Envision, Fall 2013

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Christine Lee

Her eyes were watching God.

Beat the Freshman 15

Make your college loans disappear*

Uncalled for? Women in the Seminary

Facebook likes Kendall Hopkins

Christine Lee
THE THEORY OF ASSOCIATION.
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www.envisionmagazine.com
You’re reading the fifth issue of Envision magazine—hard for me to believe! We’ve come a mighty long way since the Spring 2010 semester when we began, and it’s no doubt been a faith walk filled with obstacles along the way. How do we pay for printing? How do we help students understand that the magazine production classes aren’t ordinary, but have real deadlines and real consequences? How do we motivate others who might not quite see the vision of a publication ministry that goes beyond the four corners of the university? Yet, each time we see firsthand that what seems impossible is really only an opportunity for the Holy Spirit to work a miracle.

While our publication brings attention to our students’ God-given talents, we take particular pride in our Christian mission. Christians are called by God to envision. We look back and envision creation; we look back and envision the cross. We look at the present world and envision our role in it. We look forward and upward and envision the second coming of Christ and the establishment of the earth made new. We constantly envision. These areas preoccupy the fixed gaze of Envision magazine.

Notice Christine Lee on the cover, eyes fixed heavenward. Her poignant story is a reminder that it’s only by keeping our eyes on Jesus that our lives can flourish.

Mark 8:25 says, “Once more Jesus put his hands on the man’s eyes, then his eyes were opened, his sight was restored and he saw everything clearly.”

We will continue to pray for you, our readers, and ask that you pray for Envision magazine as well, that as our collective walk continues our vision of the King will only become sharper and clearer.

Debbie Michel
Andrews University
Department of Communication
4141 Administration Dr.
Berrien Springs, MI 49104

Facebook  Twitter
Editors
Melodie Roschman, Stahl Comete, Jacina Shultz, Jovan McLean, Petrice Wideman, Breana Soliday, Janelle Collins, Moses Primo, Jr.

Senior Editor
Janelle Collins

Writers
Brittany Swart
Ashleigh Burtnett
Francisco ‘Paco’ Ramos
Tiffany Evering
Rachael Odenthal
Moises Ruiz

Copyeditors
Jacina Shultz
Janelle Collins
Melodie Roschman
Ashleigh Burtnett

Multi-media
Veeken BaldeoSingh
Tiffany Evering
N’Kili Gumbs
Patrice Jones
Philip Mathew
Bishal Shrestha
Alexander Swensen

App Developer
Kenty Ramdatt

Publicity/Web
Lerato Moepeng

Model
Frederica St. Hillaire

Special Thanks
Karla Frazee
Diane Myers
Dave Sherwin
Delyse Steyn
Branden Stoltz
Carole Woolford-Hunt

Graphic Designers
Robert Parsons, Courtney Straub, Katie Hahn, Jeremy James, Kerri Dixon, Kristiana Mitacek, Daniel Alberto

Photographers
Ange Batie, Jenny Shrestha, Ben Steenson, Meagan Thompson, Joshua Martin, Nina Marie Rambo, Alfred Burgess, Emily Low, Klara Hopkins Not pictured: Danny Suglio, Dwayne Campbell, Carly Mitzelfelt, Jovan McLean, Jean-Ires Michel

Photo by Danny Suglio

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Dining Services offers our guests the very best in vegan and vegetarian dining.

We strongly believe in serving you only the freshest food; food that is prepared from scratch, using authentic ingredients, and created in a socially responsible manner. To us, a dining room is a gathering place, and breaking bread together helps create a sense of community and comfort.

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food services for a sustainable future
These results are from a survey of 347 college students at Andrews University. The purpose of this study was to examine whether the degree to which Sabbath keeping was internalized made a difference in overall well-being.

This data was collected by Chinyere Sampson and Karl Bailey, and analyzed by Arian Emanuel and Karl Bailey. Research completed between Fall 2011 and Spring 2012.

For Recommendations for enriching your Sabbath experience and making the Sabbath part of yourself, go to blog.envisionmagazine.com.
Such a journey would be worthy of chronicling. His first thought was to photograph and write about his adventures of living in his parents’ hometown. But then a documentary storytelling class expanded his endeavor to capture the experience. He entitled his documentary project Descent: A Film about Origins. Sure, he could have taken the traditional route — working and saving up the money. Instead, he decided to utilize a crowd funding platform built around social media to help him reach his $5,000 goal.

Two major websites exist for this sort of thing: Kickstarter and Indiegogo. Ivan mentioned his intentions to use Indiegogo to his documentary professor. His professor commented that it
seemed the risk-takers preferred Kickstarter’s all-or-nothing deadline-driven approach. Ivan’s mind responded to the casual comment. “I'm an adventurous person! Psssh! Indiegogo, who needs that!” Unencumbered by caution, Ivan built the following project page instead: http://www.kickstarter.com/projects/1415386843/descent-a-film-about-origins.

Progress towards the goal was slow and steady. He shared his excitement both online and off to anyone and everyone who would listen. Positive feedback offered by fellow students and faculty encouraged him. The video Ivan had made about the project was being re-posted on people’s Facebook walls. Optimism ran high – for the first three weeks at least. Concern kicked in when there were less than two days until the deadline and Ivan was still over $1,500 short of getting...anything.

Ivan needed a break from stressing over the computer screen, so that evening he went to Lamson Hall to visit a friend. Ivan did not know the freshman working the front desk that night, but she recognized him! Lianne had seen his video on a mutual friend’s Facebook page and had been highly impressed by his audaciousness. “Most of us never do more than dream of such things,” Lianne said. She had purposed in her heart a while back to try to lend a helping hand.

With 35 hours left before the deadline, she made a Facebook event unbeknownst to Ivan. The event description read as follows: “IVAN RUIZ NEEDS MONEY TO GO TO MEXICO. He's got a bit to go; let’s get him there. If everyone reading this gives $5, he’ll make it. It’s all or nothing. The deadline is Christmas at noon.” She encouraged all her friends to “join,” and to invite all their friends to join as well. Eventually over 2,000 people had been invited to the event! Then, Lianne began following the final countdown as if it were her own. Every two hours she would post an update on her event of how much “we” still needed in order to make the goal.

Meanwhile, back in Ivan’s room, it was only 25 hours before the deadline when Ivan came across a surprising invite to a Facebook event. It called for pledges to “back” the creation of a documentary about origins, entitled “Descent”, on Kickstarter! Someone named Lianne Wynne did this... for him. Ivan accessed his memory banks in search of an identity match. Nothing. He joined the event and started communicating with her.

Bryan Fellows, who was one of the 140 to “back” Ivan’s project, admitted, “I found out about the doc through the Facebook event.” Within 12 hours of creating the event, over $1,000 had been raised. A spike in pledges had been formed. That spike continued on its steep incline. With his project page fixed onto Ivan’s screen, the browser automatically refreshed over and over. His heart rate grew slowly, his fingers trembled slightly, and his eyes widened more and more with the passage of time. The possibility of avoiding humiliation awakened an excitement that drove his heart rate faster! From sluggishly hovering just above the $3,000 mark, he watched as it now leaped and skipped up closer and closer to the $5,000 mark. The names of new “backers” at times confused him. His mind raced to identify these new names only to come up empty. Ivan shrugged it off as the total pledge amount edged so near its goal that it took deliberate effort to breathe normally. How did these people hear about my project? How did they not hear about it before? Perhaps they waited until the last possible moment to pledge? Ivan’s glazed over eyes snapped into sharpness as the next “refresh” revealed a green bar that ran across the top of his project’s page. The first word written in white read: Funded! Almost a third of the money came from pledges of $10 or less. With the final morning still remaining, celebration began at the Ruiz household. It was one more gift for Ivan’s holiday season; just one more blessing to fill his heart with joy. [Follow Ivan's senior project for his BFA here: http://lovethisink.com/descent/]
Before I met the face behind the blog, Natural Chica, I knew of her. I would watch my older sister place a miasma of products in her hair while watching one of the many video blogs (vlogs) of Maeling Tapp speaking about different styles for transitioning. Joining the movement of numerous black females transitioning from their chemically straightened hair to their natural curls and kinks, my sister depended on various natural hair bloggers for her inspiration. However, the one from whom she gained the most support from was Mae. And that was the intention.

Tapp decided that she wanted to transition from the chemically processed straight hair that she had since the age of six, she took advice and support from the growing natural hair community. With hair bloggers such as Curly Nikki and KimmyTube, as well as her two younger sisters and a group of friends who “went natural”, Tapp garnered the information and assistance she would need to make the journey. Due to her gratitude, she uploaded her first vlog on YouTube on July 16, 2009.

“I wanted to document my experience because others helped me,” she says.

Today, her YouTube viewership tops 8 million and she has over 100,000 subscribers. A remarkable audience for a young woman who started her YouTube channel simply as an online journal. As time passed her community evolved and her vlog became an influential platform to share whatever was in her heart, not just on her head. From her own experience, Tapp soon realized that “going natural” was not just a state of her hair, but also the way she thinks.

Transitioning from relaxed hair to natural appeared to affect some of her viewers negatively. An email from one of her readers/viewers confessed, “I literally thought I made a huge mistake. I felt ugly.” However, watching and reading what Tapp had to say about her own transition made a difference for this viewer.

“Having one person in your corner can really make a difference,” Tapp answered as I asked her about how a person could deal with making their hair transition. While she did not receive plenty of negative feedback when she transitioned to natural, as many women do, she did receive a number of emails from other women who did.

Tapp is a Christian baptized into the Seventh-day Adventist church and uses both her blog and vlog to build the confidences of other women through the way they take care of themselves both inside and out. “I wanted people to know that I love Jesus.” Her purpose for the blog was not to advertise her denomination, but to be an encouragement. Tapp prayed about her platform and through it gives positive insight, information, connects with people on a deeper level and shares the Bible and Jesus with Christians and non-Christians alike. She even started a prayer forum on www.theprayerconnection.forumotion.org and sent a link through a video she posted on her page. Through this forum, she and others are able to share their testimony.

