2012

2012 Research at Andrews

Andrews University

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Andrews Students Talk About their Research Participation

More than 50 Andrews University students and faculty attended the 118th annual Michigan Academy of Science, Arts & Letters Conference at Alma College in Alma, Mich. on March 2, 2012. Many students presented their own research at the conference, others presented jointly with their professors, and a few awarded simply to gain the experience. The University annually brings students to the MASL conference, but simply to gain the experience.

FOR: What are Earhart Emerging Scholars, and how did you become one?

KP: My teachers nominated me, and at the time I didn't really know it was a scholarship. For my job, I fill out and sign a lot of papers, so when they gave me the forms I signed them but didn't realize until later that it was a scholarship.

SG: My research, overseen by Kristin Witzel and Øystein Laillancha, grew out of an on-going research collaboration to Dr. Laillancha in the spring of 2011. I'm exploring national identity in Jordan, especially the effects of Palestinian immigrants on concepts of national identity. Jordan itself is a relatively new state, created in the early 1900s, and has quite successfully begun creating its own identity. Jordanian national identity celebrates tribalism, which is essentially finding one's identity in a tribe rather than a nation or ethnicity. The problem they're having now is that with the influx of Palestinians, a more agricultural people, what does it mean to be Jordanian?

When I was in Jordan two summers ago, I conducted interviews with Jordanians and Palestinians—five Jordanians and three Palestinians, and interacted with many more that didn't want to be interviewed. There hasn't been much case study research since 2003, which is surprising since a lot has happened in the Middle East since then.

KP: I also worked in Jordan, documenting the work of the Jordan Field School with Patrice Jones, assistant professor of communication. Our project was an exposé on what's happening in the Jordan Field School. The Field School prides itself on involving many different departments—archaeology, architecture, anthropology, engineering. Just to name a few. Each department is conducting a different project, and the project's current job is to design and construct a Visitor Center at Tal' Hisban. Part of our project was to do some ethnography and find out what the community needed from the Center—asking questions like, "If there were a center, would you want it? What about your culture do you not know or would like to find out?"

SG: So we were there for two reasons—to help the ethnography students on film the stories that were useful, and also to gather footage that would promote the site once it's done. The Field School is a long-term project, and they not only need students to come, but they also need to let the local community and the community at home know about the project. The end result was a film about the Jordan Field School, called "Digging Deep, Building Up, and Reaching Up" that highlighted the different departments and their work through the Field School.

The second part of my research, which is probably more what I'm getting the scholarship for, is primarily the development of a website for the Jordan Field School (www.madabaplains.org/hisban). We were also working with Edwin Burke on an iPad app and a virtual tour of the site, which was what a lot of the footage was used for.

FOR: What got you interested in these projects?

SG: I chose my project because of a conversation I'd once had with two Jordanians. I asked them if there could be such a thing as a Palestinian-Jordanian. One said no, and the other, who was younger and had more experience with the West, said yes. I was very interested in the difference of opinion.

FOR: Sarah, what did you discover in your research?

SG: In general, the celebrations of Jorda- nian tribalism make the Palestinians feel excluded, since they are not natively tribal, but a more agricultural people. The Palestinians I interacted with felt that Jordanians are prejudiced and treat them as second-class, and don't allow them to participate equally in government. On the other hand, Jordanians feel that Palestinians, who actually hold some government positions, are usurping those positions. They believe that Palestinians only want a Jordanian passport and papers. But most importantly, Jordanians are afraid that Jordanians, who have no state of their own and whose identity is now largely centered on displacement, will try to turn Jordan into a Palestinian state.
FOR: Kristina, you described your research as “non-traditional.” In what way is it non-traditional?

KP: My research is “non-traditional” in the sense that traditional research is going into the field, getting something, and bringing it back for study. My field is journalism, and that is research—uncovering a story and a space, finding a source for an interview, conducting interviews, that sort of thing. Journalism is research and reporting. So my project isn’t traditional research, but it’s supporting the effort of research—more creative scholarship, in a sense. We’re saying, “this is what people have been finding; no one knows about it and we need to figure out a way to make that happen.”

FOR: So now you’ve both got what sounds like extensive real-world experience and expertise doing research. How has this affected your professional development?

SG: I’m actually not going into this area, but I now have a permanent obsession with identity. The topic comes up a lot in systematic theology [her area of interest], in relation to the “other.” A lot of theologians are beginning to dialogue with anthropologists, and I realize that my research can be applied to many areas of interest.

Doing the research itself has given me a chance to learn a lot more about my areas of research, and see what it was like to do fieldwork. When you’re the person doing research and not just learning about someone doing research, it’s very enlightening. You begin to recognize the scope and the logic behind the methodologies.

KP: The chance that research provided for me to go to another country is really big, and I wouldn’t have had it if not for the undergraduate program and my teachers. I didn’t know there were research avenues for the things I wanted to do—already—journalism, documentary making, website writing, all of that.

Working abroad is a big thing for a journal-ist, because it proves that you can interact with people, gain sources and do research. The awards that come out of the research—from the Society of Adventist Communicators for example—always help professionally.

