NEW RECOMMENDATIONS VOTED FOR ATLANTIC UNION COLLEGE PROPERTY

GOD ENCOUNTERS PARTICIPANTS ENCOURAGED TO BE “ONE IN HIM”

HOW TO PROTECT YOUR ORGANIZATION FROM A NON-OWNED LIABILITY CLAIM

APRIL 2023
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Adventist Education: The Added Value

In a general sense, education is a product. Whether public, private, or even homeschool, the end result is to accomplish all desired outcomes in the development of the next generation of men and women to serve in government, our communities, and in private businesses. The intended purpose of this editorial is not to compare educational models or create doubt about an entire effort where teachers, parents, government officials, and communities engage daily to provide learning to our children.

Every teacher teaches, and every school delivers learning in many ways; there is a continuum on maintaining the highest standards, relevancy in educational curriculum, and alignment with current demands of social needs and new discoveries. Although budgetary provision for education has never reached sufficient lines, neither in public systems nor the private sector, we must commend the efforts made daily to improve that.

Addressing community needs, providing learning for future jobs, and developing problem-solving skills are some of the many outcomes expected of each educational system. For example, an academic curriculum geared to providing the basics for engineering education will seek to be conversant with the newest discoveries in that field of learning.

In January 2016, the World Economic Forum, in its *Future of Jobs* report, a collaboration between governments, corporations, and business, in general, stated that by one popular estimate, 65 percent of children entering primary schools today will ultimately work in new job types and functions that do not currently exist. Technological trends such as the Fourth Industrial Revolution will create many new cross-functional roles for which employees will need technical, social, and analytical skills.

New trends have driven curriculum development in many educational systems in the last few decades. Keeping that edge constitutes a competitive advantage. As we look to the present state and the future of Adventist education, let us ask some important questions: As Seventh-day Adventists, do we continue maintaining the effort to be current and relevant in the learning delivery? Is the current model addressing the issues originating from new trends in the job industry? And last, what is the added value of having an Adventist educational system?

Efforts? Yes! Many efforts have been made to stay current and relevant. Addressing trending issues? Except for a small number of our institutions, a large majority of them are still lagging behind and need some serious redevelopment to meet current demands. To answer the third question, let’s pause a bit. Remember, my purpose is not to compare systems, instead, I wish to state why I believe there is added value in the Adventist educational system.

Number one—the Adventist educational system recognizes God as the ultimate source of existence, truth, and power. In the beginning, God created in His image perfect human beings, a perfection later marred by sin. Education, in its broadest sense, is a means of returning humanity to their original relationship with God.

Number two—the mission to develop the “whole person” concept in each student. We educate them “for the joy of service in this world and for the higher joy of wider service in the world to come” (*Education*, p. 13), to be sensitive to the needs of people at home and in society, and to become active members of the church.

And number three—the philosophy of Adventist education founded in the “need of a broader scope, a higher aim.” It states that “True education means more than the pursual of a certain course of study. . . . It has to do with the whole being, and with the whole period of existence possible to man.”

—*Education*, p. 13

Elias F. Zabala, Sr., is the Atlantic Union Conference treasurer.
Training to Lead, Empowering to Serve, Inspiring to Be Ready

At the beginning of this quinquennium, the Atlantic Union Conference established the theme, “United, We Will Go.” With this theme in mind, and following after the counsel given from the pen of inspiration, which says, “With such an army of workers as our youth, rightly trained, might furnish, how soon the message of a crucified, risen, and soon-coming Saviour might be carried to the whole world” (Education, p. 271), the goal of the Atlantic Union Conference Office of Education (AUCOE) is to train our administrators, teachers, and students to lead, empower them to serve, and inspire them to be ready for the soon coming of our Lord and Savior, Jesus.

Training to Lead

One of the objectives of the AUCOE is to provide leadership among conference educators and students. As we emerge from the COVID-19 global pandemic, it is clear that there has been a global paradigm shift in the teaching and learning processes of education. Studies have shown that academic processes are experiencing rapid changes, and therefore, it is imperative that educators be on the cutting edge of such changes to be efficient leaders.

The Atlantic Union provides many initiatives that support leadership among administrators, teachers, and students. One initiative is the Atlantic Union Conference and Andrews University Partnership Program, which is available to all educators. This program provides opportunities for teachers to complete their master’s degree in Educational Leadership, Special Education, Teaching, and Curriculum and Instruction, and provides a pathway to personal and professional development and teacher certification.

Curriculum Planning is the core of an educational system; AUCOE provides for consistent leadership in this regard. AUCOE facilitates frequent leadership meetings, professional development sessions, and advisory sessions, where educators from local conferences are trained and then return to their territory and pass on what they learned. Leadership training is also available through the North American Division (NAD). Examples of this training include summer committee meetings, educational conventions, and advisory sessions.

Standards-Based Learning (SBL) is a new initiative in our educational system. AUCOE is currently training administrators and teachers to become competent leaders in SBL.

Among the leadership programs that are prepared for students is the annual Academy Connect. The acronym SLAM (Spiritual/sports Leadership Art/academics Music/media) is used in the preparation and training of our youth. Through this program, students receive training in leadership skills.
Some of the training initiatives include sessions that cater to the following:

- **Emerging Leadership**—teaches the skills, tools, and habits utilized by successful leaders.

