

# Cedar Sentinel

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EDITOR IN CHIEF ..... ALANNAH TJHATRA

ASSISTANT EDITOR ..... KACEY MORGAN

LAYOUT ..... ALANNAH & KACEY

WRITERS ..... AIMEE ANUNCIACION  
 EDWYNN MACDONALD  
 CASSIA MOHNS  
 CASSIE XIE  
 HOPE MALABRIGO  
 ASHLEY BOEHNER  
 ZARA PHILLIPS  
 EMILY KUCHURIVSKI

SPONSER ..... MR. MACDONALD

NOTE: THANK YOU TO ASHLEY BOEHNER, CLESHA FELICIEN, CASSIA MOHNS, JEREMY MORALES, RAINER NACINO, CURTLY NEWLAND, ZARA PHILLIPS, AND JOSHUA TRINIDAD FOR SUBMITTING PICTURES. THANK YOU TO TYSON MCGANN FOR THE DRAWING ON THE BACK COVER.

# Editor's Message

ALANNAH  
TJHATRA  
EDITOR IN  
CHIEF



Hi Kingsway!

March is almost over. Everyone's back from their touring/travelling/relaxing/not doing anything (if you did homework during the break, good for you) and we're all getting back into the swing of things haha (: Nevertheless, I hope y'all had a fun Spring Break, whatever you ended up doing.

I was able to go on the choir tour to Florida this time (thankfully no one got really sick and for once our bus didn't smell like oregano oil) and I would just like to thank everyone who contributed to our being able to go on tour -- choir, Aerials, *and* band. We couldn't have done it without sponsors, teachers, parents, or church members. Everyone played a part in getting us going -- the sponsors/teachers who woke us up at 4:30 in the morning (we probably wouldn't have *gone* anywhere if they hadn't done that) prepped breakfast for us, and generally organized our mess; the parents who helped us pack or made sure we were good to go; and all the church members/school staff who opened up their facilities to us, fed us with FEASTS of food, and came to our performances. So thanks for allowing us to have that opportunity.

Anyways, enjoy this issue of the Cedar Sentinel!

- Alannah Tjhatra

## Prize Winners

Congratulations to Rebecca Nurse, Chante Alleyne, and John Reyes for winning February's contest! Be sure to check the Cedar Sentinel for future contests, games, and draws.



## March Contest

If you complete the below puzzle correctly, bring your copy of the Cedar Sentinel and show Alannah Tjhatra (or email a picture of your completed puzzle to [cedar.sentinel@gmail.com](mailto:cedar.sentinel@gmail.com).) Have fun and good luck!

There are 30 books of the Bible in this paragraph. Can you find them? This is a most remarkable puzzle. It was found by a gentleman in an airplane seat pocket, on a flight from Los Angeles to Honolulu, keeping him occupied for hours. He enjoyed it so much, he passed it on to some friends. One friend from Illinois worked on this while fishing from his john boat. Another friend studied it while playing his banjo. Elaine Taylor, a columnist friend, was so intrigued by it she mentioned it in her weekly newspaper column. Another friend judges the job of solving this puzzle so involving, she brews a cup of tea to help her nerves. There will be some names that are really easy to spot. That's a fact. Some people, however, will soon find themselves in a jam, especially since the book names are not necessarily capitalized. Truthfully, from answers we get, we are forced to admit it usually takes a minister or a scholar to see some of them at the worst. Research has shown that something in our genes is responsible for the difficulty we have in seeing the books in this paragraph. During a recent fundraising event, which featured this puzzle, the Alpha Delta Phi lemonade booth set a new record. The local paper, The Chronicle, surveyed over 200 patrons who reported that this puzzle was one of the most difficult they had ever seen. As Daniel Humana humbly puts it, "The books are all right here in plain view hidden from sight." Those able to find all of them will hear great lamentations from those who have to be shown. One revelation that may help is that books like Timothy and Samuel may occur without their numbers. Also, keep in mind, that punctuation and spaces in the middle are normal. A chipper attitude will help you compete really well against those who claim to know the answers. Remember, there is no need for a mad exodus; there really are 30 books of the Bible lurking somewhere in this paragraph waiting to be found. God bless.



# My Life. God's Plan.

It's been about 7 months into the school year now, and yet, many of us seniors are still stressing about what we want to do with the rest of our lives -- or at least the next 4 years of college, university, or working -- whichever it may be.

Throughout high school and elementary, we're used to being spoon-fed. Everything is handed to us, our teachers actually care about us and are concerned about our success. However, the real world after secondary school is a completely different experience. It's a place where we're on our

own and enormous responsibilities lay on our shoulders.

It's been an overwhelming, emotional and nerve-wracking rollercoaster ride trying

to go through the motions of selecting a higher education school and even a program of choice. After all, none of us want \$32,000 in tuition fees to go to waste after four years of a curriculum.

a few of my friends -- and it was that none of us have really consulted God about our concerns. We've forgotten that we aren't in control.

God reminds us in 1 Peter 5:7 to "cast all your cares upon Him, for He cares for you."

God is waiting for us with open arms to run to Him when we need help. He doesn't want us to face our struggles on our own -- He is willing to help us through it.

Sometimes we pray indifferently, repeating the words 'according to Your will' without even meaning what we ask for. When we ask God to take control, we

I thought about my decisions for a long while. But I noticed one thing in particular after discussing the post-secondary options with

set aside what we think is best for us, and let Him take the wheel.

There's so much to think about after high school --



where you're going to live, what you're going to do, who you're going to spend the rest of your life with -- and with all of these things comes with huge decisions. But that doesn't necessarily mean we have to stress about every single one.

