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Elected to Serve

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A Firm Foundation

By Austin Rodgers



▲ Austin Rodgers

In Mark 2:27, during one of the many occasions in which the Pharisees (laughably) attempted to catch Jesus “violating” one of their many arbitrary statutes, Jesus emphatically replies that *The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath*. While many sermons have been written on this verse’s implications as to how Seventh-day Adventists should keep the Sabbath, I would argue that a simpler truth surfaces from these words — humans need the Sabbath, not only for rest but also for fellowship and community.

We are social beings, and leading solitary, work-driven lives would result in widespread feelings of un-fulfillment and outright depression in many cases. As a college student, balancing a full course load while simultaneously participating in extracurriculars and holding down a job leaves precious little time to hang out with friends in a non-stressful context. As I’ve progressed in my academic and faith journeys, I’ve come to appreciate the church not only as a place of worship but as an institution providing much-needed community and an outlet from my responsibilities during the week.

Like a large portion of my generation, our world church’s recent decisions on issues such as women’s ordination frustrate and dishearten me. Many of my peers feel as if our voice remains unheard on these matters, causing several of my fellow students to seriously question their religious affiliation. However, an important (albeit unfortunate) truth that applies to everything from religious organizations to nation states and the business world is easily forgotten: *no organization is perfect*. Bearing this in mind, no organization grows, prospers or progresses in any meaningful way by members of a disenfranchised group simply giving up and leaving. Instead, young adults, such as me, must continue to speak up on important issues. We are the next pastors, educators and leaders who will shape the future of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and I intend to be part of the influence that takes on that challenge. ■

Austin Rodgers, senior Accounting/Finance major, Andrews University

Elected to Serve

By Gillian Panigot



▲ John Kent speaks at Student Week of Prayer in 2018, his junior year.

JOHN KENT BECAME CONSCIOUS of God in a personal way during his later years in elementary school. “Before this, I was never opposed to God but instead only found Him to be a friendly, nice Guy that I just happened to believe in.”

In eighth grade, John began reading his Bible more regularly and spending time in prayer each night. “I loved the feeling of peace and joy that I experienced with God,” he says. “My discovery that He wants to have a personal relationship with me and the joy I found resulted in an openness to God’s plan for my life.”

When John started his freshman year at Andrews Academy, he wanted to become

involved in the school’s extracurricular activities. He considered running for class office but, coming from a small school, John only knew two or three people in his Academy class. He wasn’t sure he would receive enough votes to win any election. He felt impressed, though, to take a leap of faith and run for class pastor. “On the day of elections, I remember trembling as I sat down with the whole class,” he says. “All I knew was that, if I was to be elected class pastor, it was up to God. He was the only way I would win the election.” John was elected.

That year John was repeatedly pushed out of his comfort zone as he spoke for multiple vespers programs and helped plan events and worships. People expressed how they felt compelled to follow Jesus more closely after hearing John speak. He also was able to pray individually with a number of students.

John continued to serve as the Student Association pastor for two years and the National Honor Society pastor his senior year.

“It’s all about a relationship with God,” John comments. “I have found that Jesus wants to give us abundant life, like He says in John 10:10. When God calls us to step out in faith and follow His leading, He is calling us on an adventure with Him. View your call to service as a good gift from God, a gift that will give you abundant life in a relationship with Him.” ■

Gillian Panigot, Media Communications manager and FOCUS editor, Andrews University