April 15-17, 2011, in Berrien Springs, Michigan. A Public High School Retreat, held on the campus of Andrews University. More info: Contact Andrea Jakobsons, or visit adventistyouth.org/standout. (Sponsored by Andrews University, CYE, and the Lake Union Conference Youth Department)

iChange Youth Congress: April 21-25, 2011, in Telford, British Isles. This annual event inspires and motivates attendees to share the Gospel in new and innovative ways to reach those in their generation. More info: Visit the BUC iChange event page. (Sponsored by the British Union Conference)

Francophone Convention for Youth: June 1-5, 2011, in Montreal, Canada. Intended to gather young adults and their leaders coming from all French territories across the world. More info: Contact Hebert Valiame, Quebec Conference Youth Director. (Sponsored by the GC, NAD & Church of Canada)

180 Symposium: October 18-20, 2011, in Berrien Springs, Michigan. Addressing the most pressing issues in Adventism, the 180 Symposium will be focusing this year on "Reaching the 2nd & 3rd Generation Youth & Young Adults." More info: Visit AdventistYouth.org/180. (Sponsored by CYE & the Lake Union Conference Youth Department)

Youth Leadership Development: October 21-23, 2011, Berrien Springs, Michigan. Over 50 hours of youth and young adult ministry seminars by specialist trainers. This event will take place at Andrews University. More info: Visit AdventistYouth.org/yld. (Sponsored by the Lake Union Conference Youth Department & CYE)
the One project: October 31 - November 1, 2011, in Helsinki, Finland. Celebrating the supremacy of Jesus in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. More info: Contact Japhet De Oliveira, or visit the1project.org.

Cruise With a Mission 2011: December 11-18, 2011, from Tampa, Florida. Join CYE for the launch of the “Family Edition” in addition to their young adult annual cruise and mission trip in one! More info: Contact Jose Bourget or visit AdventistYouth.org/cwm. (Sponsored by CYE & the Lake Union Conference Youth Department)

the One project: February 13-14, 2012, in Seattle, Washington. Celebrating the supremacy of Jesus in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. More info: Contact Japhet De Oliveira, or visit the1project.org.

Non-Denominational Events


Live It!: July 20-24, 2011, at Indiana Wesleyan University in Marion, Indiana. Live It! combines experiential worship and track programming, creating a spiritual catalyst for high school youth to live their unique lives for Christ. More info: Visit youthunlimited.org/LiveIt.

MOVE Summer 2011: A 5-day high school only summer event helping you mobilize and equip your students for Kingdom impact. This event takes place at various dates and locations this summer. More info: Visit CIY.com/MOVE.


Planet Wisdom: Through an in-depth look at God's specific attributes, Planet Wisdom events provide a truly unique weekend experience for students to discover practical ways they can change the world by becoming more like Him. Event locations and times vary. More info: Visit PlanetWisdom.com, or call (888) 346-4179.

Acquire the Fire: 27 hours set apart to give your teens a life-transforming experience with Christ. ATF tours occur periodically throughout the year at various locations. More info: Visit ATFTour.com.
**Dare2Share:** The 2010-2011 "un" Tour, taking place in various locations on various dates, provides training conferences to inspire, mobilize and prepare teens to share Jesus with their friends. More info: Visit dare2share.org/untour.

**Spanish Resources & Events**

**Breakthrough:** Jose Rojas' evangelistic event, which took place in Tacoma, Washington on November 12-20, 2010, is now available online and will be broadcast this month on the Hope Channel & Esperanza TV. More info: Visit the North Pacific Union Conference Resources page.

**Pathfinder Camporees**

**Inter-America Division:** April 19-23, 2011 in Mexico City, Mexico. This will be the 3rd IAD International Pathfinder Camporee. More info: Visit the IAD Camporee website.

**Atlantic Union:** May 5-7, 2011, at Burlington State Park in Charlestown, Rhode Island. The camporee theme will be "Courage to Shine." More info: Visit the AUC Camporee website.

