PATRICK KNIGHTON

KNIGHTON’S DAY

FIVE HEALTHY THINGS
YOU’RE DOING WRONG

INSIDE A SYRIAN REFUGEE
HEALTH CLINIC

CONFESSIONS OF
A SHOPAHOLIC

HOW TO GET NOTICED
BY JOB RECRUITERS
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SHAKING MY FEARS

HONESTLY, SOMETIMES IT’S SUCH A STRUGGLE. There are times I’ve actually doubted God. Like the times When I’ve gone to bed late and was sure I wouldn’t wake up early enough for devotion. Or the time I was convinced the pouring rain beating down on my snow-covered rooftop would cause the roof to cave in. As I re-read my journal I’m continually amazed at how often I doubt God, when it’s so clear He’s been there with me all along, even in my darkest moments.

I’m ashamed of my “doubting-Thomas” ways, and am reminded that doubt is a by-product of fear; fear that things might not go the way you want. Held up to the light, it is a fear that you’re not in control of your circumstances and that perhaps God cannot or will not help.

But 2 Timothy 1:7 reminds us that God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of love and self-control. As I sat in my office recently, reading the testimonies in this issue, I could hardly contain my excitement. Young people like Patrick Knighton—I liken him to one of the three Hebrew boys—making a stand to obey the fourth commandment. Read his story and you will see what I mean. Or Emily Leffler, who in the midst of a near-death accident, witnessing to the truth of Isaiah 43:2. It points to the implausibility of our doubts and fears.

These are not fables, but overriding evidence that God continues to be in total control and loves us dearly. Even in the face of doubt and fear. I’m afraid there’s no doubt about that.

How have you overcome your doubts? I’d love to know.

DEBBIE MICHEL
Associate Professor
Department of Communication

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

I recently reviewed your magazine, Envision and I was very impressed! I was in the process of reviewing your magazine and my wife snatched it out of my hands—this is a good sign. :-) She ended up reading the magazine from cover to cover in one sitting.

Omar Miranda
Editor/Director, Insight Ministries

I just finished reading issue #5 of Envision here in my office and I want to say CONGRATULATIONS on an excellent job! I am so impressed with the work that you all are doing. I really enjoyed reading the articles and the design is phenomenal. It’s so exciting to see good, quality, relevant resources that I can be proud to share as “Adventist”. Thanks for the work you all are doing. I would like to subscribe but did not find any info for that, maybe you can assist me with that.

Manny Cruz
Associate Director
Youth & Young Adult Ministries
North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists

I’m enjoying your magazine. It makes me want to be a student at Andrews! My favorite sections are Health and Fitness, and Relationships, but I read everything. As I read it I’m always thinking, more people need to read this, to see this. I think of my students, their friends, their friends’ friends. It’s just such an amazing ministry you have here. What a privilege and a blessing to engage young people in God’s Word and the benefits of Christian life. The advice is very sensible and practical. I look forward to reading your magazine. It gives me so much encouragement and joy. I know I’m in for good, wholesome fun.

Camille Goodison, Ph D.
City University of New York

LOOK FOR THIS ICON THROUGHOUT THE MAGAZINE TO FIND MORE CONTENT AVAILABLE IN OUR APP!
PHOTOS NOT INCLUDED:

LUSMELA ALONSO
ASHLEIGH BURTNETT
EMILY FERGUSON
LEVON KOTANKO
LERATO MOEPENG
CARISSA PAQUETTE
COMMUNICATION IS KEY

OPEN DOORS TO YOUR FUTURE

Joyce Yoon, ‘15
Summer 2014 intern in the Washington, DC office of Michigan congressman Fred Upton

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PHOTO: KERI LAWRENCE
Beyond Beliefs
Who Guides or Influences Your Faith at Present

The Beyond Beliefs study is a major research project being undertaken by three cohorts with nearly 700 participants at Andrews University. The study seeks to determine how Millennial young adults (ages 18-32) really feel about the 28 Fundamental Beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and give them a voice to express their thoughts about these beliefs in their own words. In addition to sourcing over 3,000 200-word written responses relating to each of the 28 Beliefs, the researchers want to further explore a range of other religious, sociocultural and spiritual topics to identify if answers are consistent with what is often anecdotally assumed by church leadership. One such topic is: “Who most guides/influences your faith at present.”

Participants in the second Cohort (Fall 2013) were able to select as many options as they needed.

For full details of the Beyond Beliefs study, visit www.Beyond-Beliefs.com.
TROUBLE
MY IMMEDIATE RESPONSE TO ANDREWS AQUATICS DIRECTOR GREGG MORROW’S INVITATION TO JOIN THE SCUBA PROGRAM CAME EASILY. IT WAS AUGUST OF 2011, AND I WAS GEARING UP FOR MY LAST YEAR OF COLLEGE AT ANDREWS. DURING LUNCH AT SUBWAY WITH MY ROOMMATE-TO-BE, MORROW JOINED US. DESPITE HIS ATTEMPT TO SELL THE TRIP OF A LIFETIME, COMPLETE WITH WORLD-CLASS DIVING, ALL-INCLUSIVE RESORT, AND BEAUTIFUL OCEANS, I DECLINED.
HE SPARED MY LIFE, BUT MY BIGGEST QUESTION WAS, "FOR WHAT?"

sixth year. I was burned out in a lot of ways and needed to be finished.

“If I drop education, I’ll graduate this May,” I explained. My advisor cautioned me against my decision, but ultimately signed the necessary paperwork, and the deed was done.

At that point I was faced with what to do with my life that had, up until that point, revolved around a classroom. In somewhat of a panic, I began searching for other options. I knew I had done editing work, and loved to write, so I considered searching for options in publishing. After several phone calls I got through to someone in Human Resources at Harper-Collins Publishing Company, but after hearing my status as a college student, I was told to call someone in the college hiring.

Several other companies told me the same thing, so I turned my focus back toward my classes and preparing for my spring break diving trip.

Looking back I shake my head at the fact that during all this I never asked God what His plan was for my life. I always anticipated that He had one, but I never considered that everything might have been working out in His timing. I feel a little bit like Jonah. I had felt God’s calling strongly in my life. I knew He was molding me for teaching but at the first sign of trouble, I ran back to my own devices. But God was sending me a whale in a big way.

COZUMEL-BOUND

The scuba trip was incredible. After I passed my checkout dives and got my certification, the sights were unbelievable. I swam with sea turtles, sharks, six-foot eels, massive eagle rays, lobsters, crabs, octopi, and millions of fish. Swimming in that foreign world gave me such an insight into God’s character and creative genius. I marveled that the world was created thousands of years before the invention of scuba tanks, and yet the detail in the environment was indescribable. God created the underwater world simply for the joy of doing it, and that was, in and of itself, amazing to me.

The entire week I was in constant awe of the ocean. I couldn’t get enough of the experience, and after sheepishly admitting to Mr. Morrow that he had been right all along, and I was having the time of my life, I added more dives to those I’d originally signed up to do.

Sadly, the time was wrapping up, and on the last day, after an incredible morning of even more new sights and experiences, we geared up for the final two dives of the trip. It was with mixed feelings that I pulled on my scuba gear and dropped over the side of the boat on the first tank of our last afternoon. In a last minute switch I had been assigned to the smaller of the two dive boats, so I would be going with just five other divers, plus the dive master who would lead the dive.

The dive we were on that day was by far the most advanced I had done. After descending to depth, my gauge read ninety feet, thrilling when I looked up to take in the vast ocean above me. We saw several cool sea creatures, but soon I noticed a deep cold settling in beneath my wetsuit. Minutes I was shivering uncontrollably, watching my gauges, ready to go up to the sun-warmed surface.

Another of the divers was also cold and burning through his air tanks, so we headed up while the rest of the group continued the dive. Once on our boat I stripped out of my gear and found a patch of sun to sit in. The warmth hit my skin but for some reason I couldn’t get warm. Presently the other divers came to the surface and we found a place to dock the boat and spend the required surface interval time.

The longer I shivered in the sunlight the more I became aware of the fact that I felt terrible. I was freezing, my stomach was upset, my muscles were fatigued, and my head was spinning. I toyed with the idea of staying in the boat for the last dive, but it was the last dive of the entire trip, and I knew I would regret sitting out, miserable as I was.

Reluctantly, as the rest of the group geared up and dropped over the side of the boat, I joined...
After a while I looked down at my gauges, wondering how much longer the dive would last. My computer read that we’d been down for just over thirty minutes, meaning there was still plenty of time left in the dive. As I watched the numbers a familiar pressure in my ears forced me to turn my attention back to my surroundings. I had unknowingly started drifting up toward the surface, and the pressure in my ears told me I needed to equalize. Just like I’d been trained to do I plugged my nose and forced air to my ear canals, but instead of clearing, the pressure caused my head to spin.

Depth of Despair
As my field of vision narrowed, I fought for consciousness and turned to find my dive buddy to signal that something was wrong. He looked at me with concern, and then my vision went black.