- **Positive, Purpose-driven Leadership**—helps students to focus on the core values of their organization and lets them guide their actions.

- **Leading Inclusively**—where students learn to build courage, empathy, and intention that helps individuals feel a true sense of belonging.

In addition to catering to leadership skills, there is leadership training in other areas. One is spiritual training—where students are given the opportunity to take charge of their own spiritual journey and initiate support in leading others to Christ. In sports training, they learn the fundamentals of sports and Christian sportsmanship. Art training shows students how to use art in different ways to enrich and color their world for Christ while making a difference in the lives of others. Academics focuses on providing new understanding and new skills. Musical training prepares students to lead out and set the tone for intentional and meaningful worship experiences on their campuses and in their churches, thus enhancing the services to bring glory to God. In keeping with the times in which we live, media training has been added to our leadership component. Media exposes students to the technical skills necessary to lead, support, and maintain media centers at schools and churches, as well as training in the use of social media to share the gospel with the world.

**Empowering to Serve**

Students and teachers are empowered to serve through intentional and meaningful community service initiatives. Our students and teachers visit nursing homes, write cards to the elderly, collect canned goods, coats for the less fortunate in the winter, and books and supplies for children in other countries. Currently, we are collecting funds so that students in Ukraine can have Bible books translated, which will lead to an enriched classroom.

Students are empowered to serve each other and follow after the Great
Commission to go on missions for God and make disciples. Students and teachers lead out and participate in chapel services. They lead out in education days and rallies. In Bermuda, they clean beaches. In upstate New York, they bake and share baked goods with their community. We also collaborate with the Youth Ministries department and participate in compassion initiatives.

Our goal is to ensure that we lead our students to an encounter with Jesus and to understand the Great Commission and the part they play in this commission to go and teach all nations about Jesus—the one who created people and loves them so much that He left His home in heaven, came to earth and gave His life so that we don’t have to die. “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life”—John 3:16 (NKJV).

“Another part of the mission of AUCOE is to inspire others to be ready. . . . ready to lead, ready to serve, and ultimately ready to meet the Lord at His second coming.”

Inspiring to Be Ready

Another part of the mission of AUCOE is to inspire others to be ready. Inspiring others to be ready begs the question, “Ready for what?” The answer: ready to lead, ready to serve, and ultimately ready to meet the Lord at His second coming.

When one is inspired to do something, they are not just ready to do it but a driving force compels them to do it. Inspiration can come from various sources, including scripture, a song, or a role model. No matter what we do here, whether coordinating meetings, conducting events, deciding curriculum, or any other thing, our hope is to inspire administrators, teachers, and students to be ready—ready to show Christ’s love to those around them, ready to use the intelligence, wisdom, and talents that God has given them to further His work, and ready to inspire others as they have been inspired.

A collaboration by the Atlantic Union Conference education leaders Marlene Alvarez, director, and Lileth Coke and Theresa Robidoux, associate directors.
Periodically, I visit an online chat group linked to Seventh-day Adventist Christian education. So many on that chat are thrilled to have had the privilege of attending church schools, acknowledging that they have acquired a legacy of influences so strong that, even now, they continue to be excited and committed to Christian education. They have a sense of purpose, an understanding of servant leadership, a solid academic education, and lifelong friends. Others complain and find fault with our schools, focusing on what was not offered there rather than on what was provided. Evaluating church schools against institutions of the world, they are resentful, even though they are successful professionals, presidents and CEOs of major corporations, and leaders of influence in their communities.

None of what is offered at our church schools is happenstance. Morning worship with students provides strength and hope for the day; it’s a time to be happy and free, singing favorite songs and hymns that motivate, encourage, and give hope for a bright future.

At union-wide music clinics, we invite interested schools from around the union to enjoy time together, making and celebrating music. I maintain that music is God’s voice and heart. When we expose our young people to music in all its forms, we share the heart of Jesus with them.

Bible classes are chock-full of God’s plan for His children. Ellen G. White said in Education, p. 18, “Higher than the highest human thought can reach is God’s ideal for His children.” Where better to understand God’s ideal than in church schools? There young minds are exposed daily to His ideal and are reminded that nothing is too hard, no job is beyond their grasp, and no physical or mental challenge is too difficult to overcome if God is on their side, and they claim and trust His promises.

The question of “Am I my brother’s keeper?” is answered in the affirmative through the demonstration of community service and community outreach. Our children love to visit the surrounding neighborhoods and interact with seniors and others who may be isolated and in need to bring them words of comfort and care packages. Our students are happy in their pursuit of making someone else happy; this is deliberate action on the part of the church school. Our community service is so intentional and so honorable that even secular schools have mandated community service as a part of their graduation requirement.

Outdoor camps that encourage team building also provide an opportunity to be our brother’s keeper and offer a chance to develop lifelong friends. Specific to Bermuda is the opportunity to spend a week or more on the sloop, “The Spirit of Bermuda,” working to develop team-building skills.

Our Weeks of Prayer are specific and times are set aside to invite our children individually to become a child of God. Our students must never leave our schools saying no one told them or asked them to be a part of God’s family and embrace the joys that come with receiving Him personally as Savior and Lord.