**Euro-Africa Division:** August 1-8, 2011, Bassano Romano, Roma, Italy. Theme: "Faith Adventure - Walking With Paul." More info: Visit the EUD Camporee website.

**Lake Union:** September 15-18, 2011, at Berrien Springs Fairgrounds. The theme will be "Finish Strong." More info: Contact Craig Harris, LUC Camporee Director, at charris@misda.org or (616) 834-2372, or visit the LUC Camporee website.

**Miscellaneous**

**WAU at AUC:** On March 10, a memorandum signed by the administrators of Washington Adventist University (formerly CUC) and Atlantic Union College states that they will be working toward WAU providing higher education on the campus of AUC. More info: Read the statement, or visit the AUC website.

**U.S. Graduates Moving in With Mom & Dad:**

- According to a 2010 report, 37% of young adults (age 18-29) are either unemployed or out of the workforce. *(Source: Pew Research Center)*
- Since 1980, the number of 25- to 34-year-olds living with their parents has nearly doubled. *(Source: Pew Research Center)*
- 85% of students plan to return home this year after graduation *(Source: Twentysomething)*

**Talent Search:** Three Angel Media is conducting a talent search for males & females between the ages of 18-60. To
apply, attach a headshot, contact info, and a resume, or your experience, interests, and talents, and send them to ThreeAngelMedia@live.com.

**Earthquake in New Zealand:** At 12:52pm on February 22, Christchurch, New Zealand was hit by a 6.3 earthquake. To read David Asscherick's account of the event, visit the ARISE news page.

**Adventism Growing:** A recent USA Today article reported that Adventists are growing by 2.5% in North America, while other church denominations are declining. But aren't we growing more? More info: Read the USA Today article.

**Quote:** "I'm a Christian, I believe in God, I believe that Jesus died on a cross for my sins. I believe that I have a relationship and I'm able to talk to him and really, He's the reason I'm here, so I definitely have to remember that." - Justin Beieber, First Step 2 Forever: My Story.

**La Sierra University Statement:** In an open letter released March 9, La Sierra University President, Randall Wisbey, acknowledged a need for the University to present and support the Adventist view of creation more strongly. More info: Read the open letter, or visit La Sierra’s website.

**Twitter for Texters:** A simple way for people to get information in real-time from Twitter without having a Twitter account of their own. By texting "follow [insert TwitterName]" to 40404, you can immediately begin receiving Tweets for that account. *(Source: AdventSource)*

**Corrections**

No items this month

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Spam
Not spam
Forget previous vote
David Asscherick shares his eyewitness account of the 6.3 quake.

A deadly earthquake (6.3 magnitude) struck Christchurch, New Zealand yesterday at 12:51 p.m. Reports are that the Central Business District (CBD) received the brunt of it.

They are correct. I should know, I was there.

My family and I have been here in New Zealand since January 25th conducting the What Does the Future Hold? Bible Prophecy Seminar. I was on the third story of our rental house—located in the heart of the CBD—preparing for the evening’s meeting when it happened. There was no warning, no indication, and no build-up. It happened instantly and violently. One second all was well and normal; the next the house was shaking wildly. My instant thought was, This building is going down, I’ve got to get out of here!

This is our rental in downtown Christchurch. I was in the room in the upper left-hand corner of the building. The visible patched cracks are from the earlier September 4th quake. I snapped this photo just after the earthquake.

Thankfully, my family had left an hour before to visit friends just outside the city, so I was alone in the house. As the house rocked, my mind was simultaneously flooded with thoughts and yet perfectly clear. It was entirely strange and indescribable, really. I raced down the stairs, the house rocking several feet side-to-side.

Seismologists and engineers would later comment that this earthquake, because of its relative shallowness, was far more "lateral, violent, and severe" in its movements than the September 4, 2010 quake (7.1 magnitude) that shook the city six months before. I can certainly confirm its "lateralness and violence!"

