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The Student Movement v. 108 (2023-2024)

Student Movement

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12-8-2023

### The Student Movement Volume 108 Issue 11: A Merry Christmas: From the SM Staff to You

Grace No

Reagan Westerman

Lauren Kim

Nate Miller

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*See next page for additional authors*

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## A Merry Christmas

FROM THE SM STAFF TO YOU



Photo by Nathaniel Reid

# Humans

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HUMANS

## Meet the Professors: New Humans Series

Grace No [12.08.23](#)

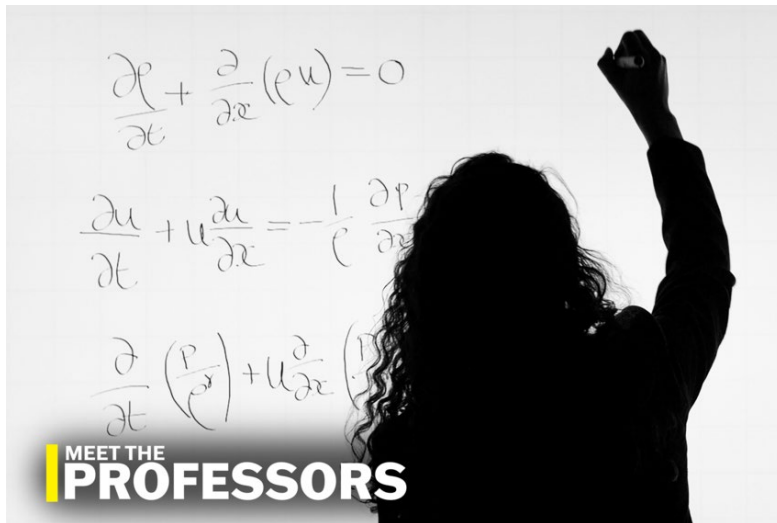


Photo by ThisIsEngineering

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Ever wondered what your favorite professors do in their free time outside of teaching class? What did they even do before they started teaching at Andrews? And what's their favorite kombucha flavor? If these are the burning questions running through your mind as you sit in a lecture, then you'll love the upcoming series of faculty and staff interviews, where we get up close and personal with the various teachers at Andrews University. Learn about different professors' academic journeys, unusual hobbies, advice for students and more as we get to know them on a more individual level.

If there's a particular professor that you're dying to know more about—maybe their class is the best you've taken at Andrews, or their sense of humor is unmatched—send us a request to interview them and we will do our best to put them on our radar for next semester's round of interviews. Look out for all of the interviews that we have planned so far as well, you never know what you might find out!

## HUMANS

# Psychology Research

Interviewed by Grace No [12.08.23](#)



Photo by Uccitly Caballero

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*This week, I talked with Uccitly Caballero (senior, psychology and French) about her senior research project with the psychology department at Andrews. She shares some of her struggles and advises any undergraduates looking to gain research experience to get started soon because of the many valuable insights that can be gained through this work.*

### **What is your senior research project?**

I am researching the effects of TikTok, and other just social media as well, but specifically TikTok's effects on individuals' ability to focus and remain attentive.

### **So what gave you an idea for this project?**

Well, that's an excellent question. Essentially, what started this was my project for research methods. I did some research on TikTok usage in general and if it could become something similar to addiction, and originally I had wanted to see if TikTok affected people's ability to pay attention. I noticed that like when I started using TikTok a lot, I could feel myself having a harder time sitting still and focusing in classes. And so I thought, what if this has to do with TikTok? But I didn't have time to do the project then and I put it on the backburner. And then when it came time to do my research project, I was like, this seems easy because I'm kind of familiar with the area.

### **What were some challenges that you faced during your research?**

Oh, so many. Starting with the fact that it took a really long time to get IRB (Institutional Review Board) approval. And I'm talking really long like I was two weeks ago, I was still not IRB approved and I was actually shaking in my boots thinking I was not going to be able to graduate. I literally turned in my proposal over the summer in August and it just took a long time. That's the biggest challenge because now getting people to interview them is hard because it's finals week.

### **And what are some enjoyable aspects of your project? What's been the most fun for you?**

I really like conducting experiments. I like seeming like I know what I'm talking about and bringing people in and going, okay, so first you're going to do this survey, and then you're going to do this and you're going to do that and then just sitting around making it all happen.

### **What makes this project meaningful to you?**

It's meaningful because I get to graduate.

### **What's your advice for people who are getting started or thinking about starting their final projects?**

You definitely shouldn't try to get it done in one semester like me. I'm just really itching to leave and I'm graduating this December. But if you can give yourself

more time, do something that you're kind of passionate about, especially if the topic applies to you or can apply to you. I feel like you find more enjoyment doing that because you're kind of doing this research for yourself in a way and not only to fulfill the requirement to graduate

**How have you kept your motivation up through this process?**

Lots of prayer. Lots of prayer and just keeping a positive attitude. There have been times where I felt very discouraged. But you keep it pushing, you know, work hard, play hard is what I always say.

**Any final thoughts?**

Final thoughts are that getting research experience is very important, especially if you're a psych major. And especially if you're not pre professional, like I'm just behavioral sciences. So take that opportunity and ask your professors: Hey, can I do some research with you? Go get that experience up because we have the privilege of being in such a small school with teachers that we get to know that you can probably get the experience if you wanted it. Take advantage of that because once you graduate, if you don't have research experience, what were you doing in college?

HUMANS

# What's The Deal With Santa Claus?

Reagan Westerman 12.08.23



Photo by Matej

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Santa Claus is a pretty well known Christmas tradition in America. Many Christmas movies do not fail to add their twist on old Saint Nicholas. Kids grow up watching and loving the joyful, belly full of jelly, Santa Claus! He's a hopeful positive icon for kids. Going from house to house on Christmas Eve planting gifts under the tree and munching on the cookies the children happily set out. Perhaps it isn't the figure himself, but the concept that some parents and even Adventists may not agree with. On the other side of things, Santa Claus is a fun tradition, but whether we like to admit it or not, it takes some deceiving from the parents to keep the tradition going. And once these bubbles burst, are there detrimental side effects on the children? As Adventists, are there specific concepts about Santa Claus that we might approach differently? While the story of Santa Claus may be harmless, are there other things that should be prioritized instead? Ultimately, the crux of the matter is: is Santa helpful or harmful? There are multiple upbringings



and opinions on the subject, thus I asked people around campus to see their thoughts! Let's see what they have to say:

**Sam Namkung** (Psychology, Senior):

Growing up my parents always joked that my sister and I should leave cookies out for "Santa", but my sister and I were both well aware that the cookies were for our parents. My parents never really played into the idea of Santa. Perhaps they realized the idea of a stranger sneaking into our house was more alarming than fun. I don't think there's anything inherently incompatible with the idea of Santa Claus and Adventism. The tradition is fun. I say let the Adventist children believe in Santa. They'll figure it out eventually. I do not not have a strong opinion on whether parents should tell their kids Santa is real or not. I guess it just depends on the parents. However, I do remember kids getting bullied in elementary school for advocating too strongly in favor of the existence of Santa—as a parent you should understand that's also a risk. Yikes.

**Colin Cha** (Music, Junior):

My parents never convinced me Santa was real or anything, but I played along with it for a while because I thought it was a fun idea. I think Santa's probably not the best way to represent Christmas, just because it ruins the whole point of Christmas. Honestly, parents should do it for fun, but let their kids know relatively early on that it's just for fun. The gift giving and all that is still a good transition to teach kids to give to others!

**Corinna Bevier** (English literature, Freshman):

I didn't grow up believing in Santa Claus, but we would joke around like we did believe in him for fun, and do things like leave cookies and milk out on Christmas Eve. I don't think that there is anything malicious about Santa Claus, but I do think that Adventist parents should consider that if they tell their kids Santa Claus is real and then admit he isn't, that could have an effect on their children's belief in God. I don't think that parents should tell their kids that Santa is real because once kids find out Santa Claus isn't real, it might make Christmas less enjoyable for them. Also, you shouldn't lie to your children.

Priscila Ruth Orellana Campana (Speech Language Pathology, Sophomore)

I knew of him but he wasn't a big part of my childhood. I just knew him as a story people made up for Christmas. I think that it should not go together because of

what Santa Claus is and also because when telling your kids about it you are lying. Tell them it's not real.

**Bianca Loss** (Elementary Education, Junior):

When I was a kid, we did have Santa for a bit. My parents kept it going until my brother and I asked if Santa was real. They let us know he wasn't and we didn't do it from then on. I personally don't think I would do Santa, but I don't want to make other people's decisions for them. I respect other people's ability to make the best decisions for their family. I think parents should make the best decision for their family. If your kids ask, I would recommend being honest. If you choose not to do Santa, I would recommend teaching your kids to respect others beliefs and not ruin the fun for other kids. Just let them know you don't personally believe.

**Emanuel Rus** (Music Performance, Freshman):

Yeah, we did have rare occasions when Santa Claus came with some gifts, but it wasn't too often. The thought of Santa Claus as an elderly guy giving gifts to kids is nice, in my opinion. As far as Adventism goes, I don't think it is bad in itself. It's a matter of who you are focusing on. I don't think it's important to focus on Santa Claus. Yes, kids can know about him as a historical person, but I believe the simple fact of receiving and giving gifts is what's more important.

All in all, while it is up to the parent to make the best decision for their child, Santa Claus may be a fun tradition to have, however not to lean on too often. Santa Claus shouldn't be the only thing Christmas is about, but it isn't harmful to let the kids on a little bit. Teach the real meaning, keep the subtle enchantment of Santa Claus, and strike a balance that preserves the magic while fostering a deeper understanding of the holiday's true significance.

## HUMANS

# Student Worker Interview: Sam Namkung

Interviewed by Lauren Kim 12.08.23



Photo by Sam Namkung

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*This week, I sat down with Sam Namkung (senior, psychology) to talk about his being a student worker here at Andrews. He explains some of the opportunities it provides as well as his passions and motivations in regard to his plans after graduation.*

### **Tell us about yourself! (hobbies, interests, etc.)**

Hellooo! My name is Sam. I was born and raised near Seattle, Washington, which developed my love for the outdoors. I enjoy watching movies, reading, and spending money on food. My all-time favorite movie is "Fantastic Mr. Fox," I'm currently reading "In the Dream House" by Carmen Maria Machado, and I graduate this December, and following graduation, I plan on continuing my current job at the LOGAN Autism Learning Center in Benton Harbor. My long-term career plan is

to get an ED.S. (Education Specialist in School Psychology) to become a school psychologist.

**What does your job entail?**

I work as a behavioral technician, supervised by a board-certified behavioral analyst (BCBA). I work with other technicians to implement behavioral programs for our center's clients. The purpose of the behavioral plans is to help kids with autism develop communication, social, and daily living skills, in addition to reducing problematic behaviors.

**What was the motivation for applying for your job? How did you get it in the first place?**

Coming into this semester and living off-campus, I knew I had to pay rent. This knowledge led me to search for a job where I could develop skills that relate to my future personal and professional goals. I heard about the LOGAN Center through one of my psychology courses and decided to apply. The application process was very straightforward. Just like any other job, it required a resume, an interview, and a background check.

**Does your job relate to any future plans? If so, how?**

Yes! I plan on working with kids one day as a school psychologist. I believe having this experience will help serve a more diverse population. In addition, different skills such as communication and knowledge in applied behavior analysis (ABA) will benefit me as I work in the education system.

**As a student at Andrews, how do you manage being a student and having a job?**

I knew that I wanted to work this semester, so I purposefully structured my school schedule to give me the freedom to do that. In order to keep up with my school work with the long work hours, I've learned to plan ahead and manage my time effectively. Burnout is real! To avoid being burnt out, I spend the weekends doing things I like and being intentional about who I spend time with. Time management is key in helping me maintain a balanced work, school, and personal life.