Our academic curriculum provides every avenue to showcase our Creator, God. Everything we do is intentional, whether in mathematics, the sciences, physical education, or home industry. And we pray that, when all is said and done, our efforts are not in vain, but that we and our children, those who have been gifted to us to prepare for eternity, will hear from our Maker and King, “Well done. . . . Enter into the joy of your Lord”—Matthew 25:21 (NKJV).

Christ is our example. He tutored the twelve, and we are to pattern His example. We must purposefully share with our young people His love and character daily. If not, we will have failed to do the will of the One who has sent us. Christian education must, in all its forms, reflect the love of God. We must communicate with students and parents why we operate as we do, not following any pattern other than that designated by God. Then, I believe we will murmur less and appreciate God’s blessings more.

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Rosemary Tyrrell is the Bermuda Conference superintendent of schools.
The role of the Seventh-day Adventist school in today’s society is unique and essential.

In such a pluralistic society, it is even more critical that our educational system promotes its relevance and the impact it makes on the lives of our students day after day. We must ensure that our students are trained to lead, empowered to serve, and inspired to be ready.

As school principals preparing students to lead, it is incumbent that we are able to take initiative, be inspirational, adequately motivate, and sufficiently challenge others. It is not enough for us to produce students who simply reflect the status quo and mirror the ideas of others; rather, they must be at the forefront of the next generation. Adventist schools must ensure that the education provided to our students propels them to be leaders who lead with a moral compass that ensures integrity is always maintained and service to others is paramount.

It is critical that we model the importance of service. Too often, many view education as a means to obtain riches and climb the social ladders of society. However, if our students only aspire to secure careers after graduation that earn them the most money and cement their position among the world’s elites, then we have failed them. The Bible reminds us that it is more blessed to give than to receive. Therefore the principle of service must be foundational in our educational system.

The students we prepare for this world must understand the value of service and demonstrate this in every action. Whether our students decide to pursue careers in the world at large or dedicate their lives to perpetuating our church and its mission in helping fulfill the three angels’ messages, serving others must be the catalyst that drives our decisions.

As Seventh-day Adventist educational leaders, we are charged with ensuring that our students are ready for the world of work and, ultimately, eternity. We have a fiduciary responsibility to ensure we prepare productive citizens, vested with the skills needed to advance this world. Our students must be well rounded, physically and intellectually, guaranteeing their ability to contribute in manifold ways to an uncertain and diverse world.

Finally, our students must be ready for eternity. The restoration of the image of God in every student must be the ultimate goal of every Seventh-day Adventist school. This must be the focus every day, in every class, and in every interaction.

Linden Hislop is the principal of the Brooklyn Seventh-day Adventist School.
**Kingsbury Is “Seeking Revival in Jesus”**

The theme this year was “Seeking Revival in Jesus” with a new series of services focused on faith and revival.

The meetings included a breakfast buffet, a wonderful time of fellowship, and beautiful musical selections by guest violinist Richard Clark. Lisa Lothian, a member of the Kingsbury church, gave a presentation about how each person can have a personal revival in Jesus and shared spiritual encouragement.

More than 80 people attended and many brought family, friends, and neighbors. The relationship aspect of the church’s life was highly encouraged and motivated attendees to make connections and establish friendships.

Many of the attendees left feeling refreshed and inspired. It was a blessing to both members and non-members alike. Praise God for His blessings and the work of the Holy Spirit!

“Our prayer is that each of us will draw closer to Jesus each day,” said a Kingsbury Women’s Ministries member.

—Elizabeth Harrison, Women’s Ministries co-leader, Kingsbury church

**Kingsbury’s Pathfinders Celebrate With the Church**

The Kingsbury Pathﬁnder Club in Hudson, New York, held their annual winter banquet on February 18. Local Pathﬁnders and their directors, Ami and Arlin Wells, worked diligently to prepare the food and decorated the Kingsbury school gymnasium, transforming it into a winter castle atmosphere. The Lord blessed the activity with a graceful atmosphere.

This year’s theme was “Welcome to the Castle.” Kingsbury’s Pathﬁnder club always brings each theme to life. The church was fully supportive and excited about this event.

The Pathﬁnders took orders and delivered dinners to each guest. Attendees enjoyed the candlelight dinner, and it was a great time for fellowship and for building relationships.

Kingsbury church is thankful to the local Pathﬁnder club. The community of believers and guests had a great time with the Pathﬁnder club.

—Carol Grimes, church clerk, Kingsbury church
Delegates of the Atlantic Union College Corporation Constituency Session voted on February 14, 2023, to approve a recommendation to negotiate with Seventh-day Adventist higher education institutions to create a “Hub of Education” where higher education courses and degrees will be offered on the campus. This vote comes exactly six months after delegates at the 31st Atlantic Union Conference Constituency Session voted on August 14, 2022, to recommend that the Atlantic Union College Corporation Board establish a committee to study the mission possibilities for the college property.

Pierre E. Omeler, Atlantic Union Conference president, chaired the meeting at the Atlantic Union Conference headquarters in Lancaster, Massachusetts. After a brief introduction and recap of the vote in 2022, Omeler provided the members with an outline of the plan. Barbara Fuller, Atlantic Union College campus administrator, also provided additional research into the viability of trade schools and Atlantic Union College’s history in workforce training programs.