I tried to brace myself as I half-fell, half-ran down the stairs. When I reached the main floor, I quickly scanned and noticed that everything was on the floor—food, the TV, dishes, the microwave, everything. The noise was overwhelming, almost deafening. I raced down the second flight of stairs. Suddenly, seemingly miraculously, I was at the door of the house. Then, just as quickly as it had started, it stopped. The whole thing had lasted maybe 25 seconds.

I looked out and surveyed the street outside. There were people everywhere. Some were screaming, some crying, but all were plainly terrified. With a single glance I was immediately aware of the severity of what had just happened. I instinctively grabbed my camera and ran down the street toward Latimer Square.
struggled to take it all in: buckled streets, screaming alarms, collapsed buildings, glass and people everywhere. Dust and smoke filled the air. The streets were beginning to fill with water and liquefaction.

This building is directly across the street from our rental. As this picture was taken bricks and debris were still falling. Note the crushed vehicles; they were two of many.

I shot this photo just down the block from our rental. The look on the lady's face at the left of the photo tells the story. People were in complete shock and were running everywhere.

This is the main office of the hotel we are staying at. We were not in this building, but in a building
Our building remained standing, but this one was not so fortunate. The two rescue workers in the photo are extracting a woman from the rubble. She was rescued shortly after I shot this photo. There may have been others in the building rubble, I don’t know.

I made my way down the street toward Latimer Square (named for the martyr Hugh Latimer). There were already more than a thousand people gathered in the park in an effort to get away from the buildings. Just as I arrived at Latimer Square a large aftershock (5.0 magnitude) shook the ground sharply. Thousands of people let out a collective and terrible scream. It looked and felt like a scene straight out of the Second Coming. It is difficult to communicate the palpable confusion and fear that hung in the air. Some people were running here and there; others were just standing or sitting in a kind of bewildered resignation. What, really, can you do when the earth itself is heaving below you?

For some reason I don’t quite remember, I felt the need to run back to our rental. Perhaps I wanted to be sure it was locked. I genuinely can’t remember. As I arrived at my door an elderly lady walked out of the rental two doors down from ours. She looked uncertain and scared, but unhurt. I asked if she was alright and alone. She said she was. She told me her name was Toby and that she was vacationing from The Netherlands. I led her by the hand two blocks away back to Latimer Square. She was very grateful. I instructed her to sit down and wait, and to stay away from the buildings. She sat down, and I moved on through the thickening crowd.

This was the scene in Latimer Square Park when I first arrived there. Just after I took this photo a major aftershock (5.0 magnitude) occurred. People were gathering in the park to get away from buildings many of which had collapsed or were on fire or both.

I walked quickly to the other side of the square where it appeared the damage was the worst. It was fascinating and revealing to listen in on the various conversations. The mood was a mix of fear, confusion and relief. People were happy to be alive, but many had left others behind and wondered aloud about their welfare. I snapped a shot of a couple looking down Madras Street, a street I would soon learn was one of the worst hit.

This couple is looking down Madras Street, one of the worst hit areas of the CBD. I quickly snapped this
photo then made my way down Madras Street.

As I made my way down Madras Street people were streaming out of the CBD. I looked to my right and saw a mass of rubble where a six-story building had stood just 10 minutes before. I would later learn that this building was the Canterbury Television (CTV) Building and that as many as 100 people were either trapped or dead inside. This building was three short blocks from our rental. As I write this—about 21 hours after the quake—I am watching the news and have just learned that the rescuers are now moving on from the CTV Building because they believe that all inside are now dead from smoke inhalation. This is particularly tragic because the news had been reporting that rescue workers were receiving texts and phone calls from people trapped inside. A group of 15 were seen by a camera that had been lowered deep into the rubble. If the most recent reports are correct, they are all now dead.

This was the scene looking down Madras Street. People were filing rapidly out of the CBD. The black arrow points to where the six-story CTV Building had stood just minutes before.

This is a closer view of the CTV Building. If current reports are correct, around 100 people were killed in that building's collapse and also from later smoke inhalation. In the distance you can see many people making their way toward Latimer Square.
Another view of the ravaged CTV Building.

