JOY IN THE DISCIPLESHIP JOURNEY

Here we are again. For some, the February issue of OUTLOOK is the most anticipated of the year. In this issue, students of Chris Blake’s sophomore-level editing class at Union College take the reigns—writing, editing and designing all content from pages 4-21, as well as the cover.

As you know, OUTLOOK’s overall theme this year is discipleship. Through their own experiences—mission trips, witnessing and being witnessed to, trials, waiting on the Lord and allowing Him to accompany them along life’s journey—these students are sharing with all of you what discipleship means to them.

As you read what they have to say, you may or may not entirely agree with their perspectives. That’s okay. Discipleship isn’t about measuring our spiritual progress against another’s. Rather, it’s about striving to be more like Jesus, sharing His love with one another and with the world around us.

Discipleship is a journey that, for many of us, is long overdue. Let’s get started then; because, after all, there’s joy in the journey.

—RANDY HARMDIERKS, designer
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Discipleship 101

Written by Chris Blake          Designed by Jeannie Hinrichs

“And Jesus came and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age’” (Matt. 28:18-20).*

As this is our college issue, let’s all begin with a short quiz. Please evaluate the following True or False statements:

1. Worship services are mostly for discipleship training.
2. When Jesus says “obey everything that I have commanded you,” He’s referring only to the Ten Commandments.
3. Jesus often teaches that the best way to determine if someone is His disciple is to inquire, “Are they going to church?”
4. Getting married is more important than staying married.
5. Following God is an absolute pain—a restrictive, rigorous, rule-bound ordeal.

If you answered “False” to every statement, you’re on the True road of discipleship. To review, let’s look at these statements more closely.

1. Each Saturday morning, most Adventist churches schedule time for Sabbath school and a time for worship—what many call “church.” Sabbath school time is discipling time. When Jesus speaks of teaching “to obey” (or in some versions “to observe”) He means we should learn by doing—which is, of course, the best way to learn anything. Naturally, this practical, active learning takes place outside of the worship service. Is our Sabbath school doing discipleship training, or are we simply talking about it? “For the kingdom of God depends not on talk but on power” (1 Cor. 4:20).

2. Other commandments from Jesus to His disciples include: Be gracious and merciful, even to the undeserving (Luke 6:31-36); Quietly and creatively do good (Matt. 6:1-8); Be born again (John 3:3-8); Continue asking and seeking (Matt. 7:7-11); Beware the clutches of greed and give generously (Matt. 6:19-21, Luke 16:10); Do not worry (Matt. 6:25-34, John 14:1); Be salty, bright, and humble (Matt. 5:13-16); Never fear people (Matt. 10:26-31); Go directly to offenders—and forgive (Matt. 18:15-35); Follow Me (Matt. 4:19, John 14:21).

3. Though it was His custom to attend synagogue on Sabbath (see Luke 4:16), Jesus chose to place His emphasis on the following: “By this everyone will know you are my disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:35). So what does this love look like? Take another look at His commands listed above.

4. Baptism is getting married; discipleship is staying married. As Jesus proposed in the opening passage, we must do both. Yet what chance of success does a marriage hold if a couple directs 90 percent of their overall efforts only toward the wedding ceremony? Will that marriage thrive? Similarly, what are the chances a church will thrive if most of its time and effort is spent on worship? Have you ever noticed how bickering and infighting stop when people consistently work together on something? What would happen if discipleship took on...
more than half of our church’s emphasis?

5. “You show me the path of life. In your presence there is fullness of joy; in your right hand are pleasures forevermore” (Ps. 16:11).

“For freedom Christ has set us free” (Gal. 5:1).

“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control” (Gal. 5:22, 23).

“Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest” (Matt. 11:28).

Go with God. Develop your own tales of journeying with Jesus—to the end of your road, to the end of the age, and beyond.

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*Scriptures are taken from the New Revised Standard Version.*
We had tried everything. Sun-drying branches. Starting with fluff from bushes. Nothing would light on fire. As a native of dry Colorado, being in the fifth wettest location on earth (Pohnpei, Micronesia) really affected my ability to create fire. It rained every day, and there was not a single piece of wood, shrub, or coconut that wasn’t soaked with water and covered in moss.

“How are we going to cook any of our food if we don’t have a fire?”

As stomachs rumbled, tensions grew. Our group of 20 student missionaries were all stranded on an outer island the size of a football field, with no idea how to get a fire going. We all stood around the fire pit, dumbfounded, no one daring to try again for fear of another watery rejection.

In my peripheral vision I saw a pair of curious eyes. Looking over I saw Urchin, a man with leather for skin and a beard that would make Paul Bunyan look like an adolescent. He was a local Pohnpeian who owned and lived on Black Rock, the island where we were staying. Hurrying over, he motioned his hand toward a machete one of the missionaries had.

Urchin picked up an old, rotting coconut and with one enormous swing cracked it in half. He then began to pull the completely dry fibers from inside the coconut. After he had brought a few other coconuts to their deaths, he grabbed our lighter and lit the newly-found fuel. After blowing some air into the small flame, there was a fire roaring large enough to dry the wet sticks we had, and then burn them. Urchin smiled, gave us a thumbs up, and strolled back over to his chicken-infested shanty.

At this point each of our stomachs were
mounting a rebellion on our bodies if we didn't feed them soon, and the pot of rice/soot/sand we had cooking on the fire was beginning to look more like turkish delight.

When the rice was finished, we looked around. “Where are the plates?”

“Oh no.”

“I don’t care. Just put it in my hands, I’m starving! . . . Ooouuch! That’s hot!!”