Tapp admits that her personal success was not fully realized until she was shopping in a grocery store one day and a woman came up to hug her. It is because her posts are benefitting people that she still continues.

However, while her vlog is an online journal and a platform for good, it is also a business. Due to her high number of views and subscribers, she is paid by Google and has advertisements on her page. When she first started, she had only one contact, Shea Moisture, an organic hair product brand. “You never really know how one connection can lead to another,” she admits, as she begins to tell how Shea Moisture lead her to being a mentioned blogger in the New York Times article, “Going Natural Requires Lots of Help,” by Jamila Bey. From there, Spark and Hustle, started by Tory Johnson to help small-business owners, contacted Tapp to ask if she could speak at one of their conferences.

Tapp has progressed from being able to communicate with her viewers online to having one-on-one conversations at hair conferences and admits she prefers these interactions.

The 26-year-old has truly excelled and been blessed. The 5th year Ph.D candidate at Georgia Institute of Technology was married in March 2013. She continues to post and attend conferences so that she may interact with her viewers/readers. “As God leads me to continue it [Natural Chica], I’m going to keep doing what I’m doing.”

Story by Tiffany Evering
Tiffany@andrews.edu

Photo by Jean-Ires Michel
Jeaniresmichel@gmail.com

Maeling Tapp
When Skye Tenorio, a journalism student at Andrews University went searching for an internship, she turned to Facebook. She knew the social media site was a place where you could waste time looking at pictures of your secret crush, or coveting others’ tropical paradise vacations. But Skye had other plans.

“Social media is such a big part of our generation that I used it for good instead of stalking old boyfriends to see who they were dating,” says Skye.

Skye set her sights on an internship at NBC and began to look under the “groups” application on Facebook for people who worked at NBC or were former employees. Then, she used the search tool – where you would normally look up a user or friend – to look for people who worked for late night shows like “Saturday Night Live” (SNL). Skye says that some of the people she looked up on Facebook worked for shows like “Park and Recreations” and “Louie” on FX. In fact, Skye says she was able to do an informal interview through Facebook with one of the writer and producers of “Parks and Recreations,” one of her favorite television shows.

When Skye used the search tool to look for comedy writers on “Saturday Night Live”, she came across one of the script supervisors for the show, so naturally she added him as a friend on Facebook. Skye says she would find people, friend request them and send them messages through Facebook once accepted as a friend. In her messages, Skye would ask for advice and guidance, discovering people responded to that sort of message. “Telling people you are a student in your messages is your key. It’s like having a discount student ID card at the movies. Use it to your advantage while you still can.”

While it may seem weird to randomly message someone on Facebook whom you have never met, Skye explains she would let the individual know she was a student aspiring to become a comedy writer on a late night show. She recounts her first message with the scriptwriter for SNL: “I asked him what he did, how he got to where he is today.”

Skye recalls writing, “I am looking for as much insight and information into the industry as possible.” He wrote back to her advising her to do as many internships as possible because that was key to getting her foot in the door. Another piece of advice the script supervisor gave her was to keep writing. He told her to create “fake scripts” for shows she would like to work for one day.

In one of her messages to him, Skye asked, “What separates those who do and those who don’t get internships with NBC?” Skye says this was the key question because in his reply he asked her to send a resume and cover letter and he would pass it along.

She eventually landed an internship at “Late Night with Jimmy Fallon” in New York City – her first big step toward her dream of becoming a comedy writer, director and producer.

While her internship at times consisted of grabbing coffee and food, she says she was able to make friends with assistants, writers and producers, with whom she still keeps in contact on - you guessed it – Facebook.

“It’s all about connections,” she says. She never met the man who passed along her resume, but did send a follow up e-mail thanking him.

“Social media is such a big part of our generation that I used it for good instead of stalking old boyfriends to see who they were dating.”

Skye Tenorio

STORY BY FRANCISCO ‘PACO’ RAMOS, Pacoramos455@gmail.com

PHOTO BY KLARA HOPKINS, Klara@andrews.edu
According to a recent study from the American Psychological Association’s annual report, young adults ages 18-34, also known as the “Millennials,” have the highest levels of stress among all adults. Not only did Millennials report higher levels of stress, 52% reported losing sleep at night because of it. There are many things that may cause young adults to be stressed out, including school work, student loans, and high unemployment rates. The study also found that compared to Generation Xers and Baby Boomers, Millennials also struggle more to manage their stress.

While you may not have found a job just yet or might still have several semesters of busy schoolwork ahead of you, you can reduce your stress by learning some simple skills. Luis Ortega, a counselor and psychologist at Andrews University, explains that your mind, relationships, body, and spirit work together in an interconnected way. He says, “Whenever you find you have that sense of wrongness, most likely one of those dimensions is out of whack.” Ortega shares some things that you can do to help keep a healthy balance:

MIND:
- Learn to identify your thoughts and feelings…. Become more self-aware
- Laugh! Talk to a funny friend. Watch a comedy
- Practice looking at things from different point of views

RELATIONSHIPS:
- Develop new friendships, but remember to nurture the old ones.
- Make time for meaningful connections
- Learn to communicate your feelings appropriately

BODY:
- Drink enough water
- Keep active; exercise
- Keep a regular sleep cycle. Get enough sleep.

SPIRIT
- Keep a hopeful outlook
- Practice gratefulness
- Take time to reflect on what is sacred for you: Your source of meaning and purpose.

In addition to keeping a balance between your mind, relationships, body, and spirit, the food you eat or choose not to eat can also affect your level of stress. Here are some things to look out for next time you’re out to eat or planning your next meal.

WHOLE GRAINS
- Eating plenty of whole grains will not only do your body a favor, you’ll also feel less guilty for eating. Amanda Arthur, nutritionist and Andrews University alumnus says, “It’s less guilt added to your list of stressful things. In addition, it improves your cholesterol, your blood sugar (if you have problems with that), and keeps you full so you’re not constantly picking at chips or something while you’re typing up a paper.” Substitute whole grain pasta in your favorite mac ‘n cheese and pasta recipes.

CALCIUM, POTASSIUM, MAGNESIUM, AND OMEGA-3’S.
- Calcium, potassium, and magnesium can help fortify your body during stressful times. Arthur explains that while most fruits and vegetable have these minerals, some foods such as bananas, sweet potatoes, strawberries, and cantaloupe have a greater amount.

WARM FOODS AND LIQUIDS
- Warms foods and liquids can help to relax you. However, the let-down after a caffeine rush can leave you feeling more stressed than you felt before. To get the warmth of a hot drink without the caffeine, Arthur recommends replacing your coffee with tea. Interested in more helpful tips on stress management? Visit helpguide.org
Happy Meals

Delicious Veggie-Packed Recipes

Linda Brinegar, Executive Chef of the Terrace Café at Andrews University shared some simple, delicious recipes packed with fresh veggies and loaded with vital nutrients—sure-fire ingredients to reduce stress and fortify the body. Bon Appetit!

**ROASTED RED PEPPER HUMMUS**

This traditional-style hummus, the best we’ve ever tasted, becomes very untraditional when we add the rich flavor of roasted red peppers. We serve it with whole grain pita chips or with fresh vegetable crudités.

- 1 cup roasted red pepper
- 3 cups garbanzo beans, rinsed and drained
- ¼ cup fresh lemon juice
- 1 tbs. olive oil
- ¼ cup tahini
- ½ tsp. cumin, or to taste
- 2 cloves garlic, or to taste
- 1 tsp. salt
- ½ tsp. cayenne, or to taste

Drain roasted red pepper and place in food processor/blender. Add remaining ingredients and process until smooth. Blend garbanzo beans and tahini until smooth. Add remaining ingredients and blend until smooth.

Makes 2 ½ Cups; 10 (¼ Cup) Servings

**SESAME LETTUCE WRAPS WITH THAI PEANUT SAUCE**

This dish features tofu grilled in fragrant sesame oil and drizzled with a mildly sweet peanut sauce. Serve warm in a crisp lettuce leaf for a delightful Asian side dish or appetizer. Known for its long, sturdy leaves, romaine lettuce works well for this wrap, though many people prefer the crispness of an iceberg leaf.

- ½ tsp. canola oil
- 2 ¼ tsp. toasted sesame oil
- ¼ cup finely chopped onion
- 3 green onions, minced
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 2 tbs. grated carrot
- 1 ¼ cups drained water-packed, extra-firm tofu, cut into ¼ - inch cubes
- 1 tbs. low-sodium soy sauce
- 1 ½ tsp. McKay’s Chicken-Style Instant Broth and Seasoning, Vegan
- 1 tbs. 100 percent natural floral honey or sweetener of your choice
- Pinch cayenne pepper (optional)

Heat oils in skillet over medium heat. Add chopped onion, green onions, garlic, carrot, and tofu cubes. Sauté until onion is tender, 3 to 4 minutes. Stir in remaining ingredients. Cook for 4 to 5 minutes. Remove from heat and allow to cool.

Place ¼ cup in each lettuce leaf, drizzle 1 tbs. of the sauce, and roll like a burrito. Fasten each lettuce leaf with wooden pick if arranging on a platter.

Makes 2 Cups; 8 (¼ cup) Servings

**THAI PEANUT SAUCE**

The secret to keeping this recipe healthy is to use natural peanut butter with no added sugar and no partially hydrogenated oil.

- 5 tbs. creamy all-natural, no-sugar-added, non-hydrogenated peanut butter
- 3 tbs. water
- 1 tbs. low-sodium soy sauce
- 3 tbs. fresh lime juice
- 2 tsp. 100 percent natural floral honey or sweetener of your choice
- 2 cloves garlic, peeled
- 1/16 tsp. salt
- 1/16 tsp. cayenne pepper

Blend all ingredients on high until smooth and creamy, 1 to 2 minutes. Transfer to a bowl, cover, and refrigerate until using. Warm sauce before serving.

