### NEWS

**Adventist Church in North America Votes Report Favoring Ordination for Women**

**Pastors:** By a six-to one ratio, North American Executive Committee members have approved a report that suggests that each division in the General Conference arbitrate its own policy guidelines regarding ordination of women.

**Changes in Health Benefits, Media Ministries Voted at Annual Meeting of Adventist Denomination:** The Affordable Care Act in the US (ObamaCare) could affect the way the Church provides health benefits for its employees in North America.

**Effectiveness of ADRA Norway Praised in Reports to Parliament by Government Agencies:** The Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) has impressed the Norwegian government by its effectiveness in humanitarian service to the world.

### OPINION

**A Commentary on “Moving Forward Together: A Response from the General Conference to Recent Actions in North America”:** Ervin Taylor seriously questions the proposition that one-size Adventism will—or ever can—satisfy members in today’s diversified world.

**The Slippery Wine Skin:** Jack Hoehn asks if abstinence from alcohol is still defensible in an era when other fine Christians seem eager to dismiss it as non-biblical.

**Sh’ma:** Debonnaire Kovacs considers the Sh’mah, and what the river by her sabbatical cabin is teaching her in a devotional way about loving God with heart, mind, soul, and body.

**Churches Filling with Ethnic Members Not Necessarily a Sign of Health:** While the "numbers" of recent ethnic converts may look good on membership records, Danny...
Bell looks at what really happens when a church’s membership does not reflect the prevailing ethnic mix.

**Be, Like a Tree:** Writer/Poet Debbonaire Kovacs weaves concepts from Neil Diamond’s song, “Be” with ideas that came to her while resting against the branches of an old silver birch.

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**Victory Over the Beast, Chapter 29, The Three Angels’ Messages: God’s Medicine:** This final chapter of *Victory Over the Beast* allows Dr. Thomsen to bring together the three angels’ messages and God’s covenant promises to form heartfelt prayers of affirmation, love, and joy.

**Coupons for Christmas:** A newlywed couple in Huntsville, Alabama, finds a fun way to give to those in need—one that can be duplicated with ease elsewhere during the Christmas season.

**Loma Linda University Children’s Hospital bids Happy Retirement to Officer Don Miskulin at the 15th annual Cops for Kids Fly-In:** For years, police helicopters, cars, and motorcycles have formed a yearly entourage for a “Fly-in” at Loma Linda University’s Children’s Hospital. This year’s event went even further with festivities to honor a special man.

**A Call for Storytellers (Poetry & the Arts):** *Half in Ten* and the *Coalition on Human Needs* have announced the next phase of their work to collect and deploy personal stories to shape the national debate around poverty issues.

**Mt. Robson (Poetry & the Arts):** “Let us go up to the mountain of the Lord.” Check out the new oil painting of Canada’s Mt. Robson.

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Adventist Church in North America Votes Report Favoring Ordination for Women Pastors

By AT News Team, November 4, 2013

By a vote of 182 to 31 with three abstaining, the executive committee of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America (NAD) voted this afternoon (November 4), "That we receive the Biblical study of ordination prepared by the NAD Theology of Ordination Study Committee and affirm the conclusion that all people, men and women, may receive ordination as an affirmation of the call of God; and that the NAD support the authorization of each division to consider, through prayer and under the direction of the Holy Spirit, its most appropriate approach to the ordination of women to gospel ministry." Adventist Today reported about the 240-page report last week which includes extensive Bible study by scholars who read the Scripture in the original languages, detailed review of the relevant material from the writings of Ellen G. White and the history of the topic. The study committee included both Bible scholars who favor ordaining women as well as men, and those who oppose the practice. The study committee took considerable time to share its report with the executive committee during its annual meeting and many chapters of the report were presented in the form of a video. Adventist Today has been unable to discover at this time whether or not these videos will be distributed more widely. This committee is the governing body for the North American section of the denomination's General Conference (GC). The meeting took place in the auditorium at the world headquarters of the denomination where the offices of the GC are also housed. This report is one of potentially 13 because the GC asked each of its divisions to establish a study committee on the topic. Between December 2013 and June 2014 the GC Theology of Ordination Committee will review the reports from the divisions. In June 2014 it will submit a report to the GC officers for review by the GC administrative committee in preparation for the annual meeting of the GC executive committee in October 2014 when a recommendation will be formulated for presentation to the delegates during the next GC Session in the summer of 2015. The purpose of this study process is to come to a solid, Bible-based solution to a controversy that has been debated since the 1970s and was originally addressed at the 1881 GC Session. With the change in traditional notions about the role of women in the western, industrial nations and a growing share of the urbanized developing nations, the issue has become increasingly mingled with concerns about the dropout factor among young adults raised in the Adventist faith and the denomination's stalled growth pattern in North America, Europe, Japan, Australia and New Zealand.

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Changes in Health Benefits, Media Ministries Voted at Annual Meeting of Adventist Denomination