Looking over toward Urchin’s shanty, I saw those curious eyes again.

Grabbing his machete, he cut large leaves off a nearby bush and handed one to everyone around the fire. “Plate,” he said, motioning with his hand to his mouth like he was eating.

From that point on, Urchin was our fearless island leader. If we ran out of coconuts to burn, Urchin would suddenly come around the corner, arms full of dry coconuts. If fish refused to bite our line, he would go hunt down a crab and then load our hook with a more tasty lure for the fish. Before he ate he would come find us and ask if we wanted to eat his dinner.

Learning from all those weekends I spent on Black Rock, I began doing things just as Urchin did them. Why? Because they worked.

Christ’s ministry was the exact same way. When Christ called His disciples, and called others to follow Him, He first ministered to their needs. He showed people the needs they had in their lives, and then made them whole. Just as I learned to survive on Black Rock, we can learn to survive in our day-to-day lives by relying on what Christ, our fearless leader, teaches us.
When “Self” Gets in the Way

Two stories of overcoming and growing into disciples

Maegan Luckiesh and Slade Lane
I am so sneaky. Slowly, I backed away from the door and searched for signs of anyone stirring inside the room. At two o’clock in the morning I assumed everyone would be asleep, but in a mission as essential as mine, I could not take any chances. Okay, the package is in place. Now I just have to make it back to my room before anyone sees me.

I had only spoken to Lily twice before noticing how depressed she was. She told me how she felt alone and unloved. She didn’t have many friends and hated boarding school, but didn’t feel happy at home either. She was both stuck and lost at the same time. I had been through a similar experience my first year of high school and wanted to show her someone cared.

My senior year as a resident assistant I was obligated to take care of my girls. I spent a year trying to make a difference in their lives. Nothing I did that year, out of obligation, came remotely close to the difference I made for Lily.

The best way to be a disciple is to stop trying to fill obligations and let God lead you. Matthew 6:2 states, “When you give to someone in need, don’t do as the hypocrites do—blowing trumpets in the synagogues and streets to call attention to their acts of charity! I tell you the truth, they have received all the reward they will ever get” (NLT).

I never wanted Lily to figure out what I had done, but knowing now what one act of love can do, I yearn to live my life showing people God.
The question hung in the air, waiting for my reply. “Do you want to come with us to talk to Jacob?” Shandon and Jordan stood outside my dorm room door. Neither was the type of guy to look concerned, to not smile or crack a joke. Yet now their eyes welled with concern. Their lips never cracked a smile.

“I think I’ll pass,” I said, chuckling nervously. “I don’t think I’m the right guy to be there for that conversation. I don’t know what I’d say.”

“Alright. It’s cool man. We think Jacob’s going through some stuff right now and we should be there for him.”

They headed down the hall toward Brent’s room. I shut my door. I thought of the night before. We had been just a couple of guys messing around, trying to dig up any embarrassing dirt on Jacob’s computer before we watched “Ace Ventura: Pet Detective.”

We found secrets. We found pictures. We found out Jacob was gay.

Jacob welcomed me when I first went to boarding school. In our sophomore English class we made a play. We both loved video games like “Final Fantasy” and “Kingdom Hearts.” He would let me play his Nintendo 64 emulator on his computer. And for a dollar Jacob would happily sell me a soda.

We found out Jacob was gay.

“An argument started among the disciples as to which of them would be the greatest. Jesus, knowing their thoughts, took a little child and had him stand beside him. Then he said to them, ‘Whoever welcomes this little child in my name welcomes me’” (Luke 9:46-48). Jesus seemed capable—no—He seemed more than that. It thrilled Jesus to sit with little children. He rolled out the welcoming mat for beggars, for prostitutes, for criminals, for heterosexuals and homosexuals—all lost souls.

I only saw Jacob in class and around the dorm every now and then when I would go to his room to buy a soda. For the rest of the school year we didn’t hang out much. Still loving him and caring for him didn’t do a lot. I don’t think he knew it or saw it in me. Jacob wouldn’t have been wrong if all he saw in me was a shut door with no welcome mat. What gets in the way of being a disciple is when we forget “He who is least among you all—he is the greatest.” We are all children of God. Jesus welcomes every thief, beggar, prostitute, heterosexual, homosexual, child, and everything we are into His presence.

We can do more for the least among us. I wish Jacob could see my door open. My welcome mat is brushed of dirt, ready to welcome him—tell him he’s the greatest.

But Jacob didn’t return to school. I miss Jacob. I really do.

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Slade Lane is a senior language arts education major from Grand Junction, Colorado.
Steven Foster is a junior communication major from Grand Junction, Colorado.
That familiar gritty feeling overwhelmed me. I had worked through the night on duty. Relieved that I was done roaming barren walkways in the dark, I exited the cold, concrete building. The sky began to lighten and all the color reminded me of a ripe peach. My senses awoke as I breathed in the aroma of a dark roast. Perfect. I’ll grab my fix before heading to work.

GO FIX YOURSELF

“Hey you! Come here!” I looked over at a shorter Marine, who no doubt outranked me. “Yes sir?” “Go fix yourself. You look like hell.” Sure. Let me go do that instead on my 15 minute break. Rather than enjoying a hot coffee, now I was the one steaming.

From head to toe I fashion myself to look the part. I smooth my curls into a sleek bun, portraying a clean image. My uniform is pressed and free of stains. My face bears no makeup. I do not recognize the plain-Jane girl looking back at me. But, to everyone else, this is who I am.