While I hung, limp in the water, my dive buddy swam off to alert one of the dive instructors. Both he and my dive buddy realized the emergency, and as quickly as possible got me to the surface, and the pressure in my ears told me I needed to equalize. Just like I’d been trained to do I plugged my nose and forced air to my ear canals, but instead of clearing, the pressure caused my head to spin.

A CLEAR PURPOSE
In time it became clear that God had spared my life in a big way. No one knows exactly why I was switched to the other, more advanced boat at the last minute, but that decision most likely saved my life. The boat I was originally on was much bigger and slower, and would not have been able to get me to help nearly as quickly. I was diving with a dive master who knew exactly who to call in a diving emergency. That doctor’s knowledge and response time also played a part in saving my life.

When I was finally allowed to return to Michigan, I was really struggling with God. I knew He spared my life, but my biggest question was, “For what?”

I spent the summer healing, making up class work I had missed, and bemoaning the fact that I had missed the deadline for application to any publishing company, and was in no shape for that kind of work anyway. Reluctantly, feeling very much abandoned by God’s plan, and with no other foreseeable options, I took a task force job at an academy in Virginia.

The day I was set to leave my advisor called me into his office and asked me if I was interested in a possible full-time high school English teacher position in Battle Creek. Floored, I asked for the details, and in a whirlwind of chaos, activity, and interviews, eight days before school was set to start I accepted the position.

Not only did God save my life, but He gave me the desire of my heart and put me in a career that I love more than anything. Just as in the story of Jonah, God was in control from the start; it just took a whale of an experience to reach me in my self-driven, derailing plan and put me back on the path He designed for me from the beginning. God never left me, He never forsook me, and He knows the plan He has for me, as well as for the rest of His children if they will just let Him lead and trust in His timing and perfect grace.
Ever wonder if the choices you’re making are the best for your body and the environment? We do. You’re probably doing a good job, but in case you’re wondering about whether or not you should be wholly committed to eating organic, spending more time on the elliptical, or spending some extra money on energy bars that promise to bulk up your muscle mass, you may want to read ahead.

**AVOIDING GLUTEN**

Staying off gluten? It’s important to ask yourself why. Like most health trends, this is not a diet that serves as a one-size-fits-all plan. Though many people need to stay off gluten for safety reasons, gluten is not an absolute evil. People who live with celiac disease or a gluten intolerance should make sure to stick to foods with the little “GF” stamp of approval. Though laying off wheat products may encourage some to experiment with new grains (hopefully whole grains), it’s important to remember that wheat isn’t necessarily evil.

**CARDIO FOR WEIGHT LOSS**

Cardio is great and a necessary part of good health, but if you’re trying to shed pounds, you may want to rely less on cardio and more on weight lifting. To burn enough calories, you need a working metabolism and muscles that are willing to do the work for you. Cardio will burn off calories, but if you spend more time lifting weights and building muscles, you have more muscle mass that will work on burning those calories off for you. According to an entry in the Journal of Sports and Medicine, the trained muscle burns double the amount of calories than an untrained muscle does. This means that people spending more time in the weight room and focusing less on cardio may be able to shed more weight than those who spend hours on the elliptical.

**EATING QUINOA**

By now, everyone’s aware of what a nutritional powerhouse quinoa is. This seed often takes the place of grains in porridge, stews, and pilafs. It boasts a rare trait of being a complete protein meaning that all essential amino acids can be found in it. If your only concern is your own personal health, feel free to keep on buying. However, if you’re worried on the environmental and social impact of your diet, you may consider steering clear. Recent gastronomical reports have shown that the newfound demand of this trendy food has been causing economical distress for the South American farmers responsible for producing it. Since demand has gone up, the prices have sky-rocketed for this Andean seed, ironically making this product too expensive for those struggling financially in Peru, including the farmers themselves. To replace quinoa in their diets, many have turned to noodles, according to PuntoEdu, a magazine that comes from the Catholic University of Peru.

**EATING TOO MUCH PROTEIN**

Protein is essential for all of us, but most people eat more than they need to. The recommendation is to make a quarter of your meal a healthy source of protein. Beans, nuts, and grains are all great sources of the protein building block, amino acids. If you’re eating a balanced diet, then there’s no need to supplement with things like protein bars, which typically end up containing as much sugar as a can of soda.
CHOOSING YOUR VEGETABLES

You should definitely be eating vegetables. But, whether or not you should be eating organic is a hotly debated topic. Should you choose to avoid some vegetables when you only have access to ones that don’t have that holy organic symbol? Experts are saying not quite. Some vegetables, including fan favorite kale, are unfortunately on the “dirty dozen” list, which means that their pesticide levels are significantly higher than those on the “clean fifteen” list. The “clean fifteen” is a list of produce generally considered harmless even with the amount of pesticides used on them. Each year the Environmental Working Group (EWG) provides an updated list for both cleaner vegetables and the ones you may consider buying organic. While choosing organic foods over non-organic is a good idea if possible, both the EWG and The Center for Science in the Public Interest agree that it’s important to remember that the bottom line is to eat vegetables, organic or not. It’s widely agreed that the pros of the vitamins and minerals found in vegetables with less than ideal pesticide levels outweigh the cons of ingesting pesticides. Happily, some vegetables and fruits have made the “clean fifteen” list, meaning they have been dubbed as being safer to eat even if they are not organic.

THE DIRTY DOZEN:
- Asparagus
- Avocados
- Cabbage
- Cantaloupe
- Sweet corn
- Eggplant
- Grapefruit
- Kiwi
- Frozen sweet peas
- Sweet potatoes
- Mangos
- Mushrooms
- Onions
- Papayas
- Pineapples
- Frozen sweet peas
- Sweet potatoes

THE CLEAN FIFTEEN:
- Apples
- Strawberries
- Grapes
- Celery
- Peaches
- Spinach
- Sweet bell peppers
- Nectarines (imported)
- Cucumbers
- Cherry tomatoes
- Snap Peas (imported)
- Potatoes

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QUICK AND EASY

5-DAY MEAL PLAN

Los Angeles is largely a numbers game, and the numbers represent calories. Figuring out how much to eat and exactly what you should pick out when you’re completely dependent on the school cafeteria can be rough, so we’ve decided to help you out.

If you’re looking to shed pounds and feel great, go ahead and follow our 5-day meal plan that includes perfectly portioned meals that pack in 1,500 calories a day. In a day, you need seven servings of protein, 12 servings of carbohydrates, three or more servings of non-starchy veggies, and four servings of fat. Plan to drink as much water as you can when you wake up, working your way up to eventually having a liter about fifteen minutes before breakfast.

Most days will involve a lot of eating in the Terrace Café, while some meals can be found at the Gazebo for a break from the buffet-style temptation. Combined with cardio, exercise, and plenty of water, losing weight on this student-tailored plan should be a no-brainer.

Story by Skye Tenorio
emmaskyet@gmail.com

Photos by Stella Laguerre
stellalag03@gmail.com
SAMPLE MENU:

BREAKFAST:
1 slice toast with 1 tablespoon natural peanut butter
1 cup soymilk
1 orange

MID MORNING SNACK
1 cup unsweetened tea

LUNCH:
Sandwich: 2 slices bread, veggie meat, unlimited veggies, cheese (optional)
1 pear
1 package baked chips
1 package soymilk

AFTERNOON SNACK:
3 graham crackers
1 package soymilk

DINNER:
4 oz. tofu or other veggie protein
2/3 cup cooked pasta with veggies
1 teaspoon olive oil
Green salad with 2 tablespoons of olive oil, lemon juice
1 cup fruit

OPTIONS

BREAKFAST:
1 egg or ¼ tofu
½ cup oatmeal
1 tsp vegan butter
1 tsp sugar
½ grapefruit
1 cup soymilk

¼ tofu
1 English muffin with 1 teaspoon vegan butter, 1 teaspoon jam
½ cup fresh fruit

Veggie omelette: 1 egg or ¼ tofu, onion, mushroom, pepper
1 slice toast, 1 teaspoon vegan butter
1 cup soymilk
1 orange

1 egg or ¼ cup tofu
2 gluten-free waffles, 2 tablespoons syrup
1 cup fresh fruit
1 cup soymilk

MID-MORNING SNACK:
banana
1 apple

LUNCH:
1 veggie Caesar salad from (Gazebo)
1 cup soup with 6 saltine crackers
1 pear

2 slices bread, lettuce, tomato, veggie meat
raw veggies
1 banana
8 animal crackers

Egg or tofu salad sandwich (Gazebo)
1 side of raw veggies
1 apple
1 package of baked chips

½ cup beans
Green salad: tomato, onion, carrots, lettuce, cucumbers, 2 tablespoons olive oil, lemon juice
½ cup tortilla chips

AFTERNOON SNACK:
¾ cup wheat flakes + 1 cup soymilk
8 animal crackers + 1 cup soymilk
6 saltine crackers + 1 apple
½ granola bar + 1 cup soymilk

DINNER:
Veggie burger with lettuce, tomato, onion, mustard
Grilled veggies
1 cup fruit
1 package soymilk

4 oz. tofu or other veggie substitute
1 cup corn
steamed veggies, 1 teaspoon vegan butter
Green salad, 2 tablespoons olive oil, lemon juice
1 orange

Fajitas: 4 oz veggie meat, 1 tortilla, grilled onions, peppers, tomatoes, salsa
2 tablespoons guacamole
2/3 cup rice
Green salad, 2 tablespoons olive oil, lemon juice
1 orange

4 oz. tofu or other veggie meat
½ cup potatoes
1 oz. bread roll with 1 teaspoon vegan margarine
Steamed veggies
Green salad
1 cup fresh fruit
CrossFit workouts have attracted a lot of attention over the last several years. However, as CrossFit has drawn more attention, it has also stirred up some controversy. Many testimonials have surfaced bringing to light dangers of CrossFit, while other testimonials have raved about how CrossFit has changed lives for the better.