When we fret about something, it is minuscule to what really matters. What may seem greatly significant at the moment may only be a small part of the path that God has laid out for you in reality. We see just seconds of what God sees over an eternity.

Psalm 18:2 points it out: "The

Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold."

God is someone you can count on without a doubt. He will not let you down.

Those times when you're at your darkest, when there seems like there's no more hope, late nights of endless tears and when it feels like no one is there for you -- try to listen for the still, small Voice.

Whether you're picking courses for university or even classes for

the next semester, remember, He has your life in His hands. No matter what comes your way, above all the falls, the anxiety, God's got your back. Have faith in Him, for He is faithful to you always.

Remember these words from Proverbs 3:5-6: "Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to Him, and He will make your paths straight."

Keep us seniors in your prayers! ■

EOWYNN  
MACDONALD



# Awkward!

Dear Diary,

March 21st, 2015

*They never leave me alone. They just keep coming. They follow me around everywhere I go. They find me even in the best hiding spots, They wait to pounce. Their presence looms around me for days at a time, just waiting to make their move. I have tried to remove them, destroy them -- but nothing helps. My problems just are always there. They will be there until I die. Nothing can change that... can it?*

Terence Nightingale

Being a clumsy, awkward ninth grader is great for having problems. She had long, curly brown hair which was always in a messy bun, and her almond-shaped, hazel eyes were framed by large, indigo glasses. Her life literally screamed of awkward problems. Every year she got branded as the class drama queen even though very few actually knew her struggle.

It did not help that she had a crush on a popular -- and cute -- grade 11 guy who was the exact opposite of her. All he did was increase the number of moments she was embarrassed. But nothing could explain what happened on Wednesday, March 22nd, 2015...

That morning was the grand opening of a newly crafted play about to take stage. Birds

sang, the sun was shining and something was right in the world. Terence woke up feeling excited for the day, but wonder soon passed in her mind.

*Why do I feel this happy? School isn't over, it's not my birthday, not Christmas...*

Nothing could shake this feeling even though she was happy and perky all day long. Her hair was left down in

long, silky curls. Her face was already glowing. When she skipped down the stairs without falling, she knew today was her day.

"Honey! I made scrambled pancakes!" Her younger brother and sister ran past her and she caught a whiff of the sweet smell of honey and fresh dough. She took a seat beside her family and before she knew it, the car door was opening up and she walked into her school. Classmates, random people, *everyone* welcomed her. New faces clouded her vision. She was *popular*. She didn't know why, but she was loving it. It was only yesterday that she was a lone, unpopular girl who was hidden by a veil of invisibility.

The bell rang and classes started. Each one passed by, making her day even better and better. The math teacher forgot about the test and it was postponed until the next

day. The science teacher had to leave early so she let her students have free time.

Soon, it was lunchtime. Her stomach rumbled with excitement for the delicious meal that awaited her. She went into the cafe and sat down at an empty table that didn't stay empty for long. She talked, laughed, and joked around, making new friends.

She exited the cafe and was walking down the path to her next class when a familiar face popped up -- the face that haunted her dreams, the Ying to her Yang. Peter. He had never even looked at her -- much less talked to her -- before now.

"Hey. I've been wondering for a while...yeah...ummm....Like...I was wondering...if...you would like...would want to go to prom with me?"

Her face was filled with both confusion and excitement, and it

flushed a dark magenta. "Uh... yeah." This day couldn't get better!

The rest of the day brought even more excitement and happiness. Soon, she was heading home. Suddenly, a car came out of seemingly-nowhere! It turned and spun out of control, hitting her own car. The door flung inward and killed her instantly. Her last words were, "Now I understand."

The news hit everyone hard. They were happy that they had been kind to her on her last day. Her death was broadcasted on the news and she was remembered, not as 'the girl who was invisible,' but as 'the girl whose life was finally recognized for what she was worth.' Her death made people realize that you could lose everything you have in just one moment. One wrong choice can cost a life. ■

personal devotions, I have found the three most encouraging Bible verses to help lift me up when I am feeling all alone. Look up Deuteronomy 31:6, Romans 8:31-38, and Isaiah 41:10.

I know that there are times when I get angry, whether it be at small things, myself, friends, or family. BUT, in Ephesians 4:26-27, it says,

**"IN YOUR ANGER DO NOT SIN: DO NOT LET THE SUN GO DOWN WHILE YOU ARE STILL ANGRY, AND DO NOT GIVE THE DEVIL A FOOTHOLD."**

I remember when I read this verse it just hit me hard. There are so many times that I go to bed angry about something that happened during the day, the week, or even something that has been happening for a long time. I'll go to sleep thinking that the anger will pass eventually, but that's a lie. I may forget about it for a period of time, but it always comes back to me. This verse stuck with me because God is telling us to not let a day go by where we don't fix what is angering us. For, when we do that, we are allowing the devil to get ahold of us and work in us.

There are some moments in my life that I feel like I have been more sad than happy. When I do feel sad though, I always tend to try and fix it by hanging out with friends, distracting myself with Aerials, finding more homework to do, or working out. Yes, those things can make you feel good about yourself, but usually only for a temporary period of time. In Psalm 34:17-20, it says,

Sometimes it is hard for me to fathom that no matter what is weighing me down and bothering me or making me sad, Jesus is always there and will take me through all of it.

