



Adventist Single Adult Ministries Day

May 21, 2016

Material and resources for the local church

Mission Statement

Reaching and empowering Single Adults to create Christ-centered safe places for fellowship, nurture and service.



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“Who Were You Born to Be?”

Suggested Order of Service

Introit:

Opening Prayer:

Opening hymn: #330, “Take My Life and Let it Be”

Call for the offering:

Children’s Story: “I know the Plans I have for You”

Scripture: Responsive Reading #724, “O Lord, You Have Searched Me”

Sermon: “Who Were You Called to Be?”

Closing hymn: #316, “Live Out Thy Life Within Me”

Handout: “In Christ...” (At the end of this document.)

Author of the Children's Story



Dr. Pamela Consuegra is the Associate Director for Adventist Single Adult Ministries for the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists. Her husband of over 30 years, Dr. Claudio Consuegra, was born in Colombia, South America, while Pamela grew up in the Appalachian Mountains of Virginia.

Pamela has a background in Adventist education, having served as a teacher, academy principal, and Superintendent of Schools. Pamela holds a Ph.D. in Leadership from Andrews University.

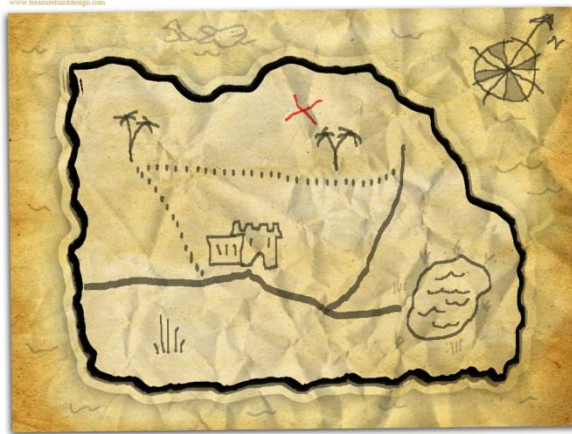
Together with her husband, Pamela has a rich background in the area of family ministries having worked as a husband and wife team in numerous conferences, hosting a live call-in family show for *LifeTalk* radio for three years, and authored numerous journal articles as well as several books.

They have two daughters: Diana, an English teacher at Takoma Adventist Academy, Hadassah, a resident surgeon in York, Pennsylvania, and a son-in-law, Gregory, who works as a Speech and Language Pathologist.

I Know the Plans I Have for You

Children's Object Lesson

Jeremiah 29:11



Introduction: God has a great big, wonderful plan for each of you, children and for me too, of course! Your life has a special purpose designed by God.

Listen to what Jeremiah 29:11 says---- “For I know the plans I have for you.” God has a plan for you. That’s great news!

Supplies Needed: Brown paper parchment, Sharpie marker, string

Preparation: Cut a piece of paper from a brown paper bag or from a roll of paper. You want it to look like a large, treasure map. Now draw an X at the top of the map. Draw many lines or paths to the X. Place some symbols like a broken heart or a tree on the map to represent obstacles. Get as creative as you like but the end result should look like a treasure map with the treasure marked with an X. Roll it up like a scroll and tie it securely with a string. Place it on a table in your teaching area.

Teach: Did you know that builders can’t build a house without having a plan? That’s right! They have to take their plans to a supervisor to let him check the plans to make sure everything is measured correctly. If you have one wall that is too short, the whole house can fall down. If you forget to add a door no one can get in! So, having a plan before you start to

build is very important. You can't have a bunch of guys just building what they want—they have to follow the builder's plan.

Your life is just like a beautiful house and God is the builder. He says in the Jeremiah 29:11 that He has a plan for you.

(Pick up the map scroll.) Look at this! This is kind of like the plan God makes for each life. Let's take a peek. Can someone help me unroll this scroll? See the X? That's where God wants to lead us, to a good place in His perfect plan. God will lead us. We should trust Him to lead our lives right from the beginning. When we do that, we can avoid some snares and traps along the way. God has a plan for you!