So, what is CrossFit exactly? Why is it so popular? Is it really that effective? Is it dangerous? And is it right for you?

CrossFit, which was founded in 2000 by Greg Glassman, is a workout that emphasizes high-intensity, functional workouts and is typically done in groups. Each day there is a workout of the day (the WOD) that features usually three to five movements. There is a specific number of reps for each movement and the goal is to repeat the cycle as many times as possible in the designated amount of time, usually 20 to 30 minutes, or time yourself for a certain amount of sets and work toward improving your time each workout. The workouts range from various squats, sit-ups, and pushups to push-pressing and deadlifts. Barbells and kettlebells are often used, but not all workouts require equipment. Muscle-confusion is a big part of CrossFit’s appeal. The whole idea of muscle-confusion is working out different muscles in different methods constantly so that your muscles do not have an opportunity to memorize workouts, and make the workouts less effective. Every workout is new, different and challenging.

CrossFit is popular because it is a workout that throws you into an intense full body workout every time, and yet is adjustable to everyone. Jeff Tatarchuk, the owner of the CrossFit gym in Berrien Springs, Mich., says, “CrossFit is a workout designed for the elite athlete, but is infinitely scalable”.

Some concern about CrossFit comes from the risk of injuries. These injuries can reign from bloody hands to injured joints. Or, as reported earlier this year, a CrossFit athlete performing in an Olympic-style weightlifting competition became paralyzed in a freak accident. However, according to Robyn Fean, a sports injury doctor from St. Francis Hospital in Indianapolis, risk of injury is present in every sport and every workout. Joint injuries can also be caused by marathon running. Just as in every intense physical activity, certain precautions, education, and preparation should be taken before doing CrossFit.

Another concern of CrossFit is the risk of developing rhabdomyolysis. Fean explains that rhabdomyolysis is a breakdown of muscle tissue releasing an excess amount of a by-products into the bloodstream. When too much of this product is released, the kidneys are not prepared to clean it up and it can cause kidney damage or even failure.

Tatarchuk claims that he has yet to see anything more serious than some bloody callouses in his gym. “Googling CrossFit is like googling the Adventist Church, you will find a lot of negative talk about it from people who have never had a personal experience with it, most of which is not true,” said Tatarchuk.

Tatarchuk said that safety measures are taken in every stage of CrossFit. He said that everyone
starts at ground zero, whether they have been inactive most of their life, or working out six days a week. The most important thing is to first learn form. No one starts with heavy weights until they have learned the form for the exercises perfectly. Tatarchuk said this is the best way to avoid injury. He said it is also important to just know your body and recognize when you are pushing yourself too much and need a break, which the trainers watch for.

More controversy surfaces on the issue of CrossFit being an almost “cult-like” environment. There is concern that the continual peer pressure is what can cause people to push themselves past their limit and suffer injury. However, sources who have been doing CrossFit had only positive things to say about the group environment. Fean emphasized the importance of having a good trainer who can modify workouts based on the physical level of each participant, and can recognize when a trainee may need to slow down or take a break.

Giancarlo Banuchi of Andrews University, a CrossFitter since October, said that he has never felt like he couldn’t take a break or slow down when he needed to, but he did want to clarify that there is a difference between needing a break and slacking, and he loves that when working out in his CrossFit group, no one lets him get away with slacking.

In regards to the “cult-like” accusations, Tatarchuk said, “When you are part of a community that you love, it is hard not to get excited about it and want to represent it in daily life.”

Finally, another significant concern is that all it takes to become a CrossFit trainer is certification within the CrossFit community, and no other credentials. This especially concerns Gretchen Krivak, interim chair of the Department of Public Health and Wellness at Andrews University. She discussed the risks of a trainer not having more education in fitness or physical therapy to help them better recognize potential risks for their trainees. Krivak said that she thinks CrossFit is a workout that may be good for some people and not good for others, and it is important to be able to recognize what kind of workout best suits a person. She is concerned that trainers without adequate fitness education may not be properly equipped to do this.

As with any workout program, Fean says it is very important to talk to a doctor when starting a new workout program, and educating yourself about the gym and the trainers. Both Fean and Krivak feel that CrossFit may not be for everyone, but it has also been great for many people.
With shaking hands, 18-year-old Patrick Knighton cleared his throat and raised his eyes to meet the audience. Harsh stares met his gaze. He thanked God that the table at which he sat was made of solid wood and would not betray the nervous tap of his leg against the floor. Could a high school senior sway a room of irritated parents? It seemed impossible, but Patrick knew that although “we think small, God doesn’t think that way.”

Patrick was born in Fredricksburg, VA on January 22, 1993 to Vickie Knighton-Lowe who moved the family to Berrien Springs, Mich. in early 1998 while she studied to receive her masters in social work. In 2005, Enfield, Connecticut became Patrick’s home and with the new home, a new public school.

During his sophomore year at Enfield High School, Patrick was encouraged to attend a leadership conference by one of his teachers and began to realize that he had an interest in leadership roles. After visiting the Enfield Youth Council, which is comprised of a select group of students from the area who address education issues, Patrick was hooked and in his junior year joined the council. Patrick became more and more involved. He sat on the mayor’s advisory council, was a youth representative for State Senator John Kissel’s talk show on youth and alcohol, and in his junior year was elected vice president of his class.

During his senior year, Patrick’s mother suggested that he run for class president. Patrick hadn’t considered running because his best friend would likely win. But his mother persisted and after some thought and prayer, Patrick finally decided to run. He didn’t expect to beat his already well-known and successful friend, but he did.

Patrick asked God why He had blessed him with this position. Was this a part of His plan? But as He often does, God waited to answer. During that year, Patrick had a positive influence on his school, but the success that Patrick experienced still surprised and confused him. Why had God given him this position, at this time?
THE TOUGH DECISION

In Enfield, Connecticut a healthy snowfall is to be expected yearly and every snow day that the local schools take is tacked on to the end of the school year. This makes the exact date of graduation unknown until the threat of snowfall has passed.

When the 25th of June was announced as the graduation date, Patrick thought nothing of it and simply made a note to add it to his calendar. It wasn’t until he saw a calendar with the letters ‘SAT’ above the 25th of June that his heart sank: Saturday, the Sabbath. Patrick had taken great care not to rock the boat because of his religious beliefs. When a science competition or basketball game landed on Sabbath he simply did not go. He never attempted to make his friends feel guilty or uncomfortable, but this was different. Graduation was going to be the culmination of all that he and his classmates had worked for. As the class president, Patrick had been looking forward to addressing his entire class in a speech. But on the Sabbath?

“What do I do Mom?” Patrick earnestly texted his mother. He knew he could count on her to know what to do. She was so strong, so solid in her beliefs. After all, it wasn’t such a bad excuse to tell your entire class, “My mom won’t let me graduate on Sabbath.” Patrick could deal with her beliefs. After all, it wasn’t such a bad excuse to tell your entire class, “My mom won’t let me graduate on Sabbath.” Patrick could deal with that but the response from his mother surprised him. “What are you going to do?” she responded. It was up to Patrick.

She was right; it was something he had to sort out. So Patrick prayed, and thought earnestly about his dilemma. He consulted his youth pastor who said, “God has been with you for all of your high school career, and even before, how can you leave Him out of the culmination of it all?” God had been with Patrick through everything. God had brought him here at this time, in this place, for a reason. For God to be uninvolved in Patrick’s graduation didn’t feel right. He would take a stand, no matter how difficult, for his beliefs, and his God.

FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS

Patrick began to see why God had blessed him with such leadership roles. Because he sat on the school board as an alternate student representative, he had the unique opportunity to appeal to the board in person. As he positioned himself at the speaker’s table in the front of the room, Patrick looked up to the raised seating where the board sat. He knew these people, he had spoken to them before, but this was different. He was not representing his school, or a group of students; he was representing himself and God. Patrick decided that no matter what happened, he would stand firm.

After Patrick delivered his appeal to the board and they thanked him for his willingness to speak to them, they decided to postpone the decision until after the spring break. Patrick made it clear to the board that if the graduation date went unchanged, he would not be able to attend. Unbeknownst to Patrick, that particular evening a local newspaper reporter was taking notes in the back of the boardroom. After the meeting, she asked him for a copy of his speech and Patrick, who thought nothing of it, obliged.