Inside I cannot wait to remove my uniform and don my usual self. God knows. He is certain of my choices and has faith in my ability to follow Him. God is different because He does not judge my outward appearance. This is why my relationship with God just works. He does not command me to hide my mane. He does not require that I forego my personality or my style. He has given me the gift of free will when my occupation has stripped me down to just a uniform. I know He wants me to develop my own style. He is happy when I am happy.

DISCIPLINE IS NO SACRIFICE WHEN IT COMES TO FAITH

The job of a serviceperson requires discipline in both appearance and demeanor. The job of following God is no job at all. He does not demand I follow Him. This is my God and discipline is no sacrifice when it comes to my faith in Him.

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Boom!

I opened my eyes as the walls stopped shaking. Oh no! Please, God no! Don’t let it be what I think. Leaping out of bed, I peeked out the door. My eyes took a moment to adjust to the hallway blanketed in black. I inched down the cramped corridor, the floor groaning with every step I took.

“Grandma?”

For two weeks during Christmas vacation, my family journeyed across the nation to visit family. The last two days, we spent in Tennessee, visiting my great aunt and grandma. I slept in a little room in the back of my grandma’s trailer home that stored itchy blankets, photos of my grandfather, and a futon as comfortable as rocks. That night, I tossed back and forth, sleep evading me. At 5:30 am, I heard the crash that made my stomach clench. I knew what had happened.

I tiptoed down the hall and whispered again, “Grandma?” Then I found her, crumpled up in the corner by the bathroom. My heart pounded. “Grandma, please say something,” I begged. “I can’t get up,” her frail voice replied.

Relief spread through my body. I told her I needed to get help. She nodded slowly, and yet I felt like she didn’t comprehend. I rushed through the tiny trailer to wake up my parents.

It took some nudging, but my mom finally woke up.

“Mom, Grandma fell!”

As Mom scrambled out of bed, my dad woke up and I explained the situation. We ran to the corner where she lay, turning on every light. The small house felt even smaller. My parents crouched over Grandma, contemplating our next move.

“Mandy, you need to call 911 and tell them what happened,” Mom instructed.

Her calm voice seemed out of place.

“911, what’s your emergency?”

“My grandma fell. We don’t know what to do. We need an ambulance now,” all the words tumbled out in a whirl.

“Okay Sweetie, you need to slow down and tell me what happened.”

I took a deep breath and tried again, stumbling over the words. My voice trembled as I explained the situation and relayed the address.

Time dragged from the moment I hung up to
when the ambulance and fire truck arrived. Five men toting medical equipment trooped into the house. I curled myself into a ball on the couch, unable to watch as they picked my grandma up and placed her on the gurney.

My parents came in, sat next to me, and gave me a big hug.

“It looks like Grandma broke her hip,” my dad said gently. “We’re going to change and go wait at the hospital. Do you want to stay here or come with us?”

“Come,” I answered. “I can’t be alone right now.”

“Mandy,” my mom said, “We know this seems like a bad thing, but this truly is a blessing.”

I looked at my mom like she had gone insane. “A blessing? How could God let this happen?”

“Well, think of it this way. We were supposed to leave today. If Grandma had fallen after we left, so much worse could have happened. None of her neighbors knew when she was coming home from Florida, and if we weren’t here things might have ended differently.”

I processed what she said. It dawned on me. God knew every circumstance. He knew my grandma’s condition. He knew our plans to visit, and He knew the role I would play in keeping Grandma safe.

As I was growing up, people reminded me that God has a plan for my life. Until that moment, I thought He held a blueprint, making sure my life followed a step-by-step construction. The morning my grandmother fell, my thought process changed.

I realized my life looks more like a road map.

God picked a destination for me, but I have more than one way to get there. I just need to trust that God continues to lead me to the same destination, despite the roadblocks. That day, I learned regardless of the worst times, God can show me how He works to bless me. My job is trusting in the midst of the fall.

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I was unhappy about their plan, but in my culture children have to respect their parents’ decision. I applied to Union, was accepted, and began a major in social science. During the year, I made some good friends and adapted to the environment as I built a relationship with God. I’d thought, Maybe this is where God wants me to be. It’s probably part of His divine plan for me.

Toward the end of my freshman year, I was still set on my aspirations of being an airline pilot. I decided to attain a bachelor’s degree in Aviation Management before flight training to give me a comprehensive scope in the aviation sector, so I applied to Florida Institute of Technology (FIT).

WELCOME TO FLORIDA TECH. NOT.

While I was back in Lagos for the summer, I received a package from FIT. I opened it and saw a “Welcome to Florida Tech” card, a rucksack with an airplane monogrammed on it, and a letter of
acceptance. Tears of joy streamed down my face as I ran to my parents to show them what I received. I felt like God had this planned out for me.

“Wow! My baby, congratulations,” my mom exclaimed.

“My pilot,” my dad praised me. “I know how much you want this.”

I could tell they were proud of me. I had no doubt that God had this under control. To complete the transfer process, I had to move my Form I-20* to FIT, but that step couldn’t be accomplished, and the only option was to go back to Union. I was unhappy and lost hope.

When I returned to Union, I felt like my dream was shattered. I sat in my room sobbing, and asked God,

Why are you letting this happen? Please show me a sign, because I won’t stop coming to You until You answer me!

MESSENGER FROM GOD

One hot afternoon, as I shared lunch with my friend, Sherry, I told her about my struggle and burst into tears. She embraced me and said, “Awww Jabz, I’m sure there’s a reason for this.” She hugged me tighter. “Have you thought about going to Andrews?”