I have seen many Christians struggle with the thought that they are not worthy of Christ's love and protection for us. Many feel unworthy, and because of that, they have a hard time accepting Him. 1 John 4:9-10 says,

**"IN THIS, THE LOVE OF GOD WAS MADE MANIFEST AMONG US, THAT GOD SENT HIS ONLY SON INTO THE WORLD SO THAT WE MIGHT LIVE THROUGH HIM. IN THIS IS LOVE, NOT THAT WE HAVE LOVED GOD BUT THAT HE LOVED US AND SENT HIS SON TO BE THE PROPITIATION FOR OUR SINS."**

-- this meaning that God sent Jesus, His ONLY Son, to die for us. Personally, I think that many of us don't truly understand how big of a gift God actually gave us. We were all told at a very young age that Jesus died for us to save us. And we have been told that fact so many times

**"WHEN THE RIGHTEOUS CRY FOR HELP, THE LORD HEARS AND DELIVERS THEM OUT OF ALL THEIR TROUBLES. THE LORD IS NEAR TO THE BROKENHEARTED AND SAVES THE CRUSHED IN SPIRIT. MANY ARE THE AFFLICTIONS OF THE RIGHTEOUS, BUT THE LORD DELIVERS HIM OUT OF THEM ALL. HE KEEPS ALL HIS BONES: NOT ONE OF THEM IS BROKEN."**

that it slowly lost its great, powerful meaning. To God, we were worth the life of Jesus. God -- and Jesus -- thought (and still think) so much of us. They both look past our sins and outward appearances and see the good in us. They think the world of us, we mean the world to Them. In return, we should praise Them, thank Them, and love Them. In Exodus 14:14 it says,

**"THE LORD WILL FIGHT FOR YOU, AND YOU HAVE ONLY TO BE SILENT."**

God is a personal fighter for each of us, and He volunteered Himself to do it because of how much we mean to Him, showing us that we are worthy of Him and all of the blessings that He gives us. God will fight for us when we are too scared or don't know how.

These are all just a few verses out of the 31,173 verses in the Bible. There are so many more that can help you survive your troubles and help you get through your days. It tends to be a dust collector sometimes, but all we have to do is open up that book. ■

“FOREVER IS COMPOSED OF NOWS.”

CASSIA MOHNS



# Emergency Verses

**H**ey guys! This is just a short little tidbit of some Bible verses and passages that I suggest reading when you are feeling stressed, sad, or angry (at friends or even at God).

Whenever I am feeling stressed about school, my jobs, or my family and friends,

reading Proverbs 3:5-6, Jeremiah 29:11, and Matthew 6:19-21, always reassure me that my life here on earth and all the stress that comes with it isn't going to matter when Jesus comes again.

I am sure that many of us have felt lonely at one point in our lives. Over many of my

**"TRUST IN THE LORD WITH ALL YOUR HEART AND LEAN NOT ON YOUR OWN UNDERSTANDING; IN ALL YOUR WAYS SUBMIT TO HIM, AND HE WILL MAKE YOUR PATHS STRAIGHT."**

# Top 5 Places to Travel



▲ *Giant Fountain - Geneva*



(Probably-filtered) photo - Santorini ▲

## NO. 4 SANTORINI.

This is not actually a city. It is more like an island which is located in the southern Aegean Sea. It is called Santorini, and it belongs to Greece. There is a village called Oia. It is the most famous attraction in Santorini -- it is the only place where three blue and white churches stand side by side. Most of the photos from Santorini are taken from this village. There are also a lot of other colours on this island. If you visit this place to see the bright colours portrayed in the photos, it is kind of disappointing because it is dimmer than you might expect. But, it is still the most beautiful island in my mind.



◀ *The Aegean Sea - Santorini*



▶ *Overhead view of Lombard Street - San Francisco*

## NO. 3 SAN FRANCISCO.

It is in northern California. I think the most wonderful experience in San Francisco is the cable car. It is the last operating cable car system in the world. You can stand outside the cable car to enjoy the charm of San Francisco. The city is laid out in a grid over some 40 hills so that you can see the ocean somewhere on a hill easily. And there is also a famous street called Lombard Street which is well-known for its steep, one-block section with nine hair-pin turns. In different seasons, there will be different flowers blooming on the roadside.

CASSIE XIE

There is a saying that goes, "You can either travel or read, but either your body or soul must be on the way." With the improvement of living standards, more and more people have time and money to travel. During travelling, one can meet various people, make new friends, and experience various lifestyles in different places. So today I am going to talk about my recommendations of the top 5 cities to travel in the world.

## NO. 5 GENEVA.

Geneva is the second-most populated city in Switzerland. The most famous attraction there is the Giant Fountain which is located in the heart

of La Rade -- the Giant fountain is the symbol of the city of Geneva. The water can go up to 140 meters high with no wind. Besides that, St. Peter's Cathedral is also nearby. It dominates the Old Town and houses a collection of archaeological treasures from pre-History to the Middle Ages, and it shows us the prosperity of previous centuries.

# NO. 2 QUEBEC CITY.

It is the capital city of Quebec. The Saint Lawrence River is a beautiful part of Quebec City. There are two most famous attractions in this city: one is the Château Frontenac. It is a grand castle hotel. The other is Old Quebec. Most of the buildings date back to the 19th century, although some 17th and 18th-century buildings remain as well. The views of Quebec are very beautiful, but the coolest thing for me is that the Korean Drama called Goblin is being shot in Quebec City. The Seniors trip here was very fun.



HOPE  
MALABRIGO



# Masterpiece in the Making

I always saw March and springtime as the season of growth. The whole idea of a tree's flowers budding after going through the harsh weather during winter is what I call growth.