The next morning a newspaper headline read, “Class President Refuses to Graduate on his Graduation Day.” From the morning the first story was run, several news outlets picked up the intriguing tale of the senior class president who wouldn’t graduate because of religion. Patrick began to receive attention.

Finally the evening of the second meeting arrived and Patrick was invited to speak to the board. Unlike the first meeting, which was held at night and had only a few attendees, the room was full. The table was full of board members except for one empty seat, for him. Upset parents filled the chairs along the perimeter of the room. After he presented his case, the board revealed to Patrick that if the graduation date were changed at his school, all local schools would be required to follow suit.

When the board finally decided to have a vote, out of 8 voting members, only 1 person voted in Patrick’s favor. The board did, however, give Patrick the option to give his speech and to graduate at the rehearsal ceremony. Although he was disappointed with the decision, Patrick agreed. After the vote, reporters and parents swarmed him for quotes and explanations.

Again Patrick wondered; where was God? He had walked straight into the fire for what he believed and failed. He began to worry that people would be angry with Him. How would all of his friends react now that Patrick had publicly admitted his faith?

The next few weeks at school were tough for Patrick. Friends who usually smiled at him in the halls between classes were reluctant to make eye contact. They didn’t know how to react to someone who hadn’t really talked about religion before, and now was making a ‘big deal’ out of his beliefs. Was this God’s plan for Patrick?

THE BIG DAY

The school board told Patrick he could invite anyone he wanted to the rehearsal ceremony and his mother had the idea to invite people from local Seventh-day Adventist churches to support him on his big day. “You don’t have
to stand alone in your beliefs,” she said. So during the weeks leading up to the rehearsal Patrick and his mother visited local churches telling their story and inviting everyone to join them for his graduation.

On the morning of the big day Patrick’s nerves and excitement were about all he could handle up until the ceremony began. Both sides of the gym held bleachers for people to sit and one side was filled with Patrick’s classmates, dressed in jeans and t-shirts. Patrick, who wore his full graduation regalia, sat near the podium by the valedictorian. On the other side of the gym, person after person from the local Seventh-day Adventist churches began to file in and find their seats. The Pathfinders even brought their drum core.

Patrick was overwhelmed. These people had come to support him, they trusted in the God who impressed him to stand for what he believed. A wave of thankfulness passed over him as he realized that everywhere God had taken him through had a purpose. He set Patrick aside to make an impression.

Any nerves or fear that Patrick had felt up to this point vanished and when the time came for him to give his speech, he took to the podium and smiled warmly at his somewhat stunned classmates. He began to share the value of character and that in the end, it will be the only thing you have. “Life is about finding your purpose, your character, defining and standing up for what you believe in,” he told them.

Because of Patrick’s efforts the school board decided to change the school rulebook to dictate that graduation would always be held on a weekday. The entire time that Patrick thought he was failing, he simply didn’t have the big picture. Through God, he had succeeded and had impacted students lives for years to come.

**WHAT ABOUT NOW?**

After graduation Patrick was certain that he would attend a university in New England but again, God had a different plan in mind. Naomi Best, a recruiter for Andrews University at the time, contacted Patrick to see if he was interested in attending Andrews. Although his mother had attended Andrews, Patrick wanted to create his own legacy elsewhere. But every time Patrick had a great scholarship or opportunity to attend one of his top choices, somehow that door would close.

One day, Patrick received a package from Andrews University that held an Andrews hat and water bottle. Patrick prayed to God asking Him for guidance. He decided to apply to Andrews, even though it was less than a week from the start of school. If he were accepted, he would know it was God’s will. Just in the knick of time, Patrick was accepted to Andrews.

Patrick is currently studying biology, and listening for God’s voice at Andrews University. When Patrick is uncertain of the future, he simply looks behind him and remembers how God has been with him in the past. As he reflects on the events in his past, and his unclear, but bright future, Patrick keeps Jeremiah 29:11 at the forefront of his thoughts, “For I know the plans I have for you,’ declares the Lord, ‘Plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”
The Syrian conflict has been growing in intensity and scope for more than two years, with the United Nations estimating more than 100,000 dead and millions displaced.

Some of the displaced have made their way to Beirut seeking shelter, where there is a large Armenian population.

My life intersected with these migrants during the 2012-2013 school year, when I served as a student missionary in the Department of Communication and Public Relations at Middle East University (MEU).

MEU established the For Your Life Center, a community center that allows the university to put on programs that will benefit the local community of Sabtieh. And during opening week in March 2013, MEU teamed up with Weimar College to put on a week long health seminar in which students from MEU acted as translators for students and staff from Weimar College.

Near the end of that week, word got to MEU that there was a center in a neighboring community that was hosting several Armenian-Syrian refugees from Syria. During our four-hour meeting with the refugees, MEU and Weimar assessed the health of more than 75 men, women and children.

I took these images as if I were a fly on the wall, having such an amazing chance to witness what I believe life is all about—helping those in need and showing love for them.

I think it was such an honor to be able to record people with the means and resources reaching out to those that have very little—it’s exactly what Christ told us we should be doing.

As the conflict in Syria continues to rage on and as the headlines cover other events and conflicts, I’d ask that the readers pray for the Syrian people and the neighboring countries that take those refugees under their wings. Just because the headlines are covering other stories doesn’t mean there aren’t still millions of Syrian people either being displaced or killed.
IT’S EXACTLY WHAT CHRIST TOLD US WE SHOULD BE DOING
For more information on the Middle East University’s involvement with displaced Syrian refugees in Lebanon, contact Jason Lemon at: jason.lemon@meu.edu.lb.
A WILD HEART

“When I was three years old,” Germain Felicia recalls, “I told my mom that I wanted to become a pastor.” He leans forward in his chair and grins. “The thing is, I didn’t know that until I was doing my undergrad [in theology]—then she told me!”

Germain, 30, chuckles at the recollection. It’s just one of many surprising twists in his life—one that has followed a path twisting and turning through disease and hardship, rebellion and devotion, romance and miracle from the tiny Caribbean island of Curacao to where he now sits in a two-room basement apartment in Berrien Springs, Michigan.

Germain Felicia was born on June 24, 1984, the second of three children, to a Catholic family. “I was a rough kid,” he remembers. Despite his devout upbringing, he wasn’t particularly interested in religion. “I wanted to become a soldier, being in the fight—then I saw that soldiers get killed, and I said no, I don’t want to be a soldier after all, I want to become a cop. Then I said, no I don’t want to become a cop either, because they get killed too!”

Soon, however, Germain learned that neither of these careers were even an option, because he had been born with a heart defect. He couldn’t run and play with his friends without quickly getting tired, and he was put on medication as soon as he was born. By the time Germain was thirteen, his condition worsened to the point where his life was in danger.

In June of 1997 he traveled with his family to Miami, for heart surgery,
only to learn that his insurance didn’t cover medical expenses in the United States. The family decided to travel instead to the Netherlands, since Curacao at that time was part of the Dutch Antilles and so the Felicias were Dutch citizens, making medical arrangements easier. They consulted with a doctor in June, then return to the Netherlands in January—almost too late. Germain went into cardiac arrest on January 14, checked into intensive care on the 15th, and received surgery on the 16th. After he had sufficiently recovered he returned to Curacao, glad to be alive.

Over the next few years, Germain began to run wild. He drifted away from his parents and their Catholic faith until, in 1999, his mother made a drastic choice. Germain’s oldest sister had just decided to go to university in the Netherlands—and the family would be going with her. While his father stayed in Curacao to work, Germain, his mother, and his two sisters moved to the Netherlands in June. It was going to be a fresh start for all of them. By August, however, Germain’s open rebellion and their lack of money got them evicted from their house and staying in temporary government housing.

I DIDN’T PRAY ANYMORE

“It was there,” he says, “that I realized I had lost my connection with God. One night I asked myself, ‘How could it be that I came to this?’ Rebellious, getting my mom and my younger sister in trouble—we’re almost on the street, you know—and then I looked out of the window and—for the first time, because it’s very cloudy in Holland—I saw the same stars that I always saw in Curacao, and then my mind went back and I remembered that I was a guy who used to pray, and I didn’t pray anymore.”

In the midst of Germain’s spiritual crisis, the family lost their housing again, and were forced to illegally move into his older sister’s dorm room to avoid homelessness. It was there that Germain reconnected with God. “I got my Bible
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and I said, ‘I am going to read you from the beginning to the end, and you are going to make me the smartest person on the earth,’ and I started devouring my New Testament. No one came and gave me Bible studies, but I was reading my Bible every day.”

One night while reading Germain was overwhelmed by an enormous sense of guilt and heaviness at all he had done in his life. If God forgives all of that, he decided, then he must owe him his entire life in servitude. “Yeah, but I cannot give my whole life to God because what will people say?” He argued with himself. Then it was like another voice said, “Yeah, but what do you care? If the Queen of Holland tells you something and other people are not agreeing with her, what do you care? She’s the queen. And it’s the same with God. So,” he smiles, “I said, ‘what do you care? I gave my heart to God.’”

