

MISSION MATTERS IDAHO

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we are **CALLED**
to make disciples in our
communities **SHARING**
the distinctive, Christ-centered
Seventh-day Adventist message
of Hope and Wholeness.



to **EQUIP** and **EMPOWER**
pastor-coached, lay-driven
churches that reflect Jesus' love,
passionately live the gospel and
grow spiritually and numerically.





Our Goals & Our Achievements

David Prest Jr., President, Idaho Conference

Dear Idaho Conference Family and Friends:

The Idaho Conference of Seventh-day Adventists has four strategic priorities for the 2019-2023 quadrennium. They are the focus of our leadership and ministry for the current four-year term. How are we doing in accomplishing the four priorities? I will list them and give an update report that follows.

Facilitate exponential Christ-centered church growth—spiritual, discipleship, and numerical

In 2020, the North Pacific Union Conference (NPUC) administration offered a unique eighteen-month partnership (2021-2022) to the Idaho Conference administration that included significant human and financial resources to help us experience exponential Christ-centered church growth. Soon after the offer, the Idaho Conference administration and the NPUC executive secretary, Elder Bill McClendon, began meeting via phone and Zoom Conference dreaming and praying together about what exponential growth might look like in the Idaho Conference. We had a face-to-face meeting in early 2021, and Operation Exponential Growth was born. Operation Exponential Growth is portrayed in a five-part paradigm including prayer, revival/revitalize, baptize/disciple, plant, and reclaim. Please see the attached document for the paradigm graphically shown. We set a faith goal of 175 baptisms/professions of faith in 2021. We are grateful to the NPUC for this partnership.

Our pastors and many of our churches in Southern Idaho and Eastern Oregon embraced Operation Exponential Growth. Local church leaders and members planned and held community outreach, reaping meetings, and evangelistic meetings last year. The Lord blessed with 157 precious souls added to His church by baptism and profession of faith in 2021. That was a 100 percent increase compared to the COVID year of 2020. Praise the Lord!

In 2021, the Idaho Conference surpassed 7,000 members for the first time in our history. According to 2021 membership data, considering baptism/profession of faith growth and



transfer growth, the Idaho Conference is the fastest growing conference in the NPUC.

Operation Exponential Growth is intentional soul winning and outreach. It is our new way of life. It is our new identity. It is what we do day-to-day and year-to-year to faithfully fulfill the Gospel Commission of Matthew 28:18-20. Many of our pastors and church leaders have already hosted or are

planning to conduct community outreach, reaping meetings, and evangelistic meetings in 2022. This year's faith goal is 200 baptisms/professions of faith, by God's grace. I invite you to join us in praying that God will help us reach this goal as we share the good news of eternal life in Jesus with the people in our communities.

Recruit, grow, equip, and empower strong Christian leaders

We embrace the biblical teaching of the priesthood of all believers. Every Seventh-day Adventist Christian who has experienced the assurance of eternal life and the baptism of the Holy Spirit is gifted for service and ministry. One of the roles of the pastor and local church leaders is to provide training and mentoring for members to discover their spiritual gift(s) and find their niche in ministry. The Idaho Conference administration also takes this important role seriously. We offer annual training in Prayer Ministries and Women's Ministries. We provide biennial training via Transformed for Ministry Sabbaths in each of the three geographical areas of the Conference (during odd years) and Elders' Retreats (during even years). We have also provided Children's Ministries Workshops on an occasional weekend.

Engage youth and young adults in all aspects of ministry

The Camp Ida-Haven team does a phenomenal job of hiring approximately fifty young adults for the annual six-weeks of summer camp. Gem State Adventist Academy and our youth department do a fantastic job of holding an annual ID Youth Conference on the campus of Gem State Adventist Academy. The Pathfinder and Adventurer Ministries teams do an excellent job of working with our churches in training our children and young people in ministry and leadership. When possible and appropriate, the Idaho Conference employs young adults in positions of leadership and ministry, namely, elementary school educators, Gem State Adventist Academy educators and staff, pastors, Camp Ida-Haven staff, and Barefoot Media Ministries staff.