“Andrews?” I replied in confusion.

“Andrews University. My cousin is in their aviation program.”

I grew up in a Catholic home, but as we kept talking, I figured out it’s a Christian university. God had come to comfort me through Sherry. “Come near to God and He will come near to you” (James 4:8, NIV). This reminds me that God called me to be His disciple, so He led me back to Union.

I’m making arrangements now to transfer to Andrews. I’ve realized that what I considered the process of my struggle, God called the end of it. My growth with Jesus is a journey—a process that will continue for the rest of my life, because even after I obtain my pilot licensing, I’ll keep growing in Him.

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*Form I-20: the certificate of eligibility for nonimmigrant student status. It is required for international students to attend school in the USA.
“Gays are not going to heaven!”
“What? Are you crazy?” I was horrified by what my friend Herbert* had said. What other judgmental ideas does he hold?
Herbert firmly believes that to be a Christian, he must shove his beliefs in people’s faces. He constantly goes out in public with the sole purpose of finding people who are doing “wrong” and telling them they are sinful and must repent from their evil ways.
Herbert also points out how his friends’ beliefs differ from the Bible’s teachings. On top of that, he oftentimes goes out of his way to debate with others about biblical topics, “to heighten my spiritual experience” as he puts it—regardless of how much the other person doesn’t want to debate. Herbert believes that the Bible was written as a book of law, to tell people exactly how wrong they are in their lives.
If that’s true, then I submit that the Bible is absolutely meaningless. That’s right: The Bible is worthless, and there is no reason to read it.
Jesus came to Earth 2,000 years ago, died, and was resurrected. If Jesus had never come to Earth, then it would not matter how much you love God. It would not matter if you kept every law God created. It would not matter if you were the most perfect person to ever live, because there would be absolutely no way to get into heaven.
The Bible is not a book to throw at people when they are doing something wrong; remember, “Do not judge, and you will not be judged” (Luke 6:37, NIV). The Bible is a story, the greatest story ever told: the story of humanity’s fall, and Jesus’ sacrifice to offer a way into heaven.
Christians are not called by God to tell the world what they are doing wrong. They are called by God to share the gospel and make disciples. Last time I checked, hitting people upside the head with a heavy book is not the best way to win friends. If we want to point out other people’s sins when we ourselves are crazy, judgmental, and sinful, we can go right ahead.

How Not to Be a Christian
Written by Jack Sauder | Designed by Jeannie Hinrichs

Christians are not called by God to tell the world what they are doing wrong.

But if we put aside our Bible-thumping long enough to share the gospel (which, after all, means “Good News”) in a non-aggressive, caring manner, perhaps more people would be willing to listen.

* Name changed
“Oooh ahhh oooh ahhhs . . .” The sounds faded into my subconsciousness as the fog of sleep settled over me. At last, I could rest.

My parents and I were living in India. They were preaching and teaching while I, as a 13-year-old, was enjoying Marco Polo and jacks with the orphan kids.

This day started like the others before it. At five o’clock in the morning I woke to the sounds of our neighbor whipping her saris against the concrete. After getting dressed, and eating mangoes fresh from the vendor, I walked up the street to the orphanage.

The day started out hot, and only got hotter. Those who ran the electrical company in the village where we lived thought it was a good idea to turn off the power during the hottest part of the day.

We never had air conditioning but at that time of day we had no fans either. It was blistering.

As I passed the day playing Duck, Duck, Goose with my friends at the orphanage, a raging headache developed, most likely caused by heat exhaustion. As it got worse I couldn’t think straight. Dots crossed my vision, like static on an old television set. A couple of my friends, noticing I wasn’t being my normal, energetic self, came to my rescue.

“Lie down on your stomach.” Through the fog of pain I complied. As I lay there my friends Ruth and Elizabeth thumped on my back and repeated the “Oooh ahhh oooh ahhhs.”

“This is something mommas here do to help their babies sleep,” Ruth explained.

This is weird. Why would this put people to sleep? I doubt it will help. I don’t think . . .

The next thing I knew, I opened my eyes and the relative cool of evening had settled. Ruth and Elizabeth were leaning against the wall beside me, talking in Telugu, their native language. Warmth seeped through my heart as I looked at them.

Through this simple kindness, these girls, whom I was supposed to be in India to help, helped me instead.

Sometimes the simplest act of kindness can mean the most to another person. “Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God” (Heb. 13:16).
SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW NOT TO BE A CHRISTIAN:

○ Make sure to debate the Bible with someone whenever you get the chance.

○ Edit Wikipedia pages that disagree with your personal views about Christianity.

○ Go out of your way to locate and correct evildoers.

○ Pronounce that all people outside your faith are lost.

SIMPLE SERVICE SUGGESTIONS:

○ Put a surprise note or sketch in with your spouse’s or kid’s lunch.

○ In summer when it’s hot, hand out cold water or juice to your mail carrier, the garbage man or random passersby.

○ Say “thank you” to someone who made a difference.

○ Keep an extra umbrella at work, so you can lend it out when it rains.

○ Donate your stuff. Instead of saving things in case you need them in 10 years, consider giving stuff to someone who needs it now.

○ Stop by a kid’s lemonade stand and buy a drink.

○ Spend a few minutes on FreeRice.com, a United Nations Food Program that will donate rice to hungry people when you interact with the website.

○ Don’t ignore the next homeless person you see. Buy them food and enjoy their smile when you give it to them.