Many times, people are discouraged by all the struggles and hardships that life brings them. These are the times where they start to wonder if there really is a God, and if there is, why would He let all these bad things happen? Why would God let a man who serves Him, die? Why would God allow a child to be diagnosed with cancer? It doesn't even have to be to the extreme of dying, but even something as simple as questioning Him -- why you're late to work on an important day, or why you have to deal with difficult people in your life.

The most recent situation where I realized God used it to help me grow was my first breakup. With the understanding that I am young and do not know that much about love and feelings, this happened in my freshman year. So

many things happened, but after two years of dating, things ended, and I questioned God with everything. I asked Him why He allowed such pain to exist. Of course, during that time, it was the hardest thing for me and I thought I had lost everything. I remember literally laying in my bed asking myself why God would just let me waste two years of my life on something so foolish -- even though this was brought upon my own wrongdoings. During what I considered were the toughest days, I never felt God's presence and I started to doubt if He even cared about what I was going through. I questioned why He wouldn't just take away all the pain, anger, hurt, and sadness and quickly replace them with happiness and peace. I then realized that, as much as the moving-on process was hard to accept and difficult to go through, it needed to be done in order to make me the person I am today. I was hurt and broken, but, seeing how much I've grown just from that one event alone helps me

understand that what I went through was crucial in aiding me to grow into a better person. I've learned so much just from that one breakup that I can use in my future relationships -- no matter what kind of relationships they are. I've gained many characteristics that I lacked -- such as patience -- but also the comforting thought that God was able to bring me through six months of questioning, confusion, hatred, and much more. Even though I questioned Him and doubted Him, He gave me His love and encouraging words to help me through it. Time allowed me to see how all the anger and hurt turned into peace and a sense of thankfulness.

I did not realize why God allowed such a painful breakup to happen until I reflected back on where I was before the breakup, to how strong of a person I am today. Budding trees remind me of this every springtime. Trees have to go through the naked feeling all throughout winter, withstand snow, hail, and strong winds,



▲ Yu Garden - Shanghai



◀ The Bund - Shanghai

# NO. 1 SHANGHAI.

Last but not least, number 1 is Shanghai. It is my hometown, as well as one of the largest cities in China. It is also a global financial centre in most people's eyes. But for me, it is the most familiar hometown. Shanghai is a city that combines both history and modernity. There is Yu Garden, which is an extensive garden in China. There is also the Bund, which is a waterfront area in central Shanghai. It is an area within the former Shanghai International Settlement, which runs along the western bank of the Huangpu River in the eastern part of the Huangpu District. I recommend this place because it is not only a beautiful city but also my home.

- Nowadays, people do not have to think much about transportation. People can travel by car to nearby places, or by train, or by plane to far places. If you are interested in one of the places I recommended, or anywhere else, just go and relax. Bon voyage! -



just so that they are able to produce such beautiful fruits and flowers during the spring. Trees have to go through hard months just to attain marvelous flowers, just like how we have to go through difficult days and overcome tall mountains to become stronger and more courageous people.

There was a couple who used to go to England to shop in the beautiful stores. They both liked antiques and pottery and especially teacups. This was their twenty-fifth wedding anniversary. One day in this beautiful shop they saw a beautiful teacup.

They said, "May we see that? We've never seen one quite so beautiful."

As the lady handed it to them, suddenly the teacup spoke.

"You don't understand," it said. "I haven't always been a teacup. There was a time when I was red and I was clay. My master took me and rolled me and patted me over and over and I yelled

out, 'Let me alone,' but he only smiled, 'Not yet.'"

"Then I was placed on a spinning wheel," the teacup said, "and suddenly I was spun around and around and around. 'Stop it! I'm getting dizzy!' I screamed. But the master only nodded and said, 'Not yet.'"

"Then he put me in the oven. I never felt such heat. I wondered why he wanted to burn me, and I

yelled and knocked at the door. I could see him through the opening and I could read his lips as he shook his head, 'Not yet.'"

"Finally the door opened, he put me on the shelf, and I began to cool. 'There, that's better,' I said. And he brushed and painted me all over. The fumes were horrible. I thought I would gag. 'Stop it, stop it!' I cried. He only nodded, 'Not yet.'"

"Then suddenly he put me back into the oven, not like the first one.



This was twice as hot and I knew I would suffocate. I begged. I pleaded. I screamed. I cried. All the time I could see him through the opening nodding his head, saying, 'Not yet.'"

Then I knew there wasn't any hope. I would never make it. I was ready to give up. But the door opened and he took me out and placed me on the shelf. One hour later he handed me a mirror and

I couldn't believe it was me. 'It's beautiful. I'm beautiful.'"

"I want you to remember, then," he said, "I know it hurts to be rolled and patted, but if I had left you alone, you would have dried up. I know it made you dizzy to spin around on the wheel, but if I had stopped, you would have crumbled. I knew it hurt and was hot and disagreeable in the oven, but if I hadn't put you there, you would have cracked. I know the fumes were bad when I brushed and painted you all over, but if I hadn't done that, you never would have hardened; you would not have had any color in your life. And if I hadn't put you back in that second oven, you wouldn't survive for very long because the hardness would not have held. Now you are a finished product. You are what I had in mind when I first began with you."