Let's pray and ask God to show us the plan that He has for our lives. Who would like to pray? You pray first and then I will pray that God would direct and lead us to fulfill His plans for us.

Author

Pamela Consuegra, PhD
Associate Director
Adventist Single Adult Ministries
North American Division

Author of the Sermon



As the Director of Family Ministries for the Oregon Conference, Cheri Corder's responsibilities include Singles' Ministries. In addition, she loves helping churches and church members get meaningfully involved in their communities through Women's Ministries, Health Ministries, Adventist Community Services and Disaster Response.

Before arriving in the Oregon Conference in 2008, she served in the Upper Columbia Conference directing Children's Ministries, Adult Sabbath School, and Adventist Community Services. She was at Upper Columbia Academy for nine years, introducing teenagers to the joy of making a difference in their local communities and internationally on mission trips.

Her favorite quote is: "I want to live my life in such a way that when I die, the devil will throw a party!"

Cheri and her husband, Jon, live in Oregon City, Oregon. They have two adult children.

Who Were You Born to Be?

Sermon for ASAM Awareness Day 2016

The excitement in that expansive audience was palpable. Glamorous stars were on hand to host the evening, with television cameras and spectacular lights and a sensational stage. With each performer, the excitement grew. You never knew quite what you were getting next, as sometimes the performers were very good and sometimes they were... Well, likely the worst one *yet* had just walked out onto the stage. She was a little different than her young, beautiful counterparts and was, shall we say, less-than-polished in both her manner and in her speech. A quiet murmur went through the audience and you could read the minds of the judges. "Oh brother," their faces said, "Could we just skip this one? How do people like this get past the auditions??"

But *then* she started to sing. "I dreamed a dream in times gone by..." The judges sat up, their eyes widened, they began to smile. By the time she got to the crescendo of "As they turned your dream to sha-a-a-a-ame", the audience was on their feet, *exploding* in applause, some in tears.

By now you may have recognized that I'm talking about Susan Boyle's appearance on Britain's Got Talent. At last count, the YouTube clip of those moments has had more than one hundred and eighty-five *million* views!

Her first CD's were soon produced and available even in stores that didn't normally sell music. It included, of course, "I Dreamed a Dream", which won her all that attention in the first place, but it also included a song which seemed to fit her, called "I am Who I Was Born to Be." Had someone chosen it for her because it suited her style and range or was Susan Boyle singing about her own life at that moment? Now, at age 47, as she was dramatically launched into her long-desired career as a professional singer, was she finally feeling "I am Who I was Born to Be"?

EVERYBODY WONDERS

The idea of whether each of us was born to either *be* or *do* something specific and unique in this world is a popular one to think about. If you do an internet search on "Who you were born to be" or "What you were born to do", you will come up with all kinds of interesting

sites featuring everything from books and articles and assessments to music or even sweatshirt and t-shirt companies selling merchandise imprinted with a related saying.

So how can you sort it out? How *do* you know what your purpose is in life? Is there really a unique purpose for each person or is it just the chosen few who have a special calling? What if bad things happened to you that kept you from your calling, or what if you messed up the opportunity to do what you should have done?

EXPERIENCES OF PEOPLE IN THE BIBLE

There are a number of Bible characters who had the amazing privilege of growing up knowing that their birth had been miraculous. What a sense of purpose this must have given them!

Think about the prophet, Samuel. During her annual visit to the temple, his mother prayed so passionately for a child that the priest thought she was drunk. Once he was born, she was very purposeful in how she raised him.

Ellen White says that “From the earliest dawn of intellect (Hannah) had taught her son to love and reverence God *and to regard himself as the Lord’s.*” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 572. We can only imagine how it would be to hear, over and over, the story of how your mother had prayed for you and how your birth was prophesied by Priest Eli himself. Samuel was faithful to his calling, from the simple duties given him as a child to the progressively larger ones he carried through those critical years of Israel’s history.

