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Talking with Him More

BY JOHN HENRI RORABECK

It was the Friday night agape feast at the Lake Union Leadership Conference at Camp Au Sable, and I was sitting toward the back—kind of away from the whole group. People started getting up and giving testimonies. I'm fine with that, but God said—not straight out speaking, but He was saying to me—"Go outside."

It wasn't the warmest of nights, and I'm like, "It's cold!"

But He said, "Go outside!" So I did.

I sat on a bench under the roof just outside the lodge there, and it was a little bit cold—but it wasn't that bad. And He's like, "You're still not far enough away. Go on out onto the deck by the flagpole and look across the lake."

I was thinking, *You know, it's going to be really cold and windy out there.*

He said, "I'll keep you warm."

So, I went out there and looked across the lake. It was all dark, and the lake was a big empty expanse; and there's this big wall of trees on the other side. Beyond the wall of trees, you can see the sky and the clouds. In one area, the sky was lit up by the lights of the nearby town.

As I looked out there, God was saying, "This lake is you. This is your life. And the wall of trees is your Christian life. And out there ... that little bright clouded area, that's Me; and I'm knocking. I'm trying to get in over the wall and into your life."

I came to realize that, basically, while my Christian



academy life is focused on Jesus and God—I mean we talk about Him all the time, we sing to Him, we praise Him, we have worship talks and we pray, and we pray, and we pray—we don't have Him.

He said, "You need to have Me in your life if you're going to be a leader for Me." I realized we're letting our Christian environment block us off from Christ. It's kind of scary to think about. Just the fact that you think you know

so much about Him—you may know the Bible backward and forward... You may even know how to pray to make it sound like you're completely into it. You know how to sing those songs, and you know them all by heart; but if you don't actually know Jesus....

He kept asking me, He kept saying, "I want to come in."

And I finally said, "Yes, Lord. I want You to come into my life. I'm Yours!"

It wasn't like a big clap of thunder and trees falling down and everything, but I just had this sense that, "Okay, God's in charge now."

As I was thinking about that, about this whole idea, I came back in and sat down and listened to the other people



talk. When I finally got up and spoke, I basically said what I just shared with you.

As I've thought about it, God was telling me that we are so focused on knowing the Bible, the history of the Bible. We're so focused on knowing how to have a relationship with Christ, we almost don't have time to actually do it—especially as a leader. As an S.A. (Student Association) president, I'm busy every now and then. A lot of times I'll wake up and say, "I'm too busy to work with God because I'm too busy teaching other people about Jesus Christ." That just doesn't make sense! How can you tell other people about something you know nothing about?

It really just got to me how as connected as we are, we're not really connected! I live in Berrien Springs in an Adventist academy and university community. I can't just go up and say, "Hey, let me teach you about Jesus."

They'd say, "Oh, well, I already know everything about Jesus."

It's hard getting to know Him when you think you know everything about Him already. That's the thing we all need to think about. If we all think we know about Jesus and we all think we're doing all right because we're in a Seventh-day Adventist environment, yet we still don't have Jesus in our actual lives—to actually have a personal relationship with Him—it's not going to help very much at all.

God challenged me that night not to let anything else get in my way—to take Him seriously and not let my Christian environment get in the way of being a Christian. I suppose I need to start talking with Him more.

Some times, at school, I don't feel comfortable talking about Jesus because some of the people there are not hot and they're not cold—like He talks about in Revelation (see Revelation 3:7–14). It's not like they're super on fire for Jesus. They love Jesus and they are Christians and all, but they're not like cannibal atheists out in the jungle. It's not like they know nothing about Him. So I don't really have a leg up on my friends. We know enough about Jesus so that we think we're all good. I think I'm okay. I think I'm alright, and I just get into a daily schedule of not really doing anything spectacular for Him.

Personally, I'm going to try to focus [on my relationship with Him] more, like at all times of the day, not just praying at meals. If someone says, "Hey, can you pray for me about this?" I'll usually say, "Sure, I'll pray for you."

"Oh, thank you," and we'll walk away.

I'm challenging myself, and I want to challenge everyone else, if someone says, "Hey, can you pray for me about this?" to say, "Yeah, sure. Let's pray right now."

I think that's the main thing: a conversation with your friends where Jesus is a real person, not just something you talk about in Bible class or chapel talks, but Someone you can talk with in the locker room, Someone you can talk with in the hallways, in Geometry or wherever—Someone you can talk with personally.

John Henri Rorabeck is a senior at Andrews Academy and serves in a leadership role as Student Association president.