By AT News Team, November 7, 2013

The 2013 annual meeting of the governing body for the Seventh-day Adventist denomination in North America ended earlier this week. It had begun last week and included key decisions about ending gender discrimination in ordination to the gospel ministry, as Adventist Today has reported in recent days. The North American Division executive committee includes about 300 members and has jurisdiction over Working Policy, remuneration scales, appropriations from the Tithe Fund and related decisions. Revisions in health benefits approved at the meeting will mean that pastors, teachers and other denominational employees will pay more and get less. The arrangements between Adventist Risk Management and the conferences and institutions will also change, edging the plan away from a strictly self-funded operation toward something more like health insurance. Committee members were told that the changes were necessary because of requirements in the new Federal law in the United States, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act often called "Obamacare" because it was proposed by President Barak Obama at the beginning of his administration. Changes that go into effect January 1, 2014, are primarily about how costs and premiums are processed and billed to conferences and institutions. Denominational employers will no longer be invoiced during the same year for every dollar of benefits paid out. Instead they will pay an amount calculated as a multi-year average. Beginning January 1, 2015, denominational employees will be under a new health benefits plan, despite the fact that it has been revised almost every year for more than a decade. The new plan will have three tiers, each with different levels of coverage. One tier will be available as a standard plan. If a person wishes to opt for a “richer” plan, he or she may do so and pay a higher premium. Committee members were told that the current health benefits provided to denominational employees do not conform to some aspects of the Affordable Care Act. Employers who offer such plans that are too generous will be assessed a penalty starting in 2015. However, if individual employees choose such plans on an individual basis, there is no penalty either to the employer or to the employee. During 2014 conferences and institutions will give information to their employees with the details of three optional plans from them to choose from. As major corporations and other institutions have shifted more of the cost of health benefits to their employees, the Adventist denomination in the United States has done the same. Almost all full time denominational employees have been paying a monthly premium for their health benefits as a payroll deduction for several years. In most cases this premium is below the amount at which the law allows a deduction from income tax for health care expenses. The committee also voted to close the Adventist Media Center in Simi Valley, California, and sell the facilities. A recommendation for this outcome was voted by the center's board in April. At that time the six ministries housed at the center were given permission to move and a time period of 12 to 18 months recommended in order to implement the moves. The goal of these changes is "to provide the best opportunity for each ministry to be successful in its individual mission to the people of North America," stated Pastor Dan Jackson, president of the denomination's North American Division. The six ministries are Voice or Prophecy, the oldest of the ministries which primarily produces radio programs and operates online Bible studies for itself and other ministries; Faith For Today, which focuses on reaching the secular audience with multiple types of programs and has the largest overall reach; It Is Written and Breath of Life television ministries that provide conventional evangelistic preaching; La Voz de la Experanza, that operates in the Spanish language, and Jesus 101, the newest of the ministries and the only one with a woman as the speaker and director. In recent decades it has become more and more difficult to raise the money necessary to sustain media ministries, more than 90 percent of which must come from direct donations. The committee also heard the report of a survey of Adventist young adults conducted by the Barna Group, a well-known Evangelical market research firm, and reviewed several pieces of its strategic plan. The plan for "transformational evangelism" set a goal of every church member finding a role in outreach, "the church becomes a safe place for sinners [and] prioritizes its resources for mission," working to make the local community "better than it found it." The plan emphasized "a Christ-centered theology, not hijacked by fringe hobbyhorses; a church characterized by joy and the freedom to laugh, [that is] faithful to scriptural authority as the rule of faith rather than tradition." A plan for the use of social media on the Internet was introduced. Since 2011 a research and development team has been working on "dashboard" software for pastors and local churches in North America to use. Earlier in 2012 a group of more than 80 pastors were among the first to be introduced to the software and are beginning to use it. As online media becomes more and more important in North American culture, churches must begin to learn to use these new media or become increasingly irrelevant to the mass of people. On the last day of the meeting, the NAD released a statement evidently in response to some very negative reactions to the report of the study committee on ordination earlier in the week. A number of independent ministries have circulated a number of highly critical comments, accusing the NAD committee of disloyalty, apostasy and worse. The NAD's study group of Bible scholars "was formed at the request of the General Conference" the statement said. "We sought balance and different perspectives [representing] all viewpoints [and] once the
[committee] was formed, we took a hands-off approach as it completed its work." The report of the committee began with a minority report which was against the ordination of women, but a clear majority of Bible scholars do not accept this position as really biblical. Although an overwhelming majority of the committee voted to accept the report affirming the ordination of women, "We did not vote to start accepting the ordination of women," despite the fact that two union conferences in North America and several in Europe have already decided to go ahead with the practice. The NAD report must be combined with the reports of studies in the other twelve divisions of the denomination's General Conference. The full 240-page report, as well as video of the presentation, can be viewed and downloaded at www.nadordination.com .

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Effectiveness of ADRA Norway Praised in Reports to Parliament by Government Agencies

By AT News Team, November 4, 2013

In a report to the national legislature related to the country's budget, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway described the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) affiliate in Norway as a humanitarian organization with a high level of effectiveness. It was listed among six agencies that in 2012 were given increased funding to support efforts for protecting children's rights to an education in disaster and conflict situations. ADRA was mentioned in a section of the budget document that reviewed the results of foreign assistance by the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad). Government officials made evaluation visits to ADRA Norway's projects in Ethiopia to review the cost and effectiveness of the work. ADRA "receives support for ... improving the quality of life of local people in Ethiopia through various health and school projects," the document states. "The projects have been planned in collaboration with the local community and authorities based on locally defined needs. The projects are sustainable because the community and local authorities take the responsibility for running the schools, and maintaining buildings and water wells after they have been handed over by ADRA." A total of "seven schools have been built so far" and they "provide education for 5,500 children." ADRA volunteers "are also involved in the training of villagers in health, family planning and environmental issues [and] local authorities have received training in health, including HIV-AIDS. The high level of achievement is the result of a partnership based on equality and reciprocity. Reviews and visits in the field have shown that ADRA is a cost-effective organization." (Proposition 1 to the Parliament, page 161) The 4,500 Seventh-day Adventist Church members in the Norwegian Union Conference raised more than $575,000 last year through the Ingathering campaign. In Norway all of these funds go to ADRA Norway and they are leveraged with Norad and other donor organizations to multiply the total several times over. Birgit Philipsen, the executive director of ADRA Norway, expressed great pleasure at this report from the Norway government. "We base all of our programs on strong partnerships," Philipsen stated in a news bulletin from the Trans-European Division of the General Conference. "It is of fundamental importance that we build local capacity and that our partners set the premises and priorities in order to achieve relevant, sustainable and cost effective programs." There are 62 local, Adventist churches in Norway among a population of five million. The denomination also operates a Junior College and two health care institutions. This story is based on a bulletin from TED News, the official news services of the Adventist denomination in the Trans-European Division.
A Commentary on “Moving Forward Together: A Response from the General Conference to Recent Actions in North America”

by Ervin Taylor, November 5, 2013

The following are comments on a statement of “The General Conference Executive Officers” issued as a kind of Adventist version of a Papal Encyclical, or perhaps what more accurately should be characterized as a Papal Bull. It was issued as a “Special Edition” of the Adventist Review InTouch email news release issued by the Adventist News Network on Sabbath, November 2, 2013. The General Conference (GC) Officers statement is in regular type and comments are in italics between brackets.

“The Seventh-day Adventist Church has been called by God as an urgent, end-time voice proclaiming God’s love and last day message to the world. [We certainly can hope that the Adventist denomination has been called by God. If the only or principal message of the Adventist would be the love of God, we would not be having these disputes. It is the institutional Adventist Church as represented by the “General Conference Executive Officers” which insists on continuing to emphasize the very problematical theological and Church polity concepts of fundamentalist Adventism which creates the problems.] He has commissioned us to proclaim the three angels’ messages of Revelation 14:6-12 to people worldwide desperately looking for hope. The message and mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is unique and is heaven-sent. [Well, again we can hope that our message and mission are “heaven-sent.” Being unique is another matter. What’s wrong with just being Christian?] Our top priority as a Church is knowing Jesus ourselves and sharing His message of redemption. [Yet again, if that was the only or principal message being advanced by the institutional Adventist Church as represented by the “General Conference Executive Officers,” we would almost certainly not be having these problems.] Nothing is to stand in the way of this proclamation as we unite to reach every “nation, kindred, tongue and people” with the “everlasting gospel.” [If the institutional Adventist denomination was advancing only the Christian gospel, we would not be having these problems. Most of these problems are created when a lot of theological concepts which have nothing to do with the Christian gospel are included in what the institutional Adventist Church is proclaiming in its officially-sanctioned, standardized, evangelistic message.]

