

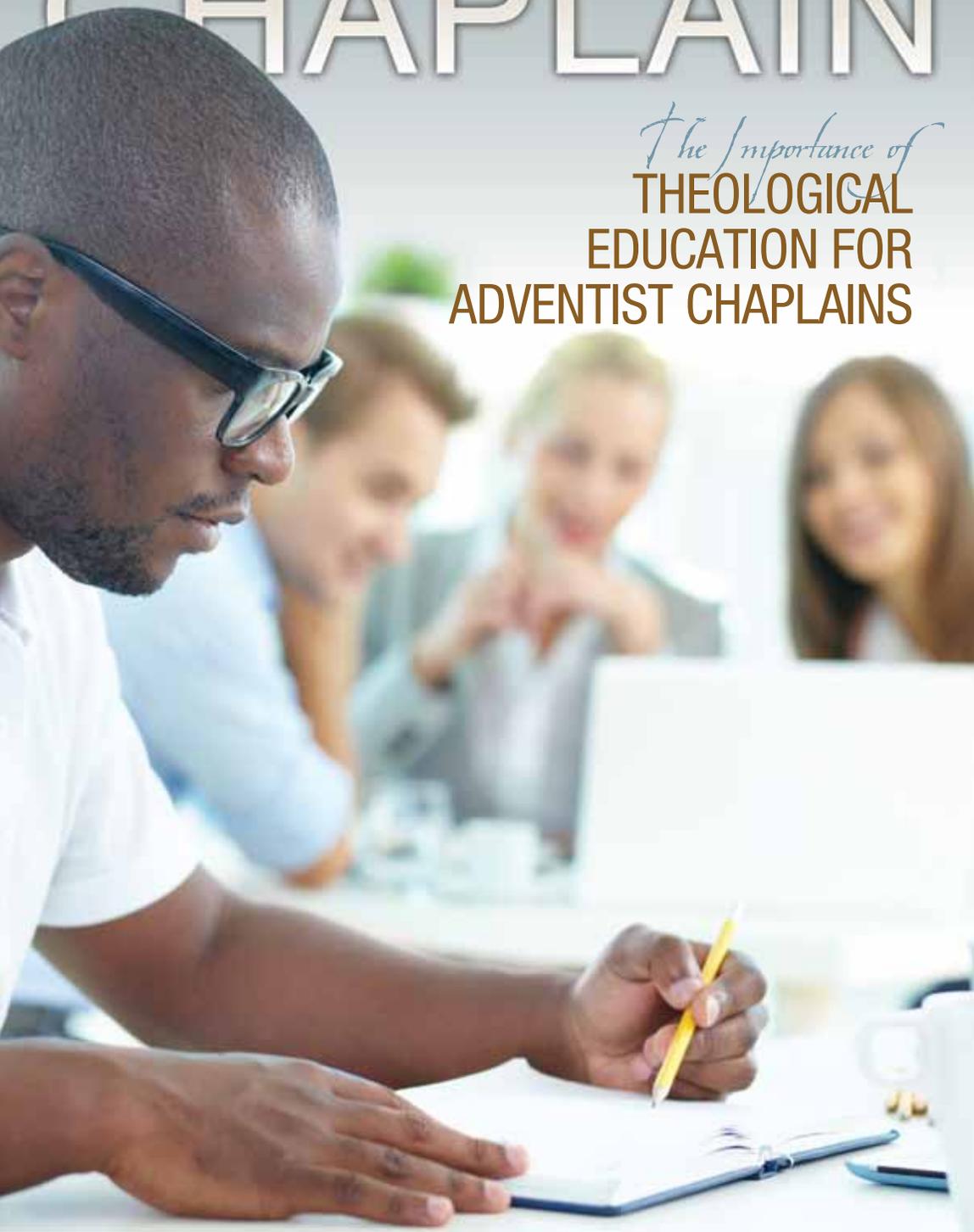
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THE

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The Importance of
**THEOLOGICAL
EDUCATION FOR
ADVENTIST CHAPLAINS**



The INFILTRATED CAMPUS

“A Christian is not one who withdraws but one who infiltrates.” Bill Glass, Champions for Life

Throughout New York State, students who have a message of hope are infiltrating public university campuses. From the streets of Manhattan to the cities in upstate New York, Adventist students, enrolled in undergraduate and graduate programs, are finding community with each other through Adventist Christian Fellowship (ACF) groups on their college campuses.