Isaac is another one who grew up hearing about his miraculous birth. “I laughed at the idea,” Sarah must have told him many times, glowing, “but here you are!”

Both Samuel and Isaac knew, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that they were born for a purpose and that their lives were specifically meant to count for something.

For others, it went even further. Not only was their birth miraculous, their life purpose was given even before their conception.

Sampson’s mother was told, “...he will begin the deliverance of Israel from the hands of the Philistines.” *Judges 13:5*

John the Baptist’s father was told John was to “go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous – to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.” *Luke 1:17*

Jesus, of course, also had this experience. "...for He shall save his people from their sins," an angel told Mary. Later, he acknowledged His life purpose. "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth..." John 18:37

King Cyrus's mission wasn't revealed to either one of his parents – It was revealed to the prophet Isaiah more than *one hundred years* before his birth! Isaiah 44:28 – 45:13. He himself didn't learn about it until well into his reign. When he did, Ellen White says "his heart was profoundly moved, and he determined to fulfill his divinely appointed mission." *Prophets and Kings*, page 557

BUT WHAT ABOUT US?

You may have been told by your mother that your birth was an answer to prayer or miraculous in some way. If so, what a beautiful heritage you have! How our parents perceive our birth makes a difference in how we see the value of our lives.

As the seventh of eight children, Charlie always knew he was loved. Thoughts about his life purpose, however, took on new meaning in his early twenties, shortly after his father passed away. "When you were born," an uncle told him, "Your dad said to me, 'There must be a reason for Charlie.'"

To have a serious conversation with this particular uncle was such a rare experience, it took him completely off guard. He didn't think to ask more, but the comment struck him. "I was more than the 'happy surprise' they told me I was," he thought. "My father saw that there is a reason for my existence. My life must have a purpose." This experience helped him believe that his *heavenly* Father saw a reason for him, too.

Not everyone is so fortunate.

Dr. Mable Dunbar relates her experience in knowing that she was the product of her mother's rape. "*I found it difficult to like men or trust them because of what happened to my mother.*" she says. Fortunately, through her husband's patience and the Lord's work in her life, she came to accept that the Lord had a purpose for her life.

"I read something in Ellen White's writings that really spoke to me," she says. It was from *Education*, page 17: "Every human being, created in the image of God, is endowed with a power akin to that of the Creator—individuality, power to think and to do." She realized that regardless of the circumstances of her birth, she had the same power as everyone else, and

decided to use it for the Lord. She eventually completed her PhD and is blessing countless others through the Women's Healing and Empowerment Network, her international ministry to abused women as well as men.

Maybe you have been told by a parent that you were an accident or a mistake. They should never have said that to you or even harbored such a thought! No matter what the circumstances were surrounding your birth, the moment you came into existence in your mother's womb, your Heavenly Father loved you and began working to bring you into relationship with Him. In that instant, your very existence as a human being made you of such great value that Jesus would have died *just for you*.

Still, we have probably all read the Bible enough to know that *our* names are not listed in any of the Old Testament prophecies or in Hebrews 11 or anywhere else. So how do we know what our life purpose is? With all the billions of people that are alive on the earth right now, can we be sure that each person does actually have a special role in the world?

In the book *Ministry of Healing* (page 476), Ellen White makes a very clear and intriguing statement about this: "Every man has his place in the eternal plan of heaven. Whether we fill that place depends on our own faithfulness in co-operating with God."

This same concept can be found in the Scriptures, especially in the writings of Paul. He writes about each person being given spiritual gifts for the purpose of building up the church and blessing the world. "Now *to each one* the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues and to still another the interpretation of tongues. All these are the work of one and the same spirit, and *he gives them to each one*, just as he determines." 1 Corinthians 12:6-11, emphasis supplied.