The delegates voted unanimously to authorize the board to begin implementing steps to create a “Hub of Education” on the college campus. The “hub” components include opening a trade school to offer in-demand trade courses and certificates, partnering with the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America to offer profit-sharing workforce development certification programs, leasing space to the Southern New England Conference Corporation to be used for community services and ministry purposes, and partnering with a suitable developer to redevelop assets not used for the Hub of Education initiative. The voted recommendation will stop the sale of the property as the recommendations are implemented.

“This is an exciting time for the Atlantic Union Conference and for Adventist education within our territory,” said Omeler. “We have already initiated the necessary steps to establish a trade school and workforce development certification programs. The next step is to negotiate agreements with potential partners. We have a lot more work to do, but God is with us. Please continue to keep us in your prayers.”

—Communication department, Atlantic Union Conference

New Recommendations Voted for Atlantic Union College Property

Atlantic Union College Corporation Board for 2023-2027

Delegates voted the following individuals to serve on the Atlantic Union College Corporation Board for 2023-2027: Pierre E. Omeler, Atlantic Union Conference president; Ted A. Huskins, Atlantic Union Conference executive secretary; Elias F. Zabala, Sr., Atlantic Union Conference treasurer; Jose Joseph, Atlantic Union Conference vice president; Henry Beras, Atlantic Union Conference vice president; Kenneth Manders, Bermuda Conference president; Alanzo Smith, Greater New York Conference president; Miguel Crespo, New York Conference president; Abraham Jules, Northeastern Conference president; Gary Blanchard, Northern New England Conference president; Robert Folkenberg, Jr., Southern New England Conference president; and six lay persons representing each of the six conferences.

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About 300 young adults—twice the expected amount of 150—gathered in Leominster, Massachusetts, February 10-12, for the first in-person GODencounters since before the COVID-19 pandemic. Under the theme, “One in Him,” attendees ages 18-35 experienced worship and revival as well as catered meals and a prayer room that was open 24 hours a day throughout the weekend.

“Our goal is to have our young adults . . . create a oneness with the Lord Jesus Christ. We want them to know Jesus for themselves individually and become one in Him . . . even as He and the Father are one,” said David McKenzie, Atlantic Union Conference Youth and Young Adult Ministries director.

Petrice Wideman, assistant pastor for the Mount Vernon church in New York, shared Friday evening’s message, emphasizing becoming one with God.

Saturday was a powerful day with a personal testimony about God’s healing from Jesús Arocho, a member of the audio team from the Southern New England Conference (SNEC). Vandeon Griffin, associate Youth and Young Adult Ministries director for the North American Division, presented an engaging sermon on our need for Jesus in order to be one with Him.

Following the breakout sessions in the afternoon, everyone regrouped for a relaxed yet deep discussion about the church, including reasons why many youth are leaving, with John Coaxum, a pastor in the Allegheny West Conference. [Other GODencounters speakers/presenters included Darien Santana, Emmanuel Contreras, and Duddley Francois, along with musical artists Cecil Ward, Jr., Esther Bazile, and the praise team; and co-hosts Mitsuka Atty Noel and Anthony Whitlow.] On Saturday evening, David Steede II, Youth Ministries director for the Bermuda Conference, spoke on the deliverance God gives us. Afterward, the night activities included bowling, board games, swimming, and more.

Anthony Whitlow, pastor of the Joy of Troy church in New York, presented the closing message on Sunday. Encouraged and inspired, Eli Irizarry, youth leader from the New Britain Spanish church in Connecticut, said, “I’m trying to restart the youth programs after the pandemic, and I’m trying to learn as many tricks of the trade so that we can get this ministry going.”

Another attendee reflected, “Find some way to put God in the center of everything. Find some way to make sure . . . it all comes back to Him.”

Teddy Williamson, SNEC associate Youth Ministries director and chair of the Atlantic Union Conference Young Adult Advisory, reminded the participants that “What is at stake is your soul salvation . . . nothing else matters. God is there to help us grow.”

—Andrew Dombrowski, member, Rockville-Tolland church, and participant, GODencounters
Mount Carmel Hosts Harvest Festival and Trunk ‘r Treat Event

Mount Carmel church hosted its first annual Harvest Festival and Trunk ‘r Treat event on October 30, 2022, for the Syracuse, New York, community and their families. The vision for the event was created by Mount Carmel church member Kayla Skipper, who was also the organizer. The purpose of this event was to utilize a popular holiday, such as Halloween, as an opportunity for evangelism while also creating a safe alternative for trick ‘r treating for the children of Syracuse’s southside, a community riddled with gun violence.

Church members came out to serve by decorating their cars with fall, harvest, and biblical themes. For two hours, neighbors packed the church parking lot. Children from the community were given candy and an evangelism gift bag that included a religious coloring book, a prayer card, and contact information for the church’s pastor, Aaron Chancy. They also handed out pamphlets for Parkview Academy, the local church school. Prayer warriors Dorrie Bryant and Laverne Houtman also decorated a car that they designated as the “prayer car.” They offered prayer for all of the children and families they served.

The children played a host of games and created a fall arts and crafts project with the help of the Sabbath School teachers. The church also provided light refreshments for all of the guests.

Under the leadership of Pastor Chancy, the dedicated congregation of the Mount Carmel church, served more than 300 children and their parents. Many community members expressed that they loved the safe, welcoming, and inviting atmosphere the event provided them and looked forward to connecting further with the church. They especially loved the “prayer car” and the opportunity to pray with the prayer warriors.

