

Can we do better?

Andrea Luxton, *president*

SOME OF YOU MAY HAVE READ THE TITLE to this editorial and immediately responded, “Yes, YOU CAN do better!” Others may wonder, “Well, who is the WE in the title?” or “BETTER in what?” Let me clarify by sharing some stories.

Just this week, a student who recently graduated came to see me, bursting with excitement over the way he had seen real and tangible evidence of God's leading. The story was quite incredible and is his to tell—maybe in another edition of FOCUS. But in short, his plans had been overturned on coming to Andrews through no fault of his own or the University. He had experienced Andrews' staff and faculty walking with him through the challenges, encouraging him and ultimately recommending he prayerfully look at a different path. He did, and then everything turned around in a measurable and very unexpectedly positive way. He was so happy, so thankful to Andrews and of course to God. A wonderful testimony.

I hear other experiences, however, and I hear them too often, of individuals who are hurt or disappointed, maybe by this University, maybe by the wider church and maybe by their families. They graduate and are not sure they want to be part of our faith community any longer. Or they graduate full of passion about the church and then hit a different reality in a local congregation or employment, and their fire is extinguished. They might say they have not seen God working in our lives or in their own. They see the challenges in our church and not the opportunities for service. Their excellent degree may lead them into success, even into a life that makes the world a better place. But the faith commitment has gone. Or they keep their faith but remain in a state of disillusionment. We can of course blame them for their decisions; but today I don't want to do that.

So for today, the “we” is all of us: Andrews University, the Adventist church, all those who read this who are active

believers. And the “do better” is about how we represent the power of the gospel in living our lives, from the simple smile of encouragement to the time taken out to walk alongside someone in a difficult time. Sometimes it may be about theology; more often it will be about modeling a compassionate, grace-filled, forgiving, patient, loving God.

Why do I say that right now? I say it because I am saddened at the current reality when people of faith find excuses for public comments that demean or insult others. I am even more saddened when people of faith find it acceptable to do the same themselves—especially when they can hide behind the screen of anonymity and use social media to cast stones and demonize others. I find it challenging when we can treat each other with disrespect, pushing the blame onto others instead of taking personal time to problem solve. And I find it unbelievably disconcerting that when there is so much wrong in the world around us, we spend time beating up on each other.

And no, it is not all like that. If it were, the great experiences would not happen. They do. Often.

But yes, WE can do BETTER. Me, Andrews University, the Church, all of us in representing God's character better. Forgive us, Lord, forgive us.



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