**What are some pros about your job? Some cons?**

This job allows me to apply concepts I have learned in class to real-world situations. Besides practical knowledge, I am also developing soft skills such as how to work cooperatively with a team to achieve a shared goal. Another pro is that it's fun getting to connect with the kids in my classroom. Some cons? It is

exhausting. Hanging out with kids all day is not an easy thing, but it is definitely rewarding. There is also a strong chance of getting minor injuries such as scratches and bite marks.

**Any advice for the student workers and/or those going into a similar career path as you?**

I think the most important factor in choosing a job in college is to choose one that you can learn and grow from. If the job allows you to develop skills that will help pave the way for your future career, even better. It doesn't hurt to apply for a job that you might think you won't have a chance of getting. You never know, it might turn into an awesome opportunity! At the same time, don't take on more than you can manage. You know yourself best! Good luck!

## Arts & Entertainment

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### ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

# A Flat World for Our Round One

Nate Miller [12.08.23](#)

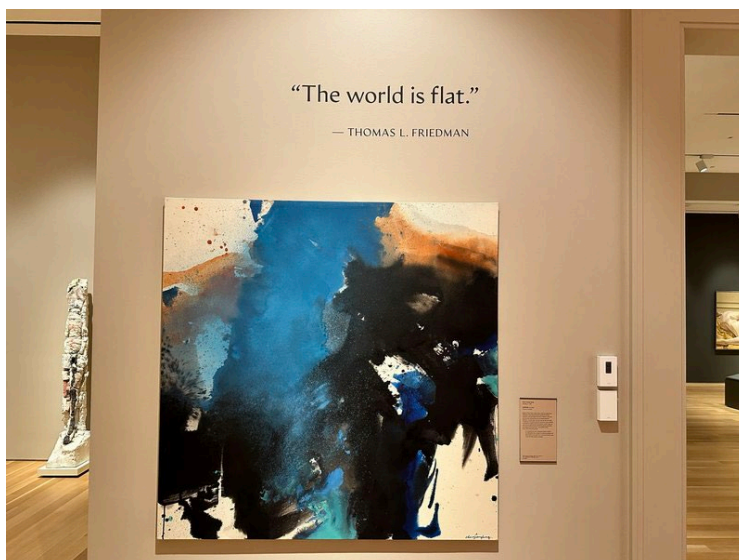


Photo by Nate Miller

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“The world is flat.”

- *Thomas L. Friedman, quoted on a wall of the Raclin Murphy Museum of Art.*

It was raining when I walked up to the University of Notre Dame’s new art museum. Overcast, a threatening wind. Lining the sidewalk that approaches it, there were several modern art pieces that jutted out from the pale ground, rigid and rust-colored, some moving in the breeze. As I turned towards the building, the central exterior sculpture came into view: a towering metallic pillar, a stack of letters and numbers and symbols that reached to the sky. My heart beat quicker as I passed by it and opened the door.

It was the final day of the museum’s opening weekend, which saw numerous local musical and artistic groups assemble in the celebration of art. It felt modern and new, and several modern art pieces lined the walls of the atrium.

But the museum’s largest collection, at least by space taken up, is European art. One-and-a-half of the three gallery floors are devoted to it. There weren’t any names I recognized (disclaimer: I would say I know as much about art and artists as the average person; that is, I don’t know all that many names) in this section. The multiple European galleries feel cerebral, dark, and authoritatively art-gallery-esque.

The basement’s modern art wing was my favorite. It felt alive in a way the rest of the galleries didn’t—the lights were brighter, the colors brash and experimental. On one side, the ceiling gave way to a courtyard surrounding a dark brown, orchid-encircled sculpture. People on the first floor could look down into the garden and examine its sculptures from different angles. The modern art wing also contained a painting by the one artist whose name I recognized: a minor work by Georgia O’Keeffe, “Blue I,” which got me excited. Seeing a name you recognize in an art gallery—especially a smaller-scale art gallery—is incredibly cathartic.

The relatively small scale of the Raclin Murphy Museum of Art (compared with a standard art museum like the Met, not with a local art museum like the Krasl) doesn’t detract from its authority. The museum offers multiple programs, too. There is a “Friends of the Raclin Murphy Museum of Art” program that provides committed visitors with membership perks like borrowing privileges at the Hesburgh Library (famous for its “Touchdown Jesus” mural), a museum magazine subscription, and discounts on museum tours. (Side note: museum entrance is

free to all visitors.) There is also an “Art 180” program that encourages people to, over a period of time, spend 180 minutes looking at a piece of art. Its goal is to immerse people in art and get them to really understand the artists’ intention, to appreciate any piece in the museum holistically. They provided me with a small journal to record my observations when I signed up.

I left the museum excited. Giddy, even. (It could have been the latte I bought at the museum cafe.) Art galleries aren’t in abundance near Andrews, and I was skeptical that the Raclin Murphy would be any good. But it was. It was incredible, actually, to know that an art gallery of its high caliber is within an easy driving distance from where I live. Sure, it’s not the Met. It’s not the Art Institute of Chicago. But it has a charm and a character all its own, and I, for one, am looking forward to countless visits over the upcoming years.

## ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

# Art & Music in Andrews’ History - Introduction

Aiko J. Ayala Rios [12.08.23](#)



Photo by Matthias Groeneveld

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You probably have already noticed that music is a big part of the campus' dynamic. It is present almost everywhere, and you can find quite a diversity of ensembles playing a wide range of genres, from hymns to movie soundtracks. Being part of an ensemble is also an enriching experience for all members, and it contributes to our campus diversity. On the other hand, we also have art in various forms that have accomplished goals ranging from creating consciousness to drawing our hearts closer to the Creator. And it gets better when several minds meet and become creative together!

However, have you wondered how we reached this point at Andrews University? How has art come to life on our campus? Were there any other ensembles or musicians in the past that we may be missing? Any artistic collectives that should be remembered? Maybe more questions could be asked, but just hang in there and get ready for the next semester, as the Arts & Entertainment section of The Student Movement will cover the history of several artistic groups on campus that have made history. We hope you get your hot drink ready and join us for this upcoming series!



ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

# Why Do I Feel Bad for President Snow?: The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes Review

Corinna Bevier [12.08.23](#)



Photo by Lionsgate

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Last month, on November 17, Francis Lawrence’s “The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes” was released to theaters, and like any other true red-blooded American, I immediately rushed to the theater, purchased my overpriced popcorn, and sat down to watch a three hour movie about children fighting each other to the death.

I have been a “Hunger Games” devotee from childhood, ever since I read the book trilogy written by Suzanne Collins, and subsequently watched the four film adaptations. Unquestionably, I am not alone in my fervent love for these books and

films. In 2008, the first “Hunger Games” book sold over [100 million copies worldwide](#), and the first film installation made over [480 million dollars](#) in 2012.

“The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes” is a film adaptation of the Suzanne Collins book of the same name that serves as a prequel to the original film tetralogy, and follows the antagonist of the original films, Coriolanus Snow, played by heartthrob and breakout sensation Tom Blyth, 64 years before the events of the first film. Admittedly, this film has not quite had the reception of the original films, only bringing in slightly more than [100 million dollars](#) globally. Nevertheless, since its release, it has consistently remained the number one film in the [box office](#), showing, that for a large audience, this film is a sensational and necessary addition to the Hunger Games franchise.

Before I saw the film, I was unsure about what my reaction to it would be, considering that as a viewer, I already knew how Coriolanus Snow’s story ended and knew the manner in which this prequel film must end in order to set up the events of the original films. In spite of this, I found the film to be extremely compelling. Even though I had seen the original films multiple times, and was fully aware of the fate of Coriolanus Snow and his eventual capitulation to evil, I was still able to sympathize with him throughout the film and found myself rooting for him and feeling sad as the warning signs of his descent began to appear.

How I could be so supportive and empathetic towards a character that I knew was eventually going to commit horrendous atrocities was a mystery to me and many other viewers of the films who found themselves in a similar position. For me, this mystery was solved during my second viewing, by the heroine of the film, Lucy Gray Baird, played by the wonderful Rachel Zegler. Near the end of the film, Lucy Gray says, “I think there’s a natural goodness born into us all. You can either cross that line into evil, or not. And it’s our life’s work to stay on that side of the line.”

This concept perfectly encapsulated the feelings that I was having. When we are introduced to Coriolanus in this film, he is portrayed as an ambitious yet struggling young man who wants to provide for his family by pursuing a career in politics. He hasn’t yet crossed over that line into evil, so for the viewer, there is still the hope that he could stay on the right side of the line. Through the film, the viewer grows attached to Coriolanus as a character who has the potential to do great things, and begins to be hopeful for his success. This only makes the disappointment and devastation even stronger when Coriolanus inevitably crosses that line and begins his descent to becoming the tyrannical President Snow that we know from the

original films. Seeing Coriolanus before his corruption makes his ending so much more tragic, in a compelling and riveting way.

Franchises such as Star Wars or Harry Potter have often struggled to capture the attention of their audiences with prequels to their original films. It is a difficult task to take beloved characters like Darth Vader, Albus Dumbledore, or Coriolanus Snow and get audiences to be interested in what happened to them before they became the characters that the audience cares about. Author Stephen King once [said](#), “The most important things to remember about backstory are that everyone has a history and most of it isn't very interesting.” Although I agree with this sentiment in regards to certain prequel films, I found that Suzanne Collins, Francis Lawrence, and the cast of the film adaptation did an incredible job creating an interesting backstory that was able to capture the attention and hearts of viewers. If you have not yet seen the film, I highly recommend taking a trip to your nearest movie theater and watching it for yourself.

## ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

# Have Yourself a Merry Little Hallmark Christmas

Lexie Dunham [12.08.23](#)



Photo by Nicole Michalou

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That's right, everyone! It is officially Hallmark Christmas movie season! Whether you think these movies are too cheesy or you love them just as much as I do, I urge you to read this article to get the scoop on what makes Hallmark Christmas movies good or bad, along with some of my favorites from a lifetime of watching them. Yes, it's true, everyone. I am a Hallmark Christmas movie fanatic. I used to have an official Hallmark Christmas movie sweater I would wear when I watched them. But even without that sweater, my whole family loves to cozy up with blankets and sit down and watch some cheesy, romantic, classic Hallmark Christmas movies.

You may say, "These movies are too cheesy even to sit through." While that is a valid point, I believe the movies' cheesy romanticism makes them fun and charming. However, I acknowledge that there are some Hallmark Christmas movies that I find to be too much or just plain bad. For example, when any movie with Allison Sweeney appears, my mom and I immediately turn off the TV. Something about her makes us feel like the movie is unwatchable. Her acting style (facial expressions, fluctuations in like delivery, etc.) falls a little flat, making us feel iffy about any movies she is in. The key to enjoyable Hallmark Christmas movie watching is finding what you do and don't like about them and sticking with it.

The remakes of some of my favorite movies are ones I steer clear from because they can never be quite like the original. Of course, having to sit through a boring storyline is a risk you have to take. You sometimes watch at least 15 minutes of the movie before you discover it's dry and dull. I have watched even an hour of some of these movies before, and I was like, "Oh my, this is incredibly boring." To be honest, the movies where they bring the big stars like Mariah Carey or Dolly Parton are not my favorites. It usually has something to do with a concert that could "save Christmas," and that storyline doesn't pique my interest. This is because I have sat through enough elementary Christmas concerts in my lifetime, so I don't need to watch a whole movie about one. Furthermore, the "Northpole" series is one that I just can't stand. It is just an Elf coming to help a little boy with many other plots mashed in, and I just cannot enjoy those movies. They are almost too cheesy, even for Hallmark.

Let's get to some of my favorites and what makes them perfect and re-watchable. First, the big reveal of my favorite Hallmark Christmas movie: "Window Wonderland." This quickly became my favorite when I first watched it six or so

years ago. This movie follows two window dressers, Sloan and Jake, competing for head window designer for MacGuire's (basically Macy's). Secrets abound as they get closer and closer to each other, as well as Christmas, where whoever makes the best window for Christmas will win the position. While this one can be predictable, many twists and turns make it impossible to predict it all. This movie is charming and hilarious and features one of my favorite Hallmark guys, Paul Campbell. Another one of my favorite movies stars two of my favorite Hallmark people, and it's called "The Nine Lives of Christmas." As you may have guessed, this movie has much to do with cats. This movie is so adorable (not just because of the cats) and romantic. Marilee starts to crush on a local fireman, whom she calls "brown eyes" (his real name is Zachary). How will they meet? What's with the cats? You'll just have to watch and find out! And, of course, who could forget the trifecta of genius royal-themed movies: "A Crown for Christmas," "A Princess for Christmas," and "A Royal Christmas." They may all sound the same, but each actress brings a different perspective and element to each movie, making them unforgettable.