Further, the Idaho Conference is ready to hire a person to serve as Vice President for Administration and Young Adult/Youth/Children's Ministries Director. This will be one full-time equivalent (FTE), with one-half as Vice President and one-half as Young Adult/Youth/Children's Ministries Director. We believe that God will lead us to someone that can give leadership as Director of Young Adult/Youth/Children's Ministries while also giving leadership as Vice President for Administration. The search process is currently taking place.

Strengthen and grow our Adventist schools

Some of our elementary schools enjoyed an enrollment increase for the current school year, 2021-2022, while some of our smaller schools had a slight decrease or were status quo with enrollment. Opening enrollment for the 2021-2022 school was 353. The 2020-2021 opening enrollment stood at 304, so that was an increase of 49 students compared to last school year. Praise the Lord!

Gem State Adventist Academy opened the 2021-2022 school year with 66 students. It represents a significant enrollment increase compared to last school year. In addition, Gem State Adventist Academy is in the strongest financial position it has been in for many years. We are thankful for the visionary and thoughtful leadership of the Gem State Adventist Academy administration, faculty, and staff.

My heart is full of gratitude and appreciation for our pastors, educators, office team, Camp Ida-Haven team, Barefoot Media Ministries team, church leaders, and all our constituents. Thank you for everything you have done and are doing to prayerfully and thoughtfully move forward in accomplishing these four strategic priorities during this challenging, yet exciting time in Earth's history. Praise God!

David Prest, Jr.
President

Financial Crisis and the End of Time

John Rogers, Vice President of Finance, Idaho Conference



In the closing scene of the movie *Schindler's List* (1993), Oskar Schindler looks around at what meager possessions he has left. Oskar is filled with remorse he didn't sell those items so he could have saved another Jewish life or two by bribing the Nazis. As Seventh-day Adventists, we are also moved to use the possessions we have been blessed with to save others eternally.

Fueled by that passion or an "Ellen White says" without a specific reference, whenever we see a financial crisis, it is not uncommon for me to get questions such as: "When should we take our money out of the banks?" Or, "is this the financial crisis that signals the end of time?" Let's take a look at what the Bible says about the relationship between a financial crisis and the close of probation or end of time. While there are always multiple interpretations of prophecy, this is one interpretation we should consider.

I am aware of three Biblical references to the financial economy when probation closes. The first one is Matthew 24:37-39 NIV: "As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man." This passage portrays a society where things were carrying on as they always had, the people were not worried about anything unusual happening. Nothing, including the economy, indicated their end of time was about to occur. Verse 39 says this is how it will be when Jesus comes.

The second reference is that of Sodom and Gomorrah. 2 Peter 2:6 says of these towns, "... and made them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly."

Furthermore, Jude 1:7b says, "They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire." So, what was it like in Sodom and Gomorrah? Genesis chapter 19 describes it as a very wicked place, but there is no indication anything was happening out of the ordinary. In fact, when Lot went to warn his sons-in-law, they thought he was joking (verse 14). As in Noah's day, nothing seemed unusual as destruction loomed, which would indicate their economy was behaving in a normal manner as well.

Revelation 18:17 gives us our third reference to the economy at the end of time. It reads, "In one hour such great wealth has been brought to ruin." The chapters surrounding Revelation 18 give us some context to this verse. Marvin Moore identified the 14th chapter of Revelation as describing the close of probation just before Jesus returns ("The Close of Probation Is a Biblical Teaching!", AdventistToday.org, July 24, 2020). Revelation chapters 15-18 then describe the seven plagues, seven bowls of God's wrath, and the fall of Babylon. Finally, Revelation chapter 19 begins the description of Christ's second return to Earth. Therefore, chapters 15-18 describe what Ellen White refers to as "The Time of Trouble" in chapter 39 of the book *Great Controversy* (1858). Note that these extremely troublesome events occur after probation has closed.