Alex España, Student Affairs Senior Assistant Dean at Columbia University has served in the department since 2001. “A student came into my office one day and saw my diplomas from Southwestern Adventist University and Andrews University on the wall,” recalls España. “She asked if I was an Adventist. When I replied that I was, she told me she was too.”

During that encounter, España and the student discussed the faith communities represented on campus. “After that I began meeting other Adventist students and the idea evolved to form an official student group on campus,” says España.

Initially five students were identified and they set out to gather the signatures needed from other



Nearly 170 university students from across upstate New York worshipped together at a recent Adventist Christian Fellowship Sabbath in Ithaca, New York. The public campuses that were represented included Cornell University, SUNY-Binghamton, University of Rochester, Rochester Institute of Technology, Monroe Community College, and Syracuse University. The guest speaker was Dustin Hall, newly appointed New York Conference ACF Director. His topic was *God Cares About Your Life: What the Bible Says About Dating, Relating, Mating, and Waiting*.

students to be granted official club status by the university. “The beginnings of the group were organic and very grassroots,” says España.

As this was happening at Columbia, Alex’s wife, Annette was working at Princeton University. “One day a student mentioned to Annette that it was Friday and she would need to leave before Sabbath,” says España. From that one remark, more Adventist students were identified and an ACF group was begun at Princeton also.

“One of the critical ways to engage young adults today is to make Christianity relevant in the daily walk,” says España. “As our

group began to grow we decided that an annual ACF Summit would be an opportunity to bring students from the tri-state area together for a weekend of speakers, breakout sessions, and fellowship. “Attendance through the years has ranged from 75-200 students.”

In 2012, ACF Columbia joined with the national ACF program and ACM to offer a national ACF Summit. “Our vision for the summit was an outreach event that would also be relational evangelism,” says Alex. “Our topics were picked with the idea that they would be used as on-ramps to introduce students to Christianity. We dealt with ways to have healthy relationships, how Christianity and career can fit together, and how to live a healthy life.” The summit was such a success that plans are already being made for the next national summit to be held in 2015.

The Church of the Advent Hope has long been active in collegiate ministry and provided a supportive environment for the students. Seeing the need for a full-time university chaplain, they appointed Reuben Sanchez to fill the role during the 2012-2013 school year. “During

this year we are involved in several projects,” says Sanchez. “Organizing more ACF groups on other campus within the city is a priority. We are also targeting our outreach to students who have various faith traditions or are secular in mindset.”

One of the ACF groups formed is in Greenwich Village, in the trendy area of Manhattan. “Our student group has members who are studying politics, law, media studies, and acting,” says Sanchez. “These students will have the opportunity to shape the world one day. It’s important that we help them now to build bridges between their faith and the real world.”

New York City isn’t the only place where ACF is active. In the New York Conference, ACF groups have been expanding since 2006. “Today we have student groups active on 10 campuses,” says Gary Wagner, New York Conference Adventist Refugee and Immigrant Ministry (ARIM) Director. Wagner served as the New York Conference ACF Director until his recent appointment as ARIM Director.

“The ministry and community of these students plays an important role in their own faith journey,” says Wagner. “Several students have been baptized because of the relationships that have been built through the ACF groups.”

A recent campus Sabbath held at Cornell University brought together 170 students from each of the campuses. Dustin Hall, newly appointed ACF director for New York Conference was the featured speaker.

“A significant action recently taken by the New York Conference was the designation of Adventist Christian Fellowship as a department,” says Wagner. “Future plans include expansion to other campuses throughout upstate New York.”

Over 200 students from across the North American Division attended the 1st Adventist Christian Fellowship National Summit held at Columbia University in New York.





Let the wise listen and add to their learning,
and let the discerning get guidance—
for understanding proverbs and parables,
the sayings and riddles of the wise.
The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge,
but fools despise wisdom and instruction.



Proverbs 1:5-7 NIV