I have so many other favorites that I could share with you, but Hallmark Christmas movies are about finding your own favorites. I hope I have inspired someone to become an avid Hallmark Christmas movie fan. There's no shame in watching movies where there isn't much of a deep plot. These are people simply enjoying Christmastime, which is what we all should be doing. Happy Holidays, everyone! Be safe, and have a wonderful time with friends and family. And go out and watch some Hallmark Christmas movies.

## ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

# It's Beginning to Sound a Lot Like Christmas: A Christmas Playlist

Madison Vath 12.08.23



Photo by Spotify (edited)

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I've always loved Christmas. The season begins in October, when my mom makes the short drive to our storage unit to dig out our winter decorations (which mainly consist of snowmen) and then spends the next couple of hours switching out our fall decor with the winter one. Usually there's cheery Christmas music blaring in the background and both of us are singing at the top of our lungs whilst struggling to untangle a strand of lights to hang up around the windows. There are so many other fond memories attached to this season, such as quiet and calm evenings sitting in the living room with a cup of hot cocoa and a blanket covering me, watching snow gently float to the ground and accumulate. More often than not I have a little dog wriggling in my lap and some kind of book propped to the side, with quiet instrumental Christmas music playing. A common thread weaving through these memories is the idea that music bolsters the already established feelings of warmth and contentment that often is associated with this time of year.

With all of the music genres that tap into the Christmas spirit like country, pop, and even indie, my personal favorite is the 80s. It gives a certain nostalgic essence to the frosty weather and makes me feel all warm inside when my nose is red and my hands are frozen. So, I've taken the time to curate a special Christmas [playlist](#), consisting mostly of the old-timey 80s tunes.

First and foremost, "The Christmas Song." This guy is probably the tune that heralds in my Christmas season. I listen to two versions: Nat King Cole's and Luther Vandross.' This is a common theme throughout the playlist mainly because I enjoy hearing the different ways in which artists sing them. Another example of this is with the song "It's Beginning to Look a Lot Like Christmas." I have both Bing Crosby's and Perry Como's versions and they really make looking at Christmas lights a lot more fun. Donny Hathaway's "This Christmas" calls to my mind a dream in which my future partner and I dance around our living space, putting up a tree whilst baking Christmas cookies and it really exudes the glee of what this season means to me. I have a few songs sung by the Carpenters, including "(There's No Place Like) Home for the Holidays," and "Sleigh Ride." Karen Carpenter's voice is fairly distinctive due to her soft and clear tones. Of course, there has to be the iconic "Last Christmas" (Wham!) because Christmas just isn't complete without it. Another artist group that is synonymous with jingle bells and cheer is Pentatonix, an acapella group that was formed in 2011 and has won numerous awards and continues to sell out tour venues worldwide. I really enjoy their renditions of the songs "I Saw Three Ships," "Evergreen," "O Come All Ye Faithful," and "Over The River." The group brings a new sound to Christmas classics. The song "We Need a Little Christmas" sung by Johnny Matthis is another one of my favorites, especially now that I'm in college where I feel like I don't get to enjoy a ton of festivities due to final papers and projects. We can't forget the soft and crooning favorite of "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas." I have four versions of this song on my playlist, including the ones sung by Frank Sinatra, Judy Garland, Ella Fitzgerald, and Michael Buble. This song reminds me of a fun-filled day of Christmas joy and you realize you're a bit tired from all the running around so you sit in your bedroom by your window and watch snowflakes drift gently to the ground while this song softly plays in the background.

So, why not grab a fluffy blanket, make yourself some hot cocoa, and settle in amongst warm fairy lights and destress with a playlist that will take you back to your younger days? Or take a walk and hear the snow crunch under your feet while the world around you is silent, save for Julie Andrews' "In the Bleak Midwinter"

playing through your headphones. Let's try and enjoy the excitement of the holiday season even when we're trying to finish out the semester with all the mental fortitude we have left and maybe this playlist (with a few extra songs) can help!

Link to

playlist: <https://open.spotify.com/playlist/5QuEm5NC7tgFo9Um19Aedz?si=7258117e392142af>

## News

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### NEWS

# Questions Answered, Questions Avoided: AUSA "Town Hall"

Andrew Francis 12.08.23



Photo by Nathaniel Reid

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On the Wednesday evening of December 6, the Andrews University Student Association (AUSA) hosted a Senate Town Hall Meeting inviting all students to ask a panel of university administrators questions regarding Andrews' current and future affairs. The members of the administrative panel that were seated in front of an overflowing Newbold Auditorium at 7 pm sharp were President John Wesley Taylor V, Provost Christon Arthur, the Vice President for Campus and Student Life, Frances Fahner, and the Vice President for Financial Administration, Glenn “Chip” A. Meekma Jr. Moderating the discussion was AUSA Executive Vice President Morgan Williams (senior, social work).



Photo by Nicholas “Nick” Gunn

Like any university or school community, Andrews University is not without its challenges. Wherever so many people meet, conflict of some kind is often bound to appear. To Taylor’s credit, he has come onto the Andrews campus exhibiting a desire to have personal engagements with students. This event, his weekly lunches in the student cafeteria with his wife, and his upcoming Friday night vespers program with students on December 8 exemplify this commitment—a quite laudable endeavor. One issue that was likely on the minds of every student, staff member, and administrator in attendance was the recent announcement that the position of Vice President of Diversity and Inclusion (later switched to VP for University Culture and Inclusion), a position that has been in place since 2017, would be removed in place of a new position entitled, Assistant to the President for University Mission and Culture. [Some](#) in the Adventist community are “pleased that Andrews has scrapped this position.” However, this move, and the [subsequent](#)

[news](#) that would come out in the following weeks of this announcement has worried many students on campus regarding the Andrews administration's commitment to giving voice and priority to matters of ethnic and cultural diversity.

Michael Nixon, Esq. had held the Vice President position since its inception but resigned at the end of the 2023 Spring Semester to become Director of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging at Beacon Health Systems. Dr. Danielle Pilgrim, the former Associate Chaplain of the university and the former Head Pastor of the largely student-organized New Life Fellowship church, was given the position as Interim Chief Diversity Officer in the summer before the 2023 Fall Semester began. She, too, would offer her resignation after experiencing “various demeaning, dismissive, and harmful practices demonstrated by the new administration,” according to Dr. Pilgrim herself in her [resignation letter](#) to the university administration that was posted and circulated publicly earlier this week.

The conflict of the diversity and inclusion position is not the only pressing issue regarding the student body. A total of 28 questions, 18 of which were submitted before the program's start, and the final 10 submitted as follow-ups to some of the original questions, were read by Williams to the administrators over an hour and a half. The auditorium remained packed full of lively students for the entire duration of the program, with many questions cut for time. The following are the topics covered in the order the questions were asked:

- Addressing Mold, Plumbing, and Infrastructure Issues in Residential Buildings, Namely Lamson Hall
- Physical Accessibility Being Improved Upon in Buildings Such as Nethery Hall and the Science Complex
- Understanding the Process of Hiring Senior Administrators for the University
- Student and Minority Representation in Administrative Issues
- 'Coming Out Ministries' Recent Acquisition of Property Near the Campus
- The VP for Diversity and Inclusion Position Being Changed to “An Assistant to the President” Role
- Cafeteria Meal Plans for Students and the Potential Addition of Options for Meal Plans
- Late Night Labs Interfering with Other Programs
- Athletic and other Creative Scholarships
- The Co-Curricular Program and its Necessity
- Laundry Machine Issues in Residential Buildings
- Undergraduate Curfews
- Parking on Campus
- Student Lounging Areas

Within the limited time frame, Williams and the administrative figures were able to touch on all these subjects with varying degrees of efficiency and productivity. For many of the tougher questions that were asked, some students thought President Taylor and his peers frequently side-stepped answering the questions and instead gave many lengthy answers that took a while to get a direct answer, if such an answer ever came at all.

The first example of indirect answers came during the seventh question of the night. The question asked for any of the administrators' comments on [Coming Out Ministries'](#) recent purchasing of a building that is almost directly across from Andrews on US Highway 31. Coming Out Ministries is a religious organization run predominantly by Seventh-day Adventists (SDAs), although not an official SDA ministry, to provide counsel, guidance, and fellowship to those in the church or interested in the church but struggling with sexual identity and sexual morality. Despite denying it fervently, Coming Out Ministries is rumored to have unethical practices found in conversion therapy as part of their programming, as described in a [previous Student Movement article](#).

VP Faehner had prepared for this question and pulled out a piece of paper from which she read. She spoke about the university handbook and its code of conduct regarding the empowerment and protection of all students, as well as affirming with the president that harassment of any kind is not accepted at the university. After a few more minutes of building to answer, Faehner stated that the university follows the guidelines that romantic relationships, according to Adventist beliefs and the Bible, should be between a man and a woman but that respect for all contrary perspectives should be upheld. Ultimately, nothing was addressed by any of the panelists directly regarding Coming Out Ministries, other than a brief remark by Taylor, implying that the location of the building is *strategic*, and that the university has sought to purchase that property in the past with no success.

The following questions regarded the new “Assistant to the President” position, which President Taylor spent plenty of time talking about. In repeating some of the same sentiments in his email to the entire university community last Friday, Taylor tried to assure the audience that the position “needed to be a full-time, senior, cabinet, position.” He claimed that the new position allows for a “campus-wide effect” on diversity and inclusion and that the former vice president position did not cover that. Taylor was not pressed further by Williams and declined to go more into detail about what he was basing his claims on, why this “campus-wide

effect” could not be added to the existing position, and how any adjustment was necessary.

Another answer by Meekma left many in the audience unsatisfied. When asked why students are unable to get a refund on the money they do not use on their meal plans, he stated that “dining services plan out the whole year in advance” based on how many meal plans are bought. He did not offer a reason as to why the policy is this way or suggest that there may be a willingness to consider adjustments that would allow refunds to become available. Meekma encouraged students to eat the food more if their accounts were too high while Arthur mentioned that the incoming meal plan tiers may help address the problem with desired refunds. The audience had already expressed a feeling of dissatisfaction, which Taylor increased by stating that out of around one hundred Adventist universities he’s eaten at, “Andrews is at the top of the list” when it comes to its dining experience. Sarcastic exclamations were instantly let out by the audience, one pointing out that “just because we’re at the top don’t mean we’re good!” Regardless of one’s opinion on the cafeteria food, it can be objectively said that both the answers given and the dining process at Andrews have things to improve upon.

At one point, Faehner called upon the help of the Director of Co-Curricular Education, Dr. Steve Yeagley, to help give an answer that left a student's question unanswered. A question asking the administrators to explain the purpose of the co-curricular program was answered with Dr. Yeagley commenting from the audience about how the program is meant to lessen class loads and how there is a new co-curricular program that has been “green-lighted to take the next steps.” Neither Faehner nor Dr. Yeagley mentioned what should be expected with the new program or how the activity requirements help students' experiences at all.

VP Faehner avoided the essence of a question regarding why undergraduate students have imposed curfews if they are legally seen as adults. Faehner’s answer diverted from the question, instead referring to other Adventist universities and academies and their policies. She emphasized that Andrews’ undergraduate curfews are later than many of the high schools that students went to before enrolling at Andrews and that there were parents who would like to see the curfews be earlier. Faehner appeared to fail to address the question itself as to why curfews even existed for individuals who have been deemed by United States federal and local governments to exceed the age necessary to be treated and seen as legal adults with rights and responsibilities.