Editor’s note: Following the NAGA Conference, Focus on Research writer Samantha Snively learned she became the third recipient of the Earhart Emerging Scholar award. She was the third recipient of the Earhart Emerging Scholar award. She had written to her professor and experience in this area.

As I walked, I reflected on the sense of community offered by research. After all, thanks to this conference I already have one new friend who shares a passion for ethics and film. Though facing the challenges of coherent critical thinking and endless reading and solitary labors, once that prized kernel of insight appears, it demands to be shared and vetted by other, interested scholars. So, while research is pursued individually, it can only be of use when shared with a wider community, meaning that interacting and communicating with others is a key skill developed by any successful researcher. These traits grow along with the more individual virtues cultivated by research such as the initiative and responsibility required to set reasonable goals and follow through on those plans. And of course, one cannot forget the sense of pride and personal accomplishment gained from contributing to human understanding of a topic you feel is important.

With a renewed heart calmed by these thoughts, I moved into the classroom where I would soon present my paper. Still nervously, but feeling slightly more confident, I sat down and waited as the first presenter for our session (a friend from Andrews) moved forward to begin reading her paper. Giving her a thumbs-up sign, I settled in to enjoy another fascinating scholarly endeavor.

Recent Andrews graduate Theron Calkins is currently teaching English at a public school in South Korea. He stays busy writing and exploring the country.

STUDENT PERSPECTIVES

Theron Calkins

Despite his prolific contributions to Adventist publications, his role as first historian for the church, and his decades as a missionary throughout the world, there has never been a scholarly biography of J.K. Loughborough. Brian Strayer, professor of history, is chang-ing that with his new biography of the early Adventist pioneer (Review and Herald Press, January 2013). The book, part of the Review and Herald’s Adventist Pioneer series, rep-re-sents the first scholarly history of the first Adventist historian, and the authoritative book written on his life.

John Norton Loughborough was born in 1832 in upstate New York, and as a boy joined the Millerite movement. He encountered the newly formed group of Seventh-day Advent-ists in the early 1850s, and enthusiastically joined the movement. He quickly became a traveling Adventist preacher and evangelist in the Midwest and California. He traveled to England as the church’s first sponsored mis-sionary in 1878 and stayed there for five years, starting churches throughout the British Isles. He returned to California and began to consolidate the church along the West Coast. He wrote the first histories of the Adventist movement, Rise and Progress of the Advent Movement (1893) and The Great Second Advent Movement (1905), as well as hundreds of articles in denominational publications.

His legacy in his writing of the histories, his articles about prophetic events, and his organizational development. He established new churches, conferences and unions throughout North America, England, Austra-lia and South Africa, as well as other satellite organizations, says Strayer.

The book began as a request from George Knight, general editor of the Adventist Pioneer Series, to write a biography on any one of “half a dozen different pioneers,” says Strayer. “But he tipped the scales a little when he said he’d like historian to deal with our first Adventist writer of history.” Preliminary research revealed to Strayer that Loughborough had been born only a few miles from Strayer’s hometown, “so that was a little emotional tie,” he says. “I agreed to do Loughborough. This was before I knew the huge amount of material we have at Andrews,” he jokes. “Sixty or so diaries; over three hundred letters—I bit of a bit more than I thought I could chew.” With a

manuscript deadline of January 2012, Strayer began his research by reading all available secondary literature on Loughborough. “It wasn’t much—a children’s book gave me the outline of his childhood. I checked every reference to him in the denominational his-tory textbook, and any references in current literature.” Once he had the big picture of Loughborough’s life, Strayer began reading all of Loughborough’s articles—and there are many—in denominational publications from across the country and spanning over 70 years. Then Strayer turned to Loughborough’s unpublished writings: more than 300 letters and 60 diaries, “little pocket-sized things in which he recorded his personal, private life.” Strayer spent more than two years sifting through articles, diaries and letters to find “the real Loughborough.” While much of Loughborough’s life was lived in the public eye and printed in denominational publications, Strayer was able to discover several previously unknown or obscure facts about Loughborough. To begin with, Loughbor-ough wasn’t his real name: he was born John Lovelord, and changed his name when he married in 1851. “He was Irish, not English as he liked to pretend,” says Strayer. “The Irish were much hated in America at the time, and it’s probable that his new wife wanted to change the name as quickly as possible.” Loughborough also outlined three wives, which is a known fact but unusual for the time, as most early Adventists only mar-ried once and the women tended to outlive the men.

Loughborough’s diaries also reveal more personal sides of him: he wasn’t a good spell-caster, for instance, often writing of going to “California” and “Great Britain.” Strayer was personally surprised by the fact that Loughborough was only 5’9”. He often wrote about his height and weight, and was never over 130 pounds. He was tiny, like a leprechaun. Given his importance to our church and its development, we think he must have been almost six feet tall.” The diaries also reveal

“Loughborough either ignored or passed over some of the largest controversies in early Adventist history, perhaps because he often had friends on both sides.”