“The Seventh-day Adventist Church is a fellowship of believers bound together by a common commitment to Christ, the truths of the Bible, a worldwide Church organization and a mission to the world. [Ah, we now come to the main point of this GC Encyclical-Bull! We can all certainly hope that the Adventist denomination is a fellowship of believers bound together by a common commitment to Christ and the truths of the Bible . . .” It is the “world Church organization” part of this statement that is the problem. Let’s not confuse the real issue.] Each of these elements is vitally important in preserving the unity of the Church and keeping it from fracturing. [Not necessarily. We can have an appropriate unity based on the first two elements (assuming that we all agree on the nature of the “truths of the Bible,”) but the insistence on defining unity as being uniformity is the problem.] The Seventh-day Adventist Church is not organized as a collection of independent units. Although each Conference/Mission, Union and the General Conference (which includes the divisions) have (sic) their own constituencies, they are also united by common commitments, mutual trust and agreed upon policies. [Ideally, yes, but “mutual trust” has been destroyed by the actions of the GC officers who seem determined to use the Working Policy as a club to force everyone back into line. Sorry, that will not work.] The Church, the body of Christ, is inter-related.[True, but the “body of Christ” is the “invisible” Church not the institutional Adventist Church.] Actions that affect one part of the body affect the whole. The Apostle Paul stated it succinctly in these words, “For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ.”(1 Corinthians 12:12)

“Working Policy, which is the recording of our agreements as to how we will work together to do the Lord’s work and mission, serves as one of the practical unifying agents that the Holy Spirit uses to bind the Church together. [Who exactly is the “we” in the “we will work together . . .”? The Working Policy should exist as a set of recommendations not directions.] Policy is not inflexible. It can be changed but it reflects the understanding of the collective group, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. [Oh, really? And guess who gets to decide what is and is not done “under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.”] When personal convictions are placed ahead of the collective policy decisions of the worldwide Church, troubling precedents are set. [Personal convictions? Please! The view that women should be ordained to the gospel ministry is a view held by thousands of Adventist Church members in North America.] God works in an orderly way and wishes His Church to exemplify this sanctified behavior through the power of the Holy Spirit. [“God works in an orderly way? Really? That is debatable.
Since when was the Reformation orderly? And early Adventism was certainly not orderly.] Humility and submission to God for the good of the Church body as outlined in the Word of God and the Spirit of Prophecy are fundamental Biblical principles for the benefit of the Church. [We can agree here. The GC officers should be humble and submit to the Spirit of God working in the Adventist Church to make sure that women called to the gospel ministry are ordained in full equality with men.]

“At the 2012 Annual Council in a voted action entitled, “Statement on Church Polity, Procedures, and Resolution of Disagreements in the Light of Recent Union Actions on Ministerial Ordination,” the world Church strongly indicated that it does not recognize as ordained ministers individuals who do not meet the criteria outlined in policy. [All this really indicates is that Church councils can and do make serious mistakes.] It deeply concerns the world leadership of the Church that recently a local conference constituency elected as a conference president an individual who is not recognized by the world Church as an ordained minister. [That’s the “world leadership’s” problem, not the local conference constituency’s problem.] Ordination to the ministry is one of the criteria set forth for being a conference president. [Ah, back to the Working Policy again.] General Conference administration is working with the North American Division administration [Working? Now what does that exactly mean?] as they deal with the implications of this local conference action, which is contrary to the 2012 Annual Council action. [Again, this just shows that Councils make serious mistakes.]

“The world Church is currently working together in a Theology of Ordination Study Committee with participation by all divisions to better understand the functions of ordination as well as the role of women in relation to ordination to the gospel ministry. [If you want to delay, delay, delay, just assign it to a committee over and over and over again.] A careful process is functioning and reports will be given to the 2014 Annual Council with the expectation that this subject will go to the 2015 General Conference Session for a decision under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. [Let’s be clear on what is going on here. It will go to the 2014 Annual Council and 2015 General Conference Session where the control of procedures is largely in the hands of the same “Officers of the General Conference” and their supporters. A lot of lay persons are not going to fall for that story line again.]

“We have every confidence in the Lord’s leading of His precious remnant Church. [We can agree. We have confidence that the Lord is leading the Adventist Church to ordain women to advance gender equity. If the GC will not do it, then the local and union conferences can do so and then a local conference can elect an ordained Adventist minister who happens to be a woman as conference president. What’s the problem? And assuming that the institutional Adventist Church is the “remnant Church” is certainly a highly disputed point.] By God’s grace and through the Holy Spirit’s guidance, the Church will find its way through this challenging time as we move forward with the unique message and mission entrusted to the Seventh-day Adventist movement. [Well, yet again, we all can hope that whatever the Adventist Church does reflects the “Holy Spirit’s guidance.” But let’s be clear and honest about this; many times that does not happen. Naked political power is exercised by Church administrators.] It is God’s plan that we proclaim His end-time, prophetic truth to every corner of the globe and especially the enormous metropolitan centers of the world through “Mission to the Cities” utilizing every form of comprehensive urban evangelism including comprehensive health ministry and many other methods. [Well again, we can hope that it is God’s plan. However, what exactly is “prophetic truth “for the 21st Century is in dispute.] We urge all Church members and leaders to pray that the Holy Spirit will unite us to fulfill Christ’s promise that “this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all nations and then the end will come.” (Matthew 24:14) United in Christ’s love, bound together in a common Biblical message, linked through a common Church organization and committed to one another with mutual respect and trust through the power of the Holy Spirit. [Here we go again: “...linked through a common Church organization...” Leave that out and we can all be happy with that sentiment.], we are confident this Church will triumph at last and proclaim Christ’s eternal message of truth to the ends of the earth in anticipation of Jesus’ soon second coming.

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The Slippery Wine Skin

By Jack Hoehn, November 6, 2013

David Neff once pastored the church I attend, so when the Editor Emeritus of Christianity Today speaks, I tend to listen. Now because he is an ex-Adventist pastor, I tend to listen critically and carefully, but in general I have found David to be a friend of Adventism and a constructive critic of his former church.

He has made many important contributions to generic Protestantism from his bully pulpit as Editor in Chief of CT and other leadership positions with that magazine for the past 28 years, where he is lauded as a “gentleman-scholar.” I have read him with benefit many times and listened to him with appreciation several times in person, but I would like to indict and contradict him just this once.

David has slipped on a slippery wine skin, which slides one very quickly into the gutter of alcohol risk minimization.

In his book review posted on the CT website September 11, 2013, he speaks approvingly of Divine Vintage (Heskett and Buttler, 2012. One of the authors imported wine, the other is president of the Institute of Masters of Wine.) ending with the inane pop-cultural trick question, “What wine would Jesus drink?”

