Anil Kanda walked into the office at the Modesto Junior College to ask a question. How do I start a Christian Club? “I wanted to connect with God and people,” he explains.

The new associate pastor of the Ceres church had met Kirstin Ashby and Karen Grimaldi, two full-time students, at church and began to dream about the outreach possibilities at the local college.

Told he had to be a student, he enrolled in a class. The only opening was an exercise class called Pilates. For $20 he became the only guy in the class. “I stayed in the very back,” he says.

He, with Kirstin and Karen, began to meet every Thursday in a central outside area. “Nearly every time we do this someone stops and listens,” he explains. “It draws a crowd like when a nearby class was waiting and came to listen. The subject was the Bible and the brain.”

The informal study group averages between 12 and 20. Word of mouth and posters spread the word. “Community colleges are so big. You see people sitting by themselves. Connection offers a way for community,” Kanda says.

From Hindu to Christian

“I am a former Hindu that was converted by the love of Jesus revealed in end time events in The Great Controversy,” he explains. Raised in Southern California by Hindu parents, he began ditching his college classes and hanging out in the library. “I got interested in end time events and the occult,” he shares.

At work he would talk about what he was reading with anyone that would listen. Kanda was especially interested in the antichrist.

Twenty-year-old Abraham, the new guy, listened. A struggling Adventist, he gave Kanda copies of The Great Controversy and Planet in Rebellion. They were baptized together in 2000.

His parents were not pleased. “I struggled a lot with my family,” he shares. He was struggling between studying law and computer technology. “God really impressed me to be a missionary,” he says. After his dad died, he left his mom, three sisters, a brother and brother-in-law and, with a friend, went to the Amazing Facts College of Evangelism. From there, he attended Weimar College for two years.

Arroyo Grande Pastor Jerry Nelson hired him as a task force worker. Two years later, he joined the Youth Evangelism Team, leading the team in 2007-08. He has been the associate pastor in Ceres since September 2008.

“I love preaching like nothing else. And giving Bible studies,” Kanda says.

Apologetics, the intellectual defense of Christianity, is a passion. “People like myself need evidence. Young adults need reasons for why they believe. They are challenged by the world view and who God is. I don’t present Christianity as just a better way of living, but as the truth for this time.”
Pastor Dong Hun Shin’s ordination to the ministry on December 13, 2008 was a time of special celebration for him. After five years of ministry to Koreans in the United States, he was ordained during a yearly Korean convocation held at the Oakland Korean church.

He is the first Korean pastor to be ordained in Central or Northern California in 20 years.

“The ordination was a beautiful and unforgettable experience,” he says. “It was a strong confirmation from God that my life is totally dedicated to ministry.”

Born into an Adventist home in South Korea, Shin attended Korean public schools, then did marketing for Coca Cola Korea. One day while doing a survey in the field, an elderly man asked Shin if Coca Cola was good for you. “No,” was his honest reply. The incident strengthened his conviction that he couldn’t sell something that he didn’t personally support. He left Coca Cola and became a product manager for oral hygiene products at Johnson and Johnson Korea.

Turning 33, he realized he had just over 20 years of work left (Koreans retire at 55). “I wanted to do something more meaningful,” he says of his career change. In 1996 he brought his wife, Mikyoung, and two sons, Joseph and Isaac, to Andrews University. There he completed his Masters of Divinity and a Masters in Software Engineering while Mikyoung received a Masters in Computer Science.

Shin received 10 calls to the ministry and the family saw this as confirmation of God’s call. They accepted the call to the Mountain View Korean church as the associate pastor. He served there for three years. In May 2006, he became pastor of the Monterey Korean Church.

One of Shin’s major goals is to provide a ministry of healing to his church members. “We are all foreigners in this country, and the transition makes many people stressed and sick,” he explains. “Many Koreans bring their pains and hurts to church. If I don’t help these people heal properly, then the whole community hurts. I want to make this church a healthy one by helping each person know God and be a warrior for Him.”

“Dong Shin has been like a son to me. He asked me to be his mentor for ministry,” says Daniel Botabara, conference director of Asian ministries. “I could not be happier to support his ordination.”

“I love the ministry,” says Shin, who is eager to find ways to reach Koreans with the gospel. “I love soul winning. I personally never realized the delight and happiness of baptizing people who’ve decided to dedicate their lives to God. Nothing else can compare to it.”

New Member Visits Every Home in Chowchilla

When Shawn Kilcease was baptized into the Chowchilla Seventh-day Adventist in December 2008, he wanted everyone in his hometown to hear the good news about Jesus, His soon coming and His church. “I used to wonder how the Mormons did it,” he says. “I prayed and God gave me this idea.”

That idea was to go door-to-door with free literature to every house, apartment and mobile home in Chowchilla. He asked his grandmother for GLOW* Pocket Signs for his Christmas gift. He completed his mission by mid-January, personally delivering 3,200 tracts.

If no one is home, he leaves the small tract. On the back is contact information for Bible studies. Those requests go directly to GLOW director Nelson Ernst.

On January 22, he picked up another 3,000 GLOW tracts to start all over again. “It’s like commercials on TV. I’m going back again and again,” he explains.