Mount Carmel church looks forward to building on the relationships they made and thank God for the creativity and ability to spread His good news in their community.

—Administrative and Youth Ministries staff, Mount Carmel church

South Ozone Park Women’s Group Enjoys “Paint and Sip With a Twist”

When a group of women from South Ozone Park church got together for a “Paint and Sip With a Twist,” little did they know that the Saturday evening would not be about the techniques of painting from an artist, rather, the “twist” was a practical, thought-provoking discussion about self-care by social worker Opal Albury. Albury discussed the necessity of obtaining personal freedom from self-limiting beliefs, such as relinquishing control of yourself to others.

Albury’s insight helped spark a deep discussion among the group about the challenges of balancing integrity and maintaining credibility among peers. The self-care challenge was based on four points: (1) Do not assume who people are and what they are. (2) Do not take anything personally. (3) Accept that people will not like you. (4) Always do your best.

The lively discussion revealed an even greater
reason for self-care and self-protection because of the abusive behavior many women suffer. The group was encouraged to take ownership over their feelings, reactions, and emotions. They were encouraged to not allow negativity to bring them down or have control over their emotions, and to reframe negative talk with something positive.

Each person then wrote their own four agreements describing their tragedy and triumphs, created a painting with a focus of letting go of negative thoughts, and then talked about what their painting represents.

The painters shared their experiences and how the painting provided release. The audience laughed, cried, encouraged, and applauded each presenter for their openness.

The impact of this “Paint and Sip With a Twist” has raised another question: When is the next event?
—Lorraine Archie and Shonell George, contributors, South Ozone Park church

Group Activity Brings Young Adults Back to Church

In an effort to bring the often missing age group of the church (21-35 years old) together, Mount Carmel church pastor, Aaron Chancy, and Kayla Skipper, one of the church’s passionate young adults who recently had a conversion experience, came up with an idea to reconnect those from that missing age group who grew up in the church located in Syracuse, New York.

The idea began to form in late September 2022. They started by making a list of those in the church who sporadically attend or do not attend church anymore, yet still live in the Syracuse area. Then they brainstormed ideas for an activity they could do together outside the church. They came up with the idea of an “Escape Room,” when a group is placed into a room and has to find clues to get out. After agreeing on the Escape Room, they contacted 18-20 young adults in the target age group.

Once Chancy and Skipper set the date for the event, they began formulating a plan leading up to the activity. They agreed to have those participating take the Myers-Briggs Personality Type Test and an online spiritual gifts test. Once the tests were completed, people were placed in groups based on who they were least likely to work with according to their personality type and spiritual gifts.

While all the individuals could not make it to the event on November 12, 2022, and some could not take the tests, this activity provided an opportunity to reconnect with the 21-35-year-olds. After the escape room activity, the group talked about their experience of working together and learned why they were asked to take the two tests.

The goal of the two tests and the Escape Room activity was to determine their level of commitment to the church and community, to show them the various ministries the church has to offer, and how they may align with their spiritual gifts. The leaders also wanted to get ideas from the group about what they would like to create in the church that may not be currently present. In addition, Pastor Chancy shared some of his vision to take Mount Carmel church to a higher level. He also affirmed each one, letting them know that they are valued, wanted, and needed.

Chancy and Skipper believe that this event brought young adults together and got them excited about being fully engaged in the church and the community and recommitting their lives to Jesus Christ. The event was such a success that everyone agreed they want to do it again as they continue to build and grow together.

—Administrative and Youth Ministries staff, Mount Carmel church
COVID was hard on the families and members of the Brunswick church in Maine. For almost two years, they could not meet for worship service, Sabbath School, potlucks, or other activities. They had online services, but it was not the same.

When they began meeting again outside, using picnic tables at first, some of the younger families wanted a more informal service like the ones they had at home during the pandemic: with the children more involved, contemporary music, and an open discussion format. As the weather got colder, they proposed an early service at 9:00 a.m., led by Nathan Stearman, pastor, and Peter Flores, associate pastor, and attended by about 20-50 people. “We did not want to go back to just sitting in the pews,” said church member Allison Clapp. “We felt something was missing. We wanted to help our communities and be more active and moving for God.”

Member Faith Crooker and others began a food distribution ministry, and they invited the families attending the first service to help with packaging and deliveries after the worship service. Over the summer, other family activities followed. They made cards, notes, passed out “blessing bags,” and reached out to refugees sharing food, clothing, and other necessities. They made porch visits to the shut-in seniors at the nearby retirement villages, and even set up a “free” lemonade stand in front of their church for the bikers, joggers, and walkers passing by. There seemed to be no limit to the creative ways the families reached out to the community.

“We contacted local food banks and started to identify areas within our community that needed the most help,” remembers church elder T.J. Trueh. “We delivered bags of food to families in need living in Brunswick, Bath, Topsham, and Lewiston. We often heard from our neighbors about how much joy it brought them to see the children bringing the bags or crafts they had made. We’ve come to understand that our mission and purpose is not just to preach the gospel, but to live the gospel to those around us.”

After resuming the regular service, the church board decided to put the vision statement, “Love God, and Love People,” into action by having an Outreach Sabbath once a month. The early and later services would meet at 9:45 a.m., followed by outreach activities for the families or Sabbath School for those who chose a more traditional format.