Makes ¾ Cup; 12 (1 tablespoon) Servings

www.envisionmagazine.com
She’d seen it time and time again: fellow students who had graduated from academy and left for college only to return heavier. It didn’t take Irma Henry long to realize this “freshman fifteen”—a term referring to the amount of weight freshmen often gained their first year—was a very real thing. “Something’s got to happen,” she recalled telling herself, as she unpacked and settled into the rigors of life at Andrews University.

In August 2012, two weeks into her first semester, she joined the university’s gym and signed up for sessions with a personal trainer not fully knowing what to expect. After all she had struggled with her weight for most of her 18 years and had some doubts she could actually slim down.

Now eight months later, the pre-physical therapy major has surprised herself and her family. In her first semester, instead of gaining the proverbial “freshman 15”, she lost 15 lbs. Since beginning her weight-loss journey, the Florida native has lost a total of 27 lbs., and dropped two dress sizes.

Here’s How Irma Did It:

**Exercise regularly:** Key to Irma’s weight loss is consistent, vigorous exercise. The regimen she follows is specifically geared towards healthy weight management. Irma knows it can be intimidating to walk into a gym and feel heavier set and less fit than others. “Don’t be afraid,” she says. “You’re doing it for yourself.”

**Watch what you eat:** “Avoid situations where you know you’re going to be tempted,” Irma advises. “Sometimes when they [the university cafeteria] have Sam’s Chicken they serve it with mashed potatoes, and I just love the mashed potato; so I avoid going to the cafe and go to the Gazebo and get salad.” Also, if she dines in the cafeteria, she says she leaves as soon as she’s done eating because if she sticks around, temptation might set in as “I start to think, ‘Oh they have this or that.’”

**Accountability:** The number one thing Irma recommends to someone trying to lose weight is to “tell somebody.” Irma and her friends hold each other accountable for what they eat and sticking to their exercise commitments. One friend, whom she refers to as her “food buddy,” chats with her at the end of every day about what they’ve eaten, while she has another friend who holds her accountable for exercise. Irma says a quick knock on the door and friendly reminder that it’s time to go exercise will urge her to stop what she’s doing and go workout.

Accountability doesn’t end with friends. Irma has one more support group in her accountability network: family. Though miles apart, Irma and her sisters keep each other in check and provide sympathy and moral support. Irma can call her sister and say, “I’ve been a bad girl today; I ate this or that,” and she has her sister there to give advice and sympathize in her struggle. Between friends, family and her personal trainer, Anna Piskozub, Irma has surrounded herself with a solid group of accountability partners.

Though Irma has succeeded in losing weight, she emphasizes that it is not easy. “This needs to be my lifestyle and it is not my lifestyle, yet.” On those days she feels like giving up, she finds it beneficial to talk with God. “If I’m on the treadmill and have just 30 seconds, then I start having a conversation.” Before she knows it, the time has whittled down and the workout is over. She’s excited about her new look and is hopeful she can loose an additional 50 pounds before graduation. The future suddenly seems brighter. “In my head I wanted to get here, and I did it; it made it all worthwhile.”

**Don’t be afraid. You’re doing it for yourself.**
Jumping rope is not just for kids! Many adults are starting to realize that while jumping rope is fun, it can also be a very intense workout. One of the greatest benefits jumping rope can give is it increases cardiovascular endurance, which helps in strengthening your heart and lungs. Jumping rope can be beneficial in increasing hand and foot coordination and can increase body awareness.

Here’s a simple routine you can do, without even leaving your room!

**Total time: 12 minutes (repeat if desired)**

For more on choosing the best jump rope or keeping your body safe during exercises, visit www.envisionmagazine.com.
The Unique Dilemma of Women in the Seminary

“I didn’t want to be a pastor,” Sabine René recalls. “When God called me, I came kicking and screaming.” She laughs, her warm smile making her dark eyes sparkle. “It was a long time before I submitted to his will and said, ‘okay, let’s go.’”

seven years ago, Sabine was thriving as a health care administrator, volunteering as community service secretary at her Brooklyn-area church, and serving as Youth Federation President of the Franco-Haitian coordination of the Northeastern Conference. She began to feel God calling her to ministry, but she resisted until a friend said, “Sabine, how do you know that the certification, the degree that you’ll get is not to open up a bigger door for you? Stop running. Stop being Jonah.” Reluctantly, she gave in, left New York City, and in May 2008 began the Master of Divinity program at Andrews University’s Theological Seminary in Berrien Springs, Mich.

Sabine is one of many women who fervently believe that God is calling them to be pastors in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, but they are all facing numerous obstacles as people adjust to women being leaders in the church and as the debate over women’s ordination continues.

While working on their degrees, they’re often subject to criticism and prejudice from classmates, family members, and friends. “You kind of sense moments,” Sabine explains, “where you’re like, ‘they don’t want me here…but you know, I’m here, and they’ve got to get over it.’”

This criticism also results in intense scrutiny of female pastors’ behavior. Pastor Esther Knott, director of the InMinistry Center at the Seventh-day Theological Seminary at Andrews University, who served until recently as an associate pastor at Pioneer Memorial Church in Berrien Springs, Mich., has been in the ministry for more than 25 years, says, “You’re always in the hot seat…. [Pastors] are called to a higher standard, and as a woman that standard is doubly high, because as women, people are observing us even more closely…. I have felt over the years that I do have to be extraordinary.” She continues, “If a man doesn’t do a good job you don’t say ‘Oh, it’s because men are horrible’ but there’s still a tendency to say, ‘It’s because she’s female.’”

Struggles for women are not only personal, but also official; the current stand of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is to commission women pastors, not ordain them. Many administrative positions, and the increased salaries that come with them, make ordination a hiring requirement, automatically barring women. The North American Division (NAD) and General Conference are currently studying ordination in order to reach a world church decision, but their UNCALLED FOR?

STORY BY MELODIE ROSCHMAN, melodieroschman@yahoo.ca

www.envisionmagazine.com
final verdict won’t come until the 2015 General Conference Session.

Beyond all of this, there’s the simple fact that the percentage of female pastors being trained doesn’t come close to the number of women pastors employed. According to the AU’s Seminary website, in the 2010-2011 school year there were 551 students enrolled in the Seminary; 14.6% of them were women. In the North American Division, however, NAD Ministerial reports only 107 women pastors (2.7%) out of an approximate 4000 pastors.

Some of this disparity could be that women are waiting until they can be ordained and/or are pursuing alternative career paths. A large factor, however, is that many current or potential employees believe that some conferences don’t offer the same employment opportunities to women as they do to men. In a 2012 survey of 50 Seventh-day Adventist female pastors conducted by the NAD and the Center for Creative Ministry, 60% said the most pressing issue for women clergy is the lack of fair treatment by the church, and 36% said that conferences need to be encouraged to hire more women.

Pastor Knott recalls when she participated in job fair interviews at the seminary more than 25 years ago: “I was often asked if I knew so-and-so was single, with the idea [that] I want to be a pastor’s wife.” Interviewers automatically assumed that if a woman was in the seminary, she wanted to marry a pastor, not be one.

Attitudes have changed since then, but the increased contemporary acknowledgment of women called to being pastors doesn’t get them jobs. Sabine says, “Most conferences are just not ready for women in ministry.”

To prepare for the possibility of employment, Sabine made a difficult decision. Though she could have graduated with her MDiv in 2011, Sabine decided to add a Master of Social Work, partially so she would have a career to fall back on if no one would hire her as a pastor. The second master’s added another two years of work, so now she hopes to graduate in December 2013.

While she chose to add this degree just in case, she believes what she has learned will increase her ministry exponentially: “I can say as I look forward to completing that program that I’m going to be the kind of pastor, whether I’m hired or not, that’s going to change the fabric of our society in one way or another.”

Sabine’s choice to add a second degree does not mean, however, that she has given up on pastoring. Rather, she calls for change. “Our leaders need to just do what’s right and stop hiding behind a veil of inequality, and hiding behind the veil of what they perceive to be doctrinally sound. There’s nothing in Scripture that says that women can’t preach, teach, or lead a flock. These are women that I am proud to stand next to and know that we are going to change this world.”

One of these women is Sabine’s former classmate, Pastor Trudy Strombom. Trudy’s journey to ministry has been a long and bumpy one. She explains, in high school “it was my heart’s desire to go into pastoral ministry and I was discouraged by all the adults I talked to.” Dishheartened, she became a teacher, then did home sales for a developer, and found herself drifting away from God. In 2007, she felt God pulling her back to him, and back to her high school dream. Though she was in her mid-40s, would have no income or conference sponsorship, and knew she’d be in a minority, Trudy enrolled in the MDiv program and graduated from the Seminary in 2012.

She spent a year volunteering at a church in Ontario, Canada while searching for a position. After many applications and rejections, she was hired “through numerous evidences of God’s providence” to a three-church district in Illinois starting April 2013. Throughout her year of unemployment, though, Trudy says of her choice to become a pastor, “I never doubted it…. I know He led me back the seminary. I know He led me back to Him. I’m going to be true to God and what He called me to do with my life. I can do
that without anyone else’s say so.”

Trudy’s and Sabine’s stories are not unique. Hundreds of Adventist women are answering God’s call, facing difficult situations, and continuing on. They are keeping their eyes fixed on God and his mission for their lives, and fervently praying and working for change. Pastor Knott says, “When they say that women shouldn’t do this, I do pause...to remember that I only want to do what God allows or what God says is right, and if I’m in error, I want to stop doing it...But when I look at the evidence, at the lives that have been changed, I can’t deny what God has done. And to say that I shouldn’t be doing that is a denial of the Holy Spirit’s work.”