Kilcease became an Adventist through Harold Goodman, a friend of his grandmother.
We seldom know the challenges and joys of others until they share their testimony. Jay Bradford, senior at Bakersfield Adventist Academy (BAA) knows about challenges. At a recent Academy vespers he shared the joys too.

In the twelve years Bradford has attended BAA, he has often been encouraged to get closer to Jesus. “I’ve heard it all my life,” he says. “Bible classes were boring to me. I was unmotivated and lazy in my school work.” His teachers and basketball coaches tried their best. “My coaches even ran a special study hall to help me keep my grades up so I could play basketball,” he adds.

Last Spring found Bradford miserable and thinking about abandoning ever having a relationship with Jesus. “I was done with it. It wasn’t for me anymore,” he shares.

“My grandparents made it possible for me to be at BAA all those years. My grandmother often talked with me about doing better in school and especially about getting closer to God,” he remembers. One day as she was talking to him he wanted to tell her that he was done with religion. “I just decided to listen to her and let it go in one ear and out the other.”

What Bradford didn’t know was that this was the last time he would talk to her. A few weeks later she passed away. She had encouraged him to get closer to God and now she was gone. Now heartsick and miserable, he wasn’t sure where to turn.

In the days that followed Bradford was trying to sort it all out. One of his classmates, Manu, told him not to give up on God, to give Him a chance. Other classmates were there to support him too. Fred Warfield, his Bible teacher, encouraged him to fully accept Jesus as his Savior and that it was important to do it now.

Then it was decision time. A baptism was being held one night. When Mr. Warfield encouraged him to surrender his life and be baptized, Bradford told him he wanted to be baptized later. “He told me I should do it right now. I was tired of being miserable and was baptized that night,” he says.

Bradford is thankful for his Bible teacher, Mr. Warfield, and his BAA friends with the joy he has found in Jesus and the changes in his life. He is especially grateful for his faithful grandmother who was a big part of his decision too. He will graduate from BAA in a few months and is hoping to attend Pacific Union College or La Sierra University.

Praise God for schools where our teens are confronted daily with choosing Jesus. Praise God for Adventist education where family, friends, teachers, and coaches join together to encourage teens to find joy in Jesus!
I believe our wonderful Lord has a good sense of humor and Janet and I have discovered that seeking to share about Him can lead to some interesting situations!

Last spring Janet and I were driving from a day of filming at 3ABN in Illinois to a weekend prayer conference in Tennessee. I knew the rental car was nearly out of gas, but I thought I could probably get gas a few cents cheaper in the next town. An important phone call distracted me for about 20 minutes, and the sputtering car reminded me of my procrastination. As we rolled to a stop on the side of the road, Janet gave me one of those “I told you so” looks.

Thankfully, I only had about half a mile walk to the next exit and gasoline. At the station a young woman loaned me a gas can and a tattooed young man offered me a ride back to the car. As we talked, I learned that his wife had just left him. I gave him a GLOW tract titled “Does God Care When You’re Hurting.” When I returned the gas can, I also gave one to the young woman. Only in eternity will I know what the Lord did with those “words” from Him. I carry a little plastic packet of tracts in my pocket waiting for God’s providential appointments.

(GLOW – Go Light Our World – is an ongoing Camp Meeting Evangelism Offering initiative adult literature project for local churches. Currently, there are 43 CCC churches participating and other conferences and the General Conference are getting involved. For more information, go to goglow.org.)

Janet loves to pass out the GLOW literature to people as the Lord impresses. After her father’s memorial service last October in Florida, we were driving on a toll road. As we approached the booth, she handed me two tracts to give the attendant. I looked at her and said, “Two?” I felt that was too much, so only gave him one.

Afterwards we talked about whether it can be offensive to give too much to someone and a gentle air of tension came as we disagreed. Soon we approached another toll booth and I asked her for a tract. To tease me, she said “No.” Then she handed me one which I passed through the window with our toll.

The woman got excited and said, “Oh, are you Christians? That’s wonderful. I just moved to Orlando and don’t know anyone yet and need to find a church home.” We gave her Janet’s brother’s number as he is a pastor of a local church there.

Driving away from the toll booth, I looked over sheepishly at Janet and we both got a good laugh out of the way the Lord can time our educational experiences. (Janet later told me she had felt the Lord impressing her to give two tracts at the previous toll booth, an important part of listening to God about who and when.)

The North American Division leadership has chosen 2009 as the Year of Pastoral Evangelism. After much prayer, they felt the Lord asking them to trust and reach out. The ambitious goal is to triple the annual baptisms – to 100,000! In Central, we’ve added lay preachers too. We’ve asked each pastor to hold at least one reaping event in his church this year. The seed sowing we do, the loving cultivating that build’s relationships lead to natural reaping.

It’s a joy to share the good news about our Jesus! And there are thousands of ways! (We love praying for and getting to know our neighbors.) As we continue on in this crucial time in earth’s history, all of us need to get involved in seeking to find someone to love and lead to Jesus! It is not only God’s way to reach the lost that He loves so much, it is the only way to keep us alive spiritually as well.

However you are led to share Him with others, remember His promise in Isaiah 55:11, “So is My Word that goes out from My mouth: It will not return to Me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.”

Your brother in Christ,

Jerry N. Page