A few verses later, he says "Now you are the body of Christ, and *each one* of you is a part of it." 1 Corinthians 12:27.

Notice that he says "to each one" and "he gives them to each one" and "each one of you is a part of it".

In the Message Bible, 1 Corinthians 12:5 is written as: "Everyone is given something to do that shows who God is." What a beautiful thought!

A calling confirmed

Linda was, understandably, devastated by her divorce. It caused her to question everything in life, including her faith and her calling as a teacher.

When an opportunity came up for her to travel to Japan, she jumped at it. Wandering around by herself, trying to sort out her life, she stopped to sit a while at a Shinto shrine. “I couldn’t have been father from a Christian environment,” she muses, “but God was there.”

She was enjoying watching the people when a group of children approached her. “Will you practice English with us?” they asked.

“Of course!” she responded, and they had a great time together!

That night, she realized God had not only showed up for her that day, He had shown her something essential. “You don’t just teach, you are a teacher.” It isn’t something you *do*, it’s who you *are*.”

She says she has never looked back, on either her faith OR her profession.

Repurposing: A calling altered

It was hard enough on Wendy and her kids when her ex-husband, the father of her children, committed suicide, but then Wendy was sexually assaulted. In response to the divorce, the suicide and the rape, both her son and her daughter turned to substances. Her daughter spent some time living on the streets and her son spent some time in jail.

“My parents worked for the church,” she reflected. “None of this was supposed to happen to me, to us. I kept thinking, ‘When life gives you lemons, make lemonade. But finally I told God, ‘I’m tired of lemonade!’ Then it came to me: There might be others who would like some...”

Wendy completed her Master’s degree and has now worked over a decade with victims of assault. As God “worked all things together for good,” experiences that were clearly not God’s will reshaped her life purpose and she is working for Him in the lives of others in ways the rest of us would not be able to do as effectively.

She has lived out 2 Corinthians 1:3-4: “Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.”

HOW CAN YOU FIND GOD’S PURPOSE FOR *YOUR* LIFE?

1. *Seek God’s guidance every day*

“The two most important days in your life,” says Mark Twain, “are the day you were born and the day you find out why.” This makes it sound like a sudden experience, like flipping on a light. For many of us, though, it’s a more gradual experience, like having the sun come up.

The best way to have the sun come up over your life is to follow the precious counsel found in Steps to Christ, page 70: “Consecrate yourself to God in the morning; make this your very first work. Let your prayer be, “Take me, O Lord, as wholly Thine. I lay all my plans at Thy feet. Use me today in Thy service. Abide with me, and let all my work be wrought in Thee.” This is a daily matter. Each morning consecrate yourself to God for that day. Surrender all your plans to Him, to be carried out or given up as His providence shall indicate. Thus day by day you may be giving your life into the hands of God, and thus your life will be molded more and more after the life of Christ.”

Cathy wanted her life to count for something for the Lord, but because of some painful life experiences, she believed she would never be able to do anything for Him. Each day, she prayed God would guide her.

When she had the chance to copy the church bulletins, she held them up to the Lord with tears streaming down her face. “Thank you!” she told Him. “If this is all I am ever able to do for you, *thank You* that I can at least do *this*.” After a while, she had the chance to organize monthly Women’s Ministries brunches for her local church. She decided it would be OK to do that, since she could stay in the background and not be up front.

One month, however, the speaker cancelled at almost the last minute. When no backup options materialized, she decided to go ahead and give a report on an exciting book she had just finished. Then, on the day before the brunch, she learned that only two people had signed up. She was going to cancel, but the pastor encouraged her to go through with it. “Those two women may need to hear what you have to say,” he encouraged her.