Sabine sees God’s work in a shift occurring around her. “I believe that God is being very purposeful in opening this window where you have women by the hundreds now that are filling the halls of this seminary. Where it started out maybe there were two, maybe there were four, now it’s hundreds. We have to look at that as something that is intentional and that we should not hinder. These small steps and these small changes taking place in the division are indicative that God is doing something different; he’s doing something that is even beyond even the opposition that we’re getting in some of our conferences and some of our local churches.”

So what does Sabine believe should happen next? “Our leaders need to stand up for what is right, period.... When you take the position of shutting us completely out, you’re really hindering the work from moving forward. We’re supposed to do this together. And so my hope is that I’d be welcomed on a platform, in an arena where my gifts are recognized, they’re acknowledged, they’re affirmed, and I’m allowed a platform to use those gifts for God’s glory.”

Pastor Knott hopes to reach a point where “people don’t see me as a woman pastor; they just see me as a pastor.”
I’m using mathematical models to characterize the biological phenomena found in the dynamics between T cells and HIV. I’m coming up with a math model that describes the fluctuations, the change in the populations over the course of the infection — from the point of viral entry to the point of death. The scope of the project is really cool and if we successfully create a model that describes the relationship between HIV and T cells, then I think we can give scientists and clinicians a valuable tool to treat and assess HIV. This could lead to better drug regimens and increased efficacy of drugs themselves.

Name: Matthew Chacko
Hometown: Wichita, Kansas
Major: Biology, English
Research Topic: A Mathematical Model Describing the Dynamics of HIV Virions and CD4+ T Cells in the Human Immune System
I wanted to look at the hospitality efforts of our church, so I chose to explore the impact of nonverbal communication on a visitor’s first impression of their church; specifically this research is limited to a Seventh-day Adventist denominational institution. I recognize that our group functions for the purpose of building relationships to draw people to Christ. We often focus on evangelistic efforts that bring new people into our faith community without looking at the obstacles that might prevent visitors from feeling welcome or from wanting to visit again once they get there. I hope that my research can reveal connections between certain identifiable behaviors and hospitality so that we can act on these and be intentional about welcoming people into our church groups.
Our dietary patterns in the U.S. are ever-changing, and there are an increasing number of convenience food products, both in grocery stores and fast food places. This greatly influences what teens are eating. It is extremely important to be aware about nutrition, especially when young. Childhood obesity has more than doubled in children and tripled in adolescents in the past 30 years. In this research we wanted to compare the intake of convenience and fast foods between public schools and Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) schools. We are still collecting data, but we are seeing that more public school students consume pizza containing meat, more than students in SDA schools.
Name: Josh Sanabria  
Hometown: Ashville, North Carolina  
Major: Architecture  
Research Topic: Connect Architecture

The project is basically using the connect camera from the X-Box and connecting it to a computer. It uses open source software to scan rooms and create 3D models instantly as it’s scanning, so you could scan a hallway or a building and have a 3D model ready to go. It’s been fun experimenting - first of all due to how it works, because it’s a pretty new technology; professionals are not even using it.

Name: Isaiah Horton  
Hometown: Bellwood, Illinois  
Major: Biology (Pre-Med) and Spanish Studies  
Research Topic: Synthesis of Imine Azachalcones as Fluorescent Chemosensors

I’m trying to make a molecule that has the capacity to detect the presence of metal ions. Metal ions are needed in all sorts of systems. You know, your blood has iron, your bones and your muscles need calcium in order for your bones and muscles to work properly. What’s great about this (project) is we’re trying to make a molecule from cheap materials in the lab, instead of using these big, huge machines that take a whole bunch of time and take a whole bunch of money and processing - just a little sprinkle of this pixie dust, it’ll change to a certain color, and it’ll let you know whether your ion is there.
Name: Camden Bowman  
Hometown: Augusta, Michigan  
Major: Spanish for Translation & Behavioral Sciences  
Research Topic: Immigration Stories and the Construction of a Bilingual American Identity

I wanted to look at the stories of how Spanish speakers came to the U.S. with the idea that that’s going to form the basis for a new American folklore, a new American identity based in the immigration story of people from Latin America. So, what I do is, I go do an interview with someone—they need to be first generation Americans, so they were born elsewhere—and I conduct the interview in Spanish and then I record it, I transcribe it, and then I’m going to translate them into English and create a collection of stories. The most interesting thing about it, [is that] I loved to sit around and listen to stories. I ask myself sometimes, can this possibly be work; am I doing research?

The most difficult thing about this research so far [would be] spell checking all of the responses to the prompts I’ve given my subjects, because I’ve had to read through them…since half of them are writing on trauma, it’s been a little traumatizing in and of itself for me to read. Even though I’m just looking for spelling and grammar and different structural errors like that, it’s been pretty difficult to read some of their traumatic accounts.

Name: Lindsay Dever  
Hometown: Tacoma Park, Maryland  
Major: Psychology Understanding  
Research Topic: Expressive Writing: Its Relationship to Trauma, Resilience, and Parenting Style

The most difficult thing about this research so far [would be] spell checking all of the responses to the prompts I’ve given my subjects, because I’ve had to read through them…since half of them are writing on trauma, it’s been a little traumatizing in and of itself for me to read. Even though I’m just looking for spelling and grammar and different structural errors like that, it’s been pretty difficult to read some of their traumatic accounts.
For a number of years the accounting industry has been described as one of the most difficult fields for a woman to break into, but it has changed quite a bit. There are four major accounting firms, and those firms have made it one of their commitments to empower women. They have a number of initiatives that work towards retaining women and they’ve adopted a culture of inclusion. However, despite the number of women that are entering accounting, they’re not proportionate at the higher ranks in accounting, like at the executive level and the partner level. I wanted to look at why that disparity exists, and what the barriers are that are hindering women from succeeding at the same rate as men.
Christine Lee discovers the secret to a deeper, more meaningful relationship with God

SHORTLY AFTER CHRISTINE WAS BORN, HER FATHER WAS DIAGNOSED WITH SCHIZOPHRENIA, A MENTAL DISORDER THAT DISTORTS AN INDIVIDUAL'S PERCEPTION OF REALITY. “HE'S TALKING AND RESPONDING TO THINGS THAT NO ONE ELSE IS HEARING,” CHRISTINE EXPLAINS.

IN AN ATTEMPT TO DROWN OUT VOICES, CHRISTINE'S FATHER WOULD BLAST MUSIC THROUGHOUT THE DAY. IF THAT DIDN'T WORK, HE WOULD BECOME VIOLENT. “HE WOULD THROW THINGS AT THE WALL, MAKE HOLES IN THE WALL WITH HIS FIST, [AND] WHEN HIM AND MY MOM ARGUED, IT GOT OUT OF HAND.” HE WOULD CONSTANTLY MAKE THREATS ON HER MOTHER'S LIFE AND DESTROYING PROPERTY IN THE HOUSE DURING HIS OUTBURSTS.

“ALMOST ANYTHING COULD SET HIM OFF,” SAYS THE ANDREWS UNIVERSITY BIOLOGY SOPHOMORE, REMEMBERING THE NIGHTS WHEN SHE AND HER FAMILY WOULD HAVE TO FLEE TO A HOTEL TO AVOID HER FATHER ON HIS MORE AGGRESSIVE EPISODES.

“I WAS ALWAYS VERY CONSCIOUS OF MY FAMILY AND HOME LIFE,” SHE SAID. DESPITE BEING AWARE OF WHAT WAS GOING ON AROUND HER, CHRISTINE RARELY SPOKE OF THE DIFFICULT TIME SHE WAS HAVING AT HOME.

“KOREANS HAVE THIS THING WHERE THEY WITHHOLD SHOWING THEIR EMOTIONS. IT’S MORE PROPER TO NOT OPEN UP… FROM A YOUNG AGE I STORED ALL OF MY BITTERNESS AND HATRED AT LIFE WITHIN ME,” SHE ADMITS.

IT WASN'T UNTIL SECOND GRADE, WHEN SHE BEFRIENDED A GIRL NAMED ANNA, THAT SOMEONE ELSE TOOK NOTICE OF CHRISTINE'S HOME SITUATION. AFTER VISITING CHRISTINE'S HOME, ANNA'S PARENTS RECOGNIZED THAT SOMETHING WAS AMISS AND TRIED THEIR BEST TO MAKE CHRISTINE COMFORTABLE AND GIVE HER A PLACE TO BE AT PEACE.

“THEY TRIED TO BE A FAMILY FOR ME AND MY YOUNGER BROTHER. IT WAS LIKE OUR SHELTER OR ESCAPE FROM OUR OWN HOME LIFE.”

CHRISTINE’S LIFE CONTINUED TO CHANGE TWO YEARS LATER WHEN HER FAMILY WAS INVITED TO ROCKY MOUNTAIN KOREAN SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH. SHE DIDN'T HAVE A VERY RELIGIOUS UPBRINGING, SO THIS WAS A VERY NEW DEVELOPMENT FOR CHRISTINE. BUT SOON, SHE BEGAN ATTENDING CHURCH EVERY SATURDAY WITH HER FAMILY.

“We met other people who took care of us,” Christine recalls. One of those people was a pastor, who they affectionately called “Uncle Tae.” He taught them about the Bible and invited the youth group over to his house every week.

“I THINK HE REALLY WANTED TO BE THERE FOR US.” DESPITE HER CONTINUED CHURCH ATTENDANCE, SHE FOUND HERSELF ANGRY AT THIS GOD SHE WAS LEARNING SO MUCH ABOUT.

“YEAR AFTER YEAR I PRAYED THE SAME PRAYER, BUT”}

FROM FEAR TO ETERNITY

STORY BY JACINA SHULTZ
jacina@andrews.edu
nothing in my life changed. I felt like God was just watching me and my family suffer, and that He was powerless to do anything about it... I had heard of so many miracles in the Bible, one of my favorite ones being the story of Joseph. In those kinds of stories, there's always a happy ending where God ends up blessing that individual, but for me there was no ending of any kind; the pain, sorrow, and hurt continued on."

