



SUMMIT HIGHLIGHTS MESSAGE AND MISSION

“This is just the beginning of what we know God is going to do as we follow His lead to hasten the coming of Jesus.”



Jeremy Hall with Royce Snyman at the Summit

Approximately 230 teachers and pastors from the Michigan Conference gathered together at Camp Au Sable from November 18-20 to attend the Teacher-Minister Summit. Teachers and pastors were packed together in lodges and cabins, which made accommodations cozier than usual.

President Jim Micheff opened the event and shared the intent of the meetings on Sunday evening. “Our purpose in coming together is twofold. First of all, to build a stronger working relationship between pastors and teachers. The second is to deepen our understanding of the message. If we are going to be united in our mission, we have to be united in our message.”

The summit highlighted the centrality of righteousness by faith as a key ingredient of our remnant identity. The meetings involved both teachers and pastors studying the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy on topics related to salvation. Time was also

given for small group discussion and for pastors and teachers to share with all the attendees what they were learning.

At the conclusion of the event, education superintendent Jeremy Hall expressed his appreciation for building stronger bonds. “What I’m really excited about is the opportunity we’ve had to build relationships with each other, and those relationships will help carry us forward as we seek to evangelize both within our churches and schools, and also the world.”

Reflecting on the summit, executive secretary Justin Ringstaff concluded, “We sensed a closeness and unity of the Holy Spirit collectively as never before. This is just the beginning of what we know God is going to do as we follow His lead to hasten the coming of Jesus.”

With an eye toward the future and within the context of the current challenges facing Adventism, Elder Micheff set a clear tone for the Michigan Conference, emphasizing the need to remain focused

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“Those who have entered the debate . . . are getting so embroiled in the controversy that the focus of preparing for the soon coming of Jesus has been forgotten.”

STAY FOCUSED . . . ON THE MESSAGE!

Right now, today, our church is in crisis and the unity of our church is being challenged. There is a difference of opinion that has developed between many leaders in our World Church over spiritual leadership roles. This has resulted in growing frustration between members and church leaders alike. The mere identification of the points of contention cause some on both sides of the issue to attack, isolate, and discredit anyone who voices a different opinion from their own.

Websites are quick to report facts about events or quote words spoken that are fueling the tension and focusing the minds of readers on the points of disagreement. Social media platforms are busy with people eager to carry on the debate. Swords are being drawn and used against each other. Those who have entered the debate surrounding these issues of contention are getting so embroiled in the controversy that the focus of preparing for the soon coming of Jesus has been forgotten and is no longer the focus.

In Proverbs 6:16-19, God identifies seven things that are an abomination to Him. The last one is identified as “one who sows discord among brethren.” David wrote in Psalm 133:1, “Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!” Paul added this admonition in Romans 12:18: “If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.”

Jesus Himself identifies a major difference between those who profess to serve Him in their own strength and those who have surrendered their will to God and by the power of the Holy Spirit are practicing

godliness. Jesus said in John 13:35, “By this all men will know that you are my disciples if you love one another.”

What is desperately needed in our church today is this kind of love for each other. When we approach ministry filled with God’s love – there is unity. This is the same message that Christ tried to share with His disciples.

One of the greatest misunderstanding of all time occurred when the disciples failed to comprehend the plan of salvation that Jesus was trying to teach them. He clearly gave them enough information to not only strengthen their faith, but to warn them of what was soon to take place. Had they really listened, it would have been a whole different story, as there would have been no element of surprise or shock as to what was about to unfold.

Christ tried to prepare His disciples for His crucifixion so they would be strong when their faith was being put to the test. One might ask, why were they so unprepared, and why did they desert their Lord in the moment of His greatest need? And the answer is quite simple – selfishness and greed.

