Dear Lexie,

The Age of Wisdom

I'm sure by now that it's pretty well known throughout the Sligo family that your senior pastor possesses a healthy infatuation with the sport of tennis. Well, maybe to call it an infatuation is putting it a little mildly. The truth be told, I love tennis. I love playing it, watching others play it (the professionals that is) and I love reading about the history of the sport. Yes, tennis is a sport that I will love as long as it remains a part of our sports culture and as long as I am physically able to play the game.

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This Sabbath:
June 8, 2013

Speaker:
Pr. Charles A. Tapp, "The Lord of the Reins"

Special Musical Guest:
Sligo Sanctuary Choir
Director, Jon Gilbertson,
Lori Bryan, Soloist

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I’m sure by now that it’s pretty well known throughout the Sligo family that your senior pastor possesses a healthy infatuation with the sport of tennis. Well, maybe to call it an infatuation is putting it a little mildly. The truth be told, I love tennis. I love playing it, watching others play it (the professionals that is) and I love reading about the history of the sport. Yes, tennis is a sport that I will love as long as it remains a part of our sports culture and as long as I am physically able to play the game.

But a funny thing happened the other day while playing against some young men that are more than half my age. After defeating both of my youthful opponents quite handily, I realized that just about every part of my body was experiencing some sort of pain. And to be perfectly honest with you, even prior to competing against these young men, I was barely able to hit the ball as hard as I am accustomed because of the amount of pain I was feeling at the time. But despite my lack of mobility, it wasn’t enough to prevent me from experiencing the thrill of victory. Then what made the difference you ask? Well, because I have been playing the game since age 16, these years have allowed me to acquire a great deal more than just a few aches and pains, it has also allowed to me to gain some wisdom regarding how to win when I’m not at my best.

In his book The Circle Maker, author Mark Batterson says that, “The older you get, the more faith you should have because you have experienced more of God’s faithfulness.” And when you think about it, isn’t that the way it is in other areas of our lives? The longer we’ve done a particular thing, the more proficient we should be in that area. Then why isn’t that the norm when it comes to our walk with God? Wouldn’t it only make sense to deduce that the more we have experienced God working in our lives, whether through answered prayer or by some other means, the more faith and knowledge we should have acquired as it relates to the ways and wisdom of God? But as Pastor Fielder recently pointed out in her message to our Sligo School graduates, maturity does not automatically come with age. And this is why the apostle Paul reminds us that instead of having progressed to a diet of solid foods, many of God’s people are still on a liquid diet. (1 Corinthians 3:1, 2)

So because wisdom doesn’t always come with years, shouldn’t this mean that old age is not necessarily an asset, nor should youth be automatically considered a liability? Doesn’t God expect us to eventually put away our “childish ways” regardless of our age and begin to grow up and become the men and women that He desires? Just a thought from one who has learned a lot about how to play the game of tennis, but still has a great deal more to learn about life.

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Looking for an easy and practical way to share faith and hope in your community? Look no further!

Sligo Seventh-day Adventist Church’s new Hope for Today outreach ministry revolves around the Homes of Hope Bible discussion groups.

The Homes of Hope initiative is a simple way of sharing the Gospel with friends and neighbors by leading a bible discussion group or offering our homes to host a Bible discussion group.

Groups meet weekly for fellowship, Bible study, prayer, and refreshments.

Will you be part of a Homes of Hope Team?

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Spring is one of the most fruitful season of hope. There is the burst of new life from the dormancy of winter. There are Easter celebrations, proms, and of course graduations. The wheels of this go–go week has come to a temporary rest at a graduation program. I was invited by a young man graduating from Northwest High in Germantown. I was especially delighted as the commencement speaker is a favorite speaker of mines, Dr. Barry Black. In a combination of oratorical skill and compelling content he inspired longing audience in Constitution Hall to strive for excellence.

He spoke of his challenging childhood. Journeying from class dunce to class valediction. He shared his secrets for success:

- Going the extra mile
- Striving for excellence instead of watching tv
- Investing your life in something greater than yourself.
- Remain focused on the true prize and not mesmerized by material goods

Dr. Black spiced speech with the lives of civil right leaders who were giants to emulate.

He encouraged them to:

- Seize opportunities even if they come disguised as work.
- Strive fiercely and refuse to give less than their best.
- Tap into unused their potential.

He added a dash of reality by reminding them that some will prophesy failure, they needed to tackle the thing that cannot be done! The hall was filled with heartily appreciation for the delivery of this most gifted presenter, but the best was yet to come.

The person who brought the hall to their seat on several occasions was the student speaker. This young man who is autistic, shared his journey from 18 months to his present 18 years. With determination and hope he was able to accomplish great things. He and his family valued his life and with hope and courage faced a challenging future. His neighborhood also played a vital role in his journey. Neighbors baby sat, shared a casserole, words of encouragement, pats on the back, et al. The woman sitting behind me was such a neighbor. Her hooting betrayed her care.

The unspoken question I asked myself was, what would he had said that I added to his life if I had been his neighbor?

Life brings us many challenges that can make us just want to curl up in fetal dormancy. But we are called to take the hand of hope and move forward in faith, and make a difference in the lives in our neighborhoods. Peter reminds us in 1 Peter 1 that we are bought not with something that fades and ruins like silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, who was the pure and perfect lamb! Yes, God is indeed greater than our frailty, and he can use that frailty to reveal how great He is. The
What difference do we make in our neighborhoods?

Hope for Today… Coming to Sligo Summer 2013

message
of the
cross is
the
message
of hope
for today.
What an

tportunity we have to share good news to a wanting neighborhood!

By: Chris Daley

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Hope for Today… Coming to Sligo Summer 2013
This story happened many years ago but I remember the details clearly...

I had overspent our budget. My wife had not overspent—I had overspent. And now it was Friday afternoon – time to write a check for our tithe and offering.

My hand started to ache – frozen – poised over the checkbook. I realized that it was either pay our tithe and offerings or pay our mortgage. And if we missed our mortgage – there would be an additional penalty to pay. Now my head was hurting too.

I said a prayer for forgiveness and asked the Lord to please take care of us and wrote the check to the church. The next day I put the check in the tithe envelope and waited impatiently for church to end. Surely God would forgive me and bless us.

As soon my wife was busy in the kitchen I ran to the mailbox, fully expecting to find some kind of money – proof of God’s blessing. But alas, as I rifled through the mail, every envelope was another bill or an advertisement. I put the unopened bills in the drawer and tried to close my worries.

Saturday night came all too soon. I opened the dreaded bill drawer. Each bill lengthened the explanation I knew I’d have to give my wife. The bill list grew longer – the explanation in my head grew more complicated.

I saved the worst envelope to open last – the bill from the mortgage company. It looked like a bill – but when I opened it – it was a check for an escrow overage paid almost a year ago – enough to pay for all the bills and the current month’s mortgage, and more.

Isaiah 65:24 “Before they call I will answer, while they are yet speaking I will hear.”

When you are struggling, just take the next right step and believe that God will get you through – because He always will.

Anthony R. Bethea is an alumnus of Pine Forge Academy; he completed his Baccalaureate at Oakwood University. He is a Public Health Advisor with the United States Department of Health and Human Services. He writes from central Maryland.

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