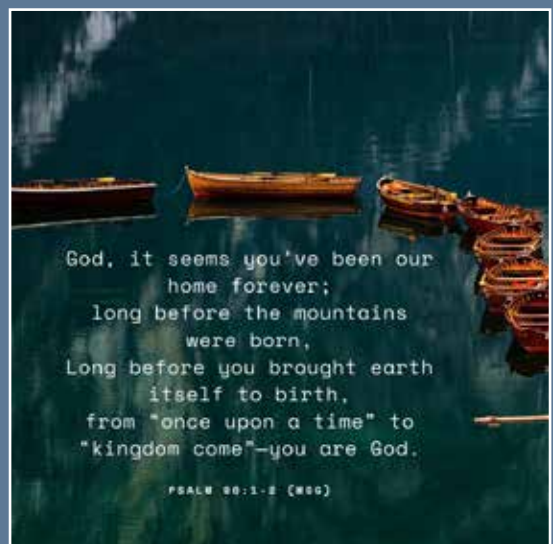
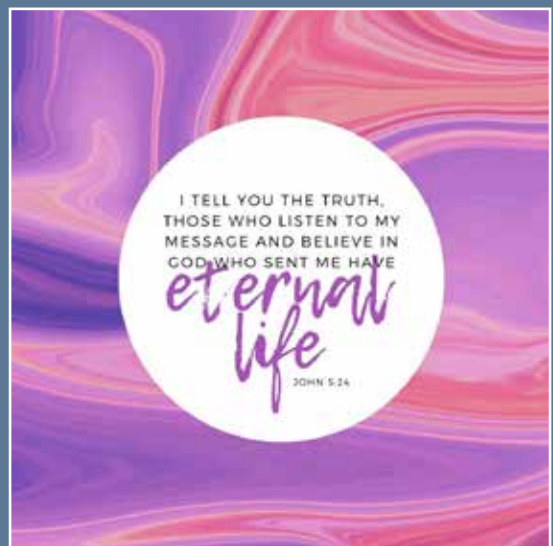
All three references tell us that at the close of probation things will appear to be carrying on as they always have. Nothing will appear to be out of the ordinary. There will be a time when the economy will come to ruin, but that will not be until after probation has closed. At the time there is total economic collapse, it won't matter anyway. It will have already been determined who is saved and who is lost. Ellen White describes "The Time of Trouble" as a



period when the saved will learn to fully trust and depend on God beyond what they have ever done in the past. At this point of economic collapse, we will depend on God for everything in our lives, including the basic needs we would formerly have used our material possessions to purchase. Speaking of this time, Daniel writes in Daniel 12:1b, "But at that time your people-everyone whose name is found written in the book-will be delivered." Good news! God will take care of His own.

These passages tell us the complete economic collapse that is to come is after probation closes. Then, is there a purpose to the various economic crises we experience now? The Old Testament has numerous examples of times when the Israelites strayed from God where He brought calamity upon them for the purpose of bringing them back to Him. For example, Jeremiah 15:19 notes, "Therefore this is what the Lord says: 'If you repent, I will restore you that you may serve me; ...'" Whenever we experience hard times in our lives, financial or otherwise, they are often the things that refocus our lives and priorities on following and serving Jesus.

All this still leaves us with the question: How much should I give, and when should I give? "Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give" (2 Corinthians 9:7a). I believe that, as we individually maintain a close relationship with our Lord, He will reveal to us how much we should give on a regular basis as well as when it is time to give an extra special gift. I have personally seen time and time again when there is a particular need somewhere in our conference the Lord has impressed one or more people that it is time to give. God has entrusted us as stewards of His "cattle on a thousand hills". When He needs one or two, He will let you know it is time to send one to the barn.



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Bethel, Alaska - The Trip of Prayers

Patrick Frey, Superintendent of Schools/Youth Director, Idaho Conference

After two years of COVID delays, the Idaho Conference Mission Trip was flying again -this time to Bethel, Alaska. This year's trip was led by Pastor Ever Perez – GSAA Bible teacher, chaplain, and academy church pastor. Initially the team was planning to go to Puerto Rico, but that fell through and in December, Pastor Perez heard about the need for teams to come and work in some of the remote towns in Alaska. That gave us only three months to raise the funds. The team prayed and, stepping out in faith, decided to go for it. Miracle after miracle would provide cheap flights, low-cost lodging, and half-price shipping of materials. The team left Boise on March 17, landing eight hours later in Anchorage, our supplying stop.

of Walmart specials. One of the items was treats of fresh fruit for the children in Bethel. Most the children's families there rarely have resources to have fruit in their diets. We enjoyed a shopping trip on Friday and a fun nature outing on Sabbath. On Sunday, March 20, we flew to Bethel.