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Let Go of the Gross,
Grab the Great

Written by Amanda Ashburn
Designed by Melissa Ratter

What time is it there?”
“I don’t know. Maybe around 2 am.”
“It’s late. I better let you get some sleep or you’re going to be tired tomorrow.”
I’m quick to reassure him. “Don’t worry—it’s not a big sacrifice. I want to keep talking to you.”
This is a common exchange between my boyfriend and me. Being in a long distance relationship makes it hard to find time to talk to one another. With him living in a different time zone I willingly stay awake later. It doesn’t bother me. I sacrifice some sleep because I love him. That just makes sense.

Sacrifices to God
What doesn’t make sense is that I can’t seem to apply this same logic when it comes to God. God, the One who asks me to sacrifice bitter feelings, selfishness, perverted thoughts, and self-destructive actions. If I stop to think about it, ridding myself of those things isn’t a sacrifice at all. But, no. When God comes around and says, “Here, let me take that for you,” I act like I desire these negative attributes. Clutching my ugly, messed up life to my chest, I shake my head furiously.

“No thanks, God. I love you, but I’m pretty content with this pathetic little mass of mortal flesh.”
What’s wrong with me? When I hear the word sacrifice I tense up, especially when sacrifice and God are sharing the same sentence. I convince myself that God is going to ask me to cut my body in half and sell my first-born child. Come on, Amanda! Wake up. God’s not asking you for any of that.

Micah 6:8 says, “And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God” (NIV). Hold on. That doesn’t sound like a huge sacrifice. In fact, it sounds like how I want to live day to day.
Sacrifice means giving up something good for something great. The ugly, messed up parts of my life I clutch aren’t good. God’s simply asking me to let go of the gross and grab the great. God doesn’t want to take from my life as much as He wants to add to it! That just makes sense. Speaking of adding, maybe I can get Him to add four more hours to the day so I can get some more sleep . . . just a thought.

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Let’s go to Miami for spring break,” suggests our friend, Kali. A united groan rises.

“I don’t think I can handle another road trip,” says Debbie.

I nod in agreement. “Don’t you remember what happened last time?”

In March 2013, five excited college freshmen set out on a 27-hour drive from Lincoln, Nebraska to Miami, Florida. Ready for a relaxing week on the beach, we never stopped to consider the horrors that could be involved in an overnight road trip.

we all started out bright-eyed and hopeful.

By the time we reached Miami at 2 am the next day, we smelled of stale food and sweat. Burger wrappers littered the floor and flat Coke took over the cup holders. Napkins, both clean and dirty, lay on our seats, but we still struggled to rid ourselves of the fast food grease on our hands. Potato chip crumbs made us itchy all over. We desperately needed a shower, and we felt as if we had been awake for two days straight, which we had.

“We’re lost, Natalie,” complained Kali, making another U-turn. We’d been roaming the Miami streets for over an hour in search of my aunt’s house.

I tried to stay calm but annoyance crowded my voice. “Why don’t you use your GPS? Isn’t that what it’s for?”

“Kali’s phone is out of battery,” countered Debbie, giving me the look. “And yours is too, right? Maybe if you would have stopped sending flirty texts to that guy, you’d still have battery.”

After another hour of passive-aggressive conversation, we made it to her house and the subsequent week was everything we dreamed of. However, the memories of that road trip still make us cringe.
on the road with GOD

My journey with God seems like that Miami trip sometimes. I remember when I started out, thrilled for what lay ahead. I expected difficulty, but I didn’t really understand what that meant. I kept the destination in sight and set out. Then it hit me. I grew tired and it stopped being exciting. It stopped being fun. It was only hard.

What went wrong? When did the enthusiasm die? More importantly, why did it die?

These questions have plagued me for many months. Talking to my friends, I recognize a common theme. We all started out our adventure with God bright-eyed and hopeful, but slowly the excitement dissolved and we are now confined to endless U-turns.

Tonight, I contemplate again these questions. As I sit on the floor of my dorm room, typing this article and eating blueberry muffins from Union Market, I remember another type of road trip I took as a child.

the fun road trips

While I was growing up, my parents loved to go on adventures. Every summer, they would pile us into our Chevy Impala and set out across the country for two weeks. Some days we drove from sunrise to sunset; other days we hiked the Smokey Mountains or ran around in the Montana hills. It didn’t matter what we did—we had fun.

I realize now that two factors made these long journeys enjoyable. First, the trip was the fun. We didn’t go on a road trip to arrive at our destination; instead, the road trip was our destination. Second, we took care of the little things. We packed the car with magnetic Checkers, Lois Lowry audio books, and 12-pack crayon boxes; Cheetos and Doritos roamed our trunk and orange Fanta rested at our feet.

In our adventure with God, sometimes we put too much focus on the destination. As Oswald Chambers says, “What men call the process, God calls the end.” Joy is not only found at the end, it’s also in the journey. And what makes the road trip joyous is the details. Service, daily devotions, praise—these ingredients make a vibrant journey.

My dad likes to say, “Natalie, even if there weren’t a heaven, even if we died and that was it, I’d still be a Christian. The joy I have gotten out of my walk with God is unbeatable.”

That’s the kind of trip I want. At the end, when we’ve reached our destination, I want to heave a sigh of contentment and smile at the good times, not remember the horrors—the nasty burger wrappers, greasy napkins, and itchy potato crumbs. After all, there is joy in the road trip.