All the gospels except John record three different times (Mark 8:31; 9:30; 10:32) where Jesus plainly described exactly what was going to happen – including dying on a cross and rising from the grave on the third day. One of those occasions was when Jesus was walking with His disciples on the road to Capernaum. The disciples’ minds were focused on the politics of the day, and they were certain it wouldn’t be much longer before Jesus would be

proclaimed King. Clearly, they were not thinking about a heavenly kingdom. The competitive spirit of selfishness had penetrated their hearts, and all they could think about was pursuing the highest position possible in His new government. Their thoughts were so caught up with who would be the greatest that they couldn’t comprehend what Jesus was talking about – even though He plainly told them He would be killed and on the third day be raised to life.

Usually when they walked together, the disciples gathered around Jesus, longing to be close to Him, but on this occasion, they lagged behind. When they arrived at their destination, Jesus called them together and asked what they were discussing among themselves as they walked. They were ashamed to answer Him, and Jesus responded to their silence by saying, “If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all” (Mark 9:35).

Then He called a child to Him and said, “Unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.” He then added, “Whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 18:3, 4). By saying this, Jesus explained that selfishness leads to contention about who is the greatest, but the love of God transforms the selfish heart . . . and greed is replaced with humility and a deep desire to do God’s bidding, whether the responsibility be great or small.

In Matthew 26:41, just before Jesus was taken by the mob in the garden of Gethsemane, He instructed His disciples to

“Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” Jesus wanted His disciples to pray because He knew that they would need God’s strength to sustain them – lest they fall. Although Jesus tried to warn them about what was to come, His words fell on deaf ears, as they were oblivious to the impending danger. Because of this, when the test came, they were unprepared, causing them to forsake Jesus. The discouragement that followed was so agonizing, that for the very first time, they lost all hope.

Now let’s examine this event from the perspective of what if the disciples had listened to Jesus and accepted what He told them about His death? Surely history would have been written differently. For one thing, the disciples would have continued asking Jesus questions until they received clarification and understanding. They would have been right there in the Garden of Gethsemane, throughout the trial and the beatings, and finally while Jesus was hanging on the cross, praying and lending support when He needed them the most, while recognizing that Jesus was doing all of this for them.

Imagine what it would have been like at Calvary, when the sun went down on Friday night. Hopelessness would have been replaced by joy in their hearts, knowing that Jesus would rise again! They would have gone throughout all Jerusalem, inviting everyone to come to the grave and welcome their Lord from the tomb on Sunday morning. There would have been so many witnesses at the resurrection that it would have been impossible for anyone to deny that Jesus rose from the grave! Sadly, that was not the case.

Just as clearly as Jesus warned the disciples about His crucifixion, He is warning us today. Matthew 24:21 tells us, “For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.” And in Hebrews 12:26-27, we’re told, “Whose voice then shook the earth; but now he that promised saying, ‘Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven.’” The Spirit of Prophecy, in *Testimonies to the*

Church, Vol. 1, p. 179-184, connects this shaking with the church.

What is this shaking? Amos 3:3 asks the question, “Can two walk together except they agree?” The implied answer is no. In Ephesians 4:13, Paul explains, “Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.” God has given various leadership roles, including pastors and teachers, for the purpose of equipping the saints for the work of ministry and to edify the body of Christ, which will lead us to unity of the faith and to a deeper knowledge of the Son of God.

The shaking is referring to a time of testing that will be allowed by God to separate those who profess the faith but do not practice it. Ellen White wrote in *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 5, p 80, 81, “The time is not far distant, when the test will come to every soul. In this time, the gold will be separated from the brass in the church. True godliness will be clearly distinguished from the appearance and tinsel of it. Many a star that we have admired for its brilliancy will then go out in darkness.”

In *The Great Controversy*, p. 608, these words of warning are given: “As the storm approaches, a large class who have professed faith in the third angel’s message but have not been sanctified through obedience to the truth, abandon their position and join the ranks of the opposition.” Ellen White also gave these words of encouragement in *Selected Messages*, Vol. 2, p. 380, “The Church may appear as about to fall, but it does not fall. It remains, while the sinners in Zion will be sifted out – the chaff separated from the precious wheat. This is a terrible ordeal, but nevertheless it must take place.”