A RAY OF HOPE?
Christine soon began 7th grade at Lincoln Junior High School, and her mom decided they were going to live separately from their dad, while his parents took over caring for him.

“She didn’t want us to grow up always living in fear of him,” she explains. “We had more freedom to be ourselves.”

As she continued to learn more about God, Christine felt that maybe He was the answer to the problems that had been plaguing her for so long. So she made the decision to enroll in baptismal classes. At 13 she was baptized, but admits it felt more procedural than genuine.

“I don’t recall having a burning desire to know God. I thought of it as something that was the next step.” But it was the following summer that she finally felt that close connection she’d been waiting to feel. “God made it all meaningful and He had the right timing.” Despite this radical change in her spiritual walk, Christine didn’t suddenly get the fairytale ending she’d been hoping for.

Instead of bliss, Christine found herself growing apart from her best friend, Anna. She also realized she would bottle up her emotions and worries, isolating herself from others.

“I didn’t have enough love for other people,” she admits. By focusing on her own problems and concerns, she had created a barrier around herself, causing her to fall into a depression and a pattern of becoming “trapped and enlisted to negative thoughts.”

Christine felt more alone as the absence of full emotional support hit her. Her mom and siblings were all preoccupied with their own problems. Her classmates, only in junior high, were more concerned with making friends than worrying about their families.

Externally, she would act like other kids. Afraid that others would think less of her if they knew the truth, she kept surface-level friendships and never told anyone about her struggles. Internally, however, she was consumed by depression.

“Because I thought God was apathetic and powerless to do anything in my life, I ended up hating Him. When I ended up hating God, I ended up hating my existence and everything in my life. I hated God for creating me, and it led me to contemplate suicide on numerous occasions,” she confesses. “I hated myself for who I was, and I hated God for letting me be born into the situation that I was in.”

She found reprieves, however brief, from her depression when she worked in the junior high counseling office. During her time working in that office, she gained respect for one of the counselors, who seemed like the only adult figure she could relate with. Unable to get her to open up about her emotions, he would always joke around and try to make her laugh.

“I didn’t think about my depression and stuff when I was with him,” she remembers. “He really cared about the students... I don’t even know if he was Christian but that was one of the greatest [acts of] witnessing for me.”

A STRUGGLE ENSUES
Even with the presence of this positive figure in her life, Christine continued to struggle with her demons as she went on to Poudre High School. Her mom began to pay closer attention to her older siblings, because they were barely getting by. Finding herself in need of attention, she tried turning to relationships with boys and partying, but she found they only added to the pain. “I found that my best distraction was surrounding myself with people. Around my friends, I became someone outgoing and fun... At home, I was faced with who I really was, and I didn’t want to come to terms with that, so I tried to avoid going home.”

She attempted to open up to some people, but that only confirmed her worst fear. “Because they couldn’t understand it, they felt very uncomfortable, and saw me in a different way,” she says. She became more resolved to keep her turmoil a secret.

Even through her anger, Christine had kept an open connection to God. One of her youth pastors in high school, Pastor Minyong Song, really helped guide her into understand who and what God really was.

“Isolating myself from others made me focus more on my own problems, so I had a very narrow perspective on everything,” Christine explains. But Pastor Song showed her God’s own sacrifice on the cross, which made her re-evaluate her own struggles. She realized, “It’s worth it to keep going.”

During Christine’s senior year, she started noticing a change in more than just herself—her family was changing too. Her older siblings had begun attending Andrews University, and when they would come home during breaks, they were much kinder and more affectionate than they’d ever been.

“It was a huge contrast to what I was feeling at the time,” she says. “They looked like they had found in God what they were looking for and she wanted that for herself. So in the hopes that she could discover a piece of this new found joy her siblings possessed, Christine decided to attend Andrews.

While there, she faced new struggles. “It was
very conservative from what I was used to. I felt like I was supposed to act in a certain way,” she says. “By coming here I became more narrow-minded and I didn’t know if that was supposed to happen or if that was even the right thing…. When I went back home I judged my mom cause she wasn’t going to church.” She didn’t like the person she was becoming, which caused her to stop attending church for a few months.

A FAITH STRENGTHENED

However, doing her own devotions really helped give Christine that spiritual push she needed. Jinha Kim, a pastor at Living Springs Fellowship, encouraged everyone in the church to take charge of their own spiritual lives. As someone who is independent, Christine found the idea very appealing.

“I liked the idea of having a personal relationship with God…. I don’t have to care about what other people say or think, because what matters is what happens and develops between God and me.”

After listening to Pastor Jinha’s Bible studies and sermons, Christine realized “how so many precious Biblical truths can be uncovered and gained from even common stories.” She began to wonder if she could find those truths herself.

“I made it a goal to spend time every morning to read the Bible and see what was there for myself; to see if God would reveal to me what other people claimed He was revealing to them.”

Pastor Jinha Kim recalls, from his brief meetings with Christine, that his first impression of her wasn’t completely accurate to her story. Christine always seemed to have a positive and peaceful disposition, which led me to believe that she had a relatively stable upbringing. Knowing what really happened made me marvel at God’s ability to bring such light and warmth to someone who has suffered so much.

As Christine continued her devotions, she gradually realized that God’s love for her was bigger than she’d imagined it to be. She realized that the way she had judged her mother wasn’t what Jesus would’ve done; she knew God reached down to the level of those in need. Her mom no longer attended church because of the degree to which the church had hurt her.

“I think she felt hurt because she wanted to make close friends, but it seemed as if people didn’t want to take the time to be a part of each other’s lives outside of church.” Christine observed that the best way to witness to her mom was by listening and spending time with her.

She also spends time during her breaks helping her grandparents at their liquor store. “They don’t believe in God, so for me that’s the only way that I feel like I can witness to them. Just showing them that I care… I feel like the first thing that people need is just acceptance.” She hopes that by accepting others, people can catch a glimpse of God’s love.

It hasn’t been easy, but Christine finds herself slowly letting go of the blame she has put on her parents. By broadening her perspective, she realized how much her mom has struggled too.

“Seeing all of the hurt and pain my mom had to go through has really helped me.” Although living separate from their dad, her mother has never divorced him and plans to take over caring for him when his parents pass away.

Christine and her siblings still visit their father. Because of his medication, he’s generally unresponsive, so it’s hard to communicate with him. She believes that understanding her father’s struggles and how he developed into who he is has helped her to forgive him and realize he is in need of love too—just as she was afraid of it, her own father fears his schizophrenia too.

It is a marvel to see how God worked in Christine’s life—she appreciates the impact that knowing Him has had on the world.

“Because of Andrews, my worldview has been shifted. Being exposed to His grace has softened my heart, and this has given God the chance to reveal a fuller picture of who He is, and not just how I want Him to be. Because of God, the healing process has started in my soul. Because of God, I want to have a passion to love my friends, family, enemies, and future people I will encounter in a healthcare career. And because of God, I want to aspire towards the higher and greater things in life. Andrews was the door that needed to be open to propel my life in a completely new direction.”
Balancing Act
How a Super-Busy Student Manages His Time

BY JACINA SHULTZ
jacina@andrews.edu

PHOTOS BY JOVAN MCLEAN
jovansj@gmail.com
Archie Wheeler grew up in a family that encouraged studiousness. In eighth grade, he began the accelerated track, and continued to gather speed. By his junior year, he was enrolled in Calculus III, and by the end of his senior year, he had passed 10 AP exams, graduated co- valedictorian, and was a National Merit Finalist.

Several of his close friends went on to schools such as Harvard and Yale, where they are excelling, but for Archie, he never even considered them. He had been drawn to the spiritual factor that Andrews had to offer, and decided he wanted to be able to stay competitive in classes while still having time to participate in extracurricular activities and sleep eight hours a night.

He is pursuing three majors, two minors, is in the Honors program, works seven jobs (including a position as an RA), has a 4.0 GPA, and is involved in dozens of extracurricular activities. (A detailed list can be found at jamwheeler.com)

Being involved in so much has forced him to find a way to manage his time well. “[My Smartphone] is linked to Google Calendars and Google Tasks, so I can literally see when tasks are coming up, when appointments are coming up, and they’re linked into my website, so that when someone asks, ‘Hey, when are you free? When can I talk to you? When can I have this interview?’ I can just say, ‘Go into my website and you can find a time.’” And, sure enough, Archie directed me to the calendar of his life when I asked for this interview. The schedule was packed, and I felt terrible asking him to schedule yet another thing. But by the time I was done with the interview, I realized he didn’t mind. He prefers his life to be busy.

Ever since he was a kid, he hasn’t been able to be idle. “When I’m sitting somewhere, not being constructive, it wears on me,” he says. Sitting through a movie in a theater is impossible; if he’s at home, he can at least be pursuing a hobby of his such as making chainmail or even knitting someone a hat. While at church or in chapel, he has a small journal he writes notes in so that he doesn’t get too fidgety.

When asked if he ever feels overwhelmed with his busy schedule, Archie explains, “[Jesus] knew that he had to do all of his missionary work, all of his witnessing, in the short span of 3 and a half years—less than the amount of time that almost everyone is at this college. If you knew that your impact on history was going to be based on these years and that millions and millions and billions of people were going...
Students may think they’re headed into an oversaturated job market, but that doesn’t mean capturing that dream job is impossible. Now, more than ever, it is important to know where to get the most valuable experience and how to market your skills. A 4.0 GPA won’t have the same impact on a potential employer as a resume packed with real world experience. And, if you’re one of the lucky ones, you won’t have to go looking for a job; that once in a lifetime opportunity will find you. That’s what happened to Kendall Hopkins, an alumnus of Andrews University.

“I didn’t pursue the job, they found me,” Hopkins said about landing a job as a software engineer at Facebook. “I had posted a resume on a popular programming website forum and it caught the eye of a technical sourcer at Facebook.” Hopkins, who graduated from Andrews in 2011, had been working for SimpleUpdates.com, where he had interned as a student.

