Youth Have the Courage to Shine

Atlantic Union Pathfinders Attend Union-wide Camporee
inside July 2011

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Pathfinders from across the Atlantic Union converged at Burlingame State Park in Charlestown, Rhode Island, for the Courage to Shine Pathfinder Camporee. In the cover feature, we share some highlights of the weekend. Also included in this issue are our regular features Adventist Education, Positions of Our Faith, and Youth Talk. On the cover is the graphic of the 2011 Atlantic Union Conference Pathfinder Camporee patch that was designed by Ornan Anthony from AdventSource.

Mission Statement
To faithfully chronicle the work and progress of the church in the Atlantic Union territory and inform, instruct, and inspire our church members.

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Empowering Youth Leadership

Each new tragedy that we hear about in the news brings a wake-up call to America today. Terror in high schools. Tornadoes ripping up homes and hearts. Witchcraft in schools. Campus riots. Teenage suicide. It seems as if we live on a daily diet of newspaper headlines of one sad absurdity after another.

As Christians we ask ourselves, “What shall we do?” Too often, however, our responses are only in reaction to individual problems (although, granted, there is nothing we can do to stop the violent acts of nature), while more lasting long-term effects remain only a thought. I believe if we are going to make an impact for the cause of Christ among our youth, we must do more than react.

We must empower our Spirit-filled youth leaders and directors and youth pastors and teachers.

Youth ministries is on the cutting-edge of the church today. As such, therefore, youth leadership is on the front lines of the latest and the new, and all that foreshadows and shapes the future course of the church—both short-range and long-range.

We must do more, then, to lend support to our youth ministries leadership in a relational, financial, and spiritual way. Youth and youth leaders abound with energy, ideas, and as an army of young people they have the potential to reach far beyond the four corners of the church or school. They touch parts of communities where adults can’t or won’t reach. Get this—they are part of the most mobile and technological group in society with digital communication devices that stagger the imagination. They’re part of the end-time generation that has some of the greatest potential for impact on a very large scale. Just watch how they use texting, Facebook, Twitter, e-mail, and the Web to communicate. (Earlier this year, it changed the political landscape of Egypt!)

In the Atlantic Union, we have some of the best youth ministries directors and school youth chaplains and teachers in the country. That includes our union youth director, Bill Wood, who recently retired after serving the territory for more than 12 years. One of his last youth programs (among many) that he organized and implemented was the Atlantic Union Conference Courage to Shine Pathfinder Camporee, an event that drew more than 3,300 Pathfinders and sponsors to Burlingame State Park in Charlestown, Rhode Island (see page 4). To Pastor Bill, we say “thank you” for helping to shape the lives of thousands of our youth in the Atlantic Union for the cause of Jesus Christ.

My encouragement to each of you reading this piece is: love your conference, church, and school youth leaders and show concern for their best good; endeavor to protect their lives by ensuring they have enough time for their family and friends (youth work can seem like a 24/7 demand). Finally, as Jesus declared to those at Lazarus’ resurrection, “Loose him and let him go,” (John 11:44) loose our youth leaders and their army and give lots of opportunities to go and try new things while coaching our youth in the process.

Great things can be accomplished on the cutting edge of the church if we give our youth ministries directors, leaders, pastors, and teachers the best of what we have. They have my wholehearted support for the mission of Christ. Can they count on yours?

Donald G. King is president of the Atlantic Union Conference and chairman of the Atlantic Union College Board of Trustees.

“They’re part of the end-time generation that has some of the greatest potential for impact on a very large scale. Just watch how they use texting, Facebook, Twitter, e-mail and the Web to communicate.”
Youth Have the Courage to Shine

From the beginning of the camporee the rain poured and the cold air kept the Pathfinders on their feet. The campers put on their tough exterior, braved the cold, set up tents, and turned a path of leaves, dirt, and trees into a fully-functioning living zone. Although the forecast called for rain on Sabbath, there was complete sunshine.

The keynote speakers for the camporee were James Black, North American Division Youth Ministries director; Ron Whitehead, Lake Union Conference Youth Ministries director and Center for Youth Evangelism president; and Jonatan Tejel, General Conference Youth Ministries associate director. Each speaker embraced the theme “Courage to Shine” and related their personal testimonies of the tests and trials they had growing up in their community. Bill Wood, Atlantic Union Youth Ministries director, says, “Our speakers really connected with the Pathfinders. I am so proud that scores of Pathfinders gave their hearts to Jesus and asked for baptism!”

About 32,820 Pathfinders from the Atlantic Union Conference attended the Courage to Shine Pathfinder Camporee at Burlingame State Park in Charlestown, Rhode Island. In all, 211 clubs from the Greater New York, New York, Northeastern, Northern New England, and Southern New England conferences, along with the First Indonesian Eagles Pathfinder Club from the Allegheny East Conference, participated in the May 4-7 event. Camporees in the Atlantic Union occur every five years and are sponsored by the Atlantic Union Conference Youth Ministries Department and the Youth Ministries departments of the six local conferences.
• Each day’s schedule was packed. There were 27 honors available for the Pathfinders to complete, 22 activities from which to choose, including inflatable slides, sports, archery, canoeing, derby races, 5K run, fire building relay, drum and drill demonstrations, bandage relay, prayer ministries, 12 community service projects, and more. With all the camporee action Avery Green, a camper from the Corona club in New York, said, “I do not want to leave.” The activities were planned with a purpose of teaching values, character-building, and life skills.

• The general services included a variety of music, historical presentations, and spiritual empowerment. Each night Courage to Shine exemplified the diversity that exists in the Atlantic Union as prayers were offered in English, Spanish, French, Swahili, Tagalog, and Portuguese. In addition, the music was accented with different languages and interpretation.

• Steve Varro, a Christian illusionist, was featured each night, presenting the love of God through hand tricks.

More than 29 Master Guides were invested on Sabbath afternoon.

Rita Hoshino played the role of Ellen White at various times during the camporee.

Thirty Pathfinders were baptized on Sabbath afternoon and several others made decisions to be baptized.

At the front of the parade line are five Pathfinders carrying the Atlantic Union Conference Pathfinder banner.
Wood Retires after 43 Years of Ministry

William (Bill) Wood began his ministry in the Atlantic Union in January 1999 at the invitation of the Atlantic Union Conference Executive committee. Since then he has spent countless hours building relationships, working with the Atlantic Union youth and young adults, and supporting the youth leaders. There is no doubt about his commitment to this “army” of young people.

Earlier this year, Wood announced that, after 43 years of ministry, it was time for him to retire. His ministry prior to his arrival in the Atlantic Union took him to such places as the Gulf States, Arkansas-Louisiana, and South Dakota conferences.

Wood’s service as Atlantic Union youth ministries director spans a period of 12-plus years. Several of the local conference youth directors who worked with Wood share their thoughts:

• “Bill’s example confirms for me that the most important aspect of ministry is the relationships that you make. You never know the difference the investment in the person will make”—Josué Feliciano, Southern New England Conference.

• “Bill is a great mentor and friend. He is always willing to help”—Harry Sabnani, Northern New England Conference.

• “Thank you Pastor Bill for being consistent and compassionate in youth ministry! I appreciate your dedication to what you do and your passion for how you do it. Congratulations on 40 years in youth ministry”—Philip Wesley, Northeastern Conference.

• “Joanne and I would like to congratulate Pastor Bill and Janet for 43 years of youth ministry. We wish you both many years of health and happiness”—José Cortés, Greater New York Conference.