A picture of the CTV Building I found on the internet. The red building in the background is the same red building from the foreground of the above photos. The CTV building was reduced to a single story of rubble instantly. Some were rescued from the debris, but most, if reports are correct, were not so fortunate.

I had been receiving texts from my good mate Karl all along. Amazingly, he had managed to send the first one within about 30 seconds of the end of the original shaking. Thanks Karl! What a comfort it was to hear that he and his pregnant wife, Aska, were alright and safe! My thoughts turned to my own family. I had already tried to call them several times, but the mobile networks were busy. Predictably, everyone was trying to make a call and this over-burdened the system. I knew that Violeta and the kids were in a more residential area, and this gave me confidence that they were safe and well. Sure enough, about a half-hour after the quake, I received a call from Violeta. What a joy and a relief to hear her voice! Thank you, God! She assured me that she and the boys were alright, but scared. We agreed that the best plan was for me to walk to where they were, about 12 kilometers away. Driving was out of the question, as the roads were either buckled, riddled with holes and liquefaction, or clogged with cars.

I wanted to stay and help, but police and rescue workers were already cordoning off the area and moving people away from the damaged buildings. I had been praying in my mind non-stop since the quake had started. I would continue to pray, of course, but was unsure of what else I could do. About this time a friend called and informed me that the city center would be shut down and that it would be best to get out of the CBD while I still could. That was what I needed to hear, and decided to walk the 12 kilometers to Violeta and the boys.

I made my way back through Latimer Square where the number of people was now several thousand. People were beginning to settle down somewhat, but weeping and questioning could still be heard everywhere. I decided to first return to our rental to retrieve some water and food, my computer, and some clothes. As I walked my eye and camera continued to record the devastation. A toxic-smelling, smokey dust was increasingly filling the air. Helicopters buzzed overhead dumping water on the fires. Various injured people were being tended to by paramedics and rescue workers. I made my way to the main office of our rental property and saw the owner...
standing in the midst of a large group of people. I informed him that my family and I were safe and that, as far as I could tell, those in our area were all out of the buildings and safe. He thanked me, and I moved on.

When I got back to the rental I was understandably nervous about going in. The aftershocks, some of which were quite strong and very unnerving, had continued unabated since the major quake had ended. I stood at the door and made a mental list of what I actually needed. I prayed a quick prayer then raced upstairs and started gathering together the things from my mental list. It took me perhaps three minutes to do, but it felt like 30! I couldn’t get out of that building fast enough!

Our stuff was everywhere, completely littering the floor. Spilled food, broken appliances, books, camera gear, and clothes were everywhere. It was downright eery. It dawned me how fortunate I was to be alive and unhurt. Too, I was so thankful to God that my family had not been there. The violent lateral movements of the building could have seriously injured my boys who are much smaller than I am. I myself had been thrown around rather wildly; the boys would probably have fared much worse.

It’s interesting and telling just how little “stuff” actually matters when something like this happens. As I gathered some items from the mess the words of Jesus came forcefully to my mind: “Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses” (Luke 12:15). The first thing I grabbed was my Bible! I am, after all, a preacher! I had to have the Word of God! Everything else was secondary, the Bible was essential. I hope that this clarity stays with me in times of prosperity and ease as well!

Finally, I made my way out of the house. I loaded the backpack, checked the map, and started walking south down Barbados Street. The plan was to walk around the CBD, as it was being increasingly cordoned off. There was plenty more devastation to see along the way. Bricks, debris, crushed cars, water, and liquefaction filled the streets. So did people. Some were on bikes, some on skateboards, but most were, like me, just walking. The scene was perfectly apocalyptic complete with fires, collapsed buildings, thousands of terrified people, helicopters buzzing overhead, and toxic smoke-filled air.

