



The words of José V. Rojas, Barry C. Black and Sir Patrick L. Allen rang true to the mission of Andrews University. As graduates set in the pews of Pioneer Memorial Church, some for the last time, the message shared by these alums reminded them why they chose to Seek Knowledge. Affirm Faith. Change the World.

# You are the Light of World

José Rojas, director for the Office of Volunteer Ministries, North American Division

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Let's bow our heads and pray. Father in heaven, we ask you to mess with us. Push us. Make us think, yet again, on this campus. Sir, we would see Jesus, not a gentle, harmless Jesus, but the mighty warrior who carried a cross for us, who bled freely and was not afraid of death, for he had a cause. Let that Jesus speak to us with might, with conviction, and with transformational power. Push us off a cliff this morning, and as we fall helplessly, let us discover that we have

wings to fly like eagles. In his name we ask, Amen.

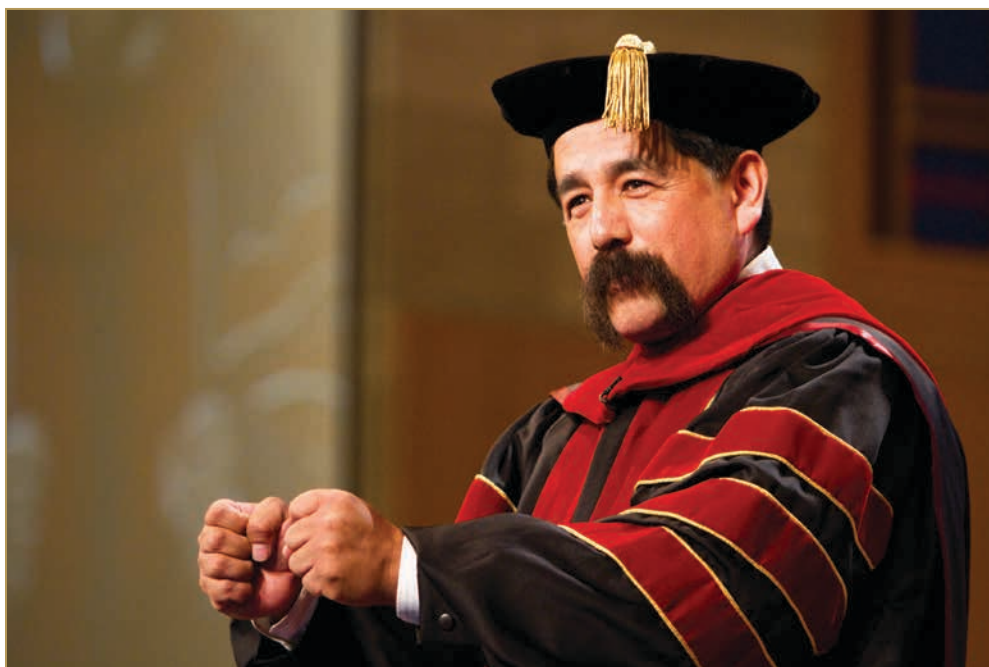
We prayed, now you guys are in trouble.

To be afraid of darkness does not come naturally. When my children were little, I'd ask them to go get something upstairs, and they'd cheerfully—all the lights were turned off—run upstairs and get it. But one day they hung out with their cousins in L.A. and learned about El Cucuy. El Cucuy in Latino tradition is the bogeyman. We don't know what he

looks like, but we know that he inhabits the darkness. He lives under the bed and can grab your ankles as you get in. He lives in the closet, you're sure of it, you've heard him—and now you're going to be thinking about it tonight.

That's called the power of suggestion. My kids learned to be afraid of the dark. You learn these things and you feed them for the rest of your life and then you learn as an adult to be AFRAID of the DARK. Now, I'm from L.A. When I'm not in a suit or a robe, you see me at the park. I hear terrified mothers whose kids are running towards the swings. "Stop! There's a man over there!" And I realized she's talking about me...You go into the city and there's a certain alley you stay out of, because in the darkness, evil can exist. Although those same alleys are just as dangerous in the daytime...I have good news for you. In Matthew, Chapter 5, Jesus says, "You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do you light a lamp to put it under a basket—no, you put it on a candlestick and it lights the whole house! So let your light so shine that others may see your good works and glorify God in heaven."