God knows what He's doing. He is the Potter and we are His clay. He will mold us and

make us so that we will be made into a flawless piece of work. Even through confusion, He will put us through hardships and difficulties because He knows what we need in order to be what He wants us to be. We just need to have faith in Him, believe that He will bring us through it, and remember that He will never give us more than we can bear. ■

ASHLEY  
BOEHNER



# A TOURIFIC Experience

With what seemed like months of rehearsals, warmups, and preparation, the time for the tour had finally arrived! On March 8th, with much anticipation, 47 students and 4 sponsors loaded the bus and headed on choir tour to our final destination: Orlando, Florida. What a drive that was. It seemed like we were on that bus forever. Twenty-eight hours, three bus drivers, and many restroom and meal stops later, we finally made it in Florida. We spent our first Friday night at the Orlando Filipino SDA church. On Sabbath morning we performed two songs for special music at the church. They fed us a yummy potluck and the next thing we knew we were on the bus again driving to the Avon Park SDA church where we put on a full concert for the community. Personally, I think that was our best performance of the whole tour. We sang so passionately, and with a lot of energy. After eating supper at the church, we headed back to the Orlando Filipino SDA Church for the night. The fun was about to begin.

We were able to have some free time on tour, which was a blast. On Sunday morning, we spent some time soaking in the sun and enjoying the ocean at Clearwater beach. That afternoon we went shopping at the Tampa Premium Outlets. Even though the exchange rate isn't the best right now, many of us still found some good deals. That evening we drove to East Pasco Adventist Academy, where we spent the night in the gym. The next morning we performed for the children at the school and then headed to Busch Gardens Amusement Park in Tampa Bay. Busch Gardens was a blast! So many fun roller coasters twisting you upside down. There was even one as fast as a cheetah! We spent the whole day there and then travelled



Busch Gardens ▼





back to East Pasco again to spend the night. Tuesday morning we headed to Cocoa Beach. It was a bit chilly that morning so we explored around the beach and the shops located around the pier. After spending a couple hours near the water, we spent some time shopping at the Orlando International Premium Outlets. After shopping, we headed

▼ Ron Jon Surf Shop at Cocoa Beach



back to the Orlando Filipino SDA Church for the night.

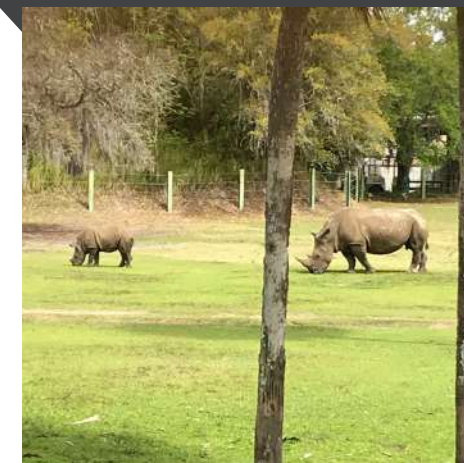
Sadly, we had to say goodbye to Florida with its beautiful scenery and weather and start our trek back to Canada. We loaded the bus ear-

ly in the morning and drove all the way to Tennessee where Southern Adventist University was generous enough to put us up in a hotel. We went out to Olive Garden for a delicious dinner. What a great feeling it was to sleep in a bed and have a nice, long, hot shower! It was a much needed good night's sleep. The next morning we got the opportunity to have a campus tour of Southern Adventist University. What a beautiful campus with such a welcoming atmosphere. We then got back on the bus and headed to Mount Pisgah Adventist Academy in North Carolina. This high school was surrounded by the mountains; it was so breathtaking. We performed a concert for the students and teachers then proceeded

to bed. Friday morning we had breakfast in the school's cafeteria with the students and then boarded our trusty bus and continued on our journey. It was another long day of travelling until we crossed

the border back into Canada and arrived in Windsor, Ontario. We spent the night at the church and performed for the service on Sabbath morning.

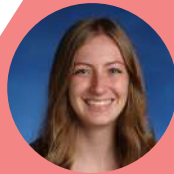
As a senior, this was a bitter-sweet tour. After three years of choir tours, it's sad that the end has finally come and my last tour is now over. Even though the hours and days were long, I enjoyed the trip to its fullest. I was able to make new friends and create memories that will stick with me even after my days at Kingsway. I was able to visit parts of the States that I had never been to before and catch a glimpse of Southern and its wonderful campus. Most importantly, it was such an amazing opportunity for us to be able to share God's message through song to various places around the United States and Canada. I am thankful for this opportunity and that God blessed our singing and kept us safe as we travelled, glorifying Him. ■



MORE  
CHOIR  
TOUR  
PICTURES



ZARA PHILLIPS



# Band Tour: Chicago

On March 9th, all 47 members of the touring band loaded and got on the bus to head to London. The church fed us and we headed to bed. The next morning was Sabbath, and we woke up bright and early to set up for the church service. After the service, we were surprised with a multitude of potluck food to feast on. Later on that night we headed to a local community centre for an open gym and social with the church members. Students played basketball and card games with the members of the London Church.

The next morning, we got on the bus and headed to Ohio to play at Kettering SDA Church. On the bus ride, we watched movies and slept for the whole 6-hour drive. We watched Little Rascals and Coco, and had little problem at the border. After our concert, the members of the church fed us a pizza dinner from a local pizza joint -- it was amazing. Afterward, we travelled to Spring Valley

Academy and set up for the night.

In the morning we headed to Kettering where there was college (and a pizza lunch.) They gave us a tour and showed us around a bit, then we went to their gym and played basketball while we waited for the food to come. After eating, we went to the National Museum of the U.S. Air Force, where we split off into groups and took a self-guided tour. Later on, we got the opportunity to go to an arcade, have fun at a bowling lane, and play laser tag with a representative of Kettering College. We were gifted with a \$20 arcade card and unlimited access to the bowling lanes and laser tag. After playing and getting our prizes, we went back into the room where we had left our bags, and it was full of pasta dishes and bread rolls. After a fun night, we headed back to sleep at Spring Valley Academy.