We stayed at the Bethel SDA church, sleeping on the floors. Well, not quite everyone. The Freys, being the "oldsters," were given a very comfortable double bed in the church's visitor room. There are some rewards to being "seniors."

In Bethel, many of the homes and businesses have water delivered by water trucks. The church had a 1,000-gallon tank that normally



Bethel is a town with a population of about 4,500 and is the eighth largest in the state. It lies inland 50 miles on the Kuskokwim River and can be reached only by plane or boat. Our mission was to organize children's meetings and provide music for the regional Camp Meeting on the weekend.

Because of the cost of food in Bethel, we purchased and shipped 640 pounds



lasted two weeks for the pastor's family living upstairs and for church on Sabbath. Our arrival just tripled the number of users. This necessitated two-minute "submarine" showers and minimum flushing. Our slogan was, "If it's yellow be mellow, if it's brown flush it down." At the end of our week there the tank was only half empty. Let's just say the pastor was amazed. You go team!

We held children's meetings in the Bethel SDA Church sanctuary/multipurpose room. The program consisted of high-energy music, puppet shows dealing with aspects of becoming a Christian, games, and crafts.

The day before the meetings, the team prayed for kids to show up and, with church members, went to the neighborhood homes around the church to invite the children to attend. The first night we had only 12 kids show up, and most of them were late. The kids started the evening out shy and not talking but, after the program, they were excited. Each child received a gift bag with some

activities for home, a little candy, and fruit as they headed out the doors. The

next evening 22 showed up. One girl brought three siblings in a taxi the second night, and by the end she brought eight kids. The teens performed like seasoned pros. Every night the programs went off without a hitch. Kids started showing up early to hang out with the team.

The weather in Bethel was 15 degrees at night and 25 during the

day. It was noticed that many of the children were showing up with inadequate clothing. The team decided to buy sweatshirts for all the kids, but we were not sure the exact number of those who would show up and could only guess

the sizes. We prayed and bought 26 shirts in varying sizes and colors. That night at the end of the program, the sweatshirts were passed out. Each kid had the right size and color they wanted. But we had one left over. Then one of the kids came in to ask if we had one left for her sister that couldn't make it that night. She asked for a large in purple. The one leftover – it was a large in purple. Another answered prayer!



On our last night, after providing music for Camp Meeting and



Pastor Perez doing a seminar on discipling, we had our last children's meeting. We had over 30 kids show up. The last theme was a rebirth party with cake, hats, and balloons. We all had fun celebrating our new life in Jesus.

And just like that, the mission trip was over. On Sunday, March 27, we boarded the redeye flight heading back to Boise. Our miracle trip was over, but not the impact on each of us.



GSAA Golf Tournament

Samantha Schnell, Head Dean, GSAA

Every year Gem State Adventist Academy hosts a tournament that puts the F-U-N in fundraiser, and this year was no different! On one of the few beautiful sunny days we had this spring, 18 teams of four came together at Timberstone Golf Course to have fun, play some golf, eat an amazing lunch (put on by our very own chef, Josh Young), and most importantly, support our kids.

The alumni golf tournament is put on with the purpose of raising money for student scholarships at GSAA. This year we raised just about \$6,000!

Along with the players, we had many sponsors who made such a great event possible. One of the best things about our sponsors

though, is that they care about our kids; Idaho Golf Fellowship gave away a \$1,000 scholarship to a graduating senior, Sela Estep, to be used for college. And that's why we play! Why we plan, why we make these events possible, so that in the end, we can be there to support the students that come to this school.

We do have many sponsors and lots of volunteers to help, but we are always looking for more! If you'd like to be a sponsor for next year's golf tournament, we would love to have you. It's a great way to get your name or your business's name out there, and plus it helps us, so it's a true win-win! Also, it's never too early to start working on that swing; come out and play with us next year!