As I walked my mind raced. I thought about those who were still trapped and struggling. I thought about the aftershocks and hoped they would stop. I thought about the rescue workers. I thought about the evangelistic meetings we were in the middle of. Many decisions for baptism had already been made. We had been getting between 300-500 people attending nightly. The last message I had presented was the truth about the Sabbath and its change. We had invited our visitors to attend the Sabbath morning church service, and many had come. I had preached my testimony and had invited people to make a decision to “walk in newness of life” as “born again” “sons and daughters of God”. Hundreds had responded, including many visitors. One visitor shook my hand and, with tears in her eyes, said to me, “Thank you for opening my eyes and my heart.” Her name is Linda. I hope she’s safe and well.

The nightly meetings are about half-way completed, and have been progressing very well, particularly for such a secular city. I was set to preach the truth about death and hell the day the quake hit. I was planning to make another appeal for baptism. Now everything is up in the air.

The hall that we’ve rented—The Aurora Centre for the Performing Arts—has been turned by the local government into a housing and feeding facility. The television news is reporting that 750 people stayed there last night. Many of them are either tourists or people who have lost their homes. It seems unlikely that this situation at the Aurora Centre will change in the near future. So it is possible that we’ll have to find a new venue. It will be difficult, to say the least, to contact every attendee. Should I stay longer? Should I leave sooner? What should I do, God? What is your plan for me and my family here in Christchurch?

These thoughts, and many more, raced through my mind as I walked toward a reunion with my family. Along the way various scenes of devastation confronted my eyes. It was all very surreal and other-worldly. I felt like a pilgrim—all my belongings on my back, walking through a wasteland surrounded by confused and frightened people. Truly, it was a compelling picture of our world as a whole!
A common scene on the streets.

A man looks back toward the CBD as he walks over a buckled section of street.

Reports are that many of the dead were killed while in their cars. I saw dozens of smashed cars. These cars were relatively un-smashed. Fortunately, there was no one inside of either of these cars.
Helicopters were flying all around. This one was dropping water on a burning building. The combination of smoke and dust was thick and terrible in some areas. The smell was noxious and toxic-like.

This shop, The Complete Angler, is owned by a friend of mine, Malcolm Bel. Malcolm is also a Christian minister. I hope that he and his staff are all well, but I have not spoken to him since the quake.
This church was seriously damaged. The left upper dome was cracked and teetering. The right upper dome had fallen.

As I sit here writing this report at some friends' house 20 miles out of town, my boys are outside playing happily and energetically. The aftershocks continue. The boys are mostly oblivious. Their friends are here. They have a ball. They’re playing catch. Life is simple and easy for them.

And yet, at the same time, people—how many we don’t know—are at this very moment struggling for life buried in some deep, dark, damaged hole. Jesus, please be near these frightened, struggling ones. Be “a very present help in times of trouble”, as your Word says you are. Give them a will and a determination to live. And, most of all, may they turn completely to you in their inner-most hearts! Amen and amen!

Friend, Jesus is coming soon. Two weeks ago I preached that very message here in Christchurch. People responded positively and solemnly. Since the September 4th earthquake people have been on edge here. Yesterday’s quake will only sharpen that edge. At present 75 are confirmed dead and many hundreds are still missing. It is devastating, truly. And yet I cannot shake the feeling that it could have been so much worse. Had things gone slightly differently, the death count could have numbered in the thousands.

My family and I could have easily been among them.

This quake shook me and many thousands literally. I hope it will shake us all up spiritually as well! In Luke 13 Jesus was asked about a disaster that occurred in his day: a tower had fallen, killing 18 people. Jesus’ response to the questioning specifically and the disaster in general was sobering. It is a message I need to hear. It is a message that Christchurch and New Zealand need to hear. It is a message that the world needs to hear:

There were present at that season some who told Him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And Jesus answered and said to them, “Do you suppose that these Galileans were worse sinners than all other Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish. Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them, do you think that they were worse sinners than all other men who dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish.”

(Luke 13:1-5)
My hope and my prayer for this lovely city and this amazing country is that as they pick up the pieces that they will let Jesus Christ pick up the pieces of their broken hearts and lives. I don’t know how much longer our family will be here, but I do know that while we’re here we’ll be working with Jesus to that very end.

May the city’s Namesake become the city’s Savior, is our earnest prayer!