Homesick and financially pressured, Germain’s family soon decided to move back to Curaçao. In school that fall, Germain started preaching all the time — in between classes, during lunch, and even in the classroom. “The only thing I [could] do as a sign of gratitude,” he explains, “is to tell people what [God] did for me to forgive my sins.” One morning, however, a teacher decided to join the religious debate: his Physics teacher—a Seventh-day Adventist. As she answered questions and quoted Bible verses, Germain tried to argue with her—but everything she said matched what he had read in his New Testament that summer. “She explained many things,” he remembers, “and then she invited us to a Bible study—a cell group. Even though I was saying ‘I don’t want to go’…I wrote down my name. And then she started coming to my house, and every Tuesday she gave me a lift to a cell group, and I was receiving Bible study there.”

His Physics teacher wasn’t the first Adventist Germain encountered. Before his family moved to the Netherlands earlier that year, his mother—desperate to reach her son—decided to ask a group of Christians to pray over him. The only person she could think of was her Seventh-day Adventist cousin. Germain traces his spiritual renewal back to that night. “I am the result of an answered prayer of my mom,” he says simply.

After attending the cell group for several weeks, Germain went to his first Adventist church service on Christmas Day of 1999. Shortly after, he decided to be baptized. When he met with his pastor for Bible study, he decided to ensure once and for all that he was making the right choice in leaving Catholicism. “I will ask him so many questions,” he said to himself, “and if there is one question that he cannot answer, I will not get baptized.” Despite his best efforts, however, Germain couldn’t stump the pastor, and on February 5, 2000, he joined the Adventist church.

A SIGN FROM GOD

Germain soon became deeply involved in the church, canvassing and holding weekly Bible studies in his house. In the midst of his pursuit of truth, however, he found something he did not expect – his wife, Nairalene. Every Tuesday, she and her sister would attend small group at Germain’s house. “It was just friends,” she says. “We would always say—we are friends, nothing more.”

Germain laughs. “That was her idea,” he jokes. That Christmas, 2002, the small group organized a “Secret Santa”-style gift exchange—and much to their surprise, Germain and Nairalene were both each other’s Secret Santas! “It was a coincidence,” Nairalene maintains. “Well,” Germain maintains, “I was praying on it. I was praying on her name.” The pastor who was there, Pastor John Williams, agreed. “So,” he teased them, “everybody has noticed that there was a sign from God.”

Sign or not, the two started spending more time together. Soon they were calling each other on the phone every night. “One day,” Nairalene smiles, “we were just feeling like more than friends.” She tilts her head back and looks at her husband with a sweet smile. “The best thing [about the relationship] is that I love the things of God, I love to preach, I love small groups, and
he has the same interests as me. We match; we are spiritual partners. And that is the thing I most love. That has united us. ‘This is the man I will marry,’ I said, because of his spirituality.” She was right – the couple married four years later almost to the day – on December 21, 2006.

**LEAVE YOUR COUNTRY**

Though he had trained to be an electrician, it was clear to Germain that the only thing he could do with his life was tell people about Jesus. He started canvassing shortly after his conversion in 2000, but it wasn’t enough. In 2005 he enrolled as an undergraduate at Venezuelan Adventist University, and graduated with a degree in Theology in 2011. When he went to look for work as a pastor, however, all of the doors were closed: across the North American Division, no one was hiring. The problem? He didn’t have his Masters of Divinity.

After some research, Germain decided that Andrews was the school he needed to go to—but it was prohibitively expensive. The solution, he decided, was to raise money by canvassing in the area. In May, he applied to and was accepted to the Light America Youth Challenge in the Chicago area.

“Since 2002 I had told God I wanted to be a missionary throughout the world,” he remembers, “and I thought the time had come, ten years later. When I was courting my wife, I asked her, ‘Do you want to be a missionary? Do you want to go throughout the world?’ and she said, ‘Yes! I will go everywhere you go. I will go with you.’ So when I was accepted to [Light America], I said, ‘Okay. That time has come.’” Germain flourished in the program, preaching evangelistic series in addition to selling books. However, he still couldn’t help but wonder if he was following his imagination or God’s plan for his life. “Sometimes, he says, “you are following a dream, but the dream is just your dream.”

He decided to fast and pray until he received a definite answer from God. “On Friday, the 7th of July, I started fasting, and on the 8th the Lord told me, that like Abraham he was calling me to leave my country. My mind went back to 2002 when he called me through the book Patriarchs and Prophets. In that book, it says, “Those that leave their country to do God’s work have the faith of Abraham.”

Then the next morning, Germain received an email from his friend Pr. Ron Clark reading, “May the Lord bless you and make you a blessing” and quoting Genesis 12:1-2: “Immediately,” Germain says, “I called him and asked him, “How did you know? Who told you to send this text to me? What were you thinking?” He said that he just wanted the Lord to make me a blessing. I closed the phone, I didn’t tell him anything, but at the same time I was thinking this is the verse that the Lord gave me yesterday. This is not a coincidence, the Lord is trying to tell me something.”

Immediately Germain called Nairalene and said, “The Lord told me this: leave your country, your family, and your people, and go to the land that I will show you. I will bless you and make you a blessing, I will make your name great and through you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.” “This is incredible,” she replied. “I will ask the Lord too!” Nairalene had been working as a pharmacist’s assistant for eight years. It was a good job, and if she came to the United States as a student’s spouse, she wouldn’t be able to work. To face a future with no guaranteed income, she needed a sign.

“That Sabbath Nairalene prayed for God to speak to her, then went to church. When the pastor announced the sermon was about Genesis 12:1-3, she nearly jumped out of her seat. “She was shocked,” Germain says. “She [called] me that night and said, ‘The Lord spoke to me!’ But she then said, ‘Oh, it is a coincidence. I am going to ask him again.’ ‘Okay,’ I said. ‘You ask him. You are going to get in trouble, but you ask him.’”

That next Sabbath, a visiting pastor from Puerto Rico delivered the sermon. The text of the morning? Genesis 12, verses one through five. Germain grins and quotes from memory: “And Abraham took Sarah, and went to the Promised Land.” He turns to his wife. “Isn’t that right, Sarah?” “I am convinced,” Nairalene said that morning. “I am ready to leave my country.” “Okay,” Germain said. “I have proof. This is the Lord’s will.” They had no money. They had nowhere to stay. But they were moving to Andrews.
I WILL MAKE YOU A BLESSING

The next few months were a series of dilemmas and provisions by God. Germain flew into Chicago on August 8, 2013 without knowing where to live. By the next day, friends of a friend found him an apartment in Berrien owned by a Seminary professor. He needed a job, and found one as a chaplain for Adventist Information Ministries, where he could pray and give people Bible studies over the phone. “God has sent people to help me from every side,” he says. God’s Abundant Pantry provided him with food. Audrey Watson-Payne, a friendly staffer at Neighbor to Neighbor, found him warm clothes to get through one of the harshest winters in memory. He received hospitality and information from the Department of International Student Services, which serves the 630-odd international students at Andrews, approx. 35% of whom are seminarians. The greatest blessing, however, was when Nairalene was finally able to join him in the United States in December.

Still, life is tough. Germain doesn’t have a car, and so he walks everywhere—even in -40 F weather. Like many students, he also struggles financially—to pay for his medication, for cardiologist and for treatment for his wife, who has a genetic hip condition and no insurance. Everyday life is also made difficult by the language barrier. Like most citizens of Curacao, Germain speaks four languages: Dutch, Spanish, English, and his native Papiamento. His English, however, is still accented, and sometimes this makes people treat him differently. “The limited ability of someone to speak English correctly,” Dr. Wagner Kuhn, Professor of Missions and Intercultural Studies explains, “We equate that with the person being less intelligent, less skilled.” In addition, Germain is learning two more languages—Greek and Hebrew. “Greek is a killer,” Germain says ruefully.

While many people would be overwhelmed simply by working and studying in a new country, it isn’t enough for Germain. He and his wife have also started an independent media ministry. “We’re trying to concentrate on American Christians, Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, and Jews. Once he finishes his degree, however, he wants to start church planting all over the world. “Probably,” he says, “we’ll end up in the Middle East.” The future is uncertain. There are days when Germain and Nairalene don’t know where their next rent payment is going to come from, or what they’re going to eat. Still, Germain says, they never doubt that they are doing God’s will. No matter how hard life is, they cling to the promise of God: “I will bless you, and make you a blessing.”
A TIME APART BUILDS CLOSER BONDS
In the early days of their relationship, Emily Olakowski and Matt Haus sat on a boardwalk in Northern Michigan and wondered if their brand new relationship could survive the nine months he planned to be away serving as a student missionary in Africa.

The couple met when Emily was visiting Great Lakes Adventist Academy to see if she’d like to attend the following year. Matt was a student there, along with Emily’s sister Sara. Sara and Matt’s friend Jordan were about to start dating and had schemed up a plan to set Emily and Matt up. 