Let your mind think about the following scenarios: What if people stopped reading what they see online, refused to argue over differences of opinions, chose to recognize that Jesus Himself, as the Head of the church, has the right to appoint spiritual leaders, and by faith, believe and trust that God will bring His church into

PRAYER FOCUS

Every Monday morning, the Michigan Conference staff meets for worship and prayer. Here is the list for January. Please join with us as we pray for these churches and ministries.

JANUARY 7-11

Frost/Ithaca
Pastor E J Wolf
Ithaca Elementary
Frost Community Services
Teen Snow Outing

JANUARY 14-18

Bad Axe/Port Sanilac Co./Unionville
Pastor Dick Bullock

JANUARY 21-25

East Lansing University Church
Pastors Steven Silva, Assoc. Ji Yong
Park, Asst. Jermaine Gayle,
Greater Lansing Adventist School
Father/Son Retreat

JANUARY 28-FEBRUARY 1

Fenton/South Flint
Pastor Christien Hodet
Adelphian Jr. Academy/First Flint
Elementary
First Flint Community Services
Holly Community Services
Ministerial Retreat

But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.

Acts 6:4

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AS A LIGHTHOUSE: SHINE FOR JESUS

For years our families have traveled to our homeland to visit family in Cuba. Of course, we could never just visit or just spend time with family. How could anyone? The beautiful island of Cuba is one that, after five decades, lacks so many basic things that one cannot go there without extending a helping hand to some of those in need.

The matriarch of the family taught others with her example to learn how to fish, and that she did well. She would also visit churches unexpectedly and bring cooking oil, soaps, socks, underwear, etc. By the time I started traveling there, I followed my mother's footsteps in a different manner, but in the same field of helping through missionary work.

Each year that we went and shared with others, my dream of doing something for as many women as I could grew bigger.

Last year I invited a group of seven women to surrender their time and resources to God and accompany me on a journey to plan and carry out a Women's Convention from the Women's Ministries here to the women in the Southeastern-most part of Cuba.

Finally June 26 came, and after arduous work from my sisters and I, the Lake Union Hispanic Ministry who gladly responded to Rosa Del Valle's request for

materials and our awesome God guiding, the trip to Cuba began.

This group was made up of sisters who live in different states in the U.S. and conferences, and born in various countries. The love for God and our fellow Cuban sisters, together with the desire of sharing a bit of what heaven might be like, brought us there.

We did encounter difficulties while there. We were not allowed to have the convention where we first desired, but God always takes care of us.

We went to share God's blessings and the gospel of Jesus to 400 women, not realizing that we were blessed more than words can describe.

To hear our sisters sing with their hearts, minds, and souls truly showed us what God's love is all about. We heard that many came without knowing how they would get back to their homes due to transportation issues. They walked and didn't leave the church because they did not want to miss anything during the entire Sabbath day.

On Friday, we talked about how we may think that we cannot shine for Jesus, because of our past mistakes. On Sabbath, we shared how Jesus heals, forgives and equips us to shine for Him. On Sunday,

we said to them: "Now like a lighthouse, Go shine!"

We pampered them with essential oils, massages, and prayers. There were lots of hugs, tears, and prayers. We went into the community on Sunday morning giving small care packages, detergent, soaps, lotion, underwear, etc. We visited a hospital for high risk pregnant women and brought them care packages, GLOW tracks, and prayed with them. One of the girls there cried from the moment we got close to her and throughout the prayer lifted to God's throne on her behalf.

If you asked each one of us individually, we would all agree that God's Holy Spirit was poured out on each of the women we ministered to and in us in a mighty way. We wish to be able to describe it so each reader could experience it, for there are insufficient words that could do it justice.

We came back filled with the Holy Spirit and wishing to continue to do God's work until Jesus comes. Go to all the world and tell all the nations that Jesus Christ is Lord and soon to come. Meanwhile we recommend: "Like a lighthouse: Shine for Jesus!"