The Atlantic Union administrators, departmental directors, and staff have been blessed over the years by Wood’s presence in the office and wish him, and his wife, Janet, well. May God bless him as he transitions to the retirement phase of his life. He will be missed.

Ednor A. P. Davison, GLEANER editor
and Ben Schnell on drums. The praise band also led out in the “Courage to Shine” theme song, written by Kristie Stevenson.

• The Courage to Shine Pathfinder Parade was a powerful testimony of how many youth are represented in the Atlantic Union Conference. One highlight of the parade was when each conference in the union marched with their unique flags, uniforms, marching styles, and mascot representing their territory. The parade began near the staging area and was led by an authentic Westerly, Rhode Island, fire truck and an official camp vehicle carrying the dignitaries who where in attendance.

• At the conclusion of the camporee on Saturday night, the conference youth directors honored Wood and his wife, Janet, acknowledging his more than 43 years in youth ministry with 12 years in the Atlantic Union. Wood’s son, Scott, was present for the event.

“This was an awesome camporee with the Lord’s blessing,” said Wood. “I am especially proud of the close to 1,000 Pathfinders who participated in community service projects as far away as Providence.”

The Courage to Shine Camporee is over, but its message continues to encourage all Pathfinders, youth, and leaders to go into their communities and bring the message of salvation to everyone! ☭

Philip M. Wesley II is the associate youth director for the Northeastern Conference.

To view additional camporee photos, visit us online at www.atlantic-union.org.

Runners prepare to start the Bill Wood 5K challenge race.

Pathfinder drum corps demonstration.

Bill Wood, second from left, and Dan Whitlow, third from right, with the Ayers family, who rode their bikes from Cortland, New York, to the camporee site.

Pictured from left are, Scott Fricke, the Westerly, Rhode Island, fireman who drove the fire truck in the parade; and youth ministries leaders Jonotan Tejel, General Conference; Ron Whithead, Lake Union; and Bill Wood, Atlantic Union.

The climbing wall was one of the activities available to all Pathfinders.

The gymnastic team performed during the Thursday evening program.
Many Massachusetts residents were stunned as they watched multiple tornadoes slam the western and central portions of the state on the afternoon of June 1. Several tornadoes touched down and were blamed for the deaths of three people, the destruction of a number of buildings and homes, and for leaving many homeless. Springfield, Monson, and Brimfield are some of the places hardest hit by the damage. The debris field spread for miles from the center of the destruction.

Luisa Cabana, a school teacher in Springfield and a Southern New England Conference Executive Committee member, reports, “The Springfield church was spared, praise God . . . . It came very close (just a few hundred yards). All of our members are accounted for and seem to be OK, other than power outages and damage in their surrounding neighborhoods. We all watched the tornado as it unfolded before our eyes. The Warren [elementary school] upper grades were returning from a field trip in the Northampton area and were being chased by the tornado. They came within yards of it and saw all the debris swirling around them. God is good for sending His angels to protect them.”

Fitzgerald Kerr, Northeastern Conference Adventist Community Services (ACS) director and Atlantic Union Conference Disaster Response coordinator, who went to the area on Thursday, June 2, said that all the members and their homes were spared, except one, which was damaged. Kerr contacted Red Cross area to provide care kits for those who were displaced.

Hardwick, who is also the area coordinator of the Adventist Community Services Disaster Response in the Northeastern Conference, reports that members, including Pathfinders and Adventurers from the Hartford, Faith, Mount Zion, Three Angels, Hope, Charity, Calvary, and Shalom churches, were all involved in helping to prepare care kits.

Joseph Aaron, pastor of the Shiloh church in Springfield, alerted the Red Cross that the church’s gymnasium was available for use as a shelter and other parts of the building as a donation center and warehouse, should the need arise.

The cleanup and the process of rebuilding are ongoing. On June 15, President Barak Obama declared a major disaster in the state of Massachusetts and ordered federal aid be provided to areas struck by the severe tornadoes and thunderstorms. Federal assistance will be available to residents in Hampden and Worcester counties, which were areas hardest hit.

—Information provided by Luisa Cabana, Reginald Hardwick, and Fitzgerald Kerr

Atlantic Union Gleaner, July 2011
Matthew 4:19 recounts that Jesus tells Peter and Andrew, “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.” In these 10 words the Captain of our salvation has given to us the method for successful soul winning. Simply put, we must “follow” Christ. We must follow how Christ mingled with the people, how he met the needs of the people, and how he won their confidence and hearts. People were always drawn to Christ and, if we claim to be His representatives on earth, shouldn’t people be drawn to us and thus to the One we represent? If we examine the text, we see that soul winning is not something you do, but rather, something that becomes a part of you.

With that in mind, DeJaun Tull, pastor of the Somerset Seventh-day Adventist Church in Somerset, Bermuda, and the members invited Carlton Knott, Bible teacher at Bermuda Institute, to conduct a six-week training session instructing church members on how to become soul winners. The training highlighted the cyclical nature of effective evangelism and covered such topics as personal preparation, how to give Bible studies, dealing with objections, and getting decisions. This led to the members being infused into the community, developing relationships, and giving Bible studies to neighbors around them.

Before the disciples of Christ went out to minister, Jesus “commanded the disciples not to depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father . . . for John truly baptized with water; but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now”—Acts 1:4, 5. Following this method, Somerset church invited Dennis Smith, author of the book 40 DAYS: PRAYERS and DEVOTIONS, to conduct a Holy Spirit weekend seminar. This ignited the church and the 40 days of prayer, fasting, and emphasis on the Holy Spirit led into the Days of Elijah Series.

On April 2, Tull began the Days of Elijah three-week campaign. The opening night took the form of a graduation ceremony for the people from the community with whom church members had been studying. As Tull preached, many were moved by the Holy Spirit. Messages such as “Booby-Trap,” “Electrifying Revelations,” and “Superman Savior of the World,” were so convicting that before calls for baptism were made the Holy Spirit moved upon many to request baptism. As a result, 22 people were baptized. Derek, a newly-baptized member, says “I experienced so much. The pastor not only preached the Word, but he taught it. He took time to explain the gospel. The church has lifted me up and I look forward to sharing a great song for the Lord about my experience.”

Since the Holy Spirit has fallen on the Somerset Seventh-day Adventist Church, it has not been the same.

—Nathalia Knott, member, Somerset church
Wakefield Church Serves Lunch in The Living Room

Members of the Wakefield and Victory Seventh-day Adventist churches joined forces to reach out to the community in the Hunts Point area of Bronx, New York. Under the leadership of Neylon Samuel, Wakefield church pastor, and Cynthia Ross, Adventist Community Services leader, the group boarded the Victory church outreach van and headed to “The Living Room,” the homeless shelter they targeted for serving lunch that day.

The Living Room is a temporary shelter for homeless people, many of whom are desperate to have a roof over their heads and a hot meal, even for one night. The shelter welcomes all the help that it can get to fulfill some basic, but often life-saving needs of many of our less fortunate neighbors. The Wakefield and Victory team members were only too happy to aid in meeting some of these needs. The residents welcomed them with open arms.

The visit started with the team introducing themselves, then it was on to the food! The hot meals served included yellow split pea soup, a fresh, crunchy salad, red beans and rice with veggie chunks, and veggie mince with cabbage. More than 100 meals were served to the residents, who also received bottled water, hygiene care packs, T-shirts, and other items of clothing.