Perhaps a slight twinge of Adventist heritage prompts David to mention, “The authors have no time for the conservative Christian belief that in the Bible, wine is always a bane and never a blessing. (On the second page of the preface, they announce that they simply will not treat all of the pointless claims that promote abstinence…)”

David? That’s it? “Conservative Christian belief…” “the pointless claims that promote abstinence…”

and off we go in oblivion to the millions of crushed lives due to alcohol?

David is a Christian enough to cringe when the authors of the book, both wine merchants, try to evolve wine paganism into Abrahamic and Christian religion (Christ is a type of Dionysus?). Good eye, David.

I have not read and will not be buying this book, so this article is not about debating if wine in the Bible is mentioned to promote or restrict its use. I personally think Sam Bacchiocchi’s arguments are more rigorous and equally valid points of view as those of the wine merchants in this book, but that is not what I wish to defend or promote.

Minimizing Alcohol What I am upset about is the problem David’s review demonstrates: the modern blindness that sees only the possible pleasures and perhaps minor benefits of alcohol, and is largely quite—strangely silent—about its dangers and harms. This is about the massive minimalism of the pain and destructive reality of alcohol.

I understand that it is possible with care to use radioactive materials for the benefit of mankind. But all of the US border stations large and
small have installed radioactive monitors sensitive enough to pick up radiation from your thyroid gland when you drive over them in your car. My friend Howard Gimbel was immediately stopped and his car was surrounded by US border control officers with Geiger counters when he drove from Calgary, Alberta, into Northern Idaho near Creston, BC, after having a short-acting radioactive body scan a few days before his trip. They let him through, but only after a careful evaluation and identification of the trace medical grade isotope they picked up as his vehicle drove over the sensors.

The dangers of radioactivity and its adverse effects are great enough to demand huge investments of money and care into prevention of possible dirty bombs being smuggled into this country by terrorists. Even the tiniest residua of medical radiation is carefully monitored and evaluated because of possible risk.

But I know for a fact that from that very same Canadian border town (Creston, BC), each day huge trucks with hundreds and thousands of gallons of Kokanee Beer cross into the USA, with not the smallest warning, not the quietest protest, not a single beep from any warning system, of the dangers or possible risk to the population from that alcohol. Dr. Gimbel was stopped by a few rads of left over radiation; the alcohol trucks drive through without a hitch.

What I am complaining about to David Neff and the rest of the media of this world, Christian and otherwise, is the strange, even pathological reluctance to publicize and warn about the actual risk and very present dangers of all forms of alcohol. Like the family members of an alcoholic, society if not an alcohol abuser itself, covers up the very real abuse. We then become partners, enablers of alcoholic terror and crime by overlooking or minimizing the risks.

Nuclear Terrorism and Alcohol Terrorism

The 2011 tsunami that destroyed the Fukushima, Japan, nuclear power plant has caused no deaths from radiation. In fact since 1952 there have been 99 major accidents involving nuclear facilities, yet except for Chernobyl (30 direct deaths, 56 total) there have been no workers or members of the public killed by nuclear radiation in the other 98 accidents.

Wine, Beer, and Spirits on the other hand kill every year more than 75,000 people in the US alone, shortening each of those lives by an average of 30 years.

You do the math.

Nuclear reactor or power plant accidents, worldwide deaths, for 60 years = 67 deaths.

Alcohol deaths, USA alone (not Russia, Europe, Asia, Africa, Central America, South America), = 4,500,000 deaths for 60 years.

Seventy-five thousand deaths a year in the USA alone, and “the authors have no time…?” Four and a half million American deaths directly caused by alcohol during my lifetime, and “they announce that they simply will not treat all of the pointless claims that promote abstinence”?

Four and a half million dead Americans cheated of an average of 30 years of life —that is a big number of years lost

—and “they simply will not treat” it? David Neff does not mention it even in passing.

Hip magazines like Wired, Outside, upscale journals like Sunset Magazine, New Yorker, foodies magazines, news magazines like Time, Sports Illustrated, all professional sports stadiums, all

Super Bowls, Stanley Cups, World Series, TV ads for the same, morning shows, soap operas, movies, and alcohol advertisements, are in a massive societal conspiracy to say the same tired, meaningless lawyer prompted escape clause: DRINK RESPONSIBLY.
How irresponsible of the 75,000 people dying this year from alcohol. Shame on them. Shame on the victims of alcohol incited violence and alcohol fueled rape. Shame on those in the cars hit by the intoxicated driver. Put a white cross by the side of road for the irresponsible, but don’t say a word of caution as you discuss the smoothness, the body, the hints of tannin and oak, the fruity notes, and the great throat feel of your next sip of dear old alcohol.

**A Teaspoon a Day Keeps the Doctor Away**

Isn’t alcohol good for you? Yes. If you eat a highly saturated, animal fat rich western diet, you can reduce the incidence of heart attack and perhaps strokes in your old age with a small amount of alcohol. (Yes it is the alcohol that does it, not the red grape juice. Vodka and beer and Jack Daniels are equally beneficial to the highly promoted wines.)

How much alcohol do you need for this benefit? 5-10 ml.

That is not a misprint. One to two teaspoons of absolute alcohol has a scientifically demonstrated, experimentally confirmed cardiac benefit. One teaspoon for a woman; 2 teaspoons for a man. So you dilute the alcohol down to whatever percent your preferred form of the drug (whoops, did I mention that alcohol is a drug?) and there you have the health benefit for alcohol.

Ladies, how to get your 5 ml of alcohol a day:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alcohol Type</th>
<th>Volume</th>
<th>Amount of Alcohol</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beer (5% alcohol)</td>
<td>100 ml</td>
<td>5 ml</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wine (12% alcohol)</td>
<td>42 ml</td>
<td>2.1 ml</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spirits 80 proof (40% alcohol)</td>
<td>12.5 ml (1 Tablespoon, 0.4 oz)</td>
<td>6.25 ml</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(7 Tablespoons, 3.3 oz) (3 Tablespoons, 1.4 oz)

Gentlemen, for your health please double the above generous portions.

**Can You See the Problem?**

No one I know takes this little alcohol. Everyone who drinks is getting more than the ideal amount of their alcohol health medicine.

Kokanee Beer comes in 12 oz/350 ml cans.

Wine is served in 5 oz/150 ml glasses and 750 ml bottles.

Whiskey is poured from a big bottle into 1.5 oz/50 ml shot glass.

**Drinking Age**

The second problem is that the majority of alcohol related deaths involve people younger than 45, while almost all of the benefits of reduction in coronary heart disease occur in people older than age 45.

If we lived in a rational society, the drinking age would never be 18 or 21 years of age; it would be 50!

I have had the life and death panic of face-to-face, mouth-to-mouth resuscitation for an SDA-raised young man in an alcohol withdrawal seizure, who was trying to die with a blue face, back arched, eyes bulging, no respirations and heart slowing in an otherwise completely healthy young man. I have wept over a young woman—once the most beautiful girl in her SDA academy class—with end stage alcoholic cirrhosis starting at or before age 32. I’m not talking about bleary-eyed alcoholics sleeping in the sidewalk under cardboard. I’m talking about beautiful, intelligent, otherwise healthy young adults severely damaged by beverage alcohols like wine, beer, and spirits.