On Tuesday we woke up early to set up for our morning concert and to eat. At break-

fast one of the guys from the school had brought us a bunch of donuts from a famous donut place in Ohio. We then sat down to play our concert. At this concert we were all pretty tired, so it wasn't the greatest performance and some parts were pretty rough. Right after the concert we packed up the bus and travelled to SkyZone, which was super fun (and Mr. Brown almost learned how to front flip.) After a few hours of jumps, flips, and falls, we got back on the bus and went to Indiana Academy and performed for their evening vespers, which had a pretty good crowd.

The next day we got back on the bus and drove to Hinsdale in Chicago to the Fil-Am church there. Before arriving at the church we stopped at bowling lanes for a couple hours where everyone had a fun time. In the evening we went to the church for our concert. After the concert, we were surprised with how much food was provided by the church members! Everyone got their food and sat

down to talk with friends. We also got a chance to talk to Mr. Brown's Andrews University "friend," Kelly, from back in their bio days. We got to talk to Kelly and the other members of the church, and then they drove us back to the school.

Thursday was the big city day: Chicago. We were dropped off at the zoo and the botanical garden, and then headed to the actual city after lunch. We went to see the Chicago Bean and explored the beautiful city. There were lots of stores where almost everyone went shopping, and almost all the grade 9s bought

overpriced shoes. That night we drove to a really nice hotel provided by Andrews. The next day, we went for tours at Andrews and had a clinic with the band teacher. We headed to the Conn-Selmer factory to be shown how our instruments are actually made, and the work that goes into it -- it was pretty cool.

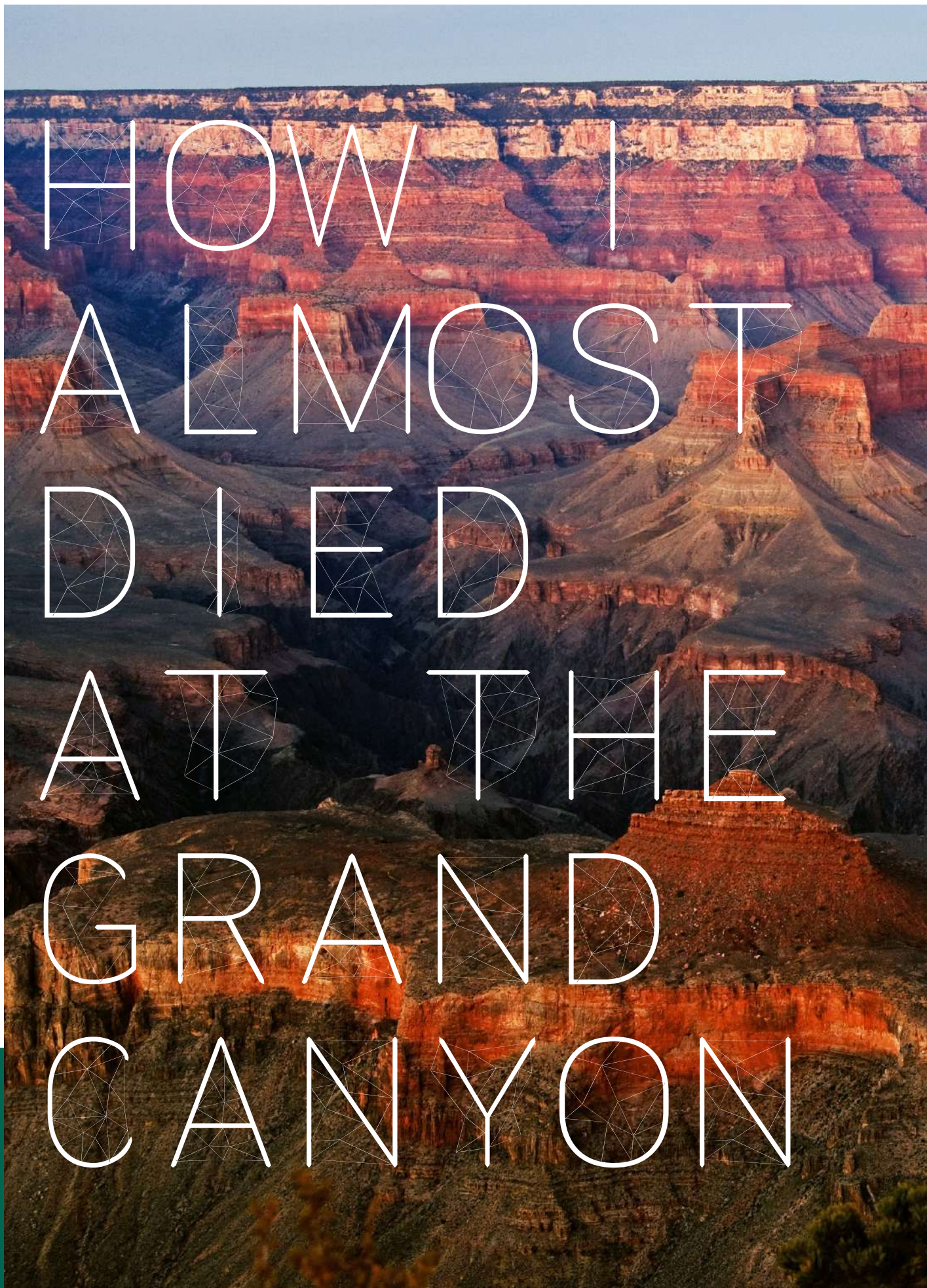
Saturday was the big performance: PMC at Andrews. We were all tired (some more than others) from spending time with our friends staying up until 3 AM to talk. The performance went very well (even though most people ex-

perienced drowsiness due to the lack of sleep.)