Following the meal, the group held a devotion that included singing, reading scripture, prayer, and words of encouragement. It was a pleasure watching the residents get into the act when individual names were substituted while singing “He’s Got the Whole World in His Hands.” The team members then greeted individuals at the shelter and also presented them with Adventist literature on health and Bible study correspondence courses.

The Wakefield and Victory churches ended a day of service by thanking God for giving them the opportunity to go out and help others in His name.

—Mike Brooks, communication team member, Wakefield church

Kinderhook Church Members Break Ground for New Church

Members of the Kinderhook Seventh-day Adventist Church in Kinderhook, New York, stood in the torrential rain on the future site of their new church in Valatie, New York, to witness the May 15 ground breaking ceremony.

In 2006, they purchased the land and began working on raising the funds needed to erect the church.

The church’s pastor, Steven Torres, was noticeably absent from the ceremony because of illness. However, his wife, Deborah, and son, Noah, were present and participated in the event. Following the welcome by Jocelyn Celestin, the church’s head elder, along with several songs, and a number of speeches, Noah Torres, armed with a small shovel, dug the first piece of earth out of the plot that will soon be the foundation of the new church. He was surrounded by a semicircle of prominent church members and officials. He was aided in his dig by Maud Celestin, the church’s second vice president.

G. Earl Knight, Greater New York Conference president, and Deborah Torres symbolically break ground on the plot that will soon be the location of their new church.
Sonia Barrett Receives Award for Teaching Excellence

Sonia Barrett, a teacher for grades 7 and 8 at the Brooklyn Seventh-day Adventist Elementary School in Brooklyn, New York, is the recipient of the highest award for teaching excellence available through the Alumni Awards Foundation. Each year up to 10 elementary and secondary teachers in the North American Division (NAD) K-12 system of education receive this award. The award offers the opportunity to celebrate contributions teachers make to the students’ educational experience.

As a result of Barrett’s outstanding achievement, she will receive a $2,000 cash gift, a medallion, and a Certificate of Excellence. In addition, the Greater New York Conference Office of Education will present Barrett with a Certificate of Recognition for having attained the Excellence in Teaching Award.

In addition to encouraging her students to study hard and to lead disciplined lives, Barrett says her greatest joy, by far, has been to see students come to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ and take their stand for God in baptism. “It is a delightful experience to see students grow spiritually and become witnesses to their peers and family members. When I experience these things it gives me a deep satisfaction and a sense of fulfillment, and I thank God for such a high calling as this. Parents and students have openly expressed their appreciation to me for helping to transform their lives and helping them to realize their true potential. These are the joys that make teaching in an Adventist school most rewarding and gratifying. My ultimate joy will be to see students, parents, and coworkers that I have had the privilege of impacting here at the Brooklyn Seventh-day Adventist School on the sea of glass when Jesus returns to claim His chosen ones."

We praise God for the ministry of Sonia Barrett to the Seventh-day Adventist system of education. She has made a lifelong commitment to her children, and each of them has been blessed as a result of her love and dedication to teaching excellence. She will be recognized at an award ceremony at Camp Berkshire in Wingdale, New York, during the Greater New York Conference (GNYC) United Camp Meeting on September 17. She is the second teacher from GNYC to be cited for teaching excellence by the Alumni Awards Foundation. Jacques Patterson, chair of the Greater New York Academy Science Department, attained this distinction in 2006.

—David A. Cadavero, superintendent of schools, Greater New York Conference
Concrete blocks, 10,000 of them, were hoisted from the ground to the third floor of the St. Lucia Seventh-day Adventist Elementary School. A human chain and then a pulley system expedited the labor of 25 AUC students and 23 adults. Their mission was to assist in the building of the school’s third floor. The adult volunteers came from Lancaster, Massachusetts; California; Michigan; and Indiana—predominantly AUC alumni and friends.

“I do this because it changes students’ lives,” says an always service-motivated, tender-hearted Henry Livergood, Mission 2000 organizer. “They get closer to God, learn another culture, and make a community contribution.”

“You’ve united our island,” Livergood was told. “Every Sunday now a group comes to work on the building.”

**Consortium Recognizes Students’ Community Engagement**

The Colleges of Worcester Consortium’s Community Engagement Committee honors outstanding college/university student volunteers. AUC’s St. Lucia project students were honored.

The day included a college fair for community agencies interested in working with college students as volunteers, interns, service-learning students, federal work-study students, and/or researchers.

Each year, the Consortium reports approximately 17,000 placements of undergraduate and graduate students in some type of experiential learning in the community, representing some 1.6 million hours and involving more than 1,065 organizations. Eligibility requires making a contribution to or having made an impact on the community organization where the work was conducted.

Atlantic Union College Community Engagement director, Edgar Castillo, is a member of the Consortium’s Community Engagement Committee.

Cindy Kurtzhals, public relations director, Atlantic Union College

**Students on St. Lucia Radio**

Students accepted the opportunity to be heard on local radio. “Telling of their service experience and how it affected them was all very positive,” said Henry Livergood ’71. He and his wife, Dorothea ’70, ’78, take students and adults on mission trips annually, and have done so for 21 years since 1989. They are alumni and retired AUC employees.
Adventist Students Host Revival Weekend

The State University of New York (SUNY) at Binghamton may seem like an enclave of secularism; a place where young people are caught up in their lives and the pursuit of an education, where God has no real import. However, there is more to behold than meets the eye at first glance. There is an active, though small, group of Seventh-day Adventist young people who meet on a regular basis at SUNY Binghamton. They have named their group 3AM (3 Angels Ministry), and have been a presence on campus for several years now. The students meet on campus on Friday evenings, as well as at the Vestal Hills Seventh-day Adventist Church in Vestal, New York, on Sabbath and at various other colleges and churches that host Adventist college groups. Recently the students invited the Vestal Hills church pastor, Kevin Dunn, to speak on the topic “Who is Jesus?” for two consecutive Friday nights. Another favorite speaker was Dustin Hall, the pastor of the Ithaca Seventh-day Adventist Church in Ithaca, New York, who discussed relationships and Christian standards.

On the weekend of April 1-2, 3AM held its seventh annual revival meeting entitled, “Revival of Dry Bones: It’s Time.” An auditorium in the SUNY Binghamton Student Union building was acquired and speaker Alden Ho, from Wheel Salt Ministries in Berrien Springs, Michigan, spoke to the students on the topic “Life is a Gift.” Ho spoke on Friday evening and Sabbath morning. After the morning meetings, the students and guests were served a vegetarian meal and following the meal there was a concert with performances by the 3AM choir, the SUNY Gospel Choir, members of the Vestal Hills church, ACFAT (Seventh-day Adventist college groups) from Cornell University and Syracuse University, and ThisGeneration. After the concert Ho spoke again. The day ended around 9:00 p.m.

In all, about 140 people attended the revival. It was a wonderful sight to behold, with all those young people praising the Lord together on a secular college campus. This may indeed be the beginning of the stirring of that valley of dry bones.

—Wendy-Lynn Dunn, member, Vestal Hills church

Prayer Retreat Honors Holy Spirit

About 35 people from around New York State attended a prayer retreat at the New York Conference office on Sabbath, April 16. The guest speaker and prayer leader was retired pastor, speaker, and author Dennis Smith. Smith ministered to pastors and teachers at their fall retreat. Many individuals, including children and youth around the conference, are engaged in 40 days of prayer for the filling of the Holy Spirit in preparation for the second coming of Jesus. They are using Smith’s book entitled, 40 DAYS: PRAYERS AND DEVOTIONS TO PREPARE FOR THE SECOND COMING. Smith’s messages are solidly entrenched in righteousness by faith and he explains in very simple terms what it means to let Jesus live in us.