NATALIE BRUZON is a sophomore language arts education major from Altamonte Springs, Florida. STEVEN FOSTER is a junior communication major from Grand Junction, Colorado.
19TH ANNUAL
DAKOTA CONFERENCE
MEN'S RETREAT
March 7 - 9, 2014

BAD LANDS BIBLE CAMP
Medora, North Dakota
Register online at dakotaadventist.org
or call 701.751.6177

Iowa-Missouri Conference’s Summer Camp on the beautiful Lake of the Ozarks
www.campheritage.org
Kansas-Nebraska Conference Calendar  
February 2014

7-8  Youth Rally  
Lincoln NE  
tsager@ks-ne.org

7-9  Hispanic Elders’ Training  
Kansas City  
robpauco@rmail.com

14-15  Kansas City Convocation  
Speaker: Mic Thurber

15  Mid-America Pathfinder  
Bible Experience  
Lincoln, NE

28-2  Engaged Encounter  
Lincoln, NE  
anhardt@ucollege.edu

Engaged Encounter  
Sponsored by Union College Campus Ministries

Feb 28 - Mar 2

Engaged couples are invited to spend a weekend developing communication skills in the context of a Christ-centered relationship. For information contact Stan and Angie Hardt at 402.423.2896 or anhardt@ucollege.edu.

Held at the Mid-America Union office building:  
8307 Pine Lake Rd | Lincoln, Nebraska

Application deadline:  
February 21

Discover Planned Giving  
How can it benefit you?

Planned giving is a way for you to make your charitable gift go further. The right planned gift can provide you and your loved ones with tax and income benefits. There are many reasons why a planned gift might make sense for you now.

• Are you looking for a way to avoid capital gains tax on the sale of your home or investments?
• Are you thinking about how to build your income for retirement?
• Would you like to create an inheritance for your children and further the Lord’s work?
• Do you need a tax-efficient way to sell your business this year?
• Would you like to receive high fixed payments for life and even some tax-free income?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, a planned gift to the Minnesota Conference can help you achieve your goals. To learn more about the benefits of planned giving, please contact us at 763.424.8923 or visit our website:  mnsdagift.org.
Raschelle Casebier, a Seattle native, is happy to be sharing her communication talents in the Mid-America Union.

Raschelle Casebier is the newest team member of the Mid-America Union Conference Communication Department. She graduated from Union College in December 2013 with a BA in communication with emphasis in public relations and a minor in graphic design. Casebier began her work in January, assisting with proofreading, writing, photography, web design and special projects. Thomas L. Lemon, president of the Mid-America Union, said, “We are very pleased to have Raschelle join our communication team, both because of her skills and creativity and also because we want to be intentional about empowering young adults to serve in important roles.”

Casebier grew up in Seattle, Washington where her parents, Don and Loree Casebier, currently live and work. Her older brother, Darrell, is married to Melissa and works as a nurse in Seattle. Casebier went to Auburn Academy then attended college in Washington for two years before deciding to finish her degree at an Adventist college. She chose Union College because of its strong communication program.

“I heard a lot of good things about it,” said Casebier. “And I had amazing experiences at Union—from working for Verna Blankenship in the Division of Business and Computer Science as their student public relations coordinator to working for Steve Nazario in Marketing Communications as a student graphic designer.” She also has a passion for art and volunteers at the Noyes Art Gallery where some of her artwork is displayed.

Casebier has concluded that Lincoln is an ideal place to live. “I’ve been here over two years and love it. There are so many wonderful people and networking opportunities,” she said. “Working for the Mid-America Union will be a valuable opportunity as I grow as a young communicator.”

Brenda Dickerson is director of communication for the Mid-America Union.
Honoring God Brings Joy by David Klinedinst

Charlotte’s face was beaming and her hand held high in praise to God as she stood in the baptismal tank at the conclusion of the evangelistic meetings organized by the Kansas City Gladstone Adventist Church. Charlotte, who prefers to be called Charlie, was one of 121 people who made decisions for Christ during these and other meetings held at St. Louis Central, Alton, New Jerusalem, Northside, Mid Rivers, Southside, St. Louis Spanish, Tabernacle of Praise, and West County churches.

I had the privilege of visiting Charlie in her home a couple of times during the series and was impressed with her sweet spirit and the joy that emanates from her face. Clearly, she is someone to whom Jesus is very real. She shared with me parts of her life story, including some of the difficulties she has encountered. Yet she knows that it was those very difficulties that drew her to Christ and helped her recognize how precious Jesus is to her.

As Charlie studied the Bible during these five-week meetings, she was convicted about the importance of the Sabbath, and because of her love for her Savior she decided to start keeping the Sabbath holy and receive its blessings. She said she felt God calling her to join this remnant movement that points people to the Bible and to honoring the commandments of God.

There are many more Charlies in Kansas City, St. Louis, Des Moines, Minneapolis, Denver and every other town or city within the Mid-America Union. This is why the church must continue to reach out to people and members must volunteer to shoulder the many necessary tasks that evangelism entails.

David Klinedinst is the resident evangelist and leader of a collaborative team of pastors and lay members reaching St. Louis metro.
SMMC Associate’s Life Transformed Through CREATION Health

by Jackie Woods

During her first days as an associate at Shawnee Mission Medical Center (SMMC), Joanne Phillips did not realize she was about to embark on a completely new experience that would not only include a new job, but also a new personal journey. During SMMC’s orientation process, Phillips learned about the Associate Wellness Program and CREATION Health.

Known for its holistic approach, SMMC’s Wellness Program focuses on improving the mind, body and spirit of associates and their families. A key part of the program is CREATION Health, which was developed by Adventist Health System. This wellness model encompasses eight principles that work together with the goal of allowing people to reach optimum personal health.