Mirtha Duthil, Women's Ministries Director at Maranatha SDA Spanish Church

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on mission. "Our church has challenges, but that's to be expected. We need to be praying and not get involved in controversy. Yes, we are going to have disagreements, but let the Lord deal with that. What God has called us to do is the work here in Michigan. These other things that are happening are out of our control. . . Don't go to the online magazines, don't start writing things and adding to this Facebook page and that. *Go to your knees and pray for them and move on doing the work that we're supposed to do.*"

Andy Im, Communication Director



CELEBRATING 40 YEARS IN NEW CHURCH

The Edenville Church was originally built southwest of its present location in 1882. Prior to this, members met in each other's homes. The former church was small and had a limited number of Sabbath School classrooms. Several members remember meeting in the church school (next to the existing church) for Sabbath School class when they were juniors and then walking or riding down to the original church building.



The original church was built in 1882 and cost \$947.50. The church started with 27 charter members.

Almost a century later, the members found

themselves in need a new church building because they had outgrown the original building.

A building committee consisting of Preston March, Cecil Crosby, Ed Simsack, Max Guernsey, with Robert Marsh as the chair, laid out plans for building a new church. Money was raised and building commenced. A contractor from Flint

came up and started work on the new church. Many church members helped, and the building started taking shape. Max Guernsey, a current member, and his children wired the whole building.

The new church was dedicated on January 14, 1978. It was a happy time for the members. Some of the members had descended from the original settlers of the area and had been members in the old church for years.

After meeting in the new church, it was decided to pave the parking lot. Sidewalks had been put in, but the church needed a paved parking lot. A sufficient sum of money was passed to the church in a will, and so in 1987, a portion of the money was used to pave the parking lot.

Now, 40 years later, as we celebrate the 40th anniversary of the new church building, we celebrate with thankful hearts for the courage, perseverance, faith, and vision that these members, some of whom are still living, had in building the church that we worship in today. We continue to enjoy the fruits of their labor!

Seth McKelvey and Laurie Beimers, Laurie is communication director for the Edenville Church

Holbrook Bibles

The Grand Rapids Central children's Sabbath School classes were looking for a mission project for the spring quarter of 2018. After prayerful consideration of various projects, the leaders looked at the adult Sabbath School quarterly and decided that one of the mission projects on the back cover should have something for the boys and girls. The leaders decided they would collect funds to purchase new Bibles for the students at the Holbrook Mission School. In addition to the Bibles, the leaders also decided to send a set of the children's Bible Studies from *It Is Written* ministries with each Bible. The adult Sabbath School classes also became interested in what the children were doing, and they joined in helping the project by collecting special offerings each Sabbath.

In August, my husband and I attended the Adventist-Laymen's Services and Industries (ASI) annual meetings. As we were visiting the exhibits, we passed the Holbrook Mission School booth. A few feet down the aisle, my husband asked, "Aren't we supposed to be sending them something?" As one of the Children's Sabbath School leaders I had talked to him many times about this mission project. He was right, we still needed to send the Bibles and Bible studies to the Holbrook school and we were not exactly sure where to send them. We immediately turned around and returned to the Holbrook booth.

After explaining the reason we wanted an address, the Holbrook missionaries looked at us in surprise. "I was just down in the school the other day," the wife explained. "I told my husband our students really need some Bibles that are not falling apart!"

Eighteen new Bibles and Bible Study sets were soon on their way to their new home in our own country's mission field. And we have a wonderful reminder that God is still leading in our decisions when we ask Him to direct our ways.

Judy Shull, Grand Rapids Central Communication Leader



REACHING THE COMMUNITY WITH SUPPER CLUBS

How can a church reach out to its community when it has been quite unresponsive to the invitations about evangelistic meetings? The Petoskey Seventh-day Adventist Church used health as an avenue and it is working. More than 40 people attended their last supper club. Supper clubs were the idea of the Michigan Conference Health Ministries Department and started in many churches in 2007. Vicki Griffin, director of Health Ministries and her board members, encouraged churches of any size to open their doors to conducting health programs for their community, with the promise that their department would provide support and resources such as videos, slides, magazines, and, possibly, even speakers.