—Kim Kaiser, communication director, New York Conference

Great Preachers Series presents . . .

Dr. Hyveth Williams

Sabbath, August 6, 2011
Utica International Seventh-day Adventist Church
1134 Herkimer Road (Rt.5), Utica NY 13502

9:45 am - Sabbath School
11:00 am - Worship

Worship includes professional choir, violin, brass and organ.

Luncheon provided by the congregation.

For more information, please call (315) 429-9399
Preparing Hearts for Jesus in Elmira

Church member Theresa Kerr brought her friend, Debby Montopoli, to church about a year and a half ago. Montopoli soon began attending each week. Her interest in God and the Bible grew as she studied with Roger Curtis, who was the pastor of the church at that time, and church member Ginger Miller. On March 19 Curtis baptized Montopoli at the Elmira Seventh-day Adventist Church in Elmira, New York.

For a few years, Elmira church, along with Curtis, was planning an evangelistic campaign. During the planning stage, the pastor was reassigned. However, the church proceeded with the meeting. The speaker of choice was Rick Kuntz, the evangelist from the Northern New England Conference. Dates were secured, radio and newspaper announcements prepared, posters were placed, and members knocked on doors, announcing the series. Many people pulled together in preparation for the series and Montopoli worked as a greeter and registrar each night. Britney Miller headed up a spiritual children’s program that averaged about 10 children each night. The church held 12 meetings between May 13 and 28, with about 50 visitors attending during the meetings. God blessed with four young families, a couple, and some other individuals who attended throughout the meetings.

A special mid-week meeting has been set up to continue the work with the Bible worker, Charlie Hammer; the pastor, Kevin Dunn; and others, along with personal visitations. The church is also planning a Vacation Bible School as part of its outreach. This has not only been a growth experience for the new attendees, but a revival for the church members, as well.

“We should now feel the responsibility of laboring with intense earnestness to impart to others the truths that God has given for this time. Men need to be aroused to realize the solemnity of the time, the nearness of the day when human probation shall be ended. Decided efforts should be made to bring the message for this time prominently before the people”—Testimonies, vol. 6, p. 16.

—Erich Haesche, communication secretary, Elmira church

Corning Church Celebrates New Life

Members of the Corning Seventh-day Adventist Church in Corning, New York, accepted Mike and Debbie Erway into membership following their baptism on Sabbath, April 30. Mike Erway searched the Internet for churches, found the Corning church’s Web site, and started attending services at the church with his wife. Eventually, he was invited to take Bible studies. Church member Charlie Hammer had the privilege of studying the 28 fundamental beliefs of the Adventist church with the Erways for many weeks. They searched God’s Word together week after week, looking for the answers to questions that had been bothering them for some time. At the end of their studies they decided to follow Jesus all the way and committed their lives to Him.

Norman Beamesderfer, from the Cornerstone Seventh-day Adventist Church in Horseheads, New York, sang “Jesus Paid It All” as everyone listened attentively.

David Kabel, head elder, led out with the baptismal vows as the couple answered each one affirmatively. Charlie Hammer, an elder, had the privilege of baptizing them. After the Sabbath services concluded, the church members celebrated the baptism with refreshments and greetings of welcome to membership.

—Marjorie Plamley, communication secretary, Corning church

Native Ministries

Presents a Joint Atlantic & Columbia Union Revival Weekend

“The Mighty Grace of God”

August 19-21, 2011

Camp Cherokee
Saranac Lake, New York

Speakers

Deb Claymore
Native Ministries
Dakota Conference

Doug Falle
Treasurer
Ohio Conference

Scottie Deal
Pastor
Carolina Conference

Hal Thomsen
Assistant to the President
Adventist Risk Management

Music

MerriLynn Braman
Tim Burnett
Scottie Deal
Union Spring Academy Students

To register and for more information, contact Barb Bridgers
Phone: (315) 469-6921 • E-mail: barb@nyconf.com
Often times in war-ravaged countries, some children are trained to bear arms for rebel forces as they learn to hunt and kill the enemy. More than 300,000 children are serving as child soldiers. When a reporter saw a young boy shot in the Middle East conflict, he threw down his pad and pencil and rushed to a man who had picked the child up, and he helped them into his car. As the reporter stepped on the accelerator, racing to the hospital, the man holding the bleeding child said, “Hurry, my friend, my child is still alive.” A moment later, “Hurry, my friend, my child is still warm.” Finally, “Hurry, my child is getting cold.” When they arrived at the hospital, the small child soldier was dead. While the two men washed the blood off their hands and clothes, the man turned to the reporter and said, “This is a terrible task for me. I must go tell this child’s father that his little boy is dead.” The reporter was amazed. He looked at the grieving man and said, “I thought he was your child.” The man looked at the reporter and said, “Aren’t they all our children?”

The man asked an important question that could be asked of all church members, because they are all our children. We should plant seeds in their little hearts and begin the great work of evangelism with our children in our churches and schools. We must prepare them for the battle that will not be fought with guns, because it is the great controversy between the forces of God and the forces of Satan. Ellen White writes of this young army with these words, “With such an army of workers as our youth, rightly trained . . . how soon the message of a crucified, risen, and soon-coming Savior might be carried to the whole world!”—Education, p. 271. We are instructed, “You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up”—Deuteronomy 6:7, NKJV.

According to research, most people who will ever make a decision to follow Jesus will do so between the ages of 4 and 14. We need to teach them to use the only weapon that can protect them—God’s Word. We need to teach them to early seek the Savior and set them on the path to true success.

This preparation needs to begin before birth because the prenatal influence of the mother and the first five years are all critical periods in the development of a child. Children are vulnerable now more than ever because we live in a toxic society with a warped value system that is taking its toll on the brains of our children through the avenues of toys, media, music, and at times, even books. What are we to do? We need to neutralize the toxic surroundings during their early and most impressionable years. Consequently, our unwavering support of Seventh-day Adventist preschool programs is crucial. Those programs are not designed to replace the home, but to complement the parents as they prepare their children for formal academics and for eternity. Preschools are the fertile grounds where seeds for eternity can be planted. Our dedicated teachers, through their relationships with the children, help them to make that heart and brain connection everyday. Our support is vital for the sustained existence of our preschools. “Children are most susceptible to the teachings of the gospel; their hearts are open to divine influences, and strong to retain the lessons received”—The Desire of Ages, p. 515.

Seventh-day Adventist Christian education offers that training—training, from preschool to adulthood, that will help finish the work that God has called us to do. It arms our young people with the helmet of salvation, the breastplate of righteousness, the belt of truth, the sandals of peace, the shield of faith, and the Word of God. With their armor on, they can battle the enemy with the assurance of victory.

Marlene Alvarez is the Atlantic Union Conference early childhood education and care assistant director and the certification registrar.
Third-grader Contributes to the National Young Scholars Program

This summer, Angelena Forese, a third-grade student at Edgewood Elementary School in Stoneham, Massachusetts, will take part in the National Young Scholars Program (NYSP) at Villanova University in Pennsylvania. NYSP inspires outstanding third-, fourth-, and fifth-grade students to explore, invent, learn, and think creatively.