Eight women showed up. One of them was from her conference's Women's Retreat Committee and was so moved and impressed over what Cathy shared, they invited her to give the same presentation as one of the seminars at the retreat. From there, she continued to receive invitations. At last count, she had spoken all over the place in eight states plus had one appointment in England and had preached an evangelistic series in Costa Rica! Her calling as a speaker was realized *gradually*. As a result of being willing to speak to two, she has spoken to thousands.

2. Be faithful in the tasks at hand

Dramatic as it was, Susan Boyle's launch was not as sudden in reality as it seemed to the rest of us. She had been practicing and singing at every opportunity for years. She had taken lessons and listened to her coaches and sung her daily scales and taken advantage of her opportunities, so when the *big* opportunity came, she was ready for it.

Joseph's life is a great example of this. As the new slave at Potiphar's, he was likely given the most menial of all the household tasks. Because he did them well and with grace, he was given greater and greater responsibilities until... Well, you know the story. "The marked prosperity which attended everything placed under Joseph's care was not the result of a direct miracle," says Ellen White (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p 214) "but his industry, care, and energy were crowned with the divine blessing."

David experienced this as well. Being faithful in both his relationship with God and in his care of the sheep are what made possible his dramatic burst onto the international stage when he killed Goliath, and were later essential in his success as king.

One day, we all hope to hear those great words from Christ, "Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things." Matthew 25:23 This principle doesn't only apply to our ultimate transition to Heaven, it applies in our lives now. As we are faithful in what feels like small, daily things to us, God is able to open up ever-expanding opportunities for us to live out our purpose.

3. Persevere in the face of hardship

While serving as cup bearer for the king of Babylon, Nehemiah had a burden placed on his heart for the rebuilding of Jerusalem. Through amazing providential circumstances, the Lord provided him with the opportunity to do just that. Accomplishing his mission required

more than the help the king had provided, however – It required that Nehemiah persevere under the hardships of being mocked, attempts to deceive him, and even the threat of war.

We, too, can experience challenges in pursuing our calling, even if it is in the “simpler” areas of life.

Cheri was sitting in church one day when the stranger sitting in front of her got up and played the piano for special music. She did not do it perfectly, however she was very clearly pouring her heart into that piece.

When she had finished, Cheri wrote a little note and passed it up to her. It read simply, “Thank you for your beautiful music. I heard your heart and was blessed!” When the pianist read the note, she burst into tears and went running out of the church!

Later, Cheri learned why. The woman’s husband had continually complained about her piano playing. “You make so many mistakes, it’s embarrassing!” he would say. Or, “I get so tired of hearing you practice!” Finally, because of this, she had given up playing the piano. The day she got that little note was her first time playing in public in ten years! No wonder it brought tears!

Fortunately, in spite of the hardships she faced in her own home regarding her musical calling, this pianist had the resilience to return to it. God’s people were once again blessed – and the Lord received joy and praise – from her music.

WHAT IF I’VE ALREADY MESSED IT UP?

One of the stories that can give us tremendous hope and courage is the story of Manasseh, King of Judah. He was given *wonderful* opportunities, being crowned a king at the age of twelve. Yet in spite of having a godly example in his father, Hezekiah, the Bible says “He did evil in the eyes of the Lord.” 2 Chronicles 33:2. He didn’t just tell a lie or work past sundown, he led his whole kingdom astray “so that they did more evil than the nations the Lord had destroyed before the Israelites.” 2 Chronicles 33:9. He even sacrificed his own sons in the fire before idols! Finally, as a prisoner in Babylon, he repented. In a beautiful testament to His grace, God saw fit to restore Manasseh to his throne and gave him the opportunity to reverse much of the evil he had brought to his kingdom.