If we were serious about the “health benefits” of alcohol we would absolutely ban the production and distribution or sale to anyone in our grade schools, high schools, colleges, and universities under 50 years of age. Of course, to be consistent we would also require our senior General Conference presidents and vice-presidents to take their 10 ml of absolute alcohol a day. (Okay, every day except Sabbath!)

**Alcohol Disease Litany**

In spite of the cardio protective benefits of a small amount of alcohol, there are cardiac damaging effects of large amounts of alcohol, but there are also spiritual heart problems with even modest alcohol consumption.
There is more marital discord and divorce with higher alcohol consumption.

There are carcinogenic effects of higher alcohol consumption.

. Have we mentioned pancreatitis?

How about major upper GI bleeding? Hepatitis C is made more fatal by alcohol consumption.

Alcoholic workers lose jobs more frequently.

Babies are damaged for life by maternal consumption during pregnancy; there are no safe levels for the fetus. And this is true also for preconception binge drinking by young mothers and perhaps by fathers.

Criminality is more common with alcohol consumption.

Both traffic injuries and fatal non-traffic injuries are worse with alcohol consumption. So “Drink Responsibly” you all. By all means “Drink Responsibly.”

**Responsible Not Drinking**

It is irresponsible to drink alcohol before age 50. It is irresponsible to drink alcohol if you are still going to have children. It is irresponsible to drink more than 1 drink a day for women and 2 drinks a day for men, and it would be more responsible to not drink at all for 2 days every week. It is irresponsible to drink and go to school, as teacher or student. It is irresponsible to drink and work. It is irresponsible to drink and drive. Alcohol is a depressant, so it is irresponsible to drink if you are depressed or taking medications for depression. It is irresponsible to drink if you have North American Indian genes. It is irresponsible to drink if you have depression, alcoholism, or mental illness in your family tree. It is irresponsible to drink in the presence of children or young adults. Alcohol can cause dementia, so it is irresponsible to drink if you want to prevent Alzheimer’s disease. It is irresponsible to drink alcohol if you have any cardiac arrhythmias. Cancers of the mouth, throat, esophagus, liver, colon, and breast are worse when you drink alcohol; the more you drink, the higher the risk, so it is irresponsible to drink if you don’t want cancer.

Oh, did I mention that of every 10 people who start to drink alcohol, 3 will have an alcohol-caused problem during their drinking, and 1 out of each 10 will become an alcoholic? Of those men who drink 3 or more drinks a day, 20% will have cirrhosis of the liver.

22% of police time is spent trying to solve alcohol related problems.

40% of all traffic related deaths are alcohol caused.

13% of employee sick days are alcohol related, and those who drink are 10% less productive than non-drinkers.

Alcohol is more dangerous than marijuana and methamphetamine. Alcohol kills more people every year than die of AIDS, TB, or gun violence.

Would David Neff write an article praising the beautiful manufacture and collector value of hand guns, and their possible benefits in the home without a balanced discussion of their risks? I don’t think so, but alcohol has this magic pass, letting it be so charitably promoted and praised with the least possible exposure of its many sins.

**Responsible Adventism**

The Bible suggests it is responsible to give alcohol, and I assume other drugs, for hospice care.

vii It suggests that priests and prophets should avoid alcohol.

viii It suggests that kings, and I would guess presidents, should avoid alcohol.

ix New Testament church leaders had to be “temperate” and “no drunkard”. y The wisdom book recommends abstinence for all.

xi
All of this keeps me very comfortable with the Adventist Abstentionist position that says God may have permitted alcohol consumption in the past, but Christians today for personal health and for societal benefit should avoid completely the consumption of alcohol. If you wish to modify that so that those over 50 should sip 1 or 2 teaspoons of absolute alcohol a day as a prescription drug against western heart disease, I might listen to your arguments with a generous mind, although I still fear the large number of side effects of that drug more than I anticipate any benefits.

I assume our former Adventist friend David Neff is now a Moderationist and no drunkard. I know he is over 50. I suspect he never drinks while working. And I hope he is not one of the 3 out of 10 men who will have alcohol trouble during their lives, or a heavy drinker who will have a 20% chance of fatal liver cirrhosis. I hope his limited use of alcohol prevents a heart attack or stroke (although as a physician I could likely do the same or better with a cholesterol check and a statin prescription and I hope he remembers the safety found in a plant based diet).

But I must insist that any article promoting the beverage use of fermented wine by Christians does the responsible thing and clearly lists the great dangers and strangely overlooked harms caused by this risky fermentation of grape juice.

Responsible writing means giving balanced presentations of the truth. Grapes are a fruit and a food. Grape juice is a concentrated extract and an occasional treat. Fermented wine is a drug. Like all drugs it may have some benefits if taken as prescribed, but it has real and present dangers that our church has decided are not worth the risk.

Alcohol can grab you and take you where you never want to go. Will the 7 in your pew who may be able to navigate alcohol’s risks care about the 3 in your pew who won’t? And are you willing to keep turning upside-down your wine glass to offer 30 or more years of extra high quality life to your child or grandchild? I am, and Adventism is.

David Neff and all journalists, especially Christian ones, owe that principled Abstentionist position a little more respect and the very real dangers of alcohol a lot more public debate and exposure.

- - -

 COMMENTS: Dr. Hoehn has requested that this article be presented with edited comments. If you would like to submit a comment, you can send a message to Dr. Hoehn via the editors at atoday@atoday.org. All comments will be read with interest. Signed contributions that contribute to the topic may be reproduced whole or in part for the wider readership.

- - -

i Randall Heskett and Joel Buttler, Divine Vintage: Following the Wine Trail from Genesis to the Modern Age, Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.

ii The clear Biblical answer to this question (“I will drink no more of this fruit of the vine…” Mark 14:25) is obviously, none, fermented or otherwise.


v WHO estimates 2,500,000 deaths a year directly caused by alcohol in the world.

vi 135 million years of life stolen by alcoholic beverages in USA alone and 4.5 Billion years of life stolen by alcohol throughout the world since 1953.

vii Proverbs 31:6

viii Isaiah 28:7; Leviticus 10:9-11; Ezekiel 44:23

ix Proverbs 31:4

x 1 Timothy 3:2-3; Titus 1:7-8.
xi Proverbs 20:1; Proverbs 23:29-35.

xii Samuele Bacchiocchi, Wine in the Bible, page 45 for definition of the traditional SDA position.

______________________Join in the discussion:

Log In to Post a Comment. Log In  Register
I have been considering the depths of the ancient prayer known as the Sh’má for several years now. There is a great deal to consider, just in the first two sentences.