The moment that may represent the peak of reported student frustration and the administrators' avoidance of student questions came with the third live question asked by Williams, the 21st overall. The question asked the administrators to share their thoughts and responses to the concerning matters that Dr. Pilgrim discussed in her resignation letter. President Taylor was the only person to answer the question, but initially spent time listing all of Dr. Pilgrim's credentials and history at the university, something that was not asked for. After finishing, he said, "I will respect what she has stated [in the letter]." Students instantly displayed various expressions of dissatisfaction with what was seen as an unsatisfactory answer. One student made an exclamation to try to get the president to give a real answer, to which he restated, "I will respect what she has stated."

Several questions prompted encouraging news, such as tiers to cafeteria meal plans coming soon, laundry machines scheduled to be completely replaced by the end of the coming summer, with Dean of Student Involvement, Leadership, and Activities (SILA) Darius Bridges hinting to potential new spaces being allowed for student gatherings. However, on top of the questions that were done a disservice, responses given by Meekma and Taylor on separate questions gave students pause and reasons for more concern as to what direction their university is being driven towards.

The first sign of trouble came during the third question of the night. When asked if there is a plan to make more of the buildings on campus wheelchair-accessible and more accommodating, Meekma mentioned that this was something that is currently a part of the plans for Andrews' next long-term construction project. Encouraging news then turned into shock as Meekma, in continuing with his response, claimed that when the renovation of Nethery Hall was being completed a few years ago, Andrews alumni asked for Nethery Hall not to be renovated to be wheelchair accessible, saying that it would "ruin the façade." When a live question was asked in response to the "façade" comment, Meekma dismissed it, stating that what was decided in the past had already taken effect before he obtained the position of Vice President for Financial Administration and that Nethery Hall currently is not in the university's plans for further remodeling anytime soon. The fact that, at the time, the aesthetic preferences of alumni was prioritized over disabled people's actual needs and that VP Meekma did not seem to consider this to be a problem concerned many students.

Another question asked if the search committee members would be announced publicly, likely with the hopes of increasing transparency in the hiring process.

President Taylor eventually stated that it will be left to the search committee members to announce publicly that they are participating on the committee. The university will not announce the search committee members. This takes away an opportunity for Taylor's still relatively new leadership team and the rest of the administration to display transparency and accountability to the school body during a time when confusion and questions regarding the university's future continue to grow daily amongst students and staff.

Another example of students beginning to become concerned with Taylor's answers during the night came towards the end of the night, where the 24th question, a live one, was asked whether both the old vice president position and the new assistant to the president role could coexist on campus. Taylor used lengthy answers which were perceived to be avoiding the question, this time enthusing about what the new position was supposed to be able to accomplish. A student from the audience bursted out, "Is that a yes or a no?" Taylor declined to respond, and the program continued.

Ultimately, the Senate Town Hall meeting displayed and discussed a lot. Although most questions that were asked by students were serious inquiries that needed to be addressed proactively and efficiently, too many questions were avoided, unanswered, or answered unsatisfactorily—in students' eyes—especially by President Taylor. Nonetheless, hopefully, all those who attended were able to glean something productive from the evening. Students had the opportunity to learn about different changes, for better or for worse, that may be arriving soon on campus. Morgan Williams, Dean Bridges, and the rest of the AUSA Senate had the opportunity to see what worked and what could be improved with this kind of program if they ever decide to host a similar event again. President Taylor, Provost Arthur, Vice President Fahner, and Vice President Meekma were able to learn definitively some of the topics that students are most concerned with. Hopefully, they come prepared to provide direct, concise, and straightforward answers at the next town hall.

## NEWS

# The Shift from Emmanuel Missionary College to Andrews University

Katie Davis 12.08.23



Photo by the Center for Adventist Research

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Educational [reformers](#) E.A. Sutherland and P.T. Maga were placed in charge of Battle Creek College in 1897. They were the first to demonstrate genuine interest in moving the establishment from Battle Creek. Once Sutherland became President of the college, he urged Mrs. White to use her influence to relocate the college. However, Mrs. White told them to be patient and that God would work in His timing. This delay might have been foreseen by Ellen because the college had more than \$80,000 in debt, and moving to another location might not have been wise. Nonetheless, Ellen found a way to reduce the debt of Adventist colleges by donating all the profits of the manuscript *Christ's Object Lessons*.

After an [interview](#) with Dean Magan, Ellen G. White challenged the college to move out of Battle Creek and to “get an extensive tract of land.” Mrs. White realized that

moving to the country would mean fewer students; however, this was not a sufficient reason to halt the movement. God provided because within the next several days the “sanitarium constituency agreed to buy the college buildings [of Battle Creek College] for use by the American Medical Missionary College and the sanitarium Nurses Training School.” Before the re-establishment of the college, Sutherland had been eyeing the peaceful and quiet little village of Berrien Springs. This tiny town is located in the southwestern corner of the mitten and on the banks of the St. Joseph River. Sutherland and Magan developed several goals for this college while they were searching for land for the relocation of the College. Their goals consisted of having an institution that was self-supporting, that belonged to the church, not requiring continuous operational subsidies, and cheaper tuition charges by creating school industries that students could work at to pay off a major part of their education.

In mid-July of 1902, the church [officials](#) convened to examine the property and voted on purchasing the 272 acres of farmland for \$18,000. Around the same time, they agreed to rename the establishment since it was ninety miles from Battle Creek. In 1898, the college faculty liked the name “Emmanuel.” Dean Magan motioned to rename Battle Creek College to Emmanuel Missionary College since the reformers emphasized that all the training programs would help prepare students to be missionaries. Emmanuel Missionary College (EMC) thrived in its new location. Buildings were constructed, which brought more students to the college, and more undergraduate programs were slowly added. However, something was missing from EMC.

The General Conference established a seminary in Potomac University located in Washington D.C., which became the first Seventh-day Adventist Church seminary in 1936. This program flourished, and in 1959, the seminary was relocated to Emmanuel Mission College. After this transition, [EMC](#) campus hosted not only the undergraduate colleges, but also the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, the beginnings of graduate studies, and a secondary school. All these [entities](#) needed to be combined under one name, but what name is worthy enough to be used for these establishments? An exemplary man, theology pioneer, editor, and the church’s first missionary to serve outside North America was deemed worthy enough. John N. Andrews had a significant impact on Adventism, and his passion for missions fit with the values and morals of Emmanuel Mission College. He was an important [leader](#) in early Adventism and served along Mrs. White. Some of his leadership included: being the General Conference President,



editor of the “Review and Herald,” and a local conference president.

The [renaming](#) of EMC to Andrews University brought change to the university for good. Moving the seminary, creating a graduate school, and uniting different entities under one charter influenced the development of the secondary school, which received the name Andrews Academy.

The rich history of Andrews University gives us more of an insight of the true mission of the college, which is to prepare students to be missionaries in the various disciplines that they choose to study. Moving Andrews University and changing the name has allowed thousands of students to prosper and has prepared them to serve with a willing heart like John N. Andrews.

## NEWS

# “Deliverance from Same-Sex Attraction?” A History of Conversion Therapy in the Adventist Church

Jonathan Clough [12.08.23](#)



Photo by Anna Shvets (Edited)

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CONTENT ADVISORY: This article contains discussions of sexual assault.

*“From a Judeo-Christian perspective, gay, straight or otherwise, we’re all prodigal sons and daughters. Exodus International is the prodigal’s older brother, trying to impose its will on God’s promises, and make judgments on who’s worthy of His Kingdom. God is calling us to be the Father – to welcome everyone, to love unhindered.”*

These are the words of Alan Chambers, the former president of disgraced organization Exodus International. From 1976 to 2013, [Exodus](#) was an organization that advertised “hope” for LGBTQ+ Christians: a way to change sexual orientation and gender identity through prayer and psychotherapy<sup>2</sup>. Exodus International touted a form of “conversion” or “reparative” therapy, which Merriam-Webster [defines](#) as “the use of any of various methods... in an attempt to change a person's sexual orientation to heterosexual or to change a person's gender identity to correspond to the sex the person was identified as having at birth<sup>3</sup>.” By 2013, the ineffectiveness of such treatment was apparent even to the founders of Exodus, and Chambers issued a sincere [apology](#) for all the harm he had done. In 2018, the APA released a [statement](#), articulating that “homosexuality... is not a mental disorder” and that attempts to change one’s sexual orientation or gender identity are “unethical.” Presently, “all mainstream medical and mental health organizations” condemn conversion therapy<sup>4</sup>. However, to those whose religious convictions state that homosexuality and transgender identities are immoral, attempts to change these aspects of their lives might be welcomed regardless of the overwhelming body of literature indicating the ineffectiveness and harm of such attempts.<sup>5,6,7</sup> Hence, religious communities have often been primary supporters of conversion therapy efforts, including the Seventh-day Adventist church. This brings us to the story of a man named Colin Cook and his program, Homosexuals Anonymous.

Colin Cook was a former SDA pastor who had been ousted from the ministry in 1974 due to numerous sexual encounters with underage teenage boys within his congregation, though Cook publicly claimed he resigned voluntarily. In the years that followed, Cook authored a number of articles in Adventist publications such as Insight and Spectrum, claiming that “[t]here is a way out of the homosexual life.... You can find new emotions and enjoy the rich possibilities inherent in love for someone of the opposite sex” (Lawson). Cook, who was then located in Reading, Pennsylvania, began holding counseling sessions in a health center where he

worked, and developed a following of individuals hopeful that Cook held the key to being “delivered from same-sex attraction.”

In 1980, Cook founded the Quest Learning Center in Reading. Featuring a program called “Homosexuals Anonymous” – inspired by the 12-step program practiced by the well-known “Alcoholics Anonymous” – the institution aimed to help “deliver” individuals from homosexuality. People from all across the country flocked to Reading during the 1980s in hopes to find the “cure” for homosexuality. The program, which received almost \$50,000 a year from the Seventh-day Adventist church, appeared to have living proof of its claims in Cook himself, who was now married and had two children. The program prominently featured personal counseling sessions with Cook, which participants later stated were less than innocent. As one former participant [recalled](#), “every private counseling session started with a hug. Not a hug like when you say goodbye to Uncle Bill, but a full body hug where you felt him [Cook] pressing against you” (Japenga). The program continued to grow and receive support from the Adventist church until October 1986, when a letter by Ronald Lawson was delivered to church leaders and support for Cook’s “ministry” was [rescinded](#). The letter contained details of sexual abuse that occurred within the program, collected in a series of interviews Lawson conducted with “graduates” of the program. While the details are too graphic to share here, these interviews make clear that Cook was manipulating and taking advantage of struggling young men and using them for sexual gratification.

Unfortunately, Cook’s misdeeds didn’t end with the withdrawal of financial support from the Adventist church. While Quest Learning Center closed its doors in June 1987, Cook continued to “minister” in Reading until 1993, when he moved to Denver, founding FaithQuest Colorado. Within this organization, the sexual abuse continued, but the Christian churches and groups – including the well-known evangelical organization Focus on the Family – supporting Cook in Denver were far more reluctant to renounce him when the abuse was uncovered. As recently as 2017 Colin Cook was still the face of the ministry.

In a [report](#) on Cook published in 1998, Ronald Lawson featured a section in which he discusses the role of the Adventist church in Cook’s ministry. In it, he indicates that Cook’s editorials written prior to Quest’s founding revealed to church leaders that there are, in fact, gay people within the Adventist church. It forced the church to finally face the question of what to do with queer individuals and how to address the issue. Perhaps it seems logical that they would support an organization like Cook’s – given the traditional position that homosexuality is sinful, a group

claiming to be able to remove the orientation itself would probably be viewed as doing a service. However, given the insights of modern study, we can now understand that sexual orientation, generally speaking, cannot be changed. Unfortunately, the response of the Adventist church and related institutions to homosexuality has been spotty at best. The [student handbook](#) for Andrews University still cites Yarhouse and Jones in order to claim that conversion therapy may result in increases in heterosexual attraction. This study has been discredited for, among other things, failure to exclude participants who had a financial/occupational stake in a positive outcome of conversion therapy, failure to include individuals who did not remain in the program, and failure to establish a baseline level of psychological harm prior to the introduction of conversion therapy<sup>5</sup>. In addition, leaders at modern institutions associated with the Adventist church, such as Coming Out Ministries and Know His Love Ministries, still suggest pseudoscientific Freudian explanations for the development of a homosexual orientation or a transgender identity, such as molestation in childhood or an unbalanced relationship with one's parents — explanations that have been thoroughly refuted by modern scholarship.<sup>8,9</sup>

It should be clear that in our modern society, queer people aren't going anywhere, and the Adventist church needs to continue to engage with the question of how best to welcome queer individuals into worship. Hopefully, as an institution, we can look back on our mistakes, acknowledge them, and ask God how best to move forward in a way that displays His radical love. As Chambers saw it, "God is calling us to be the Father — to welcome everyone, to love unhindered."