Frustrated with her weight and failed dieting attempts, Phillips made a commitment to embrace the program. She was encouraged by the CREATION Health principles and their ability to offer a lifestyle involving the whole person.

“It was not another quick weight loss program, but a journey to balance one’s self as God intended, so that we may live life abundantly,” said Phillips.

The Wellness Program helped Phillips quit dieting and adopt a lifestyle where smarter decisions take priority. Over eight months time, Phillips lost 40 pounds by committing to smarter food choices and more physical movement throughout the day. She now enjoys improved digestion by eating more fruits and vegetables in their natural state, and also consistently monitors her activity and food intake through an electronic device.

“The tracking device allows me to see what I’m taking in versus the energy I’m expending so I can properly balance the two,” said Phillips. “I am a visual person and seeing the dashboard helps me make better decisions.”

Along with physical and mental health benefits, CREATION Health has also provided a spiritual transformation for Phillips and her husband. The desire to find a new church home, combined with the information from the classes, provided Phillips with the necessary motivation to refocus on her spiritual well-being.

“We realized that it all went together like a three-legged stool,” said Phillips. “Without one of the legs, you are bound to fail.”

CREATION Health also prompted Phillips to explore Seventh-day Adventism. Last April she and her husband visited New Haven Adventist Church and recently became members. Her adoption of CREATION Health and Adventist teachings allowed Phillips to strengthen and more clearly understand her relationship with God.

“I have a peace that surpasses understanding,” said Phillips. “We recently had a family issue that, under natural circumstances, would have left me devastated. But I am grateful that I live in supernatural circumstances and rely on God who is in control.”

Phillips admits that the most rewarding part of her involvement with SMMC’s Wellness Program is people noticing her recent weight loss and commenting about her improved appearance.

“People say I now have a glow,” said Phillips, who is convinced that the new “glow” is both from her enhanced physical image and renewed spirituality. “When people mention the glow, it gives me the opportunity to tell them about my journey and encourage them to experience all the blessings God has in store for them.”

Jackie Woods is a writer for Shawnee Mission Medical Center.
Bombery, Leona, b. Sept. 8, 1926 in Lehigh, IA. d. Dec. 2, 2013 in Fort Dodge, IA. Member of Fort Dodge Church. Preceded in death by husband George; daughter Georgia Gleason. Survivors include sons Larry “Ben,” and Tim; 2 grandchildren.

Carnahan, Marvin, b. Dec. 4, 1941. d. Feb. 7, 2013. Member of Springfield (MO) Church. Survivors include wife Donna; daughter Brenda Conyne; son Frank; 12 grandchildren; 4 great-grandchildren.

Dodge, Myrna, b. July 12, 1920 in Bridgewater, IA. d. Nov. 18, 2012 in Creston, IA. Member of Creston Church. Preceded in death by husband Ben; 6 siblings; 1 grandson. Survivors include son Darrell; 2 grandchildren; 4 great-grandchildren.

Ensley, Marlene, b. Feb. 15, 1936 in Oakdale, CA. d. Nov. 7, 2013 in Madrid, IA. Member of the Boone (IA) Church. Preceded in death by husband Ernest; 2 brothers. Survivors include sons Michael and Kevin; 1 sister; 3 grandchildren.


Hanssen, Lois V., b. Feb. 24, 1917 in Shelby County, IA. d. Dec. 20, 2013 in LaFollette, TN. Member of La Follette Church. Preceded in death by husband Harrison. Survivors include dauthers Judith Tate and Janice Anderson; son Gaylord; 5 grandchildren; 2 great-grandchildren.

Holmes, Raymond, b. Aug. 16, 1926 in Moberly, MO. d. Nov. 14, 2013 in Buffalo, MO. Member of Branch Memorial (Macks Creek, MO) Church. Preceded in death by first wife Delores Holmes; 1 sister. Survivors include wife Georgia; daughter Brenda Conyne; son Ronald; 8 siblings; 13 grandchildren; 2 great-grandchildren.

Jarvis, Ruth, b. Apr. 1, 1918 in Clearfield, IA. d. Oct. 25, 2012 in Story City, IA. Member of Ames (IA) Church. Preceded in death by husband Eldon; daughter Sandra Lilly; son James; 3 siblings. Survivors include daughter Sharon Thomas and Linda Knowlton; son Ronald Jarvis; 9 grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren; 1 great-great-grandchildren.

Maxson, Frank B., b. June 30, 1938 in Cleveland, OH. d. Dec. 23, 2013 in Rapid City, SD. Member of Rapid City Church. Preceded in death by stepson Jeff Dunn. Survivors include daughter Carol; stepson David Dunn; 2 step-siblings; 7 grandchildren; 2 great-grandchildren.

McMillen, Jerald, b. Dec. 16, 1937 in Enid, OK. d. Nov. 5, 2013 in Walnut Grove, MO. Member of Springfield (MO) Church. Preceded in death by 1 brother. Survivors include wife Fonda; daughter Tonya Boone; son Trent; 5 grandchildren.

Moore, Maurice, b. May 20, 1918. d. Sept. 30, 2013 in Platte City, MO. Member of Independence (MO) Church.

Nickum, Patricia M., b. Feb. 23, 1923 in Sioux City, IA. d. Dec. 15, 2013 in Lincoln, NE. Member of Loveland (CO) Church. Preceded in death by husband Ellic; daughter Renee Nickum. Survivors include daughter Lisa Davis; son Craig.