GSAA Class of 2022

Samantha Schnell, Head Dean, GSAA

This year's graduating class of out Gem State Adventist Academy held nine amazing students. While the number is small, the class has accomplished much and has plans to continue doing just that! With the highest average GPA of a graduating class in recent history, we have high hopes and faith that God will carry this class far, as long as they let Him.

Among the graduates, there are dreams of becoming a pilot, a teacher, nurses, an architect, and even a filmmaker. Knowing that each one can do whatever it is they set out to do, the teachers and staff at GSAA, along with all their friends and family, sent them off with love and appreciation for all they've done in their time at this school.

While they were here, members of this class participated in sports, worship leadership classes, and were heavily involved in the Student Association, and will be greatly missed on each team. It has been a true blessing to watch them praise God



Final prayer together before the big day begins!

with their talents, whether that be in their leadership roles, through sports, or leading the worship at church each week. These kids have brought joy to the hearts of many and have become great leaders in their areas.

Graduation day was cold and rainy, not the usual set up for this day each year! But that didn't stop the celebration, couldn't hold back the love, and surely wouldn't have even put a damper on the smiles these kids wore as they marched down the aisle out into the rain, high school graduates, followers of Jesus.

Please keep these amazing kids in your prayers as they begin the next chapter of their lives!



Class President, Josh Essink, giving his address



Auntie Love!



One last selfie with class sponsors, Mr Waterhouse & Mrs Hastings



Soul Fitness

Eve Rusk, Director for Communications

What do we do about people who hurt others?

If you've seen the news recently, you know there have been multiple shootings, including the tragedy that happened in Uvalde, TX. Our natural response to someone who indiscriminately kills or hurts others is one of horror, of anger, of sorrow, even of revenge. We want to do something; we want someone in authority to do something. We want God to do something.

I was recently at a seminar given by Sandy Wyman on stewarding the journey of grief. She has known great sorrow in her life – she lost her seven-year-old son to an inoperable brain tumor. When the Camp Fire hit Paradise, CA in 2018, her 90-year-old parents lost their home.

When faced with painful events, most people will react in a couple of ways – either they will draw closer to God or they will deny Him even more. Wyman shared with us how she has grown closer to God's heart. She has a passion for emotional and spiritual healing for those who are dealing with life's painful events.

One thing she said at the start – there are no “difficult” people. They are simply struggling with how to cope with life. It's not easy for us to look at someone like a mass shooter and have empathy. But it's what God wants us to do. He does the same for us. There is always another side of the story, which doesn't excuse someone's behavior, it's just a fact. Think of people as God's children, whether they have chosen to have Him in their life or not.

Jesus said in Matthew 5:38 – 39 ESV: “You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.” The apostle Paul quotes King Solomon in Romans 12:20 – 21 ESV when he says, “To the contrary, if your enemy is hungry,

feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”

Sort of flies in the face of what the common human response to evil is, right? I think God specializes in the exception. He wants us to specialize in it, too. What was His response to being crucified? Luke 23:34 ESV tells us: “And Jesus said, ‘Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.’”

How do we treat others the way God does when we are in the midst of tragedy, pain and suffering? Wyman shared several tips for living in challenging times. The first one is to stay spiritually centered. What does that mean? We know in our heads that God is in control; it's sometimes hard to tell that to our hearts. By spending time with God, in prayer, in the study of His Word, in nature, in service to others, we become more focused on Him and less distracted by what's happening around us.

Another way is to know your purpose as a child of God. As His child, you are created for good works. Again, the apostle Paul writes in Ephesians 2:10 ESV. “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.” God created us to do good! And there isn't a defined set of people for whom we should do good.

I challenge you to change your thinking about tragedy, whether it happens to you or in the world around us. Instead of judgment, exercise your compassion muscle. Ask God to give you compassion. God is still in control, He loves us enough to have sent His Son to redeem us and He will give us strength to move through life with purpose, the purpose to do good to everyone. Be a blessing to someone. Review your own blessings, what God has done in your life. Change your focus from yourself and draw closer to God. He won't fail you.