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NEWS

# Introducing Andrews Through the Ages

Melissa Moore 12.08.23



Photo by the Center for Adventist Research and Alyssa Joo

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As Andrews University approaches its 150th anniversary in 2024, the Student Movement is taking time to reflect on the existence of Andrews University, including its future and its history. Be on the lookout for features covering all aspects of Andrews University history, starting in these last two issues of the semester and extending through the rest of the school year. Stick around for this upcoming News series to revisit past eras and get to know a little more about the school many of us experience every day. Topics covered will include a range of

subjects from the founding of Andrews University's predecessor, Battle Creek College, to information about the school song, to the lives of those iconic campus structures are named after. This year has been full of many major milestones for Andrews. While we wait to see where the future leads us, it is important to reflect on Andrews University's humble beginnings and learn from the past. Thus, the series begins by tracing Andrews' early years, that have led to the basic identity of Andrews as we know it today. Last week, the [first article](#) introduced the founding of Battle Creek College. As the school year continues, there will be many more unique, interesting, and lesser-known tidbits of information about Andrews University, so stay tuned every week for the latest Student Movement issue. Hopefully, after this series is complete, all readers will leave knowing a little bit more about "[Our Dear AU](#)\*."

\*"Our Dear AU" is the Andrews University school song.

## The New Diversity Position and Students' Reactions To It

Nate Miller 12.08.23



Photo by Darren Heslop

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Andrews University's campus has, over these last few weeks, undergone much unrest. The Chief Diversity Officer (CDO), which was [initially](#) established in July 2017 as the Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion and revised to Vice President for University Culture and Inclusion in August 2021, has been updated yet again. On November 22 of this year, an email was sent out to the student body stating that the title for the new CDO would be the Assistant to the President for University Mission and Culture, prompting much on- and off- campus concern and discussion.

Many students are still unclear, however, about what the exact changes happening to the administration are. In a [statement](#) provided to the Student Movement, President John Wesley Taylor V states that the new title is to “help bring consistency to how we describe administrative positions on our campus” and that he is “committed to the idea that this sort of role can and will be an influential position on our University campus.” He also affirms that “what does not change with this position is that the important and essential work of this diversity officer role will be committed to continuing to help move our university forward on issues of diversity throughout all areas of our campus.” A group of students and I had the opportunity to sit down with President Taylor to gain more insight on the specifics of this new role. In our conversation, he reaffirmed that “this is not a change in the diversity officer.... The change is that we have expanded the reach of it to incorporate our mission and core values where diversity is integral.”

However, a [graphic](#) comparing the [original](#) 2017 CDO job posting and the [updated](#) job posting shows that the position has changed substantially. All mention of equity present in the first paragraph of the original posting is gone. Gone, also, are seven of the sixteen original “Duties and Responsibilities:” the new section of the posting does not include any mention of the University Diversity Council (which has been a [fixture](#) of the university since 2003), and the new job description has also left out three clauses stipulating the CDO's involvement in “active leadership and advocacy,” “search and selection processes,” and “secur[ing] external funding.” In place of these sections are clauses on the CDO's promotion of the university's mission and core values. In the “Qualifications” section, a clause detailing how the CDO would be involved with “leading efforts relating to institutional access, diversity, inclusion, multiculturalism, and education and employment equity” is gone. Finally, the entire “Interpersonal Interactions” section is gone, which stipulated the CDO's involvement in “Cultural



and Diversity Programming, Disability Matters, Gender Discrimination, Racial and Cultural Discrimination, Inclusive Hiring Practices, Affirmative Action, Age Discrimination, Religious Diversity, Global Diversity,” and “LGBTQ Matters.” Yes, the position is still technically a “Chief Diversity Officer,” but it seems that so much has changed between the original job posting and the recent one that the “Assistant to the President for University Mission and Culture” is a position all its own. When pressed, President Taylor responded that “a job description that is posted is not exhaustive of everything a person does, it is exemplary of what a person does,” but if the exemplary characteristics of this new position exclude so much of what gave the CDO its character, change has been made to the CDO position.

What has further alarmed students is the resignation of Dr. Danielle Pilgrim, who was appointed interim Chief Diversity Officer by former President Andrea Luxton shortly before the latter’s departure from the university. Dr. Pilgrim, in her [letter](#) of resignation, says that what contributed to her resignation were “behaviors [that] have eroded trust and psychological safety, creating an environment that fosters a lack of inclusion.” She alleges that “the new chair of the Andrews University Board of Trustees of Student Experience & Faith Development Subcommittee has also engaged in harmful and demeaning practices... His attitude toward me... was dismissive, disrespectful, and somewhat hostile.” Finally, Dr. Pilgrim says that the decision to adopt the position of Assistant to the President for University Mission and Culture could cause “potential harm to individuals at the University.”

Students\* across the university expressed confusion and concern\*\* about this new shift and Dr. Pilgrim’s treatment. One senior student thought that the decision to exclude the Diversity Council from the final decision was “ridiculous and very calculating. They wanted to make this decision regardless of what anyone had to say.” A freshman didn’t understand the need for the change. “This is causing an uproar,” they said, “so it’s obviously making the students unhappy. It just seems like the administration is not listening.” Why one of the first decisions “of a new administration that people are already kind of suspicious of would be something that they know that the majority of the student body would not be happy about” was a question a junior had.

On the diversity of the university, a freshman said they don’t know “why they’re taking away that position. Especially because our whole thing is that we’re the most diverse university.”

A senior said that “the university has benefited a lot from having a large number of diverse students, and I think we’re not owning it by having a position that doesn’t say ‘diversity and inclusion.’” A former cultural club president said “I wouldn’t be where I am today without the support of the Office for Diversity and Inclusion, and if that disappears, I would be very sad to see that really pivotal aspect of my college experience also disappear.” A freshman student voiced their concern that this signals “a move towards assimilation and homogeneity, as opposed to celebrating diversity and allowing us to be different.” A junior international student says they can “understand people who come from a similar background as me, international students who come from a different culture and a different experience who need a place to feel comfortable.... By not having a specific person in a specific leadership position that caters to these students, they’re going to end up losing a lot of diversity and a lot of their international students and it’s going to basically sink the whole ship.”

Student responses were not all negative, however. One freshman student definitively indicated that “mission and culture is not a bad thing. I heard one person say that because the position is ‘mission and culture,’ mission is othering.... Yes, there are cases of missionaries doing bad things, but mission is not a bad thing. So, I don’t think that’s a wrong thing to put culture together with mission.” A junior agreed, stating they believed that President Taylor is “trying to do something positive for the school. He’s a very mission-focused, committed Adventist. Honestly, I believe he’s trying to do something good. I can’t question his intentions.”

I asked each of the eighteen diverse students I interviewed if, in their opinions, the university was headed in a good direction with this decision. The vast majority of them indicated that it was not (while many expressed confusion about the exact details of the decision). At the time of this writing, 737 students, faculty, alumni, and friends of the university who feel the same way have signed a [petition](#) to “Save the Position of VP for Diversity and Inclusion.” It seems that this on-campus discord has united many strands of the university together in a common cause: they don’t want this change. Only time will tell how the university moves forward in the wake of many students’ and faculties’ concerns; let us hope that all that transpires is for the best.

*\*To preserve interviewed students’ privacy, their names have been omitted from this article.*

*\*\*We reached out to offices on campus that might give alternative views but did not receive any responses.*

# Ideas

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## IDEAS

# Christmas Traditions

Katie Davis [12.08.23](#)

As winter approaches and lights start glistening on streets and houses, we start thinking about our favorite traditions during this time of year. The scent of pine fills the air and the joyous melodies we can't get out of our heads seem to guide us back to our past and future in one moment. We think about all the memories of Christmas in the past and what kind of memories we will make this year. Sipping hot chocolate or eggnog with our family, we dream of the laughter and fun that we will be experiencing in a couple of weeks.

Christmas is about the traditions we celebrate with those dear to us. It's a time of year when the threads of family, culture, and individuality weave together a symphony of traditions. Each house within a country participates in unique practices and journeys during this memorable time. It's not just one unique tradition that makes this holiday special but a kaleidoscope of traditions that bloom within the intimate confines of each family. The echoes of practices, such as searching for a Christmas tree or taking down the Christmas tree from the attic, are handed down through generations. Not only do generational traditions make this time of year unique, but the new traditions we can add to this unforgettable time of year also make it special.

Every culture has a unique set of customs they participate in yearly. For instance, the [Swedes](#) make a gigantic straw goat called the Gävle Goat. It stands over forty-two feet high and twenty-three feet wide and weighs about 3.6 tons. Or Saint Nicholas might come down the chimney in the Netherlands and bring treats like gingerbread men. You might not even see snow on Christmas day in most places, so instead, you might find cookouts in countries like South Africa and New

Zealand. Christmas might be celebrated in January like in Spain and Ukraine. And, in Switzerland, Swiss families make their advent calendars for the holiday seasons and make it a fun activity for children. Each gift the kids receive or find reveals a surprise or treat with the most significant gift on Christmas Eve.

Within each tradition mentioned above are practices within traditions and twists and variances to the tradition. Building upon long-held customs makes this time monumental. This festive season brings unspeakable magic to the world that can only happen during this time of year. It might be the long generational traditions passed down each year, or the scent of sugar cookies baking in the oven, but one thing is for sure: the stories told and the memories made make this holiday so memorable. It's skiing or snowboarding with our family or having gingerbread house competitions that create laughter and never-ending smiles. It's seeing kids open up their presents on Christmas Eve or Christmas and the surrisement and happiness shown on their faces. It's hugging your family that you haven't seen all year and catching up on events that happened throughout the year. This time of year binds us together in a magical embrace, transcending time and distance. It's from decorating the Christmas tree to the familiar Christmas carols that the true enchantment of Christmas unfolds, creating a shared narrative that makes this joyous season uniquely special for each one of us.

Some of the Christmas traditions that my family and I participate in include White Elephant, Saran Wrap, Oven Mitten, and going to Busch Gardens, which is a Christmas Town in Williamsburg, Virginia. Before we play the Saran Wrap Game, my mom or I set it up by wrapping a bunch of random items such as candy, gag gifts, and gift cards, in saran wrap. Then we get the whole family together. The game works by unraveling the saran wrap as the person to our left is trying to roll doubles with dice. Once the person rolls doubles, they pass the dice to their left, grab the saran wrap and start unraveling. The game ends when all the goodies are unwrapped and the saran wrap. The oven mitten game has the same concept but instead of using saran wrap, we use about a dozen rolls of wrapping paper, maybe a lock box, and tons of duct tape. I usually end up wrapping this game because nobody else wants to spend hours wrapping box after box. I start with the gift card and wrap it with half a dozen layers of paper. Then I put the gift in boxes and keep wrapping it and layering it until it's huge! Once finished, my family and I gather together and play the game. We each get fifteen seconds each to try and unwrap the box with oven mittens. These games bring back so many memories and I will definitely pass them down to my future family.