When COVID safety mandates were officially relaxed, they held “The Greatest Gift,” a Christmas pageant that involved 85 youth and adults from the Brunswick, Freeport, Portland, and Bath churches. Nearly 900 tickets were distributed for people to attend the two presentations. People came from across Maine, and even nearby states, to witness the birth of Jesus in story and song. It was the perfect way to end the year of inreach and outreach—together!

—Tom Kohls, member, Brunswick church
Students from all over the Northern New England Conference gathered at Pine Tree Academy (PTA) for this year’s Art Clinic that was held February 2-4. The halls buzzed with excitement as students gathered for worship, fellowship, and the opportunity to tap into the creative side of their brain.

Each student signed up for a variety of classes led by gifted instructors who were willing to share their time and talents. Classes and their instructors included: Drawing by Chris Thacker; Acrylics by Heather Kahnsari Nejad; Pen and Ink by Donna Newinski; Polymer Clay Figurines by Kate Clauson; Cake Decorating by Christina Losey-Brink; Culinary Arts by Sophia Milano; Set Design by Elizabeth Sommers; Visual Presentation by Janel Tyson; Costume Design by Sharon Hinckley; and Advanced Photography by Michelle George. It was rewarding to see the teachers and students thoroughly engrossed in their work, and enjoying the classes. By Friday, everyone was scrambling to finish their artwork in order to bring their completed projects to the art gallery in the gym.

Sabbath was a high day as the students displayed their beautiful creations. Neil Clauson, head teacher at Forestdale Christian school, led out in the song service for church with some of his students. James Reid, PTA Bible teacher, preached a powerful message about the trials that Joseph went through and how it applies to us today as Christians.

Following the church service, students from the visual arts class presented their version of the life of Joseph. The results of their presentation revealed the hard work that they had put into preparing for this day. It was a joy to see how talented the students were and how much they accomplished in such a short time. Many were grateful for all the effort and cooperative spirit shown by the participants as they joined the 2023 Art Clinic.

—Sonia Edwards, superintendent of schools, and Linda Dayen, story editor, Northern New England Conference
For the first time in three years, the annual Youth Leadership Training Convention was held in person in Southbridge, Massachusetts, January 13-15. “The goal is to provide tools to our ministry leaders so they can be better equipped to support the different ministries, whether it’s Adventurers, Pathfinders, Medical Cadets, Adventist Youth Ministries (AYM), or Sabbath School,” says Glorimar Teixeira, volunteer Master Guide and training coordinator for Adventist Youth Ministries at the Southern New England Conference.

Youth leaders and future youth leaders may ask, “Why should I attend this event?” Teixeira answers, “Because this is where the experts are!”

Attendees learned how to manage children with mental health diagnoses, why it’s crucial to comply with the Adventist Child Protection Screening process, how to take their leadership to the next level and move beyond doing the same activities over and over, how to mentor and empower young people to take over leadership roles, and much more.

“I didn’t expect it to be so wonderful,” said Karlene Toolan from the Connecticut Valley church. “It was my first time doing this training in person.” In the AYM track, she learned that Sabbath School is intended to be the core of the church. “It has a high impact. Now I know I really have to be more on time [when I teach] and take it seriously.”

Although this event is designed to train youth leaders, youth also were trained in leadership, with the Teen Leadership Training (TLT) class presented by the Pathfinder area coordinator for Connecticut, Herminio Guevara. “We planted the idea that, with the leading of the Holy Spirit, they are capable of coming up with an outreach program that can reach people who don’t know Jesus Christ,” says Guevara. “They came up with some great projects that they can actually start with their church.”

The high point of the weekend was the spiritual messages from Helvis Moody, Southwestern Union Youth and Young Adult Ministries director. “If we were not a Christian organization, I could point out many workshops that have been excellent, but ultimately, we are here because we want to see young people saved,” said Teixeira.

“Next year don’t let someone tell you about it,” says Teixeira. “Be a part of what is happening!”

—Sandra Dombrowski, communication specialist, Southern New England Conference

### Elders Motivated to Go to Preach

The recent Southern New England Conference Hispanic Elders Retreat at Camp Winnekeag, “I Will Go to Preach 2023,” had registered 109 men and women, but 115 showed up, ready to be equipped for ministry.

“We are motivating and inspiring elders to be effective and advancing God’s kingdom from the local perspective,” said Edgardo Herrera, Hispanic Ministries coordinator.

This army of elders sharpened their administrative skills, learned how to run their local churches and conduct home visits, and enhanced their speaking and preaching skills to multiply their churches and reach their communities for Christ.

Carlos Ramirez, from the Willimantic Spanish church in Connecticut, had just had eye surgery and wasn’t planning to come. “I kept hearing God’s voice say, ‘You have to go,’” he shared. “I didn’t know half of what it was about, but I came out a better preacher. I learned how to lead a congregation, and I learned not to tell but to model the way Jesus did.” Ramirez recognized the Holy Spirit’s presence...
These local church elders are ready to preach, thanks to the Southern New England Conference Hispanic Elders Retreat training.

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**SLA Basketball Teams Take First Place at NAD Tournament**

Both the boys’ and girls’ basketball teams from South Lancaster Academy (SLA) took first place at the 27th annual Hoops Classic high school tournament at Southwestern Adventist University in Keene, Texas. This year’s tournament, held January 25-28, had more than 25 Adventist high schools from across the country participating.