The trip as a whole was amazing; it was a great bonding experience for the students involved. Big thanks to Mr. Brown, the Pilapil family, Fabi, and Mr. T for being amazing sponsors! ■



# MORE BAND TOUR PICTURES



# HOW I ALMOST DIED AT THE GRAND CANYON

**Y**es, you read it right, I ALMOST DIED this past Christmas break. Brace yourself. This is going to be one long and magnificent story.

It all started on a little cool evening in March. The 24th. The year was 2001. Our world experienced a sudden splendid shock as it welcomed the birth of a beautiful little child. OK -- fast forward 16 years, 9 months, and 8 days when this little girl could have breathed her last breath. Pull out your box of Kleenex (or handkerchief idk) for the story of a lifetime.

This past Christmas break my cousin and I voyaged to Phoenix, Arizona for a huge Adventist youth conference. It was literally amazing. There were teenagers and young adults, (as well as the occasional awkward older person who considered themselves "young at heart"... right.) About four thousand of us basically filled up the whole downtown of Phoenix. It was really inspiring to see thousands of people the same age as me -- as us -- passionate and on fire for Christ. Those meetings lasted for 5 short days, which were filled with experiences that will last so much longer. ANYWAYS. I'm getting carried away.

Fast forward to the Monday after the meetings, when my cousin and I rented a car (A DISGUSTING NEON BLUE

ONE) and came up with the brilliant idea to drive to the Grand Canyon. That morning we woke up extremely early (6:20 am) and began driving the 3.5 hour drive to the (over-rated? Underrated?) wonder of the world. After some bathroom stops and the necessary Starbucks run, we finally got there!!! I swear it took us approximately 50 years to find a good parking spot. So we left the (eye-hurting) car in the parking lot (which we later spent another 2 years looking for) and went to the visitors centre to ask for directions and whatnot.

They were useless! So we decided to descend the Grand Canyon on our own, freestyle, WITH NO TRAIL OR PATH. Now that I think about it, I have absolutely no idea what possessed us (mainly me) to do that. After lots of bruises, scrapes, cuts, dust in mouth and hair and clothes -- and of course, prayers -- we got back to where we first messed up. And we got into the car and drove away.

Well, not exactly  
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We drove to the farthest point on the South Rim, the Hermits trails. When we parked our car and finally got out, it was about

3:30 pm. Mind you, sunset is at about 5:30.

The thing about the Grand Canyon is that it's just one giant hole in the ground. Going down is a breeze -- like you fly down. But the problem for most people is that they don't realize how much more energy is required to go back up. After the first 5 minutes of **going down**, the consequences of not doing sports since grade 9 gym class started to show. But I didn't want to seem like a little weakling or something, NO WAY. So I basically tried not to breathe and pulled my hair into a ponytail and got into game mode.

"Grand Canyon, you're going down." Well, technically I was the one going down.

ANYWAYS, we slowly made our way to the bottom, stopping to take breaks, pictures, and eating dust every so often. (the dust-eating was not intentional, of course.)

We ran into like 5.5 people on our way down, ALL of who said that going up was going to take us double the time (not including breaks) going down. I shrugged and envisioned myself flying back to the top without a problem.

HA, not everyone is as energetically gifted as I am, I thought to myself. For some strange and odd reason, we decided not to turn around and continued the long and tiring way to the very bottom.

Some may call it idiocy or lunacy, but I call it perseverance. It took us a good 1.5 hours to get down, and we didn't even end up going to the very bottom. By the time when we got to our lowest point, I was already sweating and running low on water. My legs were not doing their job properly, and I couldn't even stand properly anymore.

(This is when my lack of physical activity start to bite me in the back -- well, rather in my legs.) We took some pictures and stared into the ginormous and empty gorge.

It was beautiful.

I began to contemplate life and all it's secret and mysteries.

That is, until I realized the sun had already started to set and we were now engulfed in darkness and the natural cool of the canyon. I started to panic. My first instinct was that there was no possible way we were going to make it back to the top alive. It seemed like setting up camp for the night was my only option. Or calling an Uber.

To be honest I was completely okay with sleeping at the bottom of the freezing cold Grand Canyon, and if it hadn't been for my (mother-like) cousin who forced me to get up, I would have successfully carried out my plan. It would have been such a good story.

Nevertheless, the climb back to the top of the canyon ended up being a pretty decent story, teaching me a few valuable lessons along the way.

## 1. THE JUMP START

The crazy thing is that our phones were dying and there are

no lights or lamp posts or anything to guide those lunatics who are still down there in the night. AND even before we began going up, the sun had already started to set. AND those super-fit, Lululemon wearing, athletic-looking people we passed said it would take up double the time going down, to go up (not including breaks and naps and crying).

5 minutes into the climb back up, I got on the ground and started to pray like never before. It was like a next level Daniel-in-the-Lion's-Den-type prayer. Not only was I already tired, weak, dirty, thirsty, AND hungry, but I was scared that we wouldn't make it back to the top before sunset and that we would end up dying in the Grand Canyon.

It's crazy how we find ourselves at God's mercy when we are at our lowest points. Literally. I guess it was in that moment that I realized that there was no possible way we were going to get to the top safely, without divine intervention.