## IDEAS

# Coming Out Ministries: ‘Coming Out’ is Coming In

Two perspectives by Lexie Dunham & Bella Hamann 12.08.23



Photo by Katie Rainbow and Pixaby

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### Lexie Dunham

On November 13, Coming Out Ministries (COM) announced that they would be purchasing a permanent residence right across the street from Andrews University. Coming Out Ministries is a Seventh-day Adventist “ministry” mainly targeted at individuals in the LGBTQ+ community. As stated in an article last week by [Erin Beers](#) (as well as on the [Coming Out Ministries’ website](#)), Coming Out Ministries seeks to release individuals from the “chains of homosexuality.” With this statement alone, let us reflect on how the presence of this “ministry” could harm our campus community.

First, I am putting “ministry” in quotes because I do not believe we should be calling anything harmful to many people a ministry. One Biblical [definition](#) of the

term “ministry” is “a sense of being duty-bound to work under God’s authority as His loyal servant.” I do not believe anyone should boast that they feel a duty to attempt to forcibly change people into something they are not. I say this because Coming Out Ministries has been accused of that. This is something we would call conversion therapy, which can be incredibly emotionally and physically damaging. COM has denied these allegations many times, but why would language such as “gay/homosexual deceptions” and “addressing the many issues of the LGBTQ+ ideology and agenda” (all from their website) inspire confidence that they do not seek to change individuals and judge them while doing so? While COM has denied these allegations, they cannot say that they have not promoted their “ministry” as a way to “fix” or be the ultimate medicine for the “LGBTQ+ lifestyle.”

The presence of this building in such close proximity to Andrews sends the message that the university condones the quotes mentioned above. This is a fatal blow to the principles this university formerly stood on. With the presence of Haven, the confidential LGBTQ+ organization on this campus, I was always under the impression that this campus was a welcoming and safe space for the LGBTQ+ community. I, along with many others, were thrilled to see that. However, because COM wants to collaborate with and be accessible to the [“faculty, staff, students and visitors”](#) of Andrews University on a “daily basis.”

Furthermore, it is essential to note that, according to [the student handbook](#), Andrews University can disclose information such as names, University addresses, gender, and other identifying information without our written consent (page 68). Some students have worried that COM would seek identifying information of Haven members from the university’s database. In the town hall meeting held this past week, VP Faehner assured students that the university would not release this information. That is good to know, but still, the potential is concerning.

The fact that I am writing this article speaks to the amount of individuals on this campus who are scared by this new development. Many LGBTQ+ individuals do not get the support they need at home, and they were promised at least an ounce of solace here. As per the handbook, Andrews University [promised](#) to “create a safe and caring climate where such diverse groups [LGBTQ+ individuals] are treated with dignity and respect.” The handbook also states that reorientation efforts can be harmful. But now, we are unsure if Andrews University still believes those statements. Students may be unable to find the peace and rest they need because of the overwhelming presence that COM states they would like to have on this university.

Some hope was offered at the town hall, where President Taylor revealed that no communication had been made between him and COM. Whether future communications will ensue is unclear.

I cry as I write this article because I think of so many friends and relatives who have been affected by these so-called ministries. My uncle, who was gay and has since passed away, was kicked out of the church for who he loved, and I have heard a myriad of stories of people who had the same experience. Is that the kind of thing we should be promoting? Should we be saying that LGBTQ+ individuals can't be who they are and love God at the same time? I say no, we should not. To do so would put us in the position of judging other people's relationships with God, which is not our job! We should never try to make someone leave the church for simply existing, or attempt to harm those who are being who they are.

I just want to publicly say that I do not support communication and "everyday contact" with COM, and I know many other students also feel this way.

### **Bella Hamann**

Last week, an [article](#) was published in the Student Movement that addressed something that I believe to be a cause for major concern: a conversion therapy [group](#) that is headed for Andrews.

The article (written by Erin Beers) delved into the fine logistics of what that group, Coming Out Ministries, plans to [achieve](#) within the next few months. It highlights the organization's intent, ideologies, and potential implications if successful. I could add to that article with a slew of information, but I want to highlight something more qualitative and personal with this piece.

Coming Out Ministries came to my high school in [2017](#). I am not sure if they were explicitly told why they had been invited to speak for a weekend, but it was not to educate the school as a whole. You see, I had a classmate who was openly gay. When the school administration discovered this, instead of *a.* ignoring it because he was, in all honesty, simply existing or *b.* talk to him about it privately, they instead reserved an entire weekend, booked Coming Out Ministries, and had them present to the entire student body at the boarding academy I attended. All to target one student, under the guise of a Weekend of Spiritual Emphasis.

If the goal of this organization was to simply introduce a redemptive approach to LGBTQ+ matters, why were they then utilized in a way that appeared to be a retaliation? It does not matter whether COM was aware of this or not; the point remains that their influence *was* used in that way. I saw what impact their presentation had on many of the people I went to school with. I saw identities get called a misconception, I watched COM's [documentary](#) where it alluded to a disproven opinion that the only way you can possibly be gay is if you were sexually abused as a child. I watched the presenters compare their previously provocative lifestyles to the sexualities of my friends and deemed them to be the same, which they were not.

Much like where I was introduced to them, Coming Out Ministries gives presentations wherever they are welcome. This makes them ideal for many conservative-leaning SDA locations, such as other Adventist Academies, GYC Conferences, and more recently, Village SDA Church, this past September. Still, they do not consider themselves a conversion therapy group, and are quite insistent on this point. However, I believe this to be a flat-out lie.

Coming Out Ministries is [undoubtedly](#) a covert conversion therapy group, whether they believe so or not. One could argue that they *can't* be considered one because, unlike many notorious [groups](#), they don't force-feed compulsory heterosexuality to their targeted audience, nor do they fully deny one's sexual orientation. Despite this, COM relies on a different approach: utilizing subtlety rather than blatancy to formulate their desired outcomes. They subconsciously endorse their ideas in minute ways rather than accusations and belittlement, which, like last week's article mentioned, there exists an "act of persuasion involved in every conversation."

A problematic [rebuttal](#) to Erin's article was released on December 3. Although it is true that I have strong opinions in favor of the LGBTQ+ community, I also recognize that because Andrews is a flagship SDA institution, there cannot be any statements affirming the demographic because of the current stance of the church. That in no way means, however, that addressing this topic from the church's official stance gives *anyone* the right to demean and belittle someone of a differing view. This conversation is an issue of religiosity or biblical accuracy, which will always deal with differing views. It is one that reflects on rhetoric that can be harmful to an already marginalized population group within the Adventist sector, and could harm existing rapport built on foundations of trust and care. The core of true Christianity is to simply love, and while some may be convicted to call out



what they deem sin, it is worrisome that, while in the process of doing so, it causes people to hurt instead of heal.

Along with damaging rhetoric voiced by other outlets, COM's end goals have a high likelihood of bringing about serious mental health [implications](#) for the LGBTQ+ community on campus. The LGBTQ+ community as a whole is already at a high [risk](#) for mental illness, and individuals who are a part of that demographic at Andrews —especially those who *do* have mental health issues present— will receive exposure to a group riddled with misleading concepts. All that said, COM placing their physical location right across the road shouldn't cause any major upending to the campus dynamic, especially since there is a cabinet-level employee in place that specifically addresses these types of issues in a tactful way. At least, that's what *should* be the case.

Many students and faculty are already aware that an email was sent out over Thanksgiving break, addressing a concern that many employees and boards had previously raised, which was that of the status of the vacant cabinet level position of the Vice President of Diversity and Inclusion, a position previously held by Michael Nixon, Esq. Currently, Dr. Danielle Pilgrim serves as an interim for the role; she is considered a cabinet member, but her time as interim ends in December, as per her letter of [resignation](#). According to the email, the search for a permanent replacement for this position has not occurred, and instead, a search for a job entitled "Assistant to the President for University Mission and Culture" has replaced it. This email has already raised significant discussion, as seen by an [article](#) written by Lily Burke (senior, anthropology, English, and Spanish) and a widespread [petition](#) addressing the matter.

After looking at both job descriptions for the [former](#) and the [latter](#), they appear to be similar, save for two factors: first, the former stresses equity while the latter emphasizes the phrase 'biblical principles;' and two, the entire section for 'Interpersonal interactions' was cut. This, along with President Taylor publicly sharing his [perspective](#) on human sexuality on the AU website raises questions regarding the future of true, unbiased diversity initiatives. If a position's intention is to promote diversity, then personal beliefs should *not* be an obstruction to doing so. Even after reasons given at the Town Hall event which occurred on December 6, there is still the question of why there was even a need to change the position in the first place. Was the previous position so limited in its scope that it could not focus on multiple sectors? Was there a need to create an entirely new board of

individuals to look for somebody specific? The answer to those questions still remains unclear.

It is indisputable that a topic of this nature is controversial; especially in a university like Andrews. However, as neutral as I have always tried to be on paper, the future plans of Coming Out Ministries coupled with the replacement of a cabinet-level diversity position raises serious concerns, and could lead the school into becoming an institution that does not care for its diverse student body and instead portrays a façade that looks accepting but does the opposite. For being a school that wants to change the world for the better, it seems as if AU is taking steps backward and is embodying a harmful narrative that could destroy what previous leaders worked towards.

I refuse to say nothing. I hope many of you will do the same.

## IDEAS

# How Can We Improve Andrews?

Abby Shim 12.08.23



Photo by Darren Heslop

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As the semester wraps up and everyone enters finals week, the AUSM would like to introduce a new series for this upcoming spring semester titled “How Can We Improve Andrews?”. Every week, a new article will be released by writers employed by the Student Movement who will tackle this question and provide feedback from other students. In addition, members of administration will be interviewed on how to possibly implement appropriate student suggestions.

In lieu of recent events occurring on campus, this series will provide an opportunity for the student body to remain informed as well as provide their own thoughts and opinions.

Stay tuned for next semester! In the meantime, good luck on your finals and have a fantastic winter break!

## IDEAS

# How to Combat Seasonal Depression

Robert Zhang [12.08.23](#)

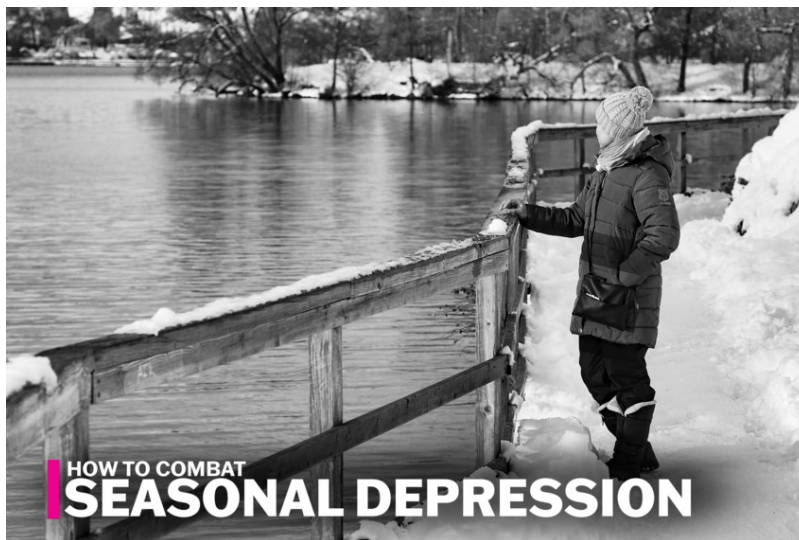


Photo by Pixaby

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Seasonal depression, more formally known as Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), is a type of depression that typically arises during the autumn and winter months when there is less natural sunlight. It's characterized by [symptoms](#) such as persistent low mood, loss of interest in usual activities, lethargy, and social withdrawal. These symptoms are often triggered by the reduced level of sunlight in fall and winter, leading to a disruption in the body's internal clock, a drop in serotonin levels (a neurotransmitter that affects mood), and an imbalance in melatonin levels (which affects sleep patterns and mood).

Typically, a professional therapist will [treat](#) SAD in a variety of ways, especially if symptoms are severe. The primary treatment for Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) typically involves two key approaches: the use of a specific class of antidepressant medications known as Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors (SSRIs), and the application of light therapy, a method that mimics natural sunlight. Therapists can also help relieve symptoms of depression through simple mindfulness and relaxation techniques and through exercises such as meditation and yoga. These practices focus on living in the present moment and can help shift negative thoughts and reduce stress. If you feel that you or a friend is in serious need of professional help, you can contact our school's Counseling & Testing Center (CTC) at 269-471-3470 or email us at [ctcenter@andrews.edu](mailto:ctcenter@andrews.edu) to seek professional psychology help.