Grace Mercado, Edgewood’s third- and fourth-grade teacher, who nominated Forese for the program, says, “Angelena exhibits strong leadership qualities in her academics. Her personality also speaks of strong Christian character. She has a philanthropic spirit, giving to those who are in need. Many times I would witness her sharing her lunch or lunch money with her classmates. I’ve also observed her enthusiasm in helping her classmates do their classwork. She would always volunteer to help around the classroom. She enjoyed being a monitor and loves to pray.”

NYSP gives students the chance to unleash their full learning potential as they further their interest in specific areas of study, such as architecture, forensic science, and medicine. Throughout the program, young scholars engage in challenging coursework, gain a greater sense of independence, and experience a renaissance of learning. The program culminates with student-created projects that tie in leadership skills learned with the discoveries made in their specific area of study.

NYSP is dedicated to identifying, inspiring, and honoring the nation’s most promising elementary school students. The program is comprised of highly successful practitioners in the field of elementary education who boast 25 years of experience in implementing successful education programs for students.

Fourth-grader Organizes Spring Benefit Concert

Tianna Damon, a fourth-grade student at Greater Boston Academy/Edgewood Elementary School, organized a spring benefit concert held on Saturday, May 14. The event, which included a variety of vocal and instrumental music, a candlelight dinner, and a live auction, was attended by more than 85 students, parents, faculty, staff, and friends.

“You can succeed in everything you want to do if you put your mind to it and ask God to help you,” said Damon after the concert.

“Tianna had the original idea and was involved in all decision making along the way, from scheduling a meeting with the principal to share her idea, to the selection of candles and table linens, to menu planning, decorations, and the event program. She truly was the lead organizer for the event with support from her family and a dedicated group of volunteers,” said Susan Damon, Tianna’s mother and assistant.

“This event was a wonderful opportunity to work with a student that had the desire to help her school, and I’m so proud to see it come to fruition.” At the end of the evening an oversized check in the amount of $1,580 was presented by Tianna Damon to Eldon Roberts, school principal. These funds will be used for physical education equipment and Bible education materials to benefit all students.

—Lisa A. Wheeler, director, Greater Boston Academy Advancement Office
Go Fish For Kids at Northeastern

The Northeastern Conference Children’s Ministries Department held its first annual Go Fish for Kids Convention at Camp Victory Lake in Hyde Park, New York, on Sabbath, May 21. Hundreds of children (ages 5 to 14), accompanied by their parents, along with children's ministries leaders, participated in the event.

Phyllis Washington, the North American Division (NAD) Children’s Ministries director, and her crew of presenters trained the children to “go fish for Jesus.”

Go Fish for Kids is a program developed by the NAD Children’s Ministries department, that is designed to teach children various methods and skills to share Jesus with their friends and neighbors. Children are taught how to creatively tell their story through such ministries as puppetry, clowning, prayer, storytelling, preaching, outreach and card, and Bible study.

The participating children were captivated and active throughout the day as they learned how to minister to their friends. It was reported that several children exclaimed, “This is better than church!” One parent said, “My child has never shown so much interest in these programs before. The way it was presented kept his attention and interest all day!” Another parent shared, “My son enjoyed the program so much! He was so excited about it that he went home and told his grandmother everything he learned. That’s amazing!”

Go Fish for Kids is a dimension of children's spiritual formation. We believe that as they grow in Jesus and develop a relationship with Him, they should learn to “train up a child in the way he should go and when he grows old, he will not depart from it.” Getting

Children from the outreach and card ministry presented a blanket they made to Pollyanna Barnes.

The children are learning to make cards.

Pollyanna Barnes, right, presented the grand prize to Martine Dacilas, Children’s Ministries leader, from the Mid-Hudson French church for bringing the largest group (36) to the program. She received a full-size puppet.

Thanks to Washington and her team, the children are equipped with tools that will aid them in fishing for Jesus. Plans are to offer this event annually. For more information, contact the Northeastern Conference Children's Ministries Department.

—Pollyanna Prosper-Barnes, director, Northeastern Conference Children’s Ministries Department.
The Queens Adventist Youth Federation annual rally day was well attended.

The Queens Adventist Youth Federation hosted its annual rally day at the Grover Cleveland High School in Queens, New York, with an audience of more than 1,400 youth. The weekend of Sabbath, May 14 marked the celebration of the end of a dynasty! This event is the capstone event of the organization and the leaders of the federation celebrate in their customary regal style.

The weekend began on Friday night with the “I Speak Life” Friday Night Live Preach Fest. Twelve-year-old David Cuke from Solid Rock Seventh-day Adventist Church in Far Rockaway, New York, started off the preach fest followed by Daasia Calhoun and Chelsea Moore.

At the Sabbath celebration the Queens Area Drum Corps and Color Guard started the processional, showing the many sides of youth leadership in the Queens area. The Queens Mass Choir sang three songs led by three of the best choir directors in the entire conference. The soloists were amazing. It is a testament to the professional and spirit-filled leadership of the choir, musicians, directors, and soloists. Abigail Charles, with her powerful voice, set the atmosphere for the message delivered by Nicardo Delahaye, associate pastor of the Mount Sinai Seventh-day Adventist Church in Queens Village, New York.

The evening concluded with a scholarship benefit concert at Jamaica Seventh-day Adventist Church in Jamaica, New York. All of the churches in the area sent groups and choirs to sing to the glory of the Lord. The proceeds benefited the Smith and Collins Family Memorial Scholarship for high school seniors. The three 2011 recipients were announced and all high school and college graduates were awarded appreciation gifts from the organization.
Members Rally Together to Build Fellowship Hall

The Mountain View Seventh-day Adventist Church in Vernon, Vermont, began construction of a new fellowship hall in the fall of 2010. The church has been blessed to have many new members join their congregation in the past few years, and the room they are temporarily using as a fellowship hall is no longer big enough to accommodate the growing church.

Church members and local community members have been very active in either helping with the construction, donating money, or both. The general contractor is church member Lloyd Condon. Pete Miller and Brian Young helped work on the septic system. Warren Fellows, a long-time member, now living in Maine, did excavating on the initial foundation footings. A local company volunteered the use of their crane for putting up the trusses.

Last summer, Gary Davis was working as a landscaper and a customer paid him with a boat. Davis put the boat up for sale. The boat sold after just a few weeks, and Davis donated the proceeds to the building fund. Davis’ wife, Heike, who is originally from Germany, has been giving German lessons to a neighbor. She donates all the proceeds to the building fund.

A benefit concert was held on February 26 to raise funds for the building project. Lorin Jalba, a concert pianist from Romania, was the guest performer. The concert was coordinated by church member Jesse Koncitik. There was an excellent turnout for the concert, and almost $2,000 was raised.

Church members are excited about how the Lord has led in this project thus far. Stay tuned for more updates!

—Amanda N. Gaspard, communication secretary, Mountain View church

Time for Tea and Transformation

Central Vermont Academy in Barre, Vermont, was transformed into an elegant tea room on June 5 for an event sponsored by the women at the Barre-Montpelier Seventh-day Adventist Church in Barre. Fifty-seven women of all ages, from a number of churches in the area, gathered for a “Time for Tea and Transformation.” The theme of the tea was “butterflies” and the text used was 2 Corinthians 5:17, “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things have become new.”

The main speaker for the event was Heidi Banks, who gave her personal testimony about how God has been transforming her from a caterpillar into a butterfly through spiritual conversion. Banks was raised a Seventh-day Adventist and always thought of herself as a faithful follower of Jesus. She knew the right things to do and not to do, but she had not developed a daily trusting relationship with Him. It wasn’t until her world was spinning out of control and her life was in shambles that she was open to seeing the truth. Banks shared the painful journal of allowing God to refine her as she developed a personal walk with Him. She challenged the women to let God show them that He can do the impossible in their life, if only they will let Him.