**Sh’má**

*Yis ‘ra’eil Adonai Eloheinu Adonai echad.*

*V’ahav ta eit Adonai Elohekha*

*b’khol l’vav’kha*

*uv’khol naf’sh’kha*

*uv’khol m’odekha.*

Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one!

You shall love the LORD your God

with all your heart

and with all your soul

and with all your might.

In Luke 10: 27, answering the question of the lawyer, Jesus added the mind.

"You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind." (NASB)

I’ve been considering what it means to love God with all those elements of my whole self. We Adventists, like most Westerners, are very good at the mind part. So were the Jews. They and we love to debate and study and exegete. It’s probably what Adventist Today is most known for.

This morning, by the river, I stood in the current (in my high boots, you understand!) and considered the mind and how it’s like the river. And I decided to do a series. It might ask more questions than it answers, but that’s okay. My hope is that it will raise emotions, too, not just brainwaves. (Well, not just beta waves, anyway. I suppose all our emotional states show up in our brainwaves.)

This week is the introduction. Here are the preliminary questions to consider:

How do you, personally, practice the deep love of the One God:

--with all your heart/emotions?

--with all your soul/spirit?

--with all your mind?

--with all your strength?

Each of the next four weeks, I’ll be pondering by the side of my borrowed river, and I’ll share my thoughts and questions with you. I hope you’ll share yours with me, too.

*http://www.jewfaq.org/prayer/shema.htm*
Churches Filling with Ethnic Members Not Necessarily a Sign of Health

By Danny Bell, November 5, 2013

It’s becoming more frequent. Churches that were once struggling and apparently dying are now being revived as a steady stream of recent immigrants floods into Australia and into our pews. Most of these immigrants are from countries where religion is part of their everyday life, not just something done on weekends. Many are also fleeing religious persecution, and upon arriving in countries like Australia, they quickly create small communities, putting down roots wherever they find acceptance and entry into religious settings.

Because of the deep religiosity of these cultures, local churches offer a connection to the way of life they left and seek to regain. The difficult circumstances of their migration makes them easier targets for religious groups as their needs are great; the humanitarian arm of churches is a net that’s getting results. These new Australians are very appreciative and often overwhelmed by the help provided. Anyone offering even basic assistance could be seen as angelic in contrast to the help they received in their own countries.

Many Australian churches that have had years of steady decline are now recipients of these families, welcoming them with open arms. The church is filled with people of different races, and there is a new buzz as they call the once declining local church home. There is a feeling of optimism accompanied by a heightened sense of achievement as this is the best thing that has happened to the church in decades. As church numbers swell, God seems to be blessing, and the church is fulfilling its mission in the community. Or is it?

Nobody would deny that souls being reached in marginalised cultures is a cause for celebration. It’s a positive thing that people from other countries find refuge in our churches. God is always pleased when people are saved and find community. These increases are something to be happy about, but there is an underlying concern that we may not have thought about, or indeed want to.

Let me clarify. The first illustration shows a community demographic where the immigrant ethnicity is at 20 percent, the nationals (those born in Australia) at 70 percent, and the indigenous are at 10 percent. The other illustration shows a church that operates in that same community but does not reflect the same percentages in attendance. The church may have a healthy number of immigrants, but it has failed in its responsibility to reach all of its community as reflected in the national and indigenous percentages.

Reaching national and indigenous people is an understandable challenge in Australia. The issue is, however, that when a church suddenly grows by way of immigrants seeking community, it feels like things are looking up—and they are—for immigrants. The problem is they are not looking up for the missing demographic. Churches that are undergoing these changes may feel a sense of God’s blessing as they ride a boom of new ethnic influx. The reality is, however, that the larger unreached native Australian percentage may be forgotten amid multicultural success stories.

It is also apt to point out that many churches do target specific cultures and grow diverse communities with success. However, if there is no other church in that community catering to nationals or indigenous groups, who are equally important, then they may become casualties in a church that has neglected its duty to be a saving vessel for all cultures.

As Paul states:

To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law, so as to win those under the law. To those not having the law I became like one not having the law, so as to win those not having the law. To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some. (1 Corinthians 9:20-22)

A well-balanced church should reflect as close as possible the same percentages of the community it serves. If it doesn’t, there are cultures and classes of people it is not reaching, people who consequently may not be receiving the gospel.

There is a typical response to this data when it is presented to churches. Many are asking, “Why make it an issue? Churches are growing, and if Australians don’t like what we are offering, it’s their choice.”
This disturbing response not only hints at a state of unwillingness to seriously reach Australians with the type of outreach they need, but it casts the blame for lack of attendance on them for not being there. This uncaring and unchristian attitude towards missing nationals is one of the reasons why many churches have turned multinational.

An Australian study on religious beliefs showed the preference to “just believe” exists more in immigrants who strongly agreed that we shouldn’t question religious beliefs, as opposed to those born in Australia who were more undecided in their opinion (See inset: NCLS, Attitudes Towards Belief, 2009).

Australians are more sceptical about religious matters than their immigrant counterparts. Are we seeing this differentiation playing out when running evangelistic efforts as well—Australians being a less rewarding target? When immigrants begin to appear in numbers at our churches, do we rest easy over previous concerns that the church was dying because now those prospects look less threatening?

There may also be deeper questions to be asked of ourselves about the methods of evangelism we use to reach our communities. Are we falling into a trap of persisting in reaching out to Australians with outdated and unsuccessful methods, giving us an impression they are not interested in God? “We have told them the message. It’s their problem if they don’t want to accept it,” one church member put it. Have we given in and stopped trying new methods to win Australians in favour of easier pickings among new ethnic groups?

This could easily turn into a debate about race, but that’s not my intention. I don’t believe churches have purposely neglected to cultivate outreach to all levels of their community. I do believe however that many have unwittingly drifted into easier ventures like overseas mission trips and working with cultures where reward and success are mostly guaranteed. Not so with traditional outreach in Australia which seems to be less about success these days and more about costly losses accompanied by a feeling of frustration and an uphill battle.

Reaching native Australians is a challenge, but it is our duty as Christians to make sure we are reaching out to all different types of nationalities locally. Going on mission trips and working with multi-cultural people in foreign lands is fun and rewarding, but there remains a primary task that God has given all to do. That task is to reach out to our local communities, making sure we leave no stone unturned, no matter how large or small the task. The challenge is not so much to work harder but smarter. Worth a thought.

_______________________ Join in the discussion:

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Be, Like a Tree

By Debbonnaire Kovacs
Submitted Nov 3, 2013

[Clearly, this is not a silver beech. This is the Sentinel Pine on a piece of woods I used to own and still love.]