Even though he had work experience, Hopkins believes that practicing his passion is what helped him land the job at Facebook. “If I had only my education, I doubt I would have been considered for an interview at Facebook. Side projects are strong indicators that a person has a passion for programming… I believe that passion plays a large role in mastering your interests.”

What is it like to be interviewed by a top tier tech company? In a word: intense.

“As the interview process unfolded I quickly discovered Facebook sets a very high bar for their Software Engineers, making the interview process nothing short of a marathon. Each interviewer spent a little time asking about my previous experience, but focused mostly on having me show them that I can solve very hard technical problems in a short time frame. After days of prepping and 8 solid hours of interviews, I was offered a job at Facebook as a software engineer,” Hopkins says.

For those hoping to land a top job in their desired field, Hopkins insists on the value of internships and gaining experience outside the classroom. “Internships are valuable experiences because it helps you
determine if the job is what you want to pursue. Also, it provides practical experience and establishes connections with the professionals in that field."

The fierce work ethic of Silicon Valley—located in the San Francisco Bay Area and home to tech companies like Google and Apple, Inc. as well as Facebook—is, for Hopkins, the most exciting part of his job.

"Impact. Everyday, I get to go to my job knowing that the work I do will have a long lasting impact on Facebook, and its billion active visitors. At the same time, there is a lot of pressure to make sure that impact is positive and doesn’t degrade the user experience," Hopkins said, adding, "Also, the free food is pretty awesome."
Don’t Follow Your Dreams:
How to Be Miserable, Waste Time, and Live an Unsatisfying Life

BY MELODIE ROSCHMAN
melodieroschman@yahoo.ca

Magazines, websites, and college classes are full of advice about how to ace college and get your dream job, but you’re probably sick of hearing it. Well, we have asked experts and students alike to give their best advice for unhappiness and failure. Here are the most important things they told us:

Choose the major you think you should do, not what you love. They aren’t the ones paying your student loans, studying for your tests, or doing your job for forty years, but they are the ones who are constantly telling you what they think of your career path. Matthew Chacko, an Andrews senior, understands better than most. Though he never felt passionate about it, he majored in Biology Pre-Med for four years—and decided the last semester of his senior year to add an English Literature major and become a professor instead. “I was never fully convinced myself that it [biology] was something that I wanted to do,” he explains. “I think it was a little bit of coercion on the part of myself and my parents into doing something that I thought was my duty to do, to go into medicine…They just really thought that this would be the best option for me because it’s something they know; they’re both physicians.” Chacko found himself lacking enthusiasm, constantly changing his goals, and looking for the least-demanding options possible. Now he’s finally pursuing something that he loves—but it will be years before he receives a diploma.

Prioritize money over passion or fulfillment. Leilani Langdon, the Counseling and Testing Center’s Career Counselor, says that many students start out in particular majors because they want money and prestige. “I see a lot of students,” she recalls, “who come in having declared majors that are idealized or glamourized…whether that’s law, medicine, business…they recognize somewhere along their journey that this is not something that is going to fulfill them or bring purpose to them.” Jon Frank, founder and CFO of Admissionado, an admissions consulting firm, is blunt: “Pursuing a goal that you don’t have passion for is the definition of ‘setting yourself up to fail.’

Declare a major just to have one…According to Kristine Knutson, Director of the Student Success Center, at least 50% of freshmen change their major at Andrews University their first year of college, so there’s really no hurt in just declaring a major with no interest of pursuing it. Do you like House and Gray’s Anatomy? Try being biology pre-med. Not only will you own some very expensive textbooks, but you’ll also get to join the other students who suffer from what Knutson calls “major-of-the-week syndrome.”

…Or, wait too long to declare a major. This will have a two-fold impact. First of all, you’ll end up with a lot of classes from different disciplines that you don’t need, and you’ll be behind on the requirements for your major. Secondly, you won’t have a department to call home, so it’ll be harder to gain references, make friends, and form an identity. Knutson explains, “When [students] are undeclared they don’t have that connection. They’re not seeing teachers at departmental assemblies or vespers or social events, and so they can be very lonely and at risk of leaving before they declare.”

Treat university like a $130,000 keg party. Few people outside of Hollywood can party with such luxury and reckless abandon as you can if you decided to spend your college career drinking, slacking off, and pursuing temporary entertainment. Sure, the Andrews Code of Student Conduct requires “abstaining from the use of alcohol, tobacco and other mind-altering drugs,” and Andrews tuition can cost $35,000 a semester, but they do say “go big or go home,” right? Besides, future student loan bills will provide a welcome distraction from hangovers.

If that’s not your style, you can spend all of your time studying, instead of working, volunteering, joining clubs, and meeting new people. This will show that you have a singularly developed skill set and don’t get distracted by interpersonal relationships or well-rounded interest. Not only will you blend in with thousands of other applicants in the same degree program, but you’ll also be much less interesting in conversation! As Admissionado’s Jon Frank explains, “A 4.0 is good, but [schools and employers] accept people and not just profiles, so you have to have a lot more to offer than a perfect GPA.”

Settle for easy and boring opportunities instead of difficult and challenging ones. If you spend your time in college on autopilot and then take a job that you barely tolerate, you won’t have to push yourself. Instead of risking failure or applying excess energy, just coast by. Your dissatisfaction will prevent people from having high expectations of your work, and help you avoid unwanted social interaction. Kendra Alley, an HR rep at innovative event-planning company Red Frog Events, says, “It is obvious when someone is unhappy because their work will suffer and they won’t be engaged with their co-workers.”

Stop thinking for yourself. Accept the information others give you without evaluating it thoroughly.
GET READY FOR THE WORLD

STUDENT CAREER GOALS

Front Row
Carina Sherman
Special Events & Arts Director
Emily Ferguson
Event Planner for Non-Profit
Emma-Skye Tenorio
Screenwriter

Back Row
Francisco Ramos
Social Media Manager
Lauriel Lewis
International Reporter
Andre Murray
International PR Practitioner
Elijah Horton
International Advertiser

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Far-Sited:
Keeping the Love in a Long-distance Relationship

It’s a well-known fact that long-distance relationships are difficult to maintain, but there’s ample evidence that the four million couples in the U.S. who are in a non-marital, long-distance relationship can thrive and have healthy relationships despite the miles between them. According to the website statisticbrain.com, seventy-five percent of couples in these relationships actually end up engaged.

For two sets of Andrews University couples—while not engaged, at least not yet—their stories illustrate the complexities and possibilities of these committed, long-distance relationships.

Kevin Wilson and Elynn Rodriguez, both juniors, had only been dating for two months before he left to serve as a student missionary to Lebanon in November 2011.

One of Kevin’s fears was the limited amount of time they had together just before he left—was it enough to sustain their relationship? He didn’t let this fear get in the way, though, of the commitment he made to this relationship.

Elynn’s biggest fear was the communication aspect. “How will we do long-distance when we’re not physically next to each other? [Will] talking to each other through computers, phones, or Facebook messaging…actually keep that legitimate connection with each other that entire time for a year?” Elynn wondered. With both of them acknowledging that it was going to be hard, they decided to pursue it and give it their best shot.

Most of Elynn’s friends weren’t supportive of the long-distance idea. “I got a lot of negativity from my friends. Some of them said to me, ‘You’re crazy, you guys have only been together for two months and you guys are going to be long distance for a year…you’re not going to last,’” says Elynn. Some of her family members even questioned her motives. But, after being committed for six months, others started to see how serious Elynn was about making the relationship work.

Kevin and Elynn’s main form of communication was through Skype, but that did not always give them a reliable connection. For five months straight, they dealt with an inconsistent and static connection. They also struggled with the time difference, which meant that one of them was asleep while the other was awake.

Busyness was another factor. “I literally had to manage my time so I could actually talk to her,” Kevin says.

Kevin and Elynn learned how to use all types of technology such as Skype, Facebook messaging, and phone conversations. Using the phone became a challenge for them since they had to learn how to understand each other without seeing each other.

“This experience really did help me to just put my full trust in him,” Elynn says. The long-distance accelerated the relationship for them and forced them to get real a lot faster.
Johnny Ahn and Ariana Cunningham first met during the fall 2010 semester. The next summer Johnny was at Andrews University doing research and Ariana was at Notre Dame for chemistry classes. As August approached, the two started officially dating. “We both had good chemistry with each other,” Johnny says.

Four months into the relationship, Johnny Ahn and Ariana Cunningham split ways when Ariana left for Italy to study abroad and Johnny remained at Andrews.

One of Johnny’s fears about the long-distance relationship was the time difference. He would find the urge to tell Ariana about different things that happened to him throughout the day, but couldn’t communicate with her at that moment. Instead, he started to make a list of the different things he wanted to talk to her about whenever they got the chance.

Johnny and Ariana were creative in utilizing the technology they had. Their friends recommended they play games such as Battleship over Skype, or write down things that intrigued them from reading magazine articles or books so they could share them with one another.

They also sent each other Christmas packages and anniversary packages, as well as sending recordings of themselves talking about their day or opening up a package they just received. During Christmas break, Johnny traced his hand on a piece of paper and sent it to Ariana as a letter that said, “Here’s my hand to hold.”

They also shared Google maps with each other where they would mark destinations to where they would be going for the day so the other would feel included in their day.

Like Elynn and Kevin, one of the positive things Johnny and Ariana learned was how to communicate more effectively with each other. If there was ever a conflict, their only option was to talk about it, instead of having the advantage of holding hands or hugging it out. Johnny learned from the time apart just how much more there was to learn about Ariana, since communication was the essence of their relationship that kept the tight bond. It allowed them to dive deeper into the relationship with one another. “The conversations that feel meaningful when you’re holding hands and are with each other - [they're] not the same over Skype, so you have to be more intentional about growing together,” Ariana says.