Right after I finished my prayer and said "Amen", I felt like there was someone behind me who almost kicked me up and pushed my legs for me. An energy that I had never felt before, not even after coffee, pulsed through my body. It ran through my veins, screaming at me to get moving. I felt alive! It's like the feeling you get right before you work out, as you start scrolling through your lit music playlist. (Yes I do work out occasionally.)

I think that lots of the time we find ourselves in this situation. Maybe it's right after you heard a dynamic sermon that almost had you in tears. Or maybe it's right af-

ter the spiritual revival you had at camp, or after hearing a song that really got you contemplating your spiritual life. You suddenly have a burst of spiritual adrenaline and YOU'RE ON FIRE FOR GOD. The next day you get up and do morning devotion -- the first time in months (or years). This continues for a couple of days, weeks, maybe even months. But as everyone who has ever done a workout, or climbed a mountain, or even went



up a lot of stairs -- you get tired out. Yup, that's exactly what happened to me.

## 2. THE FALLBACK

"I was on a rollyyyyyyyyy. I have no idea what happened." I whined to nobody in particular, it's not like anybody was listening. Since I was behind my cousin, he didn't even notice that I fell and kept going.

I felt so alone. Well, I was pretty alone. My legs were more than burning, they were almost numb. My lungs were about to explode, my head could have imploded right there and then. It felt like a déjà vu of grade 9 gym class. I curled up in a ball and closed my eyes.

Then I decided to take a selfie. As I pulled out my phone, I felt this draining energy rush over me and I thought this was it.

I once read that in the seconds

right before one's death they see some sort of a "light at the end of a tunnel". That was exactly what I saw, a big, bright light. I really thought this was it.

And then I realized the front flash was on. FALSE ALARM. \*wipes sweat\*

It's easy to connect this part of my journey to our own spiritual hike. Look at it as the period right after a spiritual high, where suddenly you feel discouraged and alone. There's this wave of exhaustion that washes

over you as your life becomes busy again. You might remember how it was like during the revival, but getting back up doesn't sound as appealing as it did before.

So in my utmost worn out self and voice, I asked God to give me energy. I reminded Him how He had raised Lazarus from the grave, and He parted the Red Sea, and I begged Him to just spare a little bit of His awesomeness and fill me with... life. To be honest I didn't just mean energy to get to the top, or for Him to momentarily take control of my lungs and legs. I wanted Jesus to give me a new heart and take control of life. I wanted -- *needed* -- help.

3. THE HELP

It was about this time when my cousin finally turned around and saw my unfortunate circumstance. He trudged back down the canyon to where I was still curled up in a ball, pulled me up, linked arms with me, and started walking. Just like that, without a word, we were back on our way.

And we got all the way back to the top without unlinking our arms. Whenever I got tired, his firm arm didn't allow me to fall down. I was tired -- and so was he. But we pushed forward.

This is the part in our spiritual journey where we realize that we can't do it alone. This is the part where we have to yell. It doesn't necessarily have to be a scream or something, but we must physically make the sound of a cry for help. I hate to break it to you, but God's help is the only way that we can

make it back to the top of the canyon of our lives. We need to plea for endurance and strength to overcome, but most importantly, help in order to get us back to the top. The moment we acknowledge to both God and to ourselves that we are weak and cannot take it any longer, is the moment when God has compassion on His child. He pauses and bends down to pick you up, and He links His mighty, powerful arms with yours. God may not give you the strength to finish the hike on your own, rather He will send people and situations to give you strength and a helping hand.

If it had not been for my cousin, I would have probably given up and died somewhere along the path of the Grand Canyon. OK -- maybe not that dramatic, but it would have taken me all night and I would have run out of water and been cold. It would not have been a good experience.

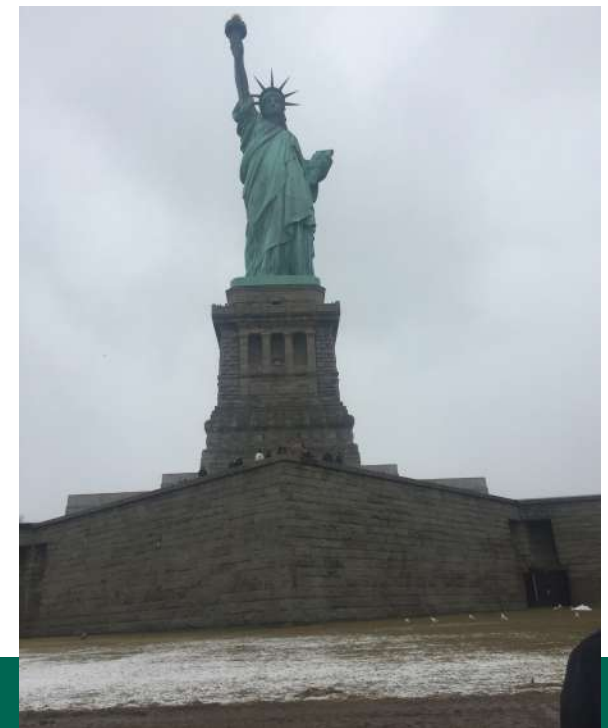
I think that the best part of the whole journey was that, yes there were parts where I was tired and I honestly thought that I was going to die -- but I came out stronger than before. With every step I climbed, I was working my muscles and slowly becoming more and more deezed.

**What doesn't kill you makes you stronger, right?**

So I didn't almost die at the Grand Canyon, but at least I got you to read this article!

Next time I visit the Grand Canyon, I probably won't worry about almost dying... well I hope not. ■

# AERIALS TOUR: AT A GLANCE



By: Tyson  
McGann

# March Break