“From this event, we have more than 100 preachers ready to conduct more than 100 evangelistic meetings in two contexts,” said Herrera. “The first cycle will be digital evangelism this year. Then we will conduct a complete cycle in May 2024 with 100 simultaneous meetings in the churches.”

“When God’s people say ‘Yes!’ as He calls them to preach, great things will happen!”

—Sandra Dombrowski, communication specialist, Southern New England Conference

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SLA’s Lady Crusaders with coach, Adrian Olivera (right), admire their first-place trophy.

Francisco Ramos (left), boys’ head varsity basketball coach, and Crusaders stand proud with their first-place trophy.

“Our goal as coaches is to develop God-fearing men [and women], to teach them life lessons [and] to see them grow,” says Ramos. The teams have seen firsthand how they can be witnesses even through sports, especially as they travel.

SLA provides an Adventist Christian education for grades pre-K to 12. In addition to boys’ and girls’ basketball teams, they offer boys’ and girls’ volleyball, soccer, cross country, and a robotics team.

Homeschoolers can also participate in SLA’s sports and music programs as part of their “Bridge” program.

—Sandra Dombrowski, communication specialist, Southern New England Conference
The largest claim ever paid through Adventist Risk Management, Inc. (ARM) is for liability claims generated by an organization we did not own. Further, this organization was not part of the denominational structure or even mentioned in the Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook. This claim is ongoing, and before conclusion it may cost the church well over $50 million.

Do you have a similar potential loss looming at your organization? What could your organization do to prevent these claims?

There are many ways that things can come under our liability structure. Recently, in one field, member volunteers began a rural healthcare ministry that became a senior care center. They had no state licensure for the practice and no qualified caregivers. Eventually, the local pastor joined in and ran the facility. Can you imagine the kinds of liabilities this practice could create for the church?

Another example is a local member who started a media ministry in which he preaches the “real truths.” He is broadcasting/streaming/podcasting from the church campus, including messages that reference the evils of Roman Catholics and degrade the personal autonomy of women. Are there potential liabilities apparent?

In this article, I seek to build awareness of the ways we unnecessarily incorporate other organizations or ministries into our liability structure, placing us at risk. I will break down the anatomy of non-owned liability incidents, drawing attention to three elements that make these claims foreseeable. I will also conclude each element with precautions your ministry can take to prevent a non-owned liability claim from drawing precious funds from your organization.

A non-owned liability incident is foreseeable when the following elements are present:

1. **An organization or ministry is not accountable or controlled by the local church and the conference.**

   A supporting ministry is one of the common ways that a non-owned liability incident may develop, because the ministry is not actively accountable to the rules and regulations of a local church and its respective conference. One of the most common fields where a supporting ministry may operate is education, particularly self-supporting schools.

   It is important to note that the Seventh-day Adventist Church has been in the school business for a long time and has developed generations of professional educators and administrators who produce excellent results. In North America, no other evangelistic enterprise produces even a significant fraction of the baptisms that our schools generate.

   However, this excellence comes with a cost. Our schools are expensive because of the management, oversight, and professional workforce driving the evangelistic, educational ministry. For this reason, many who have revolutionary ideas for education seek to implement those ideas outside the Adventist Church system. Much good can come from this kind of ministry, but also much liability.

   Many types of ministries, including evangelistic, media, and health-based, seek to further God’s work outside the official structure of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. We can love and support these ministries. However, we cannot manage or control these ministries. These prohibitions exist because we cannot be responsible for self-supporting schools or other supporting ministries.

   The supporting ministries must therefore operate and be controlled according to their system of governance and their legal structure. They must be responsible for
themselves, and Adventist entities and employees must never create the impression that the Adventist Church either operates or controls a supporting ministry.

2. Organizations or personnel of the organized church become integrated with the supporting ministry.

This can happen in either intentional or organic, unintentional ways. Lack of foresight in this area can become a significant source of trouble. We and our members have a deep affection for many supporting ministries. Our members operate these enterprises, so we try to support them. We accept invitations to sit on their boards. Sometimes the supporting ministry may adopt an entire church board or conference committee as their board. We write letters of recommendation for their ministry in our official capacity or on our official letterhead. Our boards or committees take actions to show our support of the ministry. Our leaders express support on personal social media platforms. Church employees take roles within the supporting ministry, including running the enterprise itself. Our churches and other institutions collect offerings for the supporting ministry without clarity on its ownership and governance.

Usually, no single one of those items would put you into a liability zone. However, one of them, done visibly, might. For instance, asking for an offering for a supporting ministry may not make the ministry appear to be ours; however, if you put them on your tithe envelope right next to church budget, as something you expect people to give to every week or every month, that might be enough to make it appear that it’s a ministry of the church. It is important to draw clear boundaries between your ministry and the supporting ministries you may indirectly be involved with.

3. Ministries are operated without proper leadership.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church is a mature organization. Its policies and practices are engaged by a professional workforce of employees and volunteers supported by the World Church and local fields. The history of supporting ministries includes many who have excelled under unique leadership and some who have fallen under unique leadership.

Frequently, this is exactly what supporting ministries are avoiding by being independent of the formal church structure. They can operate on a different salary structure, with different professional requirements, and under different policies. They can operate these ministries with people whom the denomination might not hire for those roles. We cannot control supporting ministries. They will do what they will do by whom they will choose to do it.