Church member Debbie Norris, was mostly familiar with more traditional ways of evangelism, so she didn't have much interest in the supper club idea. She had read this statement, "When properly conducted, the health work is an entering wedge, making a way for other truths to reach the heart." (*Counsels on Health*, p 434.2) and reluctantly, agreed to help coordinate some type of health outreach. The very first night, Debbie was surprised

by a great turn-out from the community. "I couldn't help but become excited. The Holy Spirit began to impress me, *this is the evangelism you were looking for.*" Debbie and the members decide they would create the "Heart Healthy Supper Club" and have it meet consistently each month.

Since its inception, over 200 community individuals have come in our doors, learning about their church, meeting their members and enjoying the presentations and food. They have met people from all over the Petoskey area, including a local pastor and his family who have regularly attended the club for years. Debbie says, "we can depend on at least 20-40 guests each month."

The supper club is supported by donations. Guests enjoy talks by members and the professional community from Petoskey speaking on health education, exercise, nutrition, and resources. Members provide food, recipes, cooking demonstrations, and friendship. Topics covered have been on natural remedies,

depression, arthritis, autoimmune diseases, plant-based diets, gardening, hypertension, fiber, and other topics people request.

Church members advertise by newspaper and email as well as invite their friends. Several guests have taken bible studies and attend their church. One woman who attends Petoskey Church now is Kim. Kim said, "I love our Supper Club because it helps me learn about selecting healthy foods. I also love getting to meet new people every month. People here are so friendly and that is why I keep coming back." Kim invited Debbie to attend this month. Debbie also commented on the friendliness she found there and said, "I learned how to lower my blood pressure through adapting a healthier lifestyle."

Pastor Cody Francis says, "We are a small church but God has blessed our efforts to serve him. The Petoskey Church is blessed by our supper club. It is an excellent way for our church to interact with our community in such a positive way. Petoskey members work as a team each month, cooking, cleaning, greeting, and mingling with the guests, and we are thrilled



when it results in Bible studies and some attending our church services. We are praying that eternal connections can be made through this outreach. "Making friends in the community and meeting people's needs is Christ's tried and true method.

Debbie Norris, Petoskey Church Health Temperature Director

NEWS BRIEF



Seventy-four couples attended the Crystal Mountain Marriage Retreat last November. Over the past several years there has been a waiting list due to the growing interest in the weekend getaway. Guest speakers included Pastor Steve and Tami Conway, Pastor Sung and Jewel Um, Pastor Dwight and Karen Nelson, and Chris and Macie Vander Waal. The messages were spiritual, practical, and informative. Be sure to keep your eyes and ears open for next year's registration dates. This one fills up fast!



We are hopeful that Eagle Lodge at Camp Au Sable will be completed by the beginning of summer. The facility will contain eight rooms for housing, with bathrooms and showers in each. The rooms will be similar in size to those at Cedar Lodge and will house the medical team during the summer, and during the off-season the rooms will be available for other housing needs. The bottom floor will contain the camp store, a multi-purpose room, and offices. Funds are still being raised for the building project.



Bathhouse-3 located on the campus of Great Lakes Adventist Academy caught fire the night of October 30. Apparently the cause of the fire was the electrical wiring in the custodial closet. The women's bathroom was most impacted by the fire, and the toilets, walls, pipes, wiring, and plumbing will all need to be replaced. The bathhouses across the campus are visited by thousands during the camp meeting season. The roof of bathhouse-3 had recently been replaced in March of 2018. The bathhouse is expected to be up and running by this March.

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the unity that has been promised?