In His service,

David Asscherick
Adventists' back-to-basics faith is fastest growing U.S. church

Updated 3/17/2011 5:36:48 PM | G. Jeffrey MacDonald, Religion News Service

Rest on the Sabbath. Heed Old Testament dietary codes. And be ready for Jesus to return at any moment.

If these practices sound quaint or antiquated, think again. They're hallmarks of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, the fastest-growing Christian denomination in North America.

Newly released data show Seventh-day Adventism growing by 2.5% in North America, a rapid clip for this part of the world, where Southern Baptists and mainline denominations, as well as other church groups are declining. Adventists are even growing 75% faster than Mormons (1.4 percent), who prioritize numeric growth.

For observers outside the Seventh-day Adventist Church, the growth rate in North America is perplexing.

"You've got a denomination that is basically going back to basics ... saying, 'What did God mean by all these rules and regulations and how can we fit in to be what God wants us to be?','" said Daniel Shaw, an expert on Christian missionary outreach at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, Calif. "That's just totally contrary to anything that's happening in American culture. So I'm saying, 'Whoa! That's very interesting.' And I can't answer it."

Seventh-day Adventists are asking a different question: Why isn't the church growing much faster on these shores, which is home to just 1.1 million of the world's 16 million Adventists? Despite its North American roots, the church is growing more than twice as fast overseas.

"We don't feel that we're growing very much, and that is a source of concern, especially for North America," said Ron Clouzet, director of the North American Division Evangelism Institute at Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Mich. Hispanic Adventists are "the one group that is growing very well," he added. "If we didn't have that group, we would look even more dismal."

With Saturday worship services and vegetarian lifestyles, Seventh-day Adventism owns a distinctive niche outside the Christian mainstream. But being different is turning out to be more of an asset than a liability.
movement sprang up in New Hampshire, Seventh-day Adventism has had an urgent mission to bring the gospel — with a distinctive emphasis on Christ's imminent second coming — to the ends of the earth. Adventists find the essence of their mission in Revelation 14:12, where the end of the age "calls for patient endurance on the part of the people of God who keep his commands and remain faithful to Jesus."

The church's traditional, global focus is now bearing fruit in new ways. Newly arrived immigrants in the United States often come from parts of Latin America or Africa where Seventh-day Adventism has long-established churches, schools and hospitals. Those who migrate from Brazil to Massachusetts, or from Mexico to Texas, are apt to find familiarity in a local Adventist church led by a pastor who knows their culture and speaks their native language, said Edwin Hernandez, a research fellow at the Center for the Study of Latino Religion at the University of Notre Dame.

Immigrants aren't the only ones embracing Seventh-day Adventism. Many in the general public have noticed Adventists tend to be superstars of good health and longevity; research shows they tend to live 10 years longer than the average American. With strong track records for success in health and education, Adventists find they get a hearing among skeptics who share those priorities.

Publicized research on Adventists' health "has helped bring some objective evaluation of Adventism... particularly all up and down the West Coast," said G. Alexander Bryant, executive secretary for the denomination's people about our lifestyle."

Some newcomers to Adventism also appreciate the church's clarity about what's expected of Christ's followers. Diana Syth of Kent, Wash. attended many types of Protestant churches for years. But she said she "never got the information I needed to know about what it meant to be a Christian" until she and her husband learned of Seventh-day Adventism from a sibling six years ago.

"My (adult) son has seen a change in us," Syth said. "He sees a new calmness in us. There's hope where there wasn't hope before."

Adventists are also reaping the rewards of their extra efforts in evangelism. Responding to a national initiative, more than 80% of the 6,000 Adventist churches in North America staged weeks-long outreach events in hotels and other settings in 2009.

Bryant said in an ordinary year, one-third to one-half of Adventist congregations put on
growth rates would hover around 1.7% — still high enough to top the rates of other large denominations in North America.
Creativity seems to be paying dividends, too. The church has seen some of its strongest gains come in non-religious regions such as the Pacific Northwest. In Washington, for instance, the denomination has established "Christian cafes," where people can relax and ask questions without feeling the pressures of church.