The tables were decorated with dishes, tea pots, and cups, and a number of butterfly favors for each woman to take home with her. Although this was an in-reach event, a number of people brought family members, friends, or coworkers to be a part of the tea time and transformation.

—Communication department, Barre-Montpelier church
Going to a new church district can be challenging for a pastor. Rick Kuntz, evangelist for the Northern New England Conference, saw it as an opportunity—a chance to enter a church district with vision and purpose. Kuntz and his wife, Jane, recently joined the Auburn district in Maine. Kuntz soon realized that Project Win-A-Friend, an outreach training seminar, could be used as an excellent tool to promote the importance of evangelism.

A seminar weekend was planned early in the year to connect his new church with the community in two ways, by networking with municipal government officers and by meeting the people of Auburn. Phase one of this plan was successful when Kuntz and Northern New England Conference outreach coordinator Bruce Wilkinson met with city administrators to share the vision of how the Auburn church could best use Adventist resources to support the community.

The pastors established rapport at the meeting with Auburn’s mayor, city clerk, police lieutenant, individuals from the school district, and many other agencies responsible for the well-being of the community. Invitations were extended and accepted by all to meet later in the year, should a one-hour think tank session be coordinated by the church. Each administrator expressed a willingness to support future church programs in some way. Vera Long Toe, Abenaki, a Native American, agreed to be the liaison for the Northern New England tribal leaders for future outreach endeavors. Kuntz now has many new contacts and resources ready to be used as the Lord directs the affairs of the Auburn church.

As the seminar weekend progressed, church members listened carefully as each project plan was presented. At the end of the day, willing lay people, confident in the power of God, stepped forward to proceed as a united church, using Project Win-A-Friend to make a difference for Jesus in Auburn, Maine.

—Bruce Wilkinson, outreach coordinator, Northern New England Conference

Auburn district pastor Rick Kuntz, second from left, and Bruce Wilkinson, Northern New England outreach coordinator, right, met with Auburn city administrators Mayor Richard Gleason, left, and Roberta Fogg, city clerk, second from right.
More than 100 young people gathered at Camp Winnekeag in Ashburnham, Massachusetts, for the Public Campus Ministry and Young Adult Spiritual Growth Retreat on the weekend of March 25-27. The event was a collaborative effort between the Southern New England Conference and STRIDE (Student Training and Resource Institute for Discipleship Evangelism), a public campus ministry and missionary training program based in Cambridge, Massachusetts, that is a getaway and an opportunity for students and young adults to have a personal encounter with God.

One young professional who attended said, “I am so grateful for the invitation I received for the retreat. I have never attended a Christian retreat before. I enjoyed every moment, being exposed to the intimate experience with God. I praise God for such a faithful group of young, caring, and loving individuals!”

The retreat theme, “No More,” was based on Revelation 21:4. Steven Conway, director of evangelism for Michigan Conference’s CAMPUS (Center for Adventist Ministry to Public University Students), located in Ann Arbor, Michigan, presented the evening devotional and worship service messages. He spoke about the impact of sin on God, His grace and mercy in sanctifying us from sin, and His desire to deliver us from sin that we might experience it no more. A passion for Christ was evident as the Spirit moved seven young people to make decisions for Bible study and seven more to make decisions for baptism.

This spiritual retreat is just a small reflection of what God is doing through public campus ministry. A passion for Christ was evident as the Spirit moved seven young people to make decisions for Bible study and seven more to make decisions for baptism. The signs all tell that the time is nearing and we are not too far from our eternal home. The ultimate “no more” experience portrayed in Revelation 21:4 will soon be a reality. Until then, it is our hope that God would bless and keep this group of young people and all those looking forward to that day.

—Ahriel Burston, member, STRIDE

Students from grades 1-4 of the Warren Seventh-day Adventist Elementary School in West Brookfield, Massachusetts, along with Julee Carlson, back left, music teacher; and Luisa Cabana, back right, teacher of grades 1-3, visited the Southern New England Conference office while on a field trip on April 13. They spent time with Frank Tochterman, the conference president, seated center.
Students from the Warren Seventh-day Adventist Elementary School in West Brookfield, Massachusetts, conducted the worship service at the Quinebaug Seventh-day Adventist Church in Quinebaug, Connecticut, on Sabbath, April 9. Mihail Baciu, pastor of the Warren Seventh-day Adventist Church, and Angela Walton, principal of the school, led out in the service to promote Christian education. More than half the students (16) from the school were present to conduct the program. Students from grades 1 to 8 recited memory texts and sang.

Baciu presented a message on the importance of Christian education, contrasting it with public education in the U.S. and communist education in Romania, where he grew up. Romanian parents are not allowed to educate their children. Only the state is allowed control of their minds. He was grateful to later come to America, where he is free to raise his children to serve the Lord.

Walton shared the value of Christian education in raising her own children. She quoted Proverbs 22:6: “Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.” She quoted statistics indicating that, of three of our local academies, 90-100 percent of their students go on to college, a higher percentage than that of public institutions. All the Warren students present say they want to continue their Christian education, indicating its value to them. Walton made an appeal to all to support the school financially and help meet the needs, including the purchase of a van and new computers for the students. God has blessed the Warren church school.

—Ken Maynard, communication director, Quinebaug church

A Century Well Lived

If you were to ask Mary Burke, age 100, of the Gardner Seventh-day Adventist Church in Westminster, Massachusetts, what her secret to her long life is, one thing she would tell you is that each morning and evening she rededicates her life to the Lord. When pressed further, she will respond, “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding”—Proverbs 3:5. Her lifelong walk of faith has been a blessing to countless people, including 26 foster children.

Burke’s lifelong walk of faith has been a blessing to countless people, including the 26 foster children she and her husband, Maurice, helped to raise.

Burke was born in Baltimore, Maryland, on March 20, 1911, into an Adventist home. She admits that she had a reputation of being a “cry baby” in church school but quickly learned to grow up. Her college savings fund was lost in the Great Depression, but that did not cause her to lower her sights. She worked for 15 years for a civil rights attorney for whom she transcribed some letters now housed in the Thurgood Marshall Law Library. She married her childhood friend, Maurice, on December 16, 1940, and the two were married for more than 55 years, until he died at the age of 86.

Burke has lived in Washington, D.C., Maryland, Pennsylvania, Japan, and Massachusetts. She was a longtime member of the Village Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Lancaster, Massachusetts, and moved to Gardner just in time to serve on the building committee where she helped choose the land for current location of the Gardner church.

In honor of her reaching this milestone of 100 years, many celebrations have been held and she received a hand-signed birthday wish from President and Mrs. Barak Obama. At 100 Mary continues to do her own cooking, washing, and keeps her sense of humor!

—Einar Rom, pastor, Gardner church

Mary Burke
Wilson procède à l’ouverture du Conseil pastoral historique de la Division sud-américaine


Cette rencontre est un rassemblement de pasteurs de huit pays, et il parrait que c’est pour la première fois qu’une des treize Divisions mondiales de l’église adventiste ait rassemblé tous ses pasteurs pour une séance unique de formation ministérielle.

Dans son discours destiné aux pasteurs qui ont rempli le centre de la convention dans la ville de Foz do Iguacu dans l’Etat de Paraná au sud du Brésil, Wilson a fait allusion au récent épisode dans lequel une figure religieuse américaine a prédit que Jésus allait revenir le 21 mai. T.N.C. Wilson a rappelé à son auditoire que Jésus reviendra le jour où Dieu l’a décidé, comme la Bible le dit de façon claire, mais que les croyants doivent être bien préparés pour ce moment-là.