Ariana eventually returned to America, but for only four days. She soon left for Honduras on a mission trip, where the Internet was not as reliable. She would only get Internet every two weeks, with just enough time to send her recordings to Johnny and receive his through emails.

Dr. Peterson Alcide, a Christian and a Behavioral Psychologist from Connecticut, advises, “while long distance relationships may be difficult, if you choose to engage in such commitment, I would say that the communication line with the Lord and your partner is your best chance to make it work.”

Kevin had to learn this while he was apart from Elynn. “I talked to Elynn sporadically but I didn’t know what was happening. One thing I’ve learned is dependence on God. It’s like what faith feels like.”
As the Andrews University Cardinals basketball team and coaches made their way along the traffic-clogged California highway, Tami Jardine, wife of one of the Cardinals assistant coaches, asked the players in the van a question seemingly out of the blue: “Are any of you in a relationship?” The answer was a unanimous ‘no’ from all except Jonathan Osorio.

“How long have you been in a relationship?” Tami asked.

“Four years, going on five,” he answered.

“Oh, that’s too long!” said Tami.

This response would trigger one of the biggest changes in Jonathan’s life. Jonathan transferred from La Sierra to Pacific Union College (PUC) in 2007, encountering a bigger culture shock than he was expecting.

“I didn’t know what I was getting myself into, until I got there. There was nothing to do; this was nothing like La Sierra. I told myself I would only be here for a semester and then I’m going back,” Jonathan recalled. But his apprehension towards PUC began to dissipate when he first saw Vanessa Anaya.

“I didn’t know too much about her, I just knew she was beautiful and I heard she was interested in some other guy, but I still wanted to talk to her.” Vanessa was a freshman at PUC and had also noticed Jonathan, but for her it was nothing more than admiration of his athleticism—she was already interested in another guy.

A few months after seeing her for the first time, Jonathan decided to look Vanessa up on MySpace. After chatting with her he finally decided it was time to step things up. After a little investigative work on his part, Jonathan found Vanessa’s dorm room phone number.

He called her up and asked if she would like to play basketball and hang out with him.

She agreed, but the moment she stepped on the court he knew there was something very different about this young woman.

“Something about her smile and her
eyes...caught me, and we just clicked,” he said. He didn’t want this feeling to go away, and he knew he had to tell her.

They talked for a while and then eventually started dating. Things were going well for the new couple, but Jonathan’s old lifestyle was still a part of him.

“Even though everything was good, I was still doing me. I was trapped, so to say. I was far from God; I was clubbing, drinking... the whole nine yards,” Jonathan said. It didn’t help that Vanessa’s friends gave her trouble about her and Jonathan’s relationship as well, telling her she’d chosen the wrong guy and that he was a ‘player’.

However, Jonathan didn’t want to live that life anymore, and he knew he had to change, especially if he wanted Vanessa to stick around. But despite his best efforts, Jonathan found that changing his ways was no easy undertaking.

In 2010 Jonathan took a year off to go to Spain on a study tour. His time there proved hardest on their relationship and he ended up cheating on her.

“It was so dumb,” Jonathan said about his encounters abroad. The girls were a temptation that he regretted giving into, and the Holy Spirit wouldn’t let him rest.

“It wasn’t worth losing a great girl for all of that; my conscience was heavy, so I let her know. She never judged me, and she always focused on the good in me and not the bad, and she always went to the Lord in prayer,” he said.

But what Jonathan didn’t know was that Vanessa had been preparing for that kind of situation. She’d been keeping him in prayer, and when he confessed what he had done, she felt his apology was sincere. Vanessa knew that deep down, Jonathan could be better.

“What kept me in this relationship was that I knew how great of a guy he truly is. I knew how much he cared about me and how bad he felt afterwards. There are truly no words to describe the reason I stayed and accepted him back. All in all, I just loved him.”

CALL TO MINISTRY
In the summer of 2011, Jonathan’s life finally began to turn in the direction God had been gently leading him in all along. He felt God calling him to Andrews University to pursue a Masters in Pastoral Studies. While he was excited about this new direction his life would take, it also meant another long distance separation from Vanessa.

“I didn’t like it at all,” she said, “but I understood that he got the call and he needed to go.” So in the fall of 2011, Jonathan went to Andrews and Vanessa stayed in California. This extended time away from her wasn’t easy, and as he began to question their relationship, he wasn’t the only one having doubts. This long distance relationship was taking a toll on them both. That’s when they knew it was time to consult a power greater than themselves for answers.

Together, they asked God to provide a way for Vanessa to attend Andrews for the upcoming Spring 2012 semester. If a way was provided, then that was the answer they needed on whether they should stay together.

Within a few months, they had their answer. “Once I received my acceptance letter, thoughts flooded my mind with economical issues, but then I was like, ‘hold on’ I’ve just been accepted to Andrews. I’ve been praying to God to see where my life was to go. I was praying to know if Jonathan was the right man for me. I was praying for my career path. And with that acceptance letter I knew the Lord was telling me something.”

For her, there was no more “what ifs.” She knew without a doubt that this was the man God has chosen for her. Even through she could not imagine herself with anyone else. “This can be bad in a sense, but as of now this just reassures the love I have for him.”

Despite Vanessa’s confidence in their relationship, Jonathan still struggled with the big “what if.” He continued praying and asking God to intervene and show him just one more sign. The clarity he’d been seeking finally came from an unlikely source.

When Tami Jardine started to share her own love story in the van that day, Jonathan hadn’t thought much of it. But as she continued to talk about putting aside your “what if” scenarios and allowing God to work on your relationship and become the center of it, Jonathan took that message to heart. For him, Tami’s testimony about her own relationship was God’s way of answering the questions he had about his.

The next week, God provided Jonathan with one more sign that helped seal his decision on his future with Vanessa—it was this devotional thought that led him to see this was the girl he wanted to marry.

“If you are careful to observe the decrees and laws that the LORD gave Moses for Israel. Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or discouraged” (Chronicles 22:2–19).

On December 31, 2012, within a week of hearing Tami Jardine’s story and reading that verse, Jonathan proposed to Vanessa. The key to evolving their relationship was communication with God and each other.

Jonathan knows it hasn’t been easy, but nothing that’s worth something ever is. “It’s easier to be open and truthful with each other and bring all our problems to the center where God was and still is so that we can get over these problems with Him. It wasn’t easy but with God anything is possible.” 🌟
Q: I'm a junior in college and three months ago my mom passed away. I feel unmotivated to return to school and just want to be left alone. A friend suggested I get counseling, but I'm not sure I need it. What's the difference between being sad and being depressed? I would love to know about coping strategies and where I can get help.

- Signed Blues Clues

A: Dear Blues Clues,

Grief is a normal process, but when it starts to get in the way of your everyday activities, such as going to class, eating, or spending time with friends, it is a good idea to meet with a counselor for some additional outside assistance. When dealing with bereavement, major depressive disorder may be an issue if the symptoms continue for more than two months or are causing marked functional impairment, a preoccupation with feelings of worthlessness, suicidal thoughts, or psychotic symptoms. Sometimes, though, it can be difficult to tell whether or not our sadness would qualify as “normal,” or if what we are experiencing is depression.

Ask yourself the following questions......

• Is there a logical reason for your feelings of sadness?
• Do you have trouble “snapping out of it,” even when friends or family are trying to make you feel better?
• Have you lost interest or pleasure in activities you normally enjoy?
• Are you depressed most of the day, nearly every day?
• Have you had a significant change in weight (loss or gain)?
• Have you had trouble sleeping or are you sleeping too much?
• Do you feel fatigued or are you experiencing a loss of energy?
• Do you experience feelings of worthlessness or guilt?
• Are you having difficulty concentrating?
• Do you have thoughts of suicide?

If you can answer “yes” to any of these questions and have been having these feelings or experiences for weeks, it would be a good idea to contact a counselor. If at any time you are having thoughts of suicide, do not hesitate to seek immediate assistance.

For anyone suffering from grief, depression, or any other issues, please call the Andrews University Counseling & Testing Center at 269-471-3470, located in Bell Hall 123.

Remember loss can be seen as a chance to grow because: “Out of every crisis comes the chance to be reborn, to reconceive ourselves as individuals, to choose the kind of change that will help us grow and to fulfill our lives more completely.”

Answers provided by the following first-year doctoral students in the Counseling Psychology PhD program: Melina Sample, Donalea McIntyre and Angie Horner.
Does God whistle?

Our lives often rely on the promptings of the Holy Spirit and tactics of self-discipline to move our spirituality forward.

So in a way, yes, God totally whistles. But it’s not enough to draw a heart in the dust of your Bible when He comes calling—what is well, always. The word knock in the Greek of Revelation 3:20 implies a persistent knocking. Imagine your phone ringing off the hook. That idea shouldn’t exhaust you, knowing Whom the call is from. God has class in the way He phones: it’s not annoying. It’s proof of an incessant Love.

The Wall Street Journal reports consumers use apps for an average of two hours per day. So instead of comparing the amount of time we spend engaged with technology vs. Jesus…

Let’s explore how to divinely enhance our relationship with God using technology. Above are a few of our favorite Christian apps. May we respond to that heavenly whistle.
When Leilani Langdon graduated from Andrews University in 2008 with her Masters in Social Work, her student loans were “well over $100,000” and she was stressed financially.

“Throughout college I held three jobs and had a fulltime load, but always found myself struggling financially, behind on my credit cards, not being able to pay the little amount of bills I had…I soon recognized the power money had over my life,” she says.

Leilani and her husband Adrian were determined to slash their debt, and thanks to strategic decisions they made, they are now almost debt-free. How did they do it?