“[Jordan] came up to me and said, ‘One day you are going to marry my best friend,’” recalls Emily. She looked over and saw this cocky, skinny boy with blonde hair, braces, and acne, and thought, “I don’t think so.”

Years went by until the summer of 2011, when they both worked at Camp Au Sable in northern Michigan, and this time the attraction was instant. “It was like an immediate connection,” Emily said. “It was like we were friends for years; once we started talking, we started laughing and I felt completely comfortable around him.”

Emily was also attracted to Matt’s willingness to use his talents for God. “He went up front one time to do a special music, and my heart hurt. My heart hurt, and I think it was because of the thought that I couldn’t have him. I know that sounds really, really strange, but it just felt right and natural.”

Meanwhile, Matt was taking note of her, too. He says, “I noticed right away that she didn’t discriminate who she was nice to. She treated everyone the same way, smiles and greetings, and it didn’t matter if they smelled bad or anything like that. She treated everyone the same. And her smile and laugh drew me to her right away.”

Although Emily liked Matt a lot, she would intentionally avoid him because she didn’t want to rush things. Once while Emily’s mom was visiting her at the camp, her mom noticed their connection. 

“She goes, ‘You like that boy, don’t you?’” says Emily, “and I was like, ‘No, I don’t know.” And then her mom said something that she wasn’t expecting: “Emily, you have to tell him. You’ll never know unless you try.”

This was a side of her mom that Emily had never really seen before. “My mom is like ‘Girls are independent, yeah! Stand up for yourself!’ She’d never said something like that before,” says Emily.

Emily eventually mustered up the courage and told Matt, “There are a lot of characteristics in you that I look for in a guy.”

He quickly responded, “I like you, too!”

One night as the two ended their shift as camp counselors, they sat on a bridge talking for several hours, confessing their feelings for each other. But there was just one problem.

In two weeks they would go their separate ways; he interrupting college to serve as a student missionary in Chad for nine months, and she beginning her studies at Andrews University. They wondered if they should put their burgeoning relationship on hold.

“We knew that it would work, but we didn’t know if we wanted to wait until he was back (from Africa) to start dating,” says Emily. “People weren’t too optimistic about [the long-distance], but the people who were optimistic—they really, really, were—[they said], ‘You and Matt, you just really have a connection’, and I knew that we were going to make it.”

The two had no means of communication except for snail mail, sometimes not able to hear from each other for weeks at a time. Besides the time it took the letters to travel, there was always the chance that they would get lost or sometimes searched by the government, which prolonged their delivery.

The first couple of weeks were especially difficult for Emily. “Everything I saw the first two weeks just reminded me of him and I was just so sad that I couldn’t share it with him—it was hard.”

Matt questioned if the relationship could survive the time apart. “It was really rough, definitely one of the hardest things I had to do,” he says. “People change and things change in nine months. I knew that I could see myself with her forever, but I wasn’t sure what could happen in those nine months.”

Both of them held onto their faith believing that God would bless them if they committed themselves not only as a couple, but individually to Him.

“I committed my time to God and I wasn’t going to give that up,” says Matt. Emily held onto the promise in Nehemiah 8:10, which says, “The joy of the Lord is my strength.” She says, “I realized he should not be my priority or my source of happiness. So I decided not to be sad, to be optimistic because I had a mission field here.” She did a lot of music on campus, taught
Sabbath school, and was involved in nursing home ministries.

Then before long, Emily felt impressed to also serve as student missionary, “I come from a family of missionaries so I’ve always wanted to be a missionary,” says Emily who recalls that she began looking at places to serve overseas on the Adventist Frontiers Missions website.

How would this move impact her relationship with Matt? After all, he was expected back during the time she’d be gone. In the end, the call to serve was too much to ignore.

When she read the description for Ebeye, it was listed as a “dilapidated island, very small, overpopulated, dirty, no vegetation, 750 feet wide and one mile long” and she didn’t want anything to do with the place. “I wanted the ideal thing: a Spanish speaking country and an orphanage,” says Emily. “I wanted to go to anywhere but Ebeye, but that’s how I knew I needed to go to Ebeye.”

Reluctantly, in the 2012 spring semester she gave in and travelled the 6,000 miles from Chicago to Ebeye. Once she was there she fell in love with the kids. Stepping off the boat, it was “very hot, crowded, people [were] everywhere but the kids were so friendly.” While she was there she taught second graders in every subject and assisted with the first graders. She also led out in music for worship and vespers, and preached a sermon once.

During the last month that she was serving overseas, it began to hit home that she was going to be done soon and reunited with Matt again, “It was a reality hit, like, ‘Oh, my goodness I’m going home soon and I’m going to see this boy and he likes me!’”

When she returned from Ebeye, Matt met her at the airport and they barely recognized each other. “I had forgotten a little bit what she had looked like,” says Matt, “I had all of these pictures while I was [in Africa] but I had forgotten all of her facial expressions.” He himself had a beard that was about a foot long and had lost about 40 pounds, making it harder for Emily to recognize him.

Coming back from their mission fields, they had both experienced a lot of culture shock. “I [came] back and everyone else’s life is still the same, except for mine, is drastically different,” Emily explains. They were used to not having everything at their fingertips and living simple lives, coming back to a land where everything is always right there.

They both understood what the other was going through and they bonded even more by encouraging each other and praying.

“We talked a lot,” says Emily, “We told a lot of stories and really listened to each other and encouraged each other to keep up with our family and friends in Chad and Ebeye, and here.” They also did presentations at churches about the mission work that they had done which allowed them to feel as if they were back in the mission field again.

Their reunion, however, was short-lived, when Matt returned to Southern Adventist University in Tennessee to resume his studies, while Emily continued her studies at Andrews. This was almost harder on the both of them than when they were overseas because they still couldn’t see each other that often, yet they were in the same country. “It was nice to be able to talk on the phone more, but that made us miss each other more,” says Matt. He drove over as many times as he could, but it still wasn’t enough.

Then came time to take the next logical step. “The summer that I got back it was in my head that the next summer would be a good time [to propose],” says Matt. He started planning three or four months in advance, to pop the question at the place it all started for them.

When the day of the proposal came, Emily joined Matt for an afternoon walk around Camp Au Sable. Emily remembers that Matt was “being super weird.”

“He was like, ‘remember this bench? This bench is the bench that we sat on when you got back from Ebeye’ and I was like ‘okay, he’s a weirdo.’”

But before she could start thinking about anything else, Emily stepped on a yellow jackets nest that caused the bees to start attacking her. After a few minutes of running around and then checking to see if the people walking behind them were okay, they continued on their way. Then, Matt made up an excuse that he had to use the bathroom. He used the opportunity to retrieve the guitar he had hid behind a tree. Walking over to where she stood on the bridge, he began singing a special song he wrote for the occasion:

I DON’T WANT TO LIVE WITHOUT YOUR SMILE
EVEN FOR A LITTLE WHILE
AND I DON’T WANT YOUR HOME
TO BE A DIFFERENT ONE THAN MINE

By the end of the song they were both crying their eyes out and Emily excitedly nodded her head yes, as Matt slipped the ring on her finger. The two were married in June at Camp Au Sable, the place where it all began.

For Matt and Emily, doing mission work at the same time but still so far from each other proved to be beneficial for their relationship. “We grew stronger because we were able to make more connections with each other because we both faced trials and hard times,” explains Emily. “We could share our experiences and embrace each other with stories and excitement. It builds your character. You can’t be selfish when you’re a missionary. You learn to be more of a servant for each other.”

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THE PUZZLE
Megan Reed, a senior marketing major at Andrews University, had a problem common to many university students—she needed to find an internship. While a recent study by the National Association of Colleges and Employers showed that nearly 97% of American employers planned to hire at least one intern or co-op this year, internship positions are still highly competitive—often with hundreds or even thousands of applicants vying for a few exclusive spots. To make matters worse, Megan was looking for a summer internship—the most sought after type, because they don't usually conflict with college classes. "It's tough," she says bluntly, of the process. She had visited career fairs, gathered information about different positions, and even applied to work with Coca Cola—but she still wasn't sure if she was maximizing her efforts.

When Megan decided to get advice on her applications, however, she hit a snag—Andrews University doesn't have a separate, formal career center. "It's problematic," she explained, "because different departments do their own things making connections with alumni, but there's not a central base in which we have a steady flow of events and job fairs." While the Student Counseling and Testing offers several career-related services, Megan was not sure if they had the resources to provide her with the intensive, personal help she wanted.

THE PROPOSITION
Enter Linda Channing, a professional career counselor and workshop presenter. Channing has been in the employment industry for more than twenty years, working with outplacement firms, unemployment offices, and university career centers. With her current business, Channing Career Coaching, she offers three main services: career assessment for adults, advising for high school and college students, and practical job search assistance.

Envision magazine enlisted the help of Leilani Langdon, the former Career Development Coordinator in the Counseling and Testing Center, and Megan was selected to get help from Channing Career Coaching.