Richerson, Phyllis, b. Mar. 15, 1926 in Watsonville, CA. d. Nov. 17, 2013 in Springfield, MO. Member of Springfield Church. Served in Nursing Corps and was a Korean War Veteran. Preceded in death by husband Paul; daughter Terri Richerson-Holmes. Survivors include daughter Sherri Richerson; sons Larry and Perry; 4 grandchildren.


Versteeg, Martha, b. Apr. 11, 1923 in Wood, SD. d. Nov. 22, 2013 in Newton, IA. Member of Newton Church. Preceded in death by husband Wilbur; son Ronald; 8 siblings; 1 grandson. Survivors include daughter Debra McClurkin; sons Dennis, Gary, Randal, Richard, Thomas, and Michael; 4 siblings; 7 grandchildren; 4 great-grandchildren.

Wachtler, Jeffrey L., b. Aug. 20, 1946 in Bismarck, ND. d. Dec 12, 2013 in Bismarck, ND. Member of Bismarck Church. Preceded in death by father. Survivors include mother; 2 brothers.

Wangnes, Clarence R., b. Aug. 29, 1937 in Lowry, MN. d. Dec 20, 2013 in Grand Forks, SD. Member of Grand Forks Church. Preceded in death by wife Kathryn; infant daughter; 2 siblings. Survivors include daughters Deanna Mattice and Brenda Goble; son Jon; 3 siblings; 9 grandchildren.

Don’t miss Wellness Secrets’ Spiritual Health Retreat in beautiful NW AR, March 23-30. Our theme is the Gift of the Holy Spirit; our goal is spiritual renewal. Activities: Bible study, interactive discussions, cooking classes, nature walks etc. “Come away and rest a while” recharging your spiritual batteries. Contact: 479.752.8555, WellnessSecrets4u.com

Looking for AUTHORS who have written a book on self-help for young adults (depression, suicide, eating disorders, dating, etc.). Also accepting children’s books, mission stories, biographies, and inspirational/doctrinal topics. Call TEACH Services at 800.367.1844.

Medical Missionary Training at Wellness Secrets in NW AR April 3-20. This program is designed to teach the fundamentals of health evangelism. Classes will be given on principles of medical mission work, living among the poor, living common diseases and natural treatment, hydrotherapy, herbs and community health evangelism. For more info. 479.752.8555, WellnessSecrets4u.com

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Single and Over 40? The only interracial group for Adventist singles over 40. Stay home and meet new friends in USA with a Pen Pal monthly newsletter of members and album. For information send large self-addressed stamped envelope to ASO 40, 2747 Nonpareil; Sutherland, OR 97479.

Southern Adventist University offers master’s degrees in business, computer science, counseling, education, nursing, religion and social work. Flexibility is provided through some online and many on-campus programs. Financial aid may be available. For more information, call 423.236.2585 or visit www.southern.edu/graduatestudies.

Summit Ridge Retirement Village is an Adventist community in a rural Oklahoma setting but close to Oklahoma City medical facilities and shopping. Made up of mostly individual homes, the village has a fellowship you’ll enjoy. On-site church, independent living, nursing home and home health care as needed. Call Bill Norman 405.208.1289.

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VENTURES
Adventist Health System is seeking a law student for a 6 to 8-week summer clerkship in 2014. This position is limited to students who have finished only one year of law school. Ideal candidates would be in the top 25% of their class. Duties include legal research and other projects. Please send resume and transcript to david.gordon@ahss.org.

Black Hills Health & Education Center in South Dakota is adding a Drug and Alcohol Recovery program and seeking missionary-minded professionals: MD, PA or NP with interest in preventative medicine, RN or LPN, Vegan Chef, Food Service personnel, Housekeeping, Massage Therapists, LCSW or CDC, Marketing Assistant. Must be English-speaking, licensed (if indicated) and travel to SD for interview. Please send resume to Stan Strange: stan@bhhec.org.

Union College seeks PhD in Engineering. Strong commitment to integrating Adventist faith, teaching, and scholarship essential. Will teach courses in complementary discipline in addition to engineering — TBD. Submit vitae and cover letter to Dr. Carrie Wolfe, Chair, Division of Science and Mathematics, cawolfe@ucollege.edu.

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FOR SALE

EVENTS
50th Anniversary Celebration of Adventists in Mesa Arizona the weekend of March 1, 2014 hosted by Mesa Palms SDA Church. Former members, pastors, friends invited to celebrate with us. King Herald’s concert Sabbath afternoon at 5 pm. Information on special hotel rates, call 480.985.3140; Facebook: Mesa Palms SDA Church; Website: mesapalmschurch.com.

Broadview Academy Alumni Weekend: April 25-26. Honor classes: ’44, ’54, ’64, ’74, ’84, ’89, ’94, and ’98. North Aurora SDA Church, North Aurora, IL. Friday Vespers 7:30 pm, Sabbath school and church. All ideas welcome. We need e-mail addresses. Send to: Ed Gutierrez: edjulie1@att.net; or call 630.232.9034.

ADVENTIST REALTOR. I offer experienced service to persons wishing to sell or buy real estate in the Lincoln, NE area. Please call Sandra Schwab at 402.802.1713. Address: 7141 A St. Lincoln, NE. Email: sandra.schwab@woodsbros.com.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Feb 19-22
JCI Youth Congress
Miami, FL

Mar 6
MAUC Executive Committee
Lincoln, NE

Apr 8-9
GC Spring Meetings
Silver Spring, MD

May 11
Union College Graduation
Lincoln, NE

SUNSET CALENDAR

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Deadline: March 1, 2014

Enter/Info: outlookmag.org/contest
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