A more detailed version of her journey is available at blog.envisionmagazine.com but much of what the Langdons did is similar to these recommendations given to us by Dr. LeRoy Ruhupatty, accounting professor in the School of Business Administration at Andrews University.
Don't be a victim.
Consumerism is the most prevalent and destructive money habit, especially among younger students, Dr. Ruhupatty says. "If you look at students these days, they have a lot of nice gadgets. I'm not saying that you should abstain from modern technology, but a lot of times we become a victim of technology itself." Dr. Ruhupatty strongly recommends writing out a monthly budget. He also suggests setting up a realistic budget, based on your constraints. “For me, I set my constraints as my income minus savings, tithe and offering – that would be my constraint.”

Be intentional.
Dr. Ruhupatty says it is not too early for a freshman to plan out the next ten years of their life with estimations on aspects such as: how much student loans they will take, how much money their first job should pay, what their standard of living will be, what their monthly budget will be, how quickly they will pay off their debts, at what point they may get married, when they will buy a house, and for how much. "Here's the thing: you have to control your life. Sometimes we forget that your financial success depends on you. You are the one who will determine how you will be successful. Don't let life dictate the thing, be intentional. Plan it out.”

Always use a credit card.
“I’ll tell you why: if you use a debit card and someone finds your number, they can wipe out all your money. I mean, there's no limit... [But] with a credit card you have a limit." So his advice is to intentionally set as low of a credit limit as is functionally possible. The second reason is, “Use a credit card because you can never build [up] credit without it... life here in the USA without credit is difficult.” This advice also comes with a word of caution. "The healthy ratio of your outstanding loan to your available credit line is 30%... Because if they see you have a spending balance that is consistently high, they're going to see you [as] a risky person,” and future loans will be difficult to secure.

Compare debt choices.
Dr. Ruhupatty says, deciding between graduating in four years with a lot of debt and graduating later with less debt is a choice based on personal objectives. Be aware of how much interest the loans will accumulate by the time you plan to have it paid off. “What you need to do is compare. If you get out [with] a $100,000 loan and graduate in four years, calculate the cost of that... Then, if you choose to take little by little and say, in seven years graduate, you are forgoing earning a full salary for the difference in years – three years. Again, that will be the opportunity cost. So calculate that... and see which one fits you.”

Cook healthy food.
Dr. Ruhupatty offered this tip for saving money while a student. “Eating out is expensive. If you want to save money, you cook... as long as the dorm allows you to cook. Go and buy stuff and learn how to cook healthy food that is filling, because there is nothing worse for a student than [feeling] hungry.”

Get bonded for retirement.
“I'll tell you, government bonds are a good investment product, because if you invest in government bonds or in municipal bonds, the interest is not taxed.” Dr. Ruhupatty recommends using tax return money. “Many people get a tax refund and spend the money... but you could have saved it. You had already lived without [it] - why would you take it and spend it?” He says you can automatically invest in government bonds on your tax form when filing. During tax filing season he recommends using the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program, or VITA.

Now, five years after graduation, Leilani says, “the sacrifice has been more than worth it, and in the words of [personal finance guru] Dave Ramsey, we are “living like no one else, so that later we can live like no one else.”
His campus job is not your typical one.

Todd Harrington, a senior at Andrews University, studying social studies, works on the dairy farm. Todd is the head milker at the dairy, meaning that he supervises the inside part of the dairy. He makes twelve dollars an hour, the maximum pay a student at Andrews University can make. He switches out the tanks, and makes sure the cows aren't sick or gives them medicine if they are. He also brings the cows in to get milked. Todd says there are three shifts; one at 3 a.m., 11 a.m., and the third one at 7 p.m. “Usually I have to do the 3 a.m. shift and have to go to class, so it’s kind of demanding.” A job like this might appeal to those who aren’t afraid to get their hands dirty; on the other hand, those who are naturally squeamish when it comes to nature and its ways of disposal may not want to apply.

When it comes to obtaining and securing a career, most people point to higher education as the means to obtaining a foothold in the corporate world. So, after completing high school, most young people plunge into college, whether it is community, public, or private. Of course, the price of a higher education is not cheap.

According to USA Today, the average tuition of a four-year university has gone up 15 percent—that was between the years 2008-2010. In a recent college pricing conducted by the College Board, the Board reported “that a ‘moderate’ college budget for an in-state public college for the 2012-2013 academic year averaged $22,261. A moderate budget at a private college averaged $43,289.” For those out of school, the amount of debt they carry with them is high. According
Ways to Pay for College

Many students take out loans as a way to help pay their way through school. In fact, according to Forbes magazine, “One in five American households owes some form of student loan debt.”

Other than the standard family contributions, taking out loans, and applying for grants and scholarships, ideas of finding ways to pay for a higher education seem to be few and far between. Students may often work during the summer and/or part-time during the school year to help pay for expenses of attending college.

Finding ways to pay for school are important and helpful to bringing down the costs. It is often necessary to think outside the box when it comes to finding financial solutions to college tuition.

Here at Andrews University, students have been finding creative ways to pay for college. Their methods may get them twenty-dollars or a thousand-dollars closer to paying off their bill, but the ways that students, past and present, have found to help out with the cost of school is remarkable. They have done everything from dairy-farming to collecting and recycling cans for their education.

JEFF TATARCHUCK

Jeff Tatarchuk is the owner of The Goods, a quality used-items store in Berrien Springs, MI. The idea for starting the business began at Southern Adventist University, where he studied Theology. After being called to Andrews, where he is currently studying for his Masters in Divinity, Jeff decided he could start a business, and began scouting locations when he arrived. The Goods is opened in March. An important aspect to his business is to have quality items. It is important to him to have good, reputable merchandise. In terms of what he’ll sell, Jeff says there’ll be everything from musical instruments to books to sports equipment. The Goods will also be buying textbooks back from students.

To learn more, you can go online to facebook.com/buythegoods or twitter at @thegoodsoutlet.

LESLIE SAMUEL

Leslie Samuel is an instructor in the physical therapy program at Andrews University and an A.U. alumnus. Leslie was fascinated with biology so he set up a biology blog to share his passion with the world and teach people different concepts about biology. Leslie then turned it into a business that pays him “every month,” through paid advertising, though he wishes that he started it during college. “It would have paid me much more now, and would have given me a way to have some extra money to help with my college expenses, to take care of different things that college students have to take care of.” His blog has not only made enough profit to pay his bills, but he can also travel more, and help out others.

Leslie suggests that students trying to come up with ways to pay for school should stick close to their field of interest. “If someone is interested in architecture, they can create something online where they’re teaching people about architecture and turn that into a business, if they do it the right way.” Leslie emphasized how important it can be for students to start working creatively during college. Not only could they help with some of the expenses for their schooling, but they could also develop a type of portfolio for later on in life.

Leslie also suggests that students could offer their services as a way of earning extra money for college. “That is always something people need.” Whether students have a talent for babysitting, writing, doing makeup, hairdressing, or outdoor landscaping, they can use their individual gifts to help others. “You’re using things that you’re interested in to offer value to others, and then in exchange getting paid for that.”

Some ways of paying for school are less lucrative than others, but as most college students know, every penny helps to get them through school.

JESICA CEEVER

Jesca Cheever is a freshman at Andrews University, studying elementary education. Her family collects cans to help mitigate the cost of college. She says that “they (her family) walk along the sides of the road, put them in bags, go to the recycling center and see how much they can get for the cans.” She acknowledges that the return for the cans isn’t very much, (she says her family makes about fifteen or twenty dollars from each return), but every bit helps for school.

Coming up with ways to pay for college can be daunting. Many may think they do not have the time to set up an online blog and maintain it, or may not be willing to work at three in the morning. You don’t have to come up with a grand scheme to make lots of money in order to pay for school. You can use your field of interest to guide you in looking for ways to earn money as well. The point is, be creative. Think outside the box. You can have fun while helping paying for your education, which brings great satisfaction and great motivation.
On Facebook, status updates are the big life reveal...well, sort of. They can range anywhere from the mundane - such as what's for dinner - to the very important - like when Dana Hana updated his status from “in a relationship” to “married” during the ceremony. Our timelines reflect the normal experiences of our everyday lives, dotted with the occasional milestone.

I think of an impromptu vacation my wife and I recently took. With two days warning, we drove to Florida to appease our inner children and go to Disney World. Now, I don’t work for Disney, but it was a great adventure filled with magical highlights of the mouse-eared variety. As with every adventure that involves long hours in a car, there were also perfectly normal moments in this adventure: mundane memories like looking through a windshield for 20-odd hours at the same scenic view that stops being scenic after 20 minutes, or eating at Taco Bell for the third time that day. I could go on, but you get the picture.

It’s just the same when I look back at the status updates throughout my spiritual journey, especially in terms of personal devotions. There are milestone days when I open the Bible and find a true blessing, something that just speaks to me as though God is finishing our conversation from a prayer earlier in the day with a response right there in the pages. Other times, it happens when I read something that I’ve read a hundred times only to find that I see something new in the passage or in the story. These are the days when I can leave my time with God and walk with my head high knowing I’m connected, knowing that things make sense. These days are a true spiritual highlight.

And then there are days when opening the Book reminds me of the laps my gym teacher would make us run before we could get to the fun stuff. On these days, I have spiritual dyslexia: the words are jumbled and don’t make any sense. The passages and stories bear no resemblance to my life and have no answers to my burning questions. These are the days when I leave my time with God wondering if I did it right or not, a perfectly “normal” moment.

A deeply spiritual truth found on our computers is that a Facebook timeline not only records the normal moments and the highlights, but also direction. At a glance, it reveals where you have been and where you’re going. As in our spontaneous vacation, all the moments, mundane or magical, were always leading me in a direction, and that was what mattered. Whether heading to “the happiest place on Earth”, or home, the second happiest place on Earth—every moment mattered. Without the hours on the road, there would not have been any castles. And as I look again at my spiritual timeline, I can begin to see, if for only a moment, how daily devotions reveal my direction. I want my life to be the timeline of a person who is “in a relationship” with God moving toward the happiest place outside of this Earth.
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