Moses is another dramatic example. During the forty years he led sheep, how he must have grieved the murder that had forced him to flee from Egypt. Imagine the enormous sense of *failure* he must have felt, knowing he had blown his life purpose of making a difference for

his people. I doubt he was singing “I am Who I Was Born to Be” during that time! Yet, ultimately Ellen White says that his was “The greatest work ever given to man,” and it was during that time of leading the sheep that he learned much of what later gave him his success. Does that mean it was God’s plan for him to murder the Egyptian and spend those years with the sheep? Of course not. But God has a wonderful way of working all things together for good, doesn’t he? Romans 8:28

Not all of us have the time following our repentance to do a great work like Manasseh and Moses did. The thief on the cross didn’t, yet his story has blessed countless millions and in accepting redemption and responding in love to Christ, he did fulfill the ultimate purpose of the human life – he brought joy to the heart of God.

Conclusion

Fortunately, you don’t have to wait for a dramatic “Britain’s Got Talent” type of launch into your life purpose. God already knows you by name, you are His! Isaiah 43:1. You were born as someone already loved by God and with the purpose of loving and serving Him in return. Large or small in the world’s eyes, you do have a specific task that only you can accomplish in the world. As you seek His guidance every day and serve Him faithfully, those purposes and opportunities will open up to you, and you truly can be who you were born to be.

*All Scriptures used are quoted from the NIV unless otherwise noted.

Extra thoughts:

JC Penney's slogan is "Every day matters". It's true, isn't it? For while life is made up of the years, the years are made up of the months. The months are made up of the weeks, which are made up of the days. Therefore, life really is made up of the individual days. In the end, how we spent our days is how we spend our lives.

Joan of Arc "I am not afraid... I was born to do this."

In Christ...

I am ACCEPTED

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|---------------|--|
| John 1:12 | I am God's child. |
| John 15:15 | I am Christ's friend. |
| Romans 5:1 | I have been justified. |
| 1 Cor 6:17 | I am united with the Lord, and I am one spirit with Him. |
| 1 Cor 6:19,20 | I have been bought with a price. I belong to God. |
| 1 Cor 12:27 | I am a member of Christ's body. |
| Eph 1:1 | I am a saint |
| Eph 1:5 | I have been adopted as God's child. |
| Eph 2:18 | I have direct access to God through the Holy Spirit. |
| Col 1:14 | I have been redeemed and forgiven of all my sins. |
| Col 2:10 | I am complete in Christ. |
| John 5:24 | I stand uncondemned. |

I am SECURE

| | |
|---------------|---|
| Jude 1:24 | I am faultless before God. |
| Rom 8:1,2 | I am free forever from condemnation. |
| Rom 8:28 | I am assured that all things work together for good. |
| Rom 8:31-34 | I am free from any condemning charges against me. |
| Rom 8:35-39 | I cannot be separated from the love of God. |
| 2 Cor 1:21,22 | I have been established, anointed, and sealed by God. |
| Col 3:3 | I am hidden with Christ in God. |
| Phil 1:6 | I am confident that the good work that God has begun in me will be perfected. |
| Phil 3:20 | I am a citizen of heaven. |
| 2 Tim 1:7 | I have not been given a spirit of fear but of power, love, and a sound mind. |
| Heb 4:16 | I can find grace and mercy to help in time of need. |
| 1 John 5:18 | I am born of God, and the evil one cannot touch me. |
| 1 Cor 15:57 | I have victory in Christ now. |

I am SIGNIFICANT

| | |
|---------------|--|
| Matt 5:13, 14 | I am the salt and light of the earth. |
| John 15:1, 5 | I am a branch of the true Vine, a channel of His life. |
| John 15:16 | I have been chosen and appointed to bear fruit. |
| Acts 1:8 | I am a personal witness of Christ. |
| 1 Cor 3:16 | I am God's temple |
| 2 Cor 5:17-21 | I am a minister of reconciliation for God. |
| 2 Cor 6:1 | I am God's coworker (1 Cor 3:9) |
| Eph 2:6 | I am seated with Christ in the heavenly realm. |
| Eph 2:10 | I am God's workmanship. |
| Eph 3:12 | I may approach God with freedom and confidence. |
| Phil 4:13 | I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. |

--Compiler unknown