I climbed a hill today and leaned in the arms of an old silver beech. Neil Diamond’s *Be*, from *Jonathan Livingston Seagull*, was floating in my mind, and I thought,

*Be*
*Like a tree*

*Stand patiently through whatever weather comes*
*Reach always for the sky, but also ground yourself deep*
*Even when the soil is being washed away beneath you*

*Withstand insect attack, woodpeckers, and disease...*
*Heal around the wounds, if you can...*

*Let go the lovely leaves you’ve worked so hard on*
*Wait silently through winter*
*Grow new, little ones*

*When the time comes*
*Fall gently*
*Still reach for the sky while you can*
*Nurture those coming after you*

*Like a tree*
*Be*

Somebody said, “To learn patience, cultivate the friendship of trees.

_________________________ Share your thoughts about this article:

**Log In to Post a Comment.** Log In  Register
God's Medicine for Your Life Today

The following is a summary of the contents of this book, which you can utilize in your daily walk with the Lord. It will bring you assurance of the benefits of the everlasting gospel, and it will also guard you against all the deceptions of both Babylon and the beast.

The First Angel’s Message

The Everlasting Gospel. Today I thank God for His everlasting covenant, the intention of His heart before the world began to save me through the sacrifice of His Son, Jesus Christ. I hereby declare that because of Christ’s redemption, I am a new creation of infinite worth. I am deeply loved, I am completely forgiven, I am fully pleasing, I am totally accepted by God. I am absolutely complete in Christ.

As a child of God, fully acquitted and adopted into His family, I will…

- **Fear God.** The power of the fear of God overcomes all other fears – fear of failure, fear of punishment, fear of the judgment, and fear of the future. I reject the lies of Satan that I must by my own good works earn salvation to avoid punishment. I accept the truth that Christ’s atoning death for me is sufficient to save from all sin.

- **Give glory to Him for the hour of His judgment is come.** Because of Christ’s gift of salvation, I need not fear the judgment. Therefore, I give glory to God because He has provided an Advocate who took my place and who presents me faultless before God’s throne. I repent of detracting from God’s glory by my own attempts to earn salvation, which is His free gift to me. I acknowledge that legalism can be the adherence to standards for the purpose of exalting myself. With Paul I declare “God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of Christ my Lord” (Gal. 6:14). I will also seek to give Him glory through unity with and love for fellow Christians (John 17:20-26). I believe that God is most glorified when I am most satisfied in Him.

- **Worship Him who made heaven and earth.** I rest on the Sabbath-day as His sign of the security of Christ’s gift of completed salvation for me – a true celebration that I am not saved by my own works, but by His work. I accept the truth that worship is the God-ordained way whereby the fullness of heaven’s resources flows into my life to fill me to
overflowing. When I worship I give a deposition (testimony) to declare my agreement with the witnesses in heaven’s courtroom that… “Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor and glory and blessing.”

For Jesus Christ to receive these, I must first give them to Him. Thus worship is God’s appointed path for the de-centralization of self, and for the fullest realization of a personal solid self-worth that comes from “Christ-worth.” To worship is to serve God with my praises and the needs of people with His sufficiency. I will daily come before Him to receive the fullness of the benefits of His covenant, His “last will and testament.”

The Second Angel’s Message

Because Christ so loved me that He gave Himself for me, I no longer fear rejection. Because I am fully accepted in Christ, I renounce Babylon’s seductions of spiritual adultery, evidenced by looking for love in all the wrong places, trying to fill my cup from fountains that do not satisfy.

To “come out” of Babylon means that…

- I repent of the spiritual adultery of idolatry,
- I recognize that Babylon is not only confusion but also bondage, an addictive intoxication to the idols that program my life.
- through the power of the everlasting gospel Jesus sets me free from the bondage of pride and self-sufficiency.
- I come out of bondage to all god-replacements, idols, to walk in freedom in Christ.
- I believe that Jesus Christ came to “heal the brokenhearted and set the captives free” (Luke 4:18, 19), and I ask Him to heal all my hurts and fix all my broken places (Luke 4:18, 19).
- I come out of the bondage of bitterness and unforgiveness by forgiving others as God has forgiven me. I give up my right to hurt those who have hurt me. Through the power of Christ, I break all strongholds of Satan over me as I escape the prison-like cycle of resentment, resistance, and rejection, which leads to rebellion, to experience genuine freedom.
- I reject Satan’s lies about God and about myself, and I replace these lies with God’s truths that set me free.
- I give up my dependence (addiction) on possessions, people, places, position, and power to satisfy my deepest needs.
- As I receive the gift of the Holy Spirit by faith, God pours His love into my heart. Because I experience the security and joy of being His special treasure, I will, therefore, not need to look for love in the wrong places.

The Third Angel’s Message

I accept the truth that only the Messiah, Jesus Christ, God’s Son, is qualified to save me. I,
therefore, reject all false christs, impostors masquerading their authority and ability to save. I will worship Jesus Christ as my only Savior and Lord. I believe that the genuine worship of the Lamb (Jesus) is the best protection against the beast. I choose not to seek personal significance and identity through substitutes (idols) that do not satisfy.

This means that…

- No longer will I seek to control others, nor will I use the methods of the beast (force, fear, threat, coercion, intimidation, manipulation etc.) to do the work of the Lamb.
- I will let go of all forms of self-justification, that I may experience the joys of justification by faith in verity in Jesus Christ alone.
- To prevent Satan from gaining a foothold in my life, I will let go of anger and forsake wrath, lest his footholds become strongholds that hold me captive.
- I will worship the Lamb as all-sufficient Provider and all-powerful King, and trust Him for everything, relinquishing control through daily surrender to Him. When I worship the beast, I become beast-like. Any idol (substitute or replacement for Jesus Christ) will eventually become a beast that will destroy me and damage the lives of others.

I will express my dependence on God’s covenant by…

- **the patience of the saints** as well as patience with the saints, as I accept difficult situations without giving God a deadline to remove them. I will cling with perseverance to Jesus Christ no matter what. I will trust God that all things work together for good to those who love Him (*Romans 8:28*).

- **keeping the commandments of God**, not to earn salvation, but to protect the free gift of salvation already provided through His covenant. I will not take pride in my law-keeping, but I will use the law a diagnostic tool to daily show me my need of a Savior.

- **appropriating the faith of Jesus** as I confess that my salvation does not rest on my performance of the terms of a contract, but it is based on fully trusting in Christ’s covenant faithfulness.

*We hope you have enjoyed this series. All chapters are in the archived files, if you missed any and wish to catch up or to reread. If you would like Dr Thomsen to give a seminar at your church or organization, please go to [www.streamofhealing.org](http://www.streamofhealing.org)*
It’s November already, and definitely time to begin thinking about Christmas gifts, and not just for family and friends. A newlywed couple in Huntsville, Alabama have found a unique way to give back to their community. You may be able to do the same or something similar in your community.

Alexandrea and Juan Irby are, respectively, the admissions coordinator for Oakwood University’s LEAP program, and the camp operations assistant manager for the U.S. Space & Rocket Center. They are sometimes called “extreme couponers” by those who know them well, though they don’t think they’re that extreme. When they got married in March, 2013, they began clipping coupons as a way of saving money, but it soon grew to be more than that—it was a hobby. Alexandrea even described it as “kind of an adventure.”