Light comes from God. Every time God confronts darkness, he brings light. What's the first verse of Genesis? "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. And darkness was upon the



face of the waters and the Spirit of God moved upon the waters. And then God said “let there be light” and there was LIGHT.” And then it talks about creation. But God FIRST created light.

Then you go into the New Testament. Spiritual darkness prevails. John 1:1 “In him was life, and the life was the light of men.” Spiritual darkness! God is seen sending the light. So wherever there’s darkness, God sends the light. Number two principle—darkness and light cannot inhabit the same place at the same time. You can try, but it will be a futile experience. Light always wins... Darkness must flee when light comes because darkness is merely the absence of light.

Light is little understood in today’s society. Go outside and experience ultraviolet rays for yourself—without sunscreen. And experience a second-degree burn that will leave you with blisters that threaten to become cancer later in your life. Light has power...properties that we have not yet imagined. When you go into the sunshine, and the rays hit your body, did you know that your body metabolizes and moves some cholesterol and changes it into Vitamin D? Light can be abused. Look at it and lose the function of your optic nerve. Light can be overwhelming.

Back to John 1:1, “In Him was life, and the life was the light of men, and the darkness did not comprehend it.” They did not see the light of Jesus. If you cannot even perceive light, that is what we call blindness. That is how intense it is on this planet—not only can we not understand light; we cannot even PERCEIVE the light of Jesus. The next verse says, “Then God sent a man and his NAME was JOHN.” That’s the one Bible verse that gives me a chill down my spine. Plug your name in—God sent a woman, a graduate of AU—and put your name in there. Jesus referred to John that there was no greater man than he. This man who dressed in camel’s hair, who preached not in the temple in Jerusalem, but preached in the wilderness. The guy ate grasshoppers...in honey. Can you see him? Yet through that man, God prepared the way for the coming of the Messiah. Someone was willing to hold up a light. Even Herod, a pagan, evil dude, living with his brother’s wife,

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could not miss a message. Something powerful about an individual who’s committed to God, who’s filled with the Holy Spirit, to shine a light in a dark place. So that when Jesus showed up, “Behold, the Lamb of God!” They were waiting for him now. LIGHT! ...

...The scriptures are clear—for God, a day can be a thousand years, and a thousand years can be a day.  $E=mc^2$ , with all of its fragile structure of humanity, with all its frailty, can suggest what eternity can look like. God can move freely through the dimensions of time—that’s why He has all the time in the world just for you. Because He freely moves through the dimension of time.

...When we partake of forever, a day can be a thousand years. What do you need a clock for when you are moving through the dimension of time? But to make that happen, you need light. That’s why time travel is impossible for humans, we can’t get anything to travel that fast. That’s why *Star Wars* and everybody tries to suggest warp travel. But it’s powerful when you realize

that light can go places you cannot. Now, let’s look at it spiritually with an outpouring of the Holy Ghost.  $E=m$ , a person filled with the power of the Holy spirit, times light equals a spiritual nuclear weapon.

...Now, brothers and sisters, let me tell you something, Jesus says WE are the light of the world. He’s spent his whole ministry saying that He was the light of the world. Remember when a prostitute was brought and thrown at his feet, and He said, “Neither do I condemn you. Go and sin no more,” inviting her to grow in her life. And as He forgives that prostitute in public we always end the story there, read the very next verse, he turns to a stunned crowd who had just watched him forgive a prostitute and he tells them, “I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD! He who lives in me will not walk in darkness.” As the prostitute is led away in dignity, Jesus announces to his disciples, “I’m leaving you guys to the light...so let your light shine.” Now we know it’s not in me, but the power of Christ shining through me. You see, that’s the power of light.

Don’t ever forget this—if you remember anything about today. Please, do not be successful...not by today’s definition. Webster has a very helpful definition that I hope you will go look up tonight. Now I’m not attacking the word successful, just today’s application is so corrupt...I make it and everyone else loses?...I am not into that model of success—not the word but the idea, “I make it, and you don’t. That means I pray more than you. You should repent,



and God will bless you, too.”... To not be successful the Lord says to prosper you. Prosper is different than success. When God prospers you, he blesses you so much that everyone AROUND you is blessed. That’s what God wants for you. You make it. Because you made it, everyone else made it. You don’t want to be by today’s standards of success, be by God’s standards of success!