In addition to the above, it is crucial to [seek support](#) from family and friends. Socializing may be the last thing on your mind when you're feeling low, but being with others can improve your mood. Additionally, joining a support group for people with SAD can be beneficial. One of the cornerstone principles of social psychology is the importance of social interaction and support in maintaining mental health. For individuals suffering from SAD, maintaining a robust social network is crucial. Regular interaction with friends, family, and support groups can provide a buffer against the feelings of isolation and loneliness that often accompany this condition. Engaging in social activities, even when there's an inclination to withdraw, can provide significant emotional uplifting.

Social psychology also sheds light on the impact of [cultural norms](#) and attitudes towards mental health. In many cultures, there's a stigma attached to mental health issues, which can deter people from seeking help. Promoting awareness and open discussions about mental health can encourage a more accepting and supportive environment for those suffering from seasonal depression. Therefore, we not only need to recognize that we have the courage to ask for help when we feel

down, but we also need to pay attention to whether our friends and family around us have similar anxieties. Bringing care to them can not only prevent their anxiety and depression, but also effectively build a stronger community, thereby forming community immunity to SAD.

In addition to seeking professional treatment and group retreat, [changing](#) your lifestyle can alleviate this phenomenon. Sitting here will give you a few very useful tips which you may start to changes right now:

1. Exposure to natural light is very beneficial. Try to get outdoors during the day (even if it's cloudy). Indoors, open curtains and sit close to a window to increase your exposure to natural light.
2. Regular physical activity can help relieve stress and anxiety, both of which can increase SAD symptoms. Exercise also helps boost serotonin levels in the brain, which can improve mood. In terms of resources on campus, a hot tub or sauna is a great way to relax after a good workout in the Andreasen Wellness Center.
3. Maintain a Healthy Diet: A well-balanced diet can play a crucial role in how you feel. Overeating and craving carbohydrates are common in SAD, so it's important to be mindful of your eating habits. As for the Cafe in our school, although it is somewhat controversial, the provision of a large number of fresh vegetables and fruits can very well alleviate this symptom. So using your meal plan as efficiently as possible and consuming enough fruits and fresh vegetable salads at cafes will be very effective.

# Christmas or Paganmas: A Question of Celebration

Rodney Bell II [12.08.23](#)



Photo by Alexa Fotos

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It's that time of year again: Christmas trees, lights, music festivals, and more. It is also when we Christians ask if this season is something we should be celebrating. It could be for various reasons, be it pagan roots, concerns over commercialization, or more. Whatever the reason, this time of year certainly brings many questions, some of which hopefully may be answered in this article.

A couple of things must be considered before we can answer whether Christians should celebrate Christmas, the first of which is the historical background. The

problem that arrives almost immediately is that the holiday's history is murky. Some [scholars](#) attribute the holiday to ancient Greco-Roman festivals celebrating the harvest, while others attribute it to Catholic traditions, firmly placing it as [Christian](#). Neither of these claims can be easily disputed, especially when there is no logical reason that two holidays, especially from two different cultures and belief systems, couldn't happen on the same day, with each having little to do with the other.

Next, we must consider whether the holiday is Christian or pagan; it hasn't easily been placed into either category throughout history. Whether celebrating December 25th as the birth of Christ or 'merely' a celebration of family, giving, and childlike wonder and curiosity, it would be hard to argue that Christmas has remained the same for the past 2000 odd years. Different countries celebrate the holiday differently, with different folk tales and traditions linked to it, and it has even faced attempted bannings at other times in history, such as in 1647 in [England](#). In fact, many modernized Christmas celebrations can be traced back to Charles Dickens's "A Christmas Carol," which changed perceptions of the holiday upon its publication in [1843](#).

This all leads to the question of whether we should be asking if Christians should be celebrating Christmas, the pre-Dickens holiday with pagan roots; Christmas, the birth of Christ; Christmas, the modern variant; some form of mixture; or none at all. To start, we can quickly rule out the pagan-rooted variant of the holiday because, despite the fact that there is no broad consensus as to what such a holiday actually would entail, it is undoubtedly rooted in mystic practices. The two that require more consideration, especially in a Christian circle, are the birth of Christ and the modern Dickens-inspired tale.

As for the birth of Christ, I have no problem celebrating the 25th of December as such. My family has done so for as long as I can remember, and even though we openly acknowledge that the Messiah was more likely born in spring or autumn, we will continue to celebrate the event. I see no problem with celebrating the birth of Christ on any day people choose, be it in December or otherwise, but I don't believe that many Christians actually do. The issue I've heard typically comes down to either a link to old pagan traditions, which we have already discussed, or a modern pagan interpretation of certain Christmas traditions, such as Santa Claus. To examine this aspect of the challenge of the Christian celebration of the holiday, we must look in closer detail at the turning point of modern Christmas.

“A Christmas Carol” does not have anything particular to do with Santa Claus. Yes, the ghost of Christmas present closely resembles the idea of Father Christmas, and the ideas of what Santa eventually comes to represent are there, but primarily, what the book establishes about the holiday is charity, kindness, love, and goodwill towards our fellow men. Santa Claus didn’t fully come into his own until 1863 when paintings by Thomas Nast were created depicting St. Nicholas from the 1823 poem, “A Visit from St. Nicholas” (also known as “’Twas the Night Before Christmas”). This poetic interpretation was heavily influenced and linked to Catholic traditions and the ‘real St. Nick,’ Saint Nicholas of [Myra](#), a man known for his kindness and generosity to the poor. However, Santa Claus would originate from this story and eventually greatly influence how Christmas is celebrated.

As Santa Claus is such an integral part of Christmas, let us now examine him in complete relation to the question of celebration. To some, Santa has come to represent greed, capitalism, and the holiday's commercialization. Still, to others, he symbolizes childlike innocence, joy, charity, love, guardianship, and more. While I can see why some have become jaded with the holiday being commercialized, I cannot find it in me to agree with Santa being a symbol for it, at least to anyone who actually digs into the story. Santa is undoubtedly not greedy in any of the classical stories told about him, and more importantly, he gives gifts to everyone around the world, regardless of status, finances, or nationality. I would love to hear such an explanation if that can be interpreted as greedy.

Clearly, I strongly favor the second interpretation and have no problem celebrating Santa as a symbol of everything I stated. I understand that many people’s issues with Santa do not come down to commercialism. Still, rather a religious notion of Santa being the modern world trying to make a replacement for Christ and that celebrating Santa Claus is akin to idolatry. However, I find this line of argumentation tenuous at best, especially as someone who enjoys both aspects of the holiday. Something can only replace Christ if you allow it to, and having role models, be they fictional or real, is not the same as idolatry and worship. Additionally, Santa Claus is directly linked to a deeply religious individual who would undoubtedly be opposed to the idea of being held in Christ’s stead.

Now, onto the question we have been seeking to answer since the beginning: should Christians celebrate Christmas? Simply put, in a quote from Shakespeare, “To thine own self be true.” In reality, your reading of this article has likely done little to change how you will spend this December 25th. Perhaps it did help you consider some other points of view on the issue. I don’t believe that anyone is



being disingenuous in their celebration or refusal to celebrate the holiday; it is just that it is a matter of perspective. I wish all of you a merry 25th and that, as I'm sure we can all agree on at the very least, "God bless us, everyone!"

## PULSE

# Christmas Spirit, Please Don't Go!

Reagan Westerman [12.08.23](#)

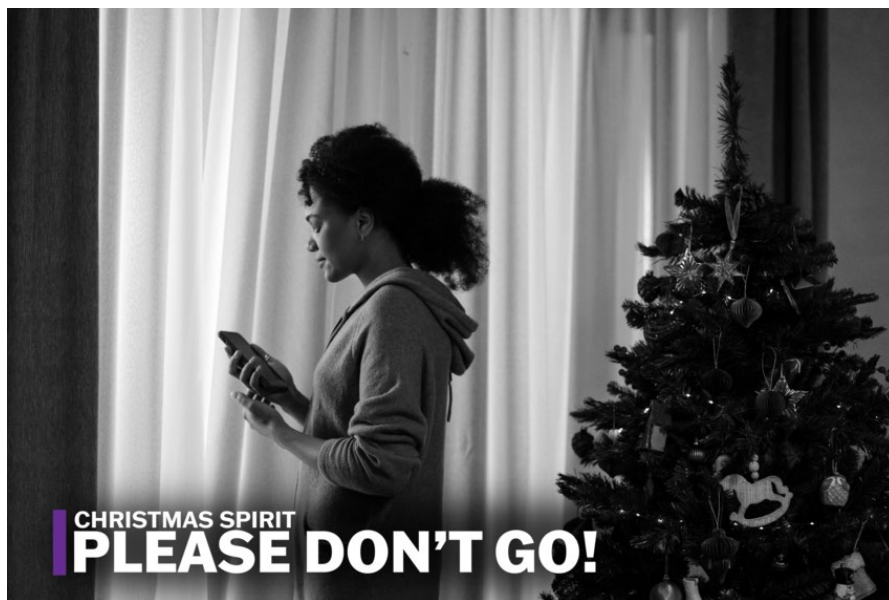


Photo by cottonbro studio

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What makes Christmas, well, Christmas? Is it the eggnog and candy canes? Or the mistletoe and stockings? As a child, your whole world is constructed for you. Your parents line up the presents, put up the tree and light up the house, while you help with however much your parents allow. There is no care in the world except what to put on your wish list! The cycle continues when you grow up and have your own kids; you'll do the same for them. You'll let them bake Christmas cookies and watch Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer. The question is, when does this Christmas spirit end? It's that warm feeling of love and appreciation, a comforting and relaxing emotion that seems to cross our hearts some years more than others.

Christmas is more commercialized now than it ever was [before](#). Perhaps the Christmas spirit seems fake or forced, with all of the commercials and ads buzzing in your ear. Not just in America, but everywhere around the world everyone is looking to get a bang for their buck as they squeeze out the ends of Christmas, from Halloween to New Year's Eve. It almost seems like the spirit everyone hopes for nowadays is artificial. People hope for a temporary excitement from the present they receive rather than a seasonal feeling of contentment.

Many say that once they grow older, they are tasked with responsibilities which draw their attention away from what they now see as silly traditions that take up nothing but time. Personal life stressors such as school and work are the priority—not seeking to get into the holiday spirit. In fact, Christmastime may be the only thing to show Americans that perhaps we are not truly living in the moment. The American life is a very fast-paced one. Today, messages can be sent in a second. Information can be consumed in minutes. People are expected to fill up their schedules and hurry to their next appointment. Double booking and multi-tasking is the expectation. We are caught in a frenzied, chaotic, spiraling way of life that demands our attention and focus 24/7. In America, progress equals fast. To snap out of this flow, and suddenly realize it's December because you hear Jingle Bells in Walmart, is the epitome of holiday whiplash.

When Christmas comes around, there is this guilt that we are not appreciating life. For some, the Christmas spirit is a passing thought, but is never sought out. A child's life is slow, thus they notice the small things in life and take their time to appreciate what's in front of them. Seldom are we granted that gift anymore—the gift of time and ease. The Christmas spirit isn't something that is obtained through a pit full of presents or the pressure to get the lights around the house just right. To get the Christmas spirit again is a beautiful experience because it means taking time out of your work, out of your life. You are giving that time to what really matters on this earth—your family. For one moment, one season, you are choosing your family and peace over other things that could occupy your time.

So, I leave you with the thought of what you will do with your time this year. Maybe it doesn't hurt to stop and smell the hollies this holiday season. Your family will miss you; your work will not. It will soon be a new year to rush around once again. I just ask that perhaps you take the time to listen to that Christmas song with a friend, or bake those Christmas cookies with a sibling. I mean, the Christmas spirit only comes around once a year! Why not make it count?