Her services are ideal, Channing says, "if you feel 'stuck'—you have tried transitioning or job searching on your own and you are not getting results." People also decide to work with her because they're "having difficulty coming up with 'job targets'—they are unsure [of] what types of jobs they want to pursue."
“She tailors her services to whatever a person needs,” Megan explains. “The job application process is exhausting—it’s about putting yourself out there, tailoring your resume to what you’re looking for, getting to know the right people.” For Megan, it was Channing’s job search expertise that would be most helpful.

THE PROCESS
While Channing Career Coaching is based in Horsham, Penn., Linda Channing does much of her coaching over the phone, and so it was no problem for Megan to work with her from Michigan. Channing set up four one-hour phone appointments with Megan to stretch over the month of March. “When we began working together,” Channing says, “she was [already] very targeted, so we jumped right into reviewing her marketing materials” and helping her achieve her specific goal of landing an internship. After discussing “what I was looking forward to, what I wanted to gain, my expectations, [and] what I’ve done so far,” Megan explains, it was time for the main coaching process to begin.

The process was fairly straightforward. “Prior to each session,” Channing explains, “[Megan] filled out a coaching prep form, stating what she wanted to talk about during our call, and told me what she accomplished since our last call. At the end of each call we decided on the ‘homework’ she was going to work on before our next call. It was a way of holding her accountable to get this work done.”

In the first session, Channing stressed the importance of what many professionals will claim is the cardinal rule of successful business: network, network, network. “The first time,” Megan says, “we talked about the importance of name dropping, of connecting with people.” Channing pointed Megan to an underutilized resource—departmental alumni.

“I was able to get amazing advice and connect with someone from Proctor and Gamble who is in the finance department, and he’s willing to be a mentor for me! And I thought, “Wow, all these opportunities from literally sending an email to alumni and getting recommendations.”

In her second session, Channing worked with Megan on her application materials. They revised her resume, developed a summary statement, and built a LinkedIn profile. After all of the documentation was in place, it was then time to apply for internships. In their third session, Channing helped Megan send out several carefully-tailored and individualized application. Soon, Megan heard back from Atlas Oil, and was chosen for a job interview. On Friday, April 11, she learned that she had landed the internship. Atlas Oil is a national fuel supply, logistics, and services company, and “as a marketing intern,” she explains, “I will help develop marketing campaigns for Atlas, report marketing metrics, and improve search engine optimization on the website, as well as other activities.”

THE PROFIT
“It’s actually helped a lot,” Megan reflects, “and I’ve learned…about putting myself out there.” For her, the benefit of career coaching was qualitative, not quantitative. The most important aspect of her coach, she reflects, “wasn’t necessarily about applying to more internships, but about strategy, and profile, and things like that.”

Megan would especially recommend working with a career coach to people who are brand new to a field, or are returning to it after a long hiatus. It does, she cautions, take commitment. “I would suggest it to friends who are really serious about looking for something, and really want help,” she says.

Another factor to consider is cost. According to Lifecoach.com, a month of career coaching usually costs between $200 and $1,000. Megan emphasizes, however, that “it can make a big difference, and if you get the job, it literally pays for itself.”

Ultimately, she says, a career choice like Linda Channing can be the key to “applying to the right places and connecting yourself with the right people. Sometimes your resume and the places your applying to don’t fit, and what she does in her coaching is make those pieces fit together.”

For more info on Channing Career Coaching, visit www.channingcoaching.com

Networking is everything. It’s really who you know, and not being shy about making new relationships. Anyone you talk to could be a connection to someone else.

AIR—Advice, Information, Referrals. When you’re having a conversation with someone, start by asking for advice, then ask for information, and then possibly ask for a referral. Even if it’s not an interview—if it’s a casual conversation, that can lead to a job opportunity.

Always be willing to seek help. You never know what will happen in life, and being willing to ask other people can just enrich you. It’s amazing how many people do want to help you. I never could have guessed by interacting with alumni that they would have been so eager to help, but they were.
Kevin Leong was planning to spend the summer with his aunt in Luxembourg, and he figured why not do an internship while there. It seemed like a great idea since he had just graduated with a diploma in architecture from Singapore Polytechnic and was always interested in European architecture.

In talking with his aunt, he realized she had connections with the architect who had built her house. The company, bel.architecture, a small architecture firm, was more than willing to take Kevin under their wings. “I was relieved because I didn’t have to spend 3 months in a place doing nothing,” says the junior architecture major at Andrews University.

Before long, Kevin was given a project to work on by himself, designing the conversion of a nunnery wash house into an apartment. He did such a great job that the firm decided to make the internship a paid gig—paying him an $800 stipend each month. “I cooked lunch for everyone most days which is also probably why they liked me,” he jokes.

Kevin was able to overcome the difficulties of living in a foreign country and really benefit from the experience. “It was definitely life-changing,” he says.

If you’re thinking of packing up and leaving campus to spend a semester studying in another country, you’re not alone. The Institute of International Education reports that upwards of 300,000 American students study abroad each year. Many are like Andrews University students Kevin Leong and Nina Lassonier who packed up and left campus to earn international work experience.

Why should a student consider an internship abroad?
An international internship is an incredible way for a student to do many things at the same time. They are able to learn about their chosen field in a real-world setting, working on projects and helping with tasks that are relevant to their future. They are also able to experience a new culture and get to know friends and build connections with people all around the world. Finally, being in a new country affords them the opportunity to travel to different destinations locally and regionally that they may not have been able to visit had they not been living abroad for a short period of time.

What value does it add?
From an employer perspective, students who list an international internship on their resume and can articulate about what they learned set themselves apart from the competition. That these student sought out an international experience speaks highly to their drive, abilities, and work ethic. Beyond that, the knowledge gained through an internship abroad is extremely valuable — specifically intercultural competency, problem solving, gaining new perspective, and having an idea of the business dynamic in a global setting.

Is it a wise investment, in light of the fact that internships generally don’t pay?
While the up front costs may seem large, it is good to look at an internship abroad as an investment. Students can build connections in their field and be a part of projects they can discuss in interviews, as well as draw upon past tasks and methods during future jobs.
Is financial aid available for these internships?
If a student is receiving academic credit for their internship through their university, it is usually possible to arrange using financial aid. Some programs offer an internship as part of a course, so this would automatically generate credit for the student. However, the majority of internships abroad are not automatically for credit, so it is the student’s responsibility to arrange getting credit on their campus as an independent study course or experiential education course (each school is different). They would also need to be sure it works with their campus and the organization to use financial aid.

What are some of the creative ways to pay for them?
Students can use a variety of real-life and online fundraising to pay for international internships, as well as of course planning ahead and giving themselves enough time to save for the experience. We have an online crowd-sourced fundraising tool called FundMyTravel.com - students can create a campaign and then share it with their network. Every little bit goes a long way - if everyone they know donates even $5 or $10, it can add up. If students have family members or friends who travel often for work, they should consider asking them to donate their miles to the plane ticket.

Are they difficult to arrange?
If a student is interested in going through an organization, it is extremely easy to set up. These fee-charging programs include housing, onsite support, orientation, as well as coordination of the internship. Usually students also participate in cultural excursions and activities. Since the organizations have staff on the ground abroad and have worked with so many students, they have connections in many career sectors and can facilitate the placement for the student.

In terms of arranging an internship without the aid of an organization, the student would have to research potential companies and placements themselves and set up the details of the internship (length of time, tasks, goals, etc.) If the student has a connection in an international company or friends or family they could stay with while they look for an internship, this would make the process much easier.

In Nina Lassonnier’s case, she says, “After working at this place I was more determined and focused and I found myself and my architectural style.”

He became acquainted with both German and French, and made new friends and acquaintances. Kevin’s advice for those interested in taking an overseas internship: “Integrate with the culture as much as possible and keep an open mindset.” He also emphasized the importance of a willing attitude. “It’s not every day you get to go overseas and learn and grow.”

NINA LASSONNIER
Nina Lassonnier found her internship while attending a National Society of Black Engineers conference in Pittsburg, Penn. She noticed United Technology Corporation, headquartered in Connecticut, was very successful and “had a hand in everything engineering—from elevators to helicopters.” She also noticed they had locations all around the world which was a huge attraction to her.

While at the conference she made sure to touch base with the HR rep and express her strong desire to work for them. They interviewed her on the spot and a few months later she was offered a position working in their office in France. Since she’s originally from Martinique, she was already eligible to work in France.

Her internship took her all the way to a small tourist town in Figeac, France. She began her internship data punching to bring the company’s research archives up to date. Her main task was statistical analysis to find the source of defects in one of their products. The company provided her with a stipend of about $700 per month. Living and lodging expenses were left up to her. With the help of her parents, she rented a small apartment in the city.

Although French is Nina’s first language she still had some problems adapting to the new environment. She had lived in the United States for two years so her French was a bit rusty but she quickly brushed up.

People from the South of France have distinct accents, which can be difficult to understand, even by a native French speaker. Nina’s supervisor had a really strong accent and it took her almost two weeks to fully understand what he was saying. “There was nothing he said that I could understand.” It was a rough transition but Nina adapted well because the French system was familiar to her.