Le président a attiré l’attention sur son espérance que les milliards de personnes qui habitent cette terre ne manqueront pas l’opportunité d’aller au ciel et que rien ne détournera leur attention de ce grand événement. “Le Seigneur Jésus revient bientôt et nous attendons cette espérance bénie,” a déclaré Wilson.

Avant que le dirigeant ne prenne la parole, Erton Köhler, président de la Division sud-américaine, a fait référence à l’héritage de ses deux prédécesseurs, les pasteurs Rut Nagel et John Wolff. Il a raconté la distribution de cinq millions d’imprimés faisant la promotion du retour proche de Jésus-Christ lors d’un effort d’évangélisation d’une journée sous la direction de J. Wolff le 31 mars 1979, et la mise en place d’une évangélisation intégrée lorsque R. Nagel était cadre à la Division. Köhler a également mis l’accent sur la nécessité de rechercher une réforme et un réveil personnel.

“Nous sommes citoyens des cieux. Notre identité actuelle parle plus fort que nos origines” a-t-il dit.

Des l’ouverture de l’évènement, l’intention de faire preuve d’unité au milieu de la diversité parmi les pasteurs et membres de la Division était claire lorsque les représentants ont salué les personnes présentées en six langues différentes : le portugais, l’espagnol, l’aymara, le quechua, le guarani et le rom.

Un exemplaire spécial de la Bible, qui contient presque 70 suppléments, dont un ensemble complet de 27 études bibliques, a été distribué à chacun des pasteurs présents. La Bible du Pasteur a été offerte comme un cadeau, mais fut distribuée dans un sentiment de responsabilité. Les pasteurs ont été poussés à se préparer avec intensité pour prêcher aux plus de 300 millions de personnes qui vivent sur le territoire de la Division. Dans une scène émouvante, des milliers de pasteurs ont placé leurs mains sur la Bible en gage de consécration pendant que le secrétaire exécutif de l’église adventiste mondiale G. T. Ng priait pour leur fidélité envers la Parole de Dieu.

Durant la soirée d’ouverture, le premier recensement des pasteurs adventistes de l’Amérique du Sud a également eu lieu. Selon le sociologue Tadeu de Jesus, tous les participants ont dû remplir un questionnaire composé de 216 questions relatives au pasteur dans sa vie personnelle et professionnelle. Cette recherche permettra de générer des index pour évaluer les processus et résultats stratégiques pour les pasteurs adventistes.

Source: Adventist News Network
¿Están realmente unidos en la esperanza del regreso de Jesús?” preguntó Ted N. C. Wilson a unos cuatro mil pastores de Sudamérica al inaugurar un histórico Concilio Ministerial bajo el lema “Unidos en la esperanza.”

El encuentro reunió a pastores de ocho países, y se cree que es el primero que logra reunir todos los pastores de una de las trece divisiones de la iglesia mundial.

En su mensaje a los pastores que atestaron el centro de convenciones de la ciudad de Foz do Iguacu, Wilson hizo referencia a la reciente predicción de que Jesús regresaría el 21 de mayo. Wilson recordó a su audiencia que Jesús regresará cuando Dios lo determine, pero que los creyentes necesitan estar preparados para ese momento.

El presidente enfatizó la esperanza de que los miles de millones de habitantes de este mundo no se pierdan la oportunidad de estar en el cielo y de que nada los distraiga de este gran evento. “El Señor Jesús volverá pronto y estamos aguardando esa bienaventurada esperanza,” declaró.

Antes de que el líder de los casi 17 millones de adventistas pronunciara su mensaje, Erton Köhler, presidente de la División Sudamericana, citó el legado de sus dos antecesores, Rui Nagel y Joao Wolff. Recordó la distribución de cinco millones de volantes sobre el regreso de Cristo el 31 de marzo de 1979, cuando Wolff era presidente, y el establecimiento del evangelismo integrado bajo la conducción de Nagel Köhler el cual enfatizó también la necesidad de buscar el reavivamiento y la reforma personal.

“Somos ciudadanos del cielo. Nuestra identidad habla más fuerte que nuestros orígenes,” expresó.

Desde el mismo comienzo se buscó ilustrar la diversidad entre los pastores y feligreses de la división, dado que representantes saludaron a los presentes en seis idiomas diferentes: portugués, español, aimara, quechua, guaraní y romaní.

Cada pastor recibió una Biblia con casi setenta suplementos y un juego completo de 27 estudios bíblicos. Al recibirla, los ministros presentes recibieron el desafío de predicar a los más de trescientos millones de habitantes del territorio.

G. T. Ng, secretario de la Iglesia Adventista mundial, elevó una oración de dedicación de las Biblias mientras los miles de pastores colocaban su mano sobre ella.

La primera noche, se realizó también el primer censo de pastores adventistas de Sudamérica. Según el sociólogo Tadeu de Jesus, todos los participantes tenían que completar un cuestionario de 216 preguntas sobre la vida personal y profesional del pastor. Se espera que esto ayude a generar indicadores para medir los procesos y resultados estratégicos de los ministros adventistas.

Source: Adventist News Network

Positions of Our Faith

Religious Minorities and Religious Freedom: A Statement of Commitment and Concern

In order to increase awareness of the views of the Seventh-day Adventist Church on various subjects, the Atlantic Union Gleaner will publish monthly one of the position statements or guidelines voted by church leadership since 1980. These official statements were issued by the General Conference in session, the General Conference Executive Committee, the General Conference Administrative Committee, or the office of the General Conference president.

As the church continues to grow and make an influence, its role in the society will require that its views and what it holds true become known. Such will continue to be the demands of the society, and such will be the need to define Adventism’s relevance, or present truth, to those who are asking questions and seeking answers to their dilemmas and problems.

The documents presented here are not an end in themselves, but a reflection of a movement sensitive to its calling and the people who “know how to answer everyone” (Colossians 4:6, NIV).

Throughout history religious minorities have often been subject to discrimination and outright persecution. Today religious intolerance and prejudice are again on the rise. Notwithstanding the affirmation of the freedom of everyone to hold and disseminate religious views and to change one’s religion—an affirmation sustained in the United Nations instruments and documents comprising an “International Bill of Rights”—many countries deny this right to their citizens.

International instruments condemn discrimination against minorities, but tragically, some nations have published lists of religious groups described as potentially dangerous sects. Anti-sect commissions have been set up, investigative personnel have been trained, and restrictive laws passed. Hundreds of thousands of innocent believers are now under official suspicion and are treated as second-class citizens. All this violates religious freedom, which is the most basic and essential of the fundamental rights of human-kind. Seventh-day Adventists believe in obeying the laws of the land as long as they do not conflict with the laws of God. However, we oppose any law, policy, or activity that discriminates against religious minorities.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church stands for religious freedom for everyone, as well as for the separation of church and state. Scripture teaches that the God who gave life also gave freedom of choice. God only accepts homage that is freely given. Seventh-day Adventists further believe that the law must be applied evenly and without capricious favor. We submit that no religious group should be judged because some adherents may appear to be extremists. Religious freedom is limited when aggressive or violent behavior violates the human rights of others.