# Civil Rights at Andrews: A Series

Wambui Karanja 12.08.23



Photo by Kelly Lacy

The start of the [Civil Rights Movement](#) is thought to be marked by one brave woman's refusal to give up her bus seat to a white man in Montgomery, Alabama, on December 1, 1955. Recognized as the "mother of the modern-day Civil Rights Movement," Rosa Parks' decision served as a catalyst for change. In the following years, Black people and their allies fought hard to achieve equal rights under the law for African Americans, a group of people disenfranchised and largely regarded as second-class citizens. Their efforts led to the signing of legislation, like the [Civil Rights Act of 1957](#), the integration of schools, and other notable achievements.

Next semester, the Pulse section of the Student Movement will be doing a twelve-part series on the impact that the Civil Rights Movement has had on Andrews University. We will have pieces about the University's complex history with racism and discrimination, what was done in the way of achieving civil rights for all individuals on campus, and its effects today. The Civil Rights Movement served as

a blueprint for countless other social justice movements and its impact is far-reaching. Stay tuned for more.

PULSE

# The Meaning of Christmas

Anna Rybachek [12.08.23](#)



Photo by Brett Sayles

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Christmas. That word can bring so much to mind, some things good and some things not so much. The word carries with it a whiff of smoke coming from the fireplace, the aroma of freshly baked sugar cookies, the perfume of the evergreen Christmas tree, and the smell of crisp, falling snow. Memories of snowball fights, twinkling lights, colorful wrapping paper, musical concerts, and family gatherings come to life. Yet so do the stressors of final exams, work deadlines, Christmas shopping, music practices, and tense family relations. But what is Christmas really about? What is the meaning of Christmas?

To answer this, I interviewed a few Andrews students about their opinions on the true meaning of Christmas.

**What is the meaning of Christmas?**

“The real meaning of Christmas is that it is a time when the family gathers to celebrate the life of our Savior.” - *Sam Martin (sophomore, Biochemistry)*

“For me, Christmas is a lot about the traditions you have with your family. My family always goes on the second weekend after Thanksgiving to get our Christmas tree. We do other special things every year around Christmas, such as having crepes for Christmas Day breakfast. It is about those things you do with your family, year after year.” - *Scott Frain (freshman, agricultural business)*

“The meaning of Christmas, the way my family celebrates it, it is just an excuse to get together.” - *Sara Santana (senior, psychology)*

“Not much. My family has not celebrated Christmas since I was in 4th grade. I believe that we can appreciate Jesus’s birth any day of the year.” - *Anonymous.*

“I think it’s evolved for me. Obviously, it is about considering the birth of Jesus. But as a kid, it was more about getting, but now, as an adult, it is more about giving. It is the season of giving.” - *Moriah Duncan (graduate, social work)*

“Christmas to me is about celebrating Christ's birth and spending time with friends and family! It's also about taking the time to spread joy and cheer to everyone around us.” - *Bianca Loss (junior, elementary education)*

For some, Christmas is about family traditions. For others, it is simply an excuse to get together and have a great time. So, while the lights, food, music, snow, and other Christmasy things are essential, it seemed that the most common thread throughout all these reflections was people. Specifically those people that make our holidays so wonderful.

So Christmas, for many people, is directly tied to family. Most of our holiday memories consist not so much of the gifts we got, the food we ate, or the movies we watched but of the people who gave us those gifts, the family we made cookies with, and the friends with whom we watched those funny movies. In the end, Christmas is not only about the birth of Christ, which is very important but also about those who make that holiday special. Let us remember and appreciate those people who make our lives special, not just on Christmas but every day of the year!

# Letters to the Editor

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Desmond Hartwell Murray

**I Know Dilution!** [12.08.23](#)

Dear Editor,

Everyone knows that when more tasks, more projects, more assignments, and more work is given to them that their focus, attention, and time would be more divided - less - for each individual task. It is common sense. An excessive workload can result in significant drops in job performance. Just common sense.

Yet, we are being asked to believe in this tragicomical absurdity: that loading up a single person/position with significantly more work that “provide(s) our Andrews University diversity officer with an expanded title and role” would, against all commonsense and all lived experiences, magically enhance the necessary work and stewardship of diversity at Andrews University.

Every student knows that there is a huge difference in focus, attention, and time management between taking 2 credits and 16 credits. Every administrator, every homemaker, every dogcatcher, lemon juice vendor, multinational corporation CEO, Prime Minister, or President, knows the inverse ‘mathematical’ relationship of this universal truth: the more you have to do, the less you can focus on each individual task. Everybody knows it, that’s why it’s called commonsense.

This newly proposed Assistant to the President position according to the posted job description will be involved in and tasked with at least 16 responsibilities. In addition to being the chief diversity officer they are also assigned the following: university mission (still undefined), university culture (still nebulous), spiritual leadership, administrative leadership, academic leadership, missional activities liaison, multiple reporting functions, institutional change officer, conflict resolution, policy development, initiatives implementation, diversity training coordinator, multicultural coordinating and mentoring, recruitment and retention strategies for underrepresented populations, curricular and instructional infusion of diversity, and Title VII compliance.

Can any single individual you know realistically do all these tasks and assignments? Is there any person that has all these capabilities and skills? Is there any person with all these qualifications and experiences? How can a single person do all this? How can they do all this well? How can they do all this while enhancing the work, stewardship, performance, and results of being chief diversity officer? This position as it is currently described is by commonsense set up to fail by virtue of its excessive workload. It is not an upgrade but a major downgrade of our diversity commitment as a university that significantly benefits in revenue and reputation from diversity. This position is ill-conceived, unrealistic, and destined to fail, based on simple commonsense. It unnecessarily messes with a goose – diversity - that lays one of AU's golden eggs.

To make matters even worse, many of the responsibilities listed in the job description encroach on established positions and portfolios already held by experienced and qualified persons within our university administrative and staff structure. What are the limitations, demarcations, and specific guidelines addressing the encroachments built into this proposed position. It basically sets up organizational chaos and confusion, which its launch is unmistakably engendering, on and off campus. Together, chaos and confusion, is perhaps now its singular crowning achievement. 1 Corinthians 14:33 is crystal clear that “God is not the author of confusion, but of peace.”

As a chemist, I know dilution. I know concentration, I know density. This newly proposed position is dilution, plain and simple. It effectively and practically demotes the priority, position, importance, and commitment to diversity, at exactly a time when greater focus and attention, stewardship and time is needed in the form and functions of a Vice President for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at Andrews University. The diversity density function at Andrews University is precipitating exponentially. It could impact our demographics, brand, reputation, and revenue. Most everybody knows it. US News & World Report surveys and rankings will reflect it. For most of us, this is just common sense. And so will be the consequences. Is this the side of history we really want to be on?

Desmond Hartwell Murray

Associate Professor of Chemistry

The Student Movement *welcomes submission of thoughtfully written letters by current*

*members of the Andrews University community (students/staff/faculty). Our next issue will be published in late January. Published letters may be lightly copy-edited. Submit to [smeditor@andrews.edu](mailto:smeditor@andrews.edu)*

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

# Shandelle Henson

12.08.23

Dear Editor, and my dear students and colleagues,

I love Andrews University. I have grown as a person and as a Christian over the 22 years of my tenure because of the way we intentionally cherish and celebrate our diversity. I am so proud of who we are, even as we still have more to do in this regard. We must keep moving forward in love, always following Christ.

Over these years I have learned much about myself and about the diverse people around me. Although my intentions were always good, my ignorance with regards to the feelings and realities of my neighbors has been remarkable. Good intentions and civility are not enough when it comes to Christ's command to "love your neighbor as yourself." I am learning to care about how my neighbor feels and how our society is structured.

My eyes have slowly been opened in so many ways as I have awakened to the people around me. This rebirth into the Kingdom has been possible because of the supportive, pastoral, loving, yet instructional, diversity by which I have been surrounded at Andrews. I am not "there" yet, but I intend to keep on growing in understanding.

I am enormously grateful for the spiritual leadership of Dr. Luxton, Dr. Arthur, and V.P. Nixon. Dr. Luxton and her administrative team have been by far the best spiritual leaders I have ever had. They have helped me grow as a citizen of God's Kingdom. Their spiritual legacy and influence are profoundly Christlike!

Shared doctrine is obviously important and defining for our community. Our deepest unity, however, lies in our increasing awareness of each other as human beings. We become unified as we grow in the understanding that Christ declares every human being to be equally and infinitely valuable.



My friends, never give up the faith. Andrews University is an awesome place and we have an awesome responsibility to society.

Shandelle Henson

Professor of Mathematics

Professor of Ecology

## Last Word

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### LAST WORD

# Sonder\* in the Train Station

Amelia Stefanescu 12.08.23

“Trein richting Amsterdam: vertraagd.” (Train towards Amsterdam: delayed).

The intercom voice blared through the colossal train station, accentuating my already-growing annoyance.

“Third time, should we try for a fourth?” I muttered under my breath, the sound drowned out by the whooshing of the trains and the blend of human sounds, from the shrieking of excited little children to the clicking of poshly-dressed women’s stilettos.

This was my last full day in Europe for the summer, and I’ll admit, spending it sitting around for hours, waiting for a train while trying to decipher the words around me with my broken Dutch – what did “heelal” mean again? – was not what I had imagined. But there I was, sitting on the cold stone bench, tuning into the “hellos,” the “goodbyes,” and all the conversations in between.

I looked up towards the clock, bored, watching from the distance as the second hand rhythmically ticked from one number to the next. The train station’s multiple levels towered over me. On the highest one, there was a big, beautiful clock surrounded by golden swirls and sculpted ornaments, an arch of stunning Neo-Renaissance-style motifs curling over it like an umbrella sheltering a poor soul caught in the rain.

I didn't really think, I just got up and started moving.

Three flights of stairs and a five-minute walk later, and I was standing right below it. The ceiling was glass, and the sunlight made the gold shimmer in a lovely way. I watched as the hands ticked. It was 11:55 am now. I wasn't even going to try to think about how long I had already been there, much less how much longer I would probably have to wait.

People crowded around me, trying to take pictures of the legendary Antwerpen clock. The train station was known as the "spoorwegkathedraal" (railroad cathedral), and I will admit that it did live up to its name with its debonair domed ceiling and grandiose architecture.

I turned around then, trying to get away from the crowd, from the noise and the movement.

I stilled.

The train station was sprawled out before me, levels of trains and people combining in a strange Renaissance-style rendering of a man-machine system. Trains crawled in and flew out. People jumped on and staggered off.

I watched the people below me, taking it all in. Some were running to hug their loved ones, while others walked out of the station alone. A child was trying not to cry as he waved goodbye to his grandparents while an elderly couple excitedly got on the train, holding hands as if on their honeymoon. A girl in a pretty blue sweater passionately spoke on the phone as she skipped off the train right as a middle-aged man in a suit ran towards it, looking anxiously at his watch. So many people, so many stories. A thousand lifetimes would not be enough to get through even a fraction of them.

Right then, that moment almost felt sacred.

The tiredness was suddenly gone, replaced instead by the wonder of how many lives and experiences were intertwined right here, in this Belgian train station. Lives I will never be able to comprehend or see except from the sidelines, a silent, unknown spectator to the collection of dreams, regrets, memories, hopes, and unspoken prayers that made up one's being.

Observing the liturgy of human happenings below me, I grew aware of how cocooned we were within our own lives. It was awe-inspiring to realize that we were surrounded by such complexity but, at the same time, such fragile simplicity.

At the end of the day, we were all human beings who were coming from somewhere and going elsewhere.

The intercom pulled me out of my thoughts.

“Trein richting Amsterdam: inscheping begint.” (Train towards Amsterdam: embarkation is starting.)

*\*Sonder*

1. the realization that each random passerby is living a life as vivid and complex as your own—populated with their own ambitions, friends, routines, worries and inherited craziness—an epic story that continues invisibly around you like an anthill sprawling deep underground, with elaborate passageways to thousands of other lives that you’ll never know existed, in which you might appear only once, as an extra sipping coffee in the background, as a blur of traffic passing on the highway, as a lighted window at dusk.