In the end, Nina thoroughly enjoyed her internship. She made a lot of friends and learned a lot about the professional aspects of her field. The internship was especially valuable to Nina because it helped her recognize the applicability of everything she was learning in school. When she returned to Andrews in the fall she was able to look at the concepts she was learning and see how they would be used in a professional setting. “I learned a lot about work etiquette, and how engineers actually work, compared to what you learn in school,” she says.

She also learned that although French is Nina’s first language she still had some problems adapting to the new environment. She had lived in the United States for two years so her French was a bit rusty but she quickly brushed up.

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Every year students contemplate whether to take that leap and live off-campus and away from the dorms. More than likely this will be their first time living on their own and will quickly find out the hardships that come with it.
LIVING OFF-CAMPUS

HAVE A RELIABLE SOURCE OF INCOME
Unless you just won the lottery or have a big pile of cash lying around you will need to find a steady flow of income to afford living off-campus. The things you take for granted such as water and electricity will need to be paid for as well as food and transportation. Having a nice income will also allow you to have some fun after you pay your bills like going to the movies, eating out with friends or even bowling.

SET UP A BUDGET
It’s one thing to have a nice flow of income, but you will still need to budget your money if you want to successfully live off-campus. Be prepared to budget your expenses early on so that you have an idea of how much money you can spend on each item. Be conscious of what is being used, such as lights, water, and other utilities; these bills can skyrocket if used carelessly. One helpful way to save money is to plan meals ahead of time so that when you go to the store you know what you need.

HAVE RELIABLE TRANSPORTATION
The biggest challenge of living off-campus is that you no longer can simply walk to your classes. Having a reliable means of transportation has many positives such as getting to class on time, having more time due to not having to walk and it can keep you away from the nasty weather. Transportation is definitely a must during the winter as the temperatures in places such as Michigan normally drop below the 20s along with lake effect snow. Also, frequently check your car to make sure that it is working properly. There is nothing worse than getting stuck in the middle of nowhere in the freezing cold. If possible have your own car even if you live close to school or have friends who offer to pick you up, because it won’t always work out.

LOCATION
Living off-campus does give you a feeling of freedom, but be warned not to stray too far from campus or you will find out that getting to school becomes a hassle. For instance it doesn’t make much sense to rent out an apartment or house 30-45 minutes away from campus. Keep in mind the cost of gas and other expenses when looking for a place to stay. Last but certainly not least make sure that you check out the neighborhood surrounding your place of choice to see if there is any potential trouble.

PICK RELIABLE ROOMMATES
Picking the right roommates is just as important as picking the right place to stay. These are the people you will have to depend on if this adventure is going to be successful, and you will need to be able to work with them. A good way to get things started on the right foot is to have a list of things that each person needs to do. For example, plan who is going to clean what ahead of time so you can minimize the amount of arguments. The most important thing is that you must rely on your roommates to help pay the rent otherwise the relationship quickly falls apart and you could end up paying more than you had previously planned for.

READ YOUR LEASE
A lease from your landlord is a legal document that you will be required to honor. So be careful to read all of the details of your agreement before actually signing. It will also be a good idea to check which utilities are included and what types of benefits you will enjoy while under this lease. Remember that once you sign the lease you must honor it until the contract is up.

www.andrews.edu/envision
Afia Asamoah nursed a common addiction—she was a shopaholic.

“I like having money and I like spending money,” she says.

But the music and political science major at Andrews University had to learn the hard way about budgeting and spending. As a freshman, Afia came to school with more than enough spending money to last her the first two years of college. With her newfound independence and a bank account filled with money, Afia found herself buying things she didn’t need. “I wouldn’t spend $50 on a shirt but I would spend $80 on a gazillion things I didn’t really need!”

Sales were her weakness. She thought she was being frugal because everything she bought was at a discounted price. So, every sale she encountered she would go crazy.

After awhile, shopping in stores wasn’t enough. She began an obsession with online sales and on days such as “Cyber Monday” or Memorial Day, Afia would pull out her bank card and spend away. With no bills to pay, and no pressing financial commitments, she didn’t have to think twice about her spending or saving habits. Going out to eat and enjoying fast food joints, quickly turned into another unhealthy spending habit.

After months of buying anything and everything she wanted, she was left with only $30 in her account at the end of her first year.
“When I realized I had spent over a $1,000 I was shocked and had to admit that I had a spending problem.”

Surprised and slightly embarrassed by her lack of stewardship, she decided to make a change.

HOW SHE KICKED THE HABIT
Afia took on a part-time summer job as a waitress. She started off by tithing, then she put all of her remaining wages in a savings account. The extra money she earned from tips was split into three categories: 10 percent tithe, 20 percent savings, and the rest, spending money. This system worked for a while, then she refined it to include travel cost, an emergency fund and debt repayment.

She consistently tracked her spending and kept impeccable details of miscellaneous/emergency money and travel costs in a notebook. This system has allowed her to have enough money for all the things she wants and needs, and even financial surprises such as car repairs.

Jose Goris, professor of management in the School of Business Administration at Andrews University says Afia is on the right track. “The most important part of budgeting is making sure your expenses are not more than your income,” he says. He also says that while budgets are personal there are two main components they all should have: income and expenses—and within the expense bracket, there should be fixed and variable expenses. For example, a fixed expense would be a car payment, while a variable would be gas purchases.

Afia’s saving plan, she follows an outline she found on the Internet that allows you to save $1,300 a year by saving a specific amount every week. You determine the amount to save by which week of the year it is. For example, the first week you save $1, the second you save $2 and on the third you save $3, and the fourth you save $4. By the end of the first month you would have saved $10.

Whatever money Afia had left over after tithe, savings and travel, she used for emergency and spending. The emergency category is used when there is no more money left in spending money. For example if she wanted to buy a new dress and there was not enough money left in savings, she would borrow some from the emergency fund and then refill it after she got paid. This ensures that she always has emergency money, even if she doesn’t have spending money.

Afia’s philosophy is perfect for shopaholics. She never had to stop shopping; she just had to control it. She advises shopaholics to keep a record of everything. A tip she gave was setting your amount of spending money according to how much you know you like to spend. For example, if you make $100 and you know you like to spend money, set your pocket money at around $60. Setting too small of an amount for pocket money will probably end with you over spending. The larger budget will give you wiggle room. After saving with a bigger budget you can start decreasing the amount of pocket money to a more appropriate size.

Budgeting in college can be hard especially when you don’t have a steady income, but Afia has managed to take control of her finances by practicing and trying different methods to see what worked for her. It took patience and discipline to get herself into a budgeting routine; but she has reaped the benefits of a balanced financial book.

“It’s hard in the beginning because you don’t see the fruit of your work,” she says. “But in the end it all piles up like snow.”

Some time ago, while taking a break from the routine of working, studying and completing assignments, I went on Facebook to hang out a bit. As I scanned the homepage for updates from friends, I was intrigued by a post on a friend’s wall: “I wish GOD had a cell phone. And that it was never ‘staticky’ on His end or on my end: And that we had unlimited mobile to mobile. And that we were on the same plan. And that He has a special ring tone just for me. And that there were never any roaming charges.” Needless to say this wall post generated several comments – from sympathy, to empathy, to probing questions seeking answers to what led her to post such thought-provocative words. I remember commenting on her wall by assuring her to hold on, reminding her that the circumstances of life often seem to get extremely hard when we are on the verge of experiencing God’s miraculous intervention. How easy it is to say such words to someone, rather than believing them.

I reflect on situations in my own life, and the times when I experience the seeming absence of God. A few years ago after reaching a milestone in my academic journey, I felt empowered and ready to make a difference in society. I was revving to go, confident that God was leading me to pursue a certain path. But when God changed the trajectory of the journey, and pointed me back to the path of academia, I could not help exclaiming, “God, this is insane! This does not make sense.” Ironically, after pointing me in this direction, God seemed quiet for a time. Then I thought I was the insane one. I began to question the validity of God leading me back to pursue graduate studies.

But after much monologue with God (He was quiet, but I kept talking; urging, trying to convince Him that school is not a great idea at this time), I began to realize how different God’s ways are than mine. I admit that I am not big on taking risks. If I am not able to work through the logistics of a certain venture step by step, from start to finish, I am often reluctant to move.

Realizing that God was not about to change His mind on the issue of graduate studies, I reluctantly gave in and accepted the challenge. Still, my acceptance failed to quell my anxious thoughts. In earnest, with much soul-searching, I pleaded with God to give me a glimpse of how He would do it. Because I could not see how studying at this time was financially feasible, I envisioned the mission impossible. It is no wonder that God patiently reminds us through these words, “My ways are higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.” How different are our thoughts, and perceptions from God’s! His thoughts supersede our greatest logic. When we think “obstacles,” God thinks “opportunities.” Now as I reflect on the journey to this point, it seems like an entire lifetime, but one that I would not trade for anything. I believe the best we can do to experience the immensity of God’s thoughts and ways for our lives is to walk with Him in faith, not by sight.
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