What if we heeded Jesus' warning in Revelation 3:14-22 and acknowledged that we are spiritually "wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked"? What if we accepted the faith and righteousness that God offers to us and then exercised that faith by believing His promise to "work in us to will and do of His good pleasure"? If we seek clarity from God and pray for wisdom and discernment, we'll have an opportunity to change the world.

Surely our history would be written differently if we would ask more questions – for when we seek for truth - God will give spiritual understanding and insight. The love of God will transform our selfish hearts and unselfishness will be demon-

strated by humility and contentment with whatever responsibility God gives us. The message of a soon coming Savior will dominate the content of our thoughts. Every spare moment will be spent searching the scriptures and then sharing the wonderful things God reveals to us with others. This will be the reality and destiny of all who respond to Jesus' invitation, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me" Revelation 3:20.

Jesus is about to come, and Satan is diligently working to distract us from carrying out the responsibilities God has given each of us. He is trying to get us to focus on the mechanics of ministry rather than

the message. He knows that if we embrace the message, his power will be broken, and he does not want God's mission to be accomplished through us.

My fellow Michigan members, let's work together here in our territory to put aside the controversial issues surrounding our church and work to accomplish the mission God has given us. There are entire areas in our territory where there is no Seventh-day Adventist presence. We must stay focused on our message. Remember that message will drive mission. Let's not get distracted. Stay focused on the message – for soon we all want to hear God say these words, "Well done, good and faithful servant . . . welcome home!"

James Michieff

MICHIGAN CONFERENCE OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

5801 W Michigan Ave

Lansing, MI 48917

PHONE 517.316.1500 FAX 517.316.1501

commdept@misda.org

www.misda.org

www.facebook.com/miconf

MONTHLY CALENDAR

January

- 1 New Year's Day - Office Closed
- 11-12 Teen Snow Outing -
Camp Au Sable
- 13-16 Adventist Ministries Convention
- 17-23 LUC Presidents Spiritual Retreat
- 21 Martin Luther King Day -
Office Closed
- 21-24 Education Superintendent
Spiritual Retreat
- 23 Camp Meeting Directors
- 25-27 Father/Son Retreat -
Camp Au Sable
- 25-27 Pathfinder Area Corrdinators
Leadership Retreat -
Pathfinder Area
- 28-31 Ministerial Retreat -
Camp Au Sable

February

- 2 Pathfinder Bible Experience Area
- 4-7 NAD Presidents Retreat
- 6-10 GLAA Home Leave
- 10-15 Blind Camp - Camp Au Sable
- 14 District Superintendents
- 15-17 CAMPUS Retreat -
Camp Au Sable
- 17 Lay Advisory Budget Review
- 18 President's Day - Office Closed
- 19 MI Executive Committee

LIFT

Life Style Improvement for Teens, affectionately known as LIFT, was once again held October 7-9 on the beautiful grounds of Camp Au Sable. One hundred eighty students and 50+ adults came together for in an amazing and uplifting experience. The weather began cold and rainy, but by the second day it was sunny and warm. God blessed the event with extended summer weather, with the beauty of fall colors painted across the landscape. Our keynote speaker, Pastor

blessed with so many godly people who have a passion for our youth. On the final



evening, 30 students asked for baptism and 48 requested help to study the Bible more deeply. With the world crumbling around us, what a privilege it is to witness our youth choosing Christ. "With such an army of workers as our youth, rightly trained, might furnish, how soon the message of a crucified, risen, and



Craig Harris, engaged the students each morning and evening. The key text was James 4:7, "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you." During the day students met in small break-out sessions that covered the Spiritual, Physical, and Social dimensions of teen living. The students were able to choose breakouts that most interested them. The presenters were volunteers from across the state of Michigan with particular passion or expertise. Our schools and churches are



soon coming Savior might be carried to the whole world! How soon might the end come--" (*Counsels to Teachers, Parents, and Students*, p.555). We saw a glimpse of that army at LIFT 2018.

Brian Kittleson, Associate Superintendent of Education