"You're not necessarily inviting them to church," Bryant said. "You're just sitting around, talking with people, building relationships — and slowly talking to them about Christ."
AN OPEN LETTER REGARDING THE TEACHING OF CREATION

How students learn about origins is a matter of significant concern in the Seventh-day Adventist Church today. La Sierra University has found itself the focus of this concern for much of the past two years.

The University Board of Trustees, administration, and faculty have heard and taken seriously the concern expressed by Church leaders and members, especially as expressed in the report and recommendations of the Adventist Accrediting Association following their regular November site visit. The Board appointed a study group to study the issue. It carefully reviewed the AAA report and the team’s counsel and issued a report that the La Sierra University Board of Trustees voted to receive at its February meeting. The Board has directed campus administration to implement the Board’s recommendations. The complete report can be found at http://www.lasierra.edu/fileadmin/documents/provost/LSU_Board_Report.pdf.

In order to get the most accurate and objective assessment of what students are learning in La Sierra’s biology classes, the study group went directly to the source. It attempted to reach every student who studied General Biology or who graduated with a biology major for the past four years, plus the year 2000. It invited them to answer, anonymously, 17 questions focusing specifically on what they learned about creation and evolution, whether their personal religious views were respected, and how the classes impacted their religious faith.

From those who have been enrolled in biology classes, the study group learned that the university is doing well in some areas. Two-thirds responded that their professors presented helpful ways of relating science and religious faith, supported their faithfulness to their religious heritage, and encouraged faith in a personal God.

The survey, though, also showed areas in which we have fallen short of what we and our Church want for our students. We found that only 50 percent of the students surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that our Adventist view of creation was presented, and only 40 percent agreed or strongly agreed that our Adventist view was supported. This is not acceptable, and we apologize. We have already begun addressing this in meaningful ways to ensure that our biology program seriously addresses the topic of creation.

The study group’s findings also included:

- The biology faculty deserve recognition and respect for their work. Neither their professional competency as biologists nor their character and sincerity were questioned.
- Instruction at the university, while being strong in many areas, has not adequately presented the denomination’s position on the subject of creation.
- There is some evidence that students have not always been respected for their belief in the Biblical creation position.

The Board adopted, and directed campus administration to implement, the following measures:
- Accept and implement the recommendations from the Adventist Accrediting Association.
- Develop faculty workshops regarding the challenges of teaching controversial topics such as those in biology.
- Continue the work in progress, (as identified below).
- Conduct regular follow-up surveys of biology students.
- Provide the Board with ongoing candid and prompt reports of both progress and challenges in dealing with this issue.

The Board affirmed its support for the president and his administration and entrusted them with the implementation of these recommendations. In addition, the Board committed to support the administration in these efforts and to focus on the more positive aspects of the university.

The university president and provost identified steps to address this issue that have already been taken or are currently in progress. These include:
- Ensuring that all biology students discuss key documents relating to our Adventist belief regarding origins, including Fundamental Belief #6, the 2004 Annual Council Reaffirmation of Creation, and Genesis 1 and 2.
- Increased participation by the Church’s Geoscience Research Institute in planning the General Biology Seminar.
- Ongoing refinement of the General Biology Seminar, based on student exit surveys and other input.
- Attendance of biology faculty members at the Geoscience Research Institute summer workshop.
- Continue the lecture series that presents a range of Adventist views on the integration of faith and science.
- Establish dialogue with biology professors from sister Adventist colleges and universities.
The biology department specifically commits to:

- Faithfully present the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s position on creation.
- Respect every student’s religious beliefs.
- Help students learn how to grapple with issues of faith and science in faith-affirming ways.

La Sierra University is committed to being an institution that does not just present the Church’s view of creation, but fully supports it. We pledge our commitment to work prayerfully and diligently to ensure that our mission to provide a rigorous and faith-affirming Seventh-day Adventist education is carried out on behalf of our students and our Church.

Randal Wisbey    Ricardo Graham
President        Chair, Board of Trustees