Now somebody’s thinking, “Well I ain’t exactly, like, religious.” So? I’m not asking, but I want you to know that God is religious about you. He sent you to a religious institution, and you can have any opinion about it—it’s so popular today to dog our institutions. It’s like caf food. If you can’t dog the caf food, you’re not really a student. Most of you are going to miss this place. I know you don’t believe me, but it’s all right. Don’t forget though, that this place gave you something that is irreplaceable. Don’t go out there to just be a careerist and join the lines of unemployed college graduates. Careerists are constantly frustrated out there. All they care about is their career. Go out there and watch Jesus open some doors for you...I have yet to be allowed by God to prepare for my career. It’s the truth. Had it not been for Dr. Andreasen, I wouldn’t have graduated in the first place. He helped me take a 1.7 cumulative GPA, and repeat every D and F. I owe a lot to this man. He was my major professor. I can’t explain to you what it means to grow up thinking you’re a loser, and then you get an education, and it’s not so much what you got from books but what you got from the Lord. It’s about values, principles, about living a life for the Lord. I know some of you with 4.0s don’t know what I’m talking about, but others of you do— who squeezed four years into six—you can’t believe you’re here. It’s the end of the journey, and your parents are here because they can’t believe it either, but they’re still so proud. I’m telling you, it has to be more than books. You must leave this place in the name of Christ. You must go out into a dark world and shine the light of Jesus like never before!

In 1996, I was chosen by the U.S. Olympic Committee to carry the Olympic torch. I know, I was confused too—do I look like an athlete?...The governor suggested me and the Olympic Committee asked me to carry the torch,

which is an enormous responsibility... As I looked at the experience of the torch, they first taught us what it meant. I always thought it was the torch that gets passed, but it’s not. A torch can’t survive being passed, it burns to stubble. You can’t take the torch very far; you can only pass the light...the flame...I discovered that Jesus is not the torch, I am the torch. Jesus is the light of the world. You see, the Olympic flame is lit by the rays of the sun in Olympia, Greece, and they light it. Three lanterns are immediately lit and kept separate by three separate security details. They then fly the torch to the country that will host the Olympics and then begins the Olympic torch run. They light a torch and so begins the first Olympic torch runner...I was chosen to carry the flame into Washington, D.C., and one of the ladies in my group was chosen to carry it up the steps of the nation’s Capitol and boy am I happy that was not me! All 3,000 steps in broad daylight, with national cameras—“We are live at the torch ceremony on the Capitol...He has passed out before the halfway mark.” So I was chosen to bear the flame into the city...Suddenly the man says, “Are you ready?” “No...” And they turned it on (makes torch noise) and I stood like this waiting as he came closer (exploding noise) and his was turned off. “Run!” “Yes...” There were thousands of people lining the route, cheering me. No they weren’t, they were cheering the Olympic flame as it made its way through the town, to Atlanta. They didn’t know who I was, they didn’t care who I was. No one asked, “Who is that man?” No, they said, “There it goes! There goes the Olympic flame!”...The light can inspire when people can see it!

I switched hands, and the last part of my run was uphill. And I remember (wheezing) you know that sideache on the first day of PE? We’re talking about 25 years since my last PE! I kept my best face forward and I pretended it didn’t hurt. As I held the TORCH of the OLYMPIC GAMES—I’m still overwhelmed to think that I carried the Olympic flame. I don’t care if there were several thousand others who did. I got to be one...That will be one of the moments that defines my life—that verse hit me. “You are the light of the WORLD! A city built on a hill cannot be hid. You don’t

# “...don’t you dare leave this campus with merely a degree in your hand.”

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put a candle under a basket, you let it shine so that it lights up the whole house. Let your light so SHINE that others may see your good works and they will glorify your father who is in heaven. Let YOUR light so shine...

Class of 2010, don’t you dare leave this campus with merely a degree in your hand. Dr. Andreasen was there for both my graduations...The one question that he asked me searches the soul. It is the one I will leave with you today. “What have you learned?” I could waste his time and tell him about all the classes I made up, all those Fs that turned into As...All I could say to Dr. Andreasen that day was, “I came here to get a degree. I ended up getting an education.” I’m not the same person who walked on campus. Within three years I was working for the General Conference. Two years after that I was working at the White House. I was offered Deputy Chief of Staff at the White House and I accepted only Advisor to the President. That’s a D and F student talking to you. I’m telling you right now that if you choose the light of Christ, you have no idea what plans he has for your life!

So shine your light until Jesus comes. All around the neighborhood. Don’t let Satan blow it out. Let it shine! Let it shine! Let it shine!