Now, they’ve developed a system.

“On Sundays when we get The Huntsville Times,” Alexandrea explains, “we go through the paper and look at each store to see what’s on sale. Then we look for the lowest price on duplicate items. We match up our coupons with the sales, and prepare our list. Monday is when we go shopping.”

It occurred to them that, with the amount of money they were saving, they might be able to help others besides their own budget. Alexandrea often volunteers with the United Way of her county. When she and her husband had grown to enjoy couponing so much, she asked one of her local coordinators if there was a way they could use this enjoyable new hobby to help others.

She learned that her county’s United Way agency had partnered with another organization and asked 29 local charitable organizations what their top three most-needed items were. They were now publicizing these needs in a “Holiday Wishes” program. Most of the needs fall into the category of household staples such as paper towels or hygiene products, or canned goods, and those are the very items that are most likely to be discounted through coupons.

The Irbys have set their goal high. They want to use coupons—their own and those of neighbors who want to pitch in, to buy 1,000 items for their local United Way organizations. They were written up in their local paper and have made a call for people in Madison County, Alabama to join in, either by buying things themselves or by sending coupons to the Irbys.

AToday attempted to learn if the United Way Holiday Wishes Program is a national program, but it seems to be county by county and only in some areas. To learn if this or a similar program is available in your area, go to www.unitedway.org and input your zip code. If such a program is not active in your area, you may call local charitable organizations and suggest it, or simply use coupons or other means to try to help. Household staples are always in high demand at such organizations, and the state of the economy the past few years has given them a “double
whammy,” by reducing donations and increasing those in need of help.

The Irbys point out that this is a way those who don’t have much money—who may even feel somewhat “in need” themselves—to still gain the blessing that comes from helping others.

To learn more, especially if you are in the Huntsville area, see: http://www.al.com/living/index.ssf/2013/11/huntsville_couple_uses_coupon.html
Loma Linda University Children’s Hospital bids Happy Retirement to Officer Don Miskulin at the 15th annual Cops for Kids Fly-In

We present this guest feature, sent by Herbert Atienza, Media Relations Specialist at Loma Linda University Health. Submitted Nov. 3, 2013

Photo Captions: (Left): More than 100 police officers from throughout Southern California took part in the 15th annual Cops for Kids Fly-In at Loma Linda University Children’s Hospital on Tuesday, Oct. 22.
(Right) Dr. Richard Hart (left), president of Loma Linda University Health, thanked Riverside police Pilot Officer Don Miskulin for leading the Cops for Kids Fly-In for the last 15 years and congratulated him on his retirement from the police force.

LOMA LINDA, CA – Oct. 23, 2013 – The skies over Loma Linda University Children’s Hospital once again roared with the sound of helicopters and police sirens on Tuesday, Oct. 22, as more than 100 officers from throughout Southern California took part in the 15th annual Cops for Kids Fly-In.

This year’s event was bitter sweet, as Riverside police Pilot Officer Don Miskulin, who co-founded Cops for Kids Fly-In, marked his final year of leading the event, as he retires from the police force.

Four police helicopters from different law enforcement agencies staged dramatic landings on the campus lawn, and were then joined by police motorcycles, cars, tactical, and armored vehicles in a motorcade, to loud cheers and applause from an appreciative audience, including many pediatric patients.

The children then were able to greet the officers and get on board the law enforcement vehicles. Following a welcoming program, the officers proceeded to LLUCH to distribute presents they have collected through a yearlong toy drive to the young patients.

“This is my favorite time of the year and it’s amazing to me that it’s been 15 years,” Officer Miskulin said. “It’s great to be able to bring smiles to the kids and let them visit with their heroes.”
Officer Miskulin said he’s relinquishing his leadership role, but promised that he and the rest of the law enforcement officers will be back to support the kids at LLUCH. Next year, the event will be led by Riverside police Pilot Officer Richard Estes.

During the program, Dr. Richard Hart, president of Loma Linda University Health, congratulated Officer Miskulin on his retirement, and thanked him and the other officers in attendance, including Riverside police Chief Sergio Diaz, for their support of the Cops for Kids Fly-In. Participating agencies and associations were: Riverside Police Association; Riverside Police Department; Riverside County Sheriff’s Association; Riverside County Sheriff’s Department; San Bernardino Police Department; San Bernardino County Sheriff’s Department; Los Angeles Police Department; Fontana Police Department; Ontario Police Department; California Highway Patrol; and Pasadena Police Department.

“This event has become a highlight for Loma Linda every year,” Dr. Hart said. “We really appreciate the unity of our law enforcement officers and their support of our children.”
A Call for Storytellers

Calling all storytellers! Here is a different kind of opportunity:

[press release: posted 11/7/2013]

Tell Us Your Story Today!

**Half in Ten** and the **Coalition on Human Needs** are thrilled to announce the next phase of our work to collect and deploy personal stories to shape the national debate around poverty issues.

As you may know, we began collecting stories in 2011 from low-income families and service providers to illustrate the human cost of reckless budget cuts and highlight the need for proactive investment strategies to promote economic security and opportunity.

Today, we are proud to announce “**Our American Story: A Storyteller Action Network.**” This new name reflects our renewed focus on the community of advocates, low-income families, and service providers who have shared their stories about the American Dream with us as a way of shaping public policy.

With attacks on vital programs like nutrition assistance set for this fall, and in advance of the 50th anniversary of the War on Poverty in January 2014, we are looking forward to continuing to partner with you to collect and share personal stories showing how such programs have helped people move out of poverty and make ends meet when they fall on hard times.

We hope you will **submit your story today** and check out our **new one-pager and updated resources** to learn more about Our American Story. You can also help us spread the word on social media using the hashtag #OurAmericanStory.

Stay tuned for more from us this fall, and thanks again for your help and willingness to share your stories with us.

Best,

Our American Story Team

**Help us spread the word about Our American Story:**

The last trip my late husband, Les and I took together, in 2008, was a train ride through Canada followed by an inside passage cruise to Alaska. On the train, we had a big flurry of activity when the train officials said excitedly, “Mt. Robson’s out!” Apparently he only shows his face once a month or so. I got fairly good photos through the train window, and when I got the chance to take a class in oils, this was the first thing I tried. We had to use only red, yellow, and blue, mixing our own colors, and to tell the truth, I’m at least as proud of that as of the painting itself! According to Wikipedia, Mount Robson is the most prominent mountain in North America's Rocky Mountain range and the highest point in the Canadian Rockies. The earliest inhabitants of the area call it Yuh-hai-has-kun, *The Mountain of the Spiral Road*. Other unofficial names include Cloud Cap Mountain, and as you see, it did have a bit of a cloud cap the day I saw it.