For these reasons, we leaders of the formal church must be clear, both internally and externally, about which ministries we operate, and which are owned, operated, and controlled by others. There was a time when conferences routinely operated healthcare facilities. The practice is rare today, but in its heyday, it produced mixed outcomes for the church. Operating organizations outside the primary mission of the local field creates liabilities that are difficult to justify.

Conclusion

There is a bright line which divides ministries into two classes: those operated and controlled within the church organization, and “supporting ministries” which are not. When self-supporting ministries come into being, we may wish to encourage and support them. As we do, we must clarify that the ownership, control, and sponsorship is not that of the church and maintain an appropriate distance.

We may wish to adopt such ministries. When we do, we adopt them with control to be run professionally and within policy, with safeguards consistent with our stewardship of God’s church. If we, as the organized church, want to conduct specialized ministry, we must hire, train, and support professionals who can run the operation competently. ¶

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Faculty—School of Education and Psychology, School of Business, School of Nursing, Engineering, English department, School of Health and Kinesiology, and McKee Library.
Adjunct—German instructor (Modern Languages department), Applied Technology (Mechanics).
For detailed descriptions and qualifications, see southern.edu/jobs.

SOUTHERN ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY

is seeking qualified candidates for the following staff positions:
Salaried position—Marketing and University Relations Digital Engagement Manager, Director of Student Life and Activities, Assistant/Associate Dean of Women.
Hourly positions—(Cafeteria) Cafeteria Floater, Cafeteria Worker, and Cook Coordinator; (Village Market) Deli Lunch Cook/Supervisor, Deli Supper Cook/Supervisor, Deli Floater, Vitamin Associate, Cashier/Customer Service Associate, Procurement Engagement Manager; Director of Student Life and Activities, Assistant/Associate Dean of Women.
Hourly positions—(Cafeteria) Cafeteria Floater, Cafeteria Worker, and Cook Coordinator; (Village Market) Deli Lunch Cook/Supervisor, Deli Supper Cook/Supervisor, Deli Floater, Vitamin Associate, Cashier/Customer Service Associate, Procurement

OFFICIAL NOTICE

New York Conference of Seventh-day Adventists
Constituency Session

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN of the 2023 Regular Quinquennial Constituency Session of the New York Conference of Seventh-day Adventists called to convene at 10:00 a.m., Sunday, April 30, 2023, on the Union Springs Academy grounds, 40 Spring Street, Union Springs, NY 13160.
The purpose of this meeting is:
1. To receive reports and establish future plans for the New York Conference.
2. To elect conference officers, departmental directors, an Executive Committee, a Constitution and Bylaws Committee, and a Board of Education Committee.
3. To consider amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws of the New York Conference.
4. To accept new churches or disband churches as may be necessary.
5. To transact such other business as may properly come before the delegates.

Constituency Session Regular Delegate Selection: According to the Constitution and Bylaws of the New York Conference page 7, Article III, Section 1a, “Each church shall be entitled to one delegate for the organization and one additional delegate for each fifteen (15) members or major fraction thereof and who hold membership in the local church which accrues them.”
Vegetarian lunch will be provided.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a meeting of the Organizing Committee will convene at 10:00 a.m. on Sunday, April 9, 2023, at the New York Conference office, 4930 West Seneca Turnpike, Syracuse, NY 13215, for the purpose of appointing members of the Nominating Committee to serve for that meeting.
Organizing Committee Delegate Selection: According to the Constitution and Bylaws of the New York Conference page 8, Article IV, Section 1a “The Organizing Committee shall be constituted as follows: Each church represented at the Constituency Meeting shall choose or empower its delegation to choose, one (1) member plus one (1) additional member for each five hundred (500) members or a major fraction thereof.”
Miguel Crespo, President
Claudio Gomez, Secretary

OFFICIAL NOTICE

New York Conference Association
Regular Meeting

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the 2023 Regular Quinquennial Constituency Session of the New York Conference Association, a New York Corporation, is called to meet on the Union Springs Academy grounds, 40 Spring Street, Union Springs, NY 13160 on Sunday, April 30, 2023, at 10:00 a.m., concurrently with the regular session of the New York Conference. The purpose of the meeting is to elect officers, to receive reports, and to transact such other business as may properly come before the delegates.
Delegates of the New York Conference Constituency Session will be the delegates for the New York Conference Association.
Vegetarian lunch will be provided.

Miguel Crespo, President
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ANNOUNCEMENTS

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The Northeastern Conference Global Prayer Hotline is open 24 hours a day for prayer and study. The phone number for the prayer line is (605) 313-5169, access code: 889074#. For more information, visit the website at northeastern.org/prayer-ministries.

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

OBITUARIES


WINSLOW, Priscilla Jane—75; b. Feb. 8, 1947, in Worcester, Mass.; d. Nov. 22, 2022, in Worcester, Mass. She was a member of the College Church in Lancaster, Mass. She graduated from South Lancaster Academy in 1965. She is survived by her husband of 45 years, Donald G. Winslow of South Lancaster, Mass., a son, Andrew (Francine) Winslow of Townsend, Mass.; a grandson, Zachary; a granddaughter, Isabelle; and a brother-in-law, Ted Winslow (Sharon) of Birmingham, Ala.
FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

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