In support of Article 18 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international instruments, and in harmony with its beliefs and its history, the Seventh-day Adventist Church is fully committed to promote, defend, and protect religious freedom for everyone, everywhere. To that end, we will continue to cooperate with the United Nations Human Rights Commission and other international agencies and religious organizations to encourage every nation to implement the fundamental right of religious freedom. In addition, we will continue to promote dialogue and better understanding between governmental authorities and people who belong to religious minorities. ☞

This statement was voted during the Annual Council of the General Conference Executive Committee on Wednesday, September 29, 1999, in Silver Spring, Maryland.
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OBITUARIES

BAILEY, Daniel F.—71; b. Feb. 11, 1939, in Hartford, Conn.; d. Dec. 30, 2010, in Hartford, Conn. He was a member of the Rockville-Tolland Seventh-day Adventist Church in Tolland, Conn. He attended Atlantic Union College in South Lancaster, Mass., (1966-1968). He was active in his community and was involved in many civic groups. He was active in his church in the Personal Ministries department and helped to found a church in Hartford called All Nation, now known as Christian Fellowship Seventh-day Adventist Church. He saw the baptism of several people from Bible studies he gave in association with the Ken Cox evangelistic meetings. Survivors include his sister, Martha Redner of Sinking Springs, Pa., two nieces, and other relatives.

DAVIES, Doris H.—67; b. Nov. 23, 1943, in Tortola, British Virgin Islands; d. Jan. 30, 2011, in Lanham, Md. She served for 18 years as a secretary in the Northeastern Conference Youth and Treasury departments. From 1999, she also served in the secretariat at the General Conference world church headquarters and part-time at the Potomac Book and Bible House. Survivors include two daughters, Gail S. Thomas and Sherma S. Thomas; a grandson, Justin D. Thomas-Miller; her parents Haldane and Rosita Davies; eight sisters, Enid, Naomi (Drew), Joy (Clinton), Gena (Bennett), Judy (Eton), Betsy (David), Dorcas (Elroy), and Joan (Lionel); eight brothers, Henrique, Nesco (Odiene), Dante, Paul, Marshall (Burke), Floyd (Patrona), Dave (Ceryl), Alvason (Mary), and other relatives.


GIFFORD, Ralph A.—74; b. Apr. 3, 1936, in Fairfield, Maine; d. Jan. 26, 2011, in Pinedale, Wy. He is graduated from South Lancaster Academy and attended Atlantic Union College in South Lancaster, Mass. He and his brother,
Kendall, started the Gifford Brothers Construction Company in 1938. He went on to build numerous commercial and industrial buildings throughout New England. Notable buildings in Lancaster include the College Church of Seventh-day Adventists, the AUC gymnasium and the gymnasium at SLA. He completed the conversion of the old Clinton mills into the new Nypro building. He also built the Parkview Hospital in Brunswick, Maine. In South Lancaster, he was a volunteer firefighter, a charter member of the College Church, and a promoter of the Thayer Symphony Orchestra. He is survived by his wife, Betty Gifford; his daughter, Alison Clemmer; former wife, Nola Gifford; two daughters, Rita Allain and Ruth Meis; five sons, Ralph Gifford III, Ronald Gifford, Russell Gifford, Robert Gifford, and Randall Gifford; two sisters, Barbara Bonton and Carilyn Zimmer, a brother, Curtis Gifford; 22 grandchildren, and six great-grandchildren.

GIMBEL, Lee V.—87, b. Feb. 8, 1924, in Heaton, N.D.; d. Feb. 10, 2011, in Brunswick, Maine. He was a member of the Brunswick Seventh-day Adventist Church in Brunswick, Maine. He was employed by White Memorial Hospital in Los Angeles, Calif; Hindsdale Hospital in Hinsdale, Ill.; and New York Branson Hospital in Toronto, Canada. He was employed at Parkview Hospital in Brunswick, Maine. He retired in 1989, as chief financial officer. He also served at times as acting administrator. Survivors include three sons, Gregory Gimbel of Brunswick, Maine; John Gimbel of Fairbanks, Alaska, and Jere Gimbel of Denver, Colo., a brother, Lloyd Gimbel of Stetler, Alberta; and a sister, Madella Gifford, of Brunswick, Maine; John Gimbel of San Antonio, Texas; a sister, Judy Herndon, a brother, Virgil A. Humphrey, Jr. (Delores); Edwina J. Humphrey-Flynn (Gawin), Edwin J. Humphrey, Jr. (Delores), Virgil A. Humphrey (Alicia), Louis C. Humphrey (Sherrie), Calvin L. Humphrey, Margaret E. Humphrey-Richardson (Stephen) and Lawrence E. Fields, four grandchildren, and several great-grandchildren.


HUMPHREY, SR., Edwin J.—88, b. Oct. 12, 1922, in Detroit, Mich.; d. Dec. 31, 2010, in Silver Spring, Md. He attended Oakwood Academy and Oakwood College (now Oakwood University). He was drafted into the U.S. Army in 1943. His pastoral ministry includes service in the South Central and Northeastern conferences. He pastored churches in Buffalo, Brooklyn, Harlem, Jamaica, New Rochelle, Niagara Falls, Rochester, and Syracuse, N.Y. At the Ephesus Seventh-day Adventist Church he led the congregation in rebuilding the severely burned edifice, restoring an historic landmark. He also served as the Northeastern Conference ministerial secretary. Prompted by a stroke, he retired from pastoral ministry in 1991 to Silver Spring, Md. Survivors include, Margaret Humphrey, his wife of 62 years; seven children, Edwina J. Humphrey-Flynn (Gawin), Edwin J. Humphrey, Jr. (Delores), Virgil A. Humphrey (Alicia), Louis C. Humphrey (Sherrie), Calvin L. Humphrey, Margaret E. Humphrey-Richardson (Stephen) and Lawrence E. Fields, four grandchildren, and several great-grandchildren.

LAROSA, Salvatore R.—89; b. Jun. 6, 1921, in Little Ferry, N.J.; d. Feb. 12, 2011, in Dayton Tenn. He graduated from Andrews University and Oakwood College, in South Lancaster, Mass. He was employed as a pastor in Greater New York, New Jersey, Ohio, and Michigan. He was a member of the Brayton Seventh-day Adventist Church, Dayton, Tenn. He served in the U.S. Army Air Corps during World War II. Survivors include Laura Natalie Melita LaRosa, his wife of 69 years, of Dayton, Tenn.; a son Julius D. La Rosa of Camp Hill, Pa.; two daughters, Carol Anne Buhler of Harpster, Ohio, and Susan L. Macre of Calhoun, Ga.; five grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren.


REAMS, Rodney G.—75; b. May 21, 1935, in Des Moines, Iowa; d. Feb. 27, 2011, in Clermont, Fla. He was a member of the Worcester Seventh-day Adventist Church, in Worcester, Mass., where he was involved in multiple activities throughout life. He served in the U.S. Army. Survivors include June Reams, his wife of 35 years; a brother, Larry (Virginia) Reams of Iowa, and a sister, Karen (Galan) Slyke of Iowa.

VANGALDER, Rodney F.—81, b. Feb. 4, 1929, in Candor, N.Y.; d. Jan. 11, 2011, in Elmira, N.Y. He was a member of the Elmira Seventh-day Adventist Church in Elmira, N.Y. Survivors include his wife, Joan VanGelder, four sons, Bradley, Richelle, Michael, and Mark; three daughters, Sandra Love, Rebecca Shutter, and Roxanne Koski, a brother, Ricard VanGelder, a sister, Marjorie VanGelder, 18 grandchildren, and nine great-grandchildren.
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