CARED FOR AND CONNECTED

by Dave Smith

As I shared with you a couple of months ago, in an August retreat, the Collegedale church pastors set a goal of doing what they could to help each church member feel cared for and connected. Since that time we have been attempting to accomplish this goal.

Because we have only started to progress toward our goal, it seems premature for a formal analysis of our progress. But we would like to hear from you. How are we doing? Can you tell a difference in our church culture? How have you experienced or observed that difference?

We would like to hear from you. Please e-mail your comments to church@southern.edu or write them on the cards in the Church pews and turn them in when the offering is collected. In addition to telling us how we are doing, we would appreciate any suggestions you might have for how we can do even better at reaching out to church members. We would also appreciate any ideas you have for how fellow church members can help other church members feel cared for and connected. What a special place our church will be when everyone reaches out to help and affirm others.

We will publish your ideas in a later Churchbeat. And we will keep working to help you feel that you are an important part of this church. I trust that you will, in turn, do your best to help other church members and guests feel special as well.

THE IRON SHARPENERS

by Ray Minner

You probably won’t hear metallic clanking and grinding as you pass the door of the Senior Center on the Church’s east side hall on Sabbath morning, but if you step inside you will find yourself surrounded by a circle of Bible students who take their theme from Proverbs 27:17: “As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.”

“Each of us brings our own perspective and questions to the Quarterly’s lesson and we always seek our common ground,” says Steve Lake, explaining the genesis of the class’s continued on page 2, Iron
YOUTH RECEIVES HAITI ASSISTANCE

by Wolf Jedamski

In a little over two months, a group of our youth will be leaving with their adult leaders on a mission trip to Haiti. Often when someone feels the call and tug from God, the next question that begs an answer is “How will I be able to pay for the trip and the supplies we’ll need?” One of the team members feeling God’s Spirit moving on her heart to respond to the needs of the orphans of Haiti was Sydney Sinclair, a sophomore at Collegedale Academy. At our first team meeting this last Sabbath, as team members introduced themselves to the group, Sydney did so by holding up a large replica of a check for almost $1000 that had been presented to her by the Fertility Center where her mother works.

The Center decided a few years ago to quit passing gifts to each other, and just collect money to help others in need. The first family to get help has a 9 yr. old boy (7 when diagnosed) with a rare terminal disease called A.L.D. They are constantly going back, and forth to hospitals, giving him the best life they can. The second gift, last year was to a 19 year old young lady who decided on her own to do mission work, and found a group going to Uganda, and is now about to go back for another 6 months.

continued on page 3, Haiti

Iron

continued from page 1

name, Common Ground. By encouraging free and open discussion of the lesson in an informal atmosphere, Steve has been nurturing a class of approximately 15 members of various ages and backgrounds since it started about two years ago.

“We take the Quarterly subject in the broad sense,” says Steve, “but we don’t feel confined to following it too closely. We use many other resources that bear on the theme of the lesson.”

Steve places a lot of importance on maintaining a class where all the members and even the visitors are known by name and feel their viewpoints are welcome and respected. “We aren’t intimidated by the hard topics,” he says.

“We started out in the Church Office two years ago, but we soon outgrew that space and we needed a configuration where everyone felt he had an opportunity to contribute to the discussion,” says Steve, who enjoys the present location, but worries that “Senior Center” conveys the wrong impression to persons who may be searching for a stimulating class. “We have a diverse group, ranging from their late teens (college age) to the mid-60s,” he says.

Common Ground has occasional social functions as well. Among the most popular in the recent history of the class was an international potluck, featuring dishes from many different parts of the world.

But looking toward the next year, Steve would like to involve the class in inner-city ministry and more overt witnessing. “This really takes some of us out of our comfort level, let me tell you,” he says. “We’re often tempted to just let the Mark Finleys and other professionals handle that aspect of church life.” Steve also has a vision for reclaiming church members who have stopped attending. “We need to get to know them and remind them that they are valued here.”

Common Ground’s 10:15 meeting time makes it convenient for worshippers who have been to Adoration I or who may be planning to attend Renewal.
You and I would never deliberately decide to help Satan. He certainly gets enough inadvertent help from us that goes a long way in contributing to his success. I know it’s not uplifting to spend much time analyzing the reasons for that success, but in addition to his intimate knowledge of human nature, we should never forget that one of his most effective secrets is to present a distorted image of God.

Adam and Eve used to walk in the garden with God. They knew him personally. Yet it was when Satan sowed doubt about God’s motives (What might God be hiding that He didn’t want them to know about?) that sin got its foothold.

Some see God as the ultimate vengeance seeker, rendering His judgment even now through earthquakes, hurricanes, and epidemics of sexually transmitted diseases. Others, when they are able to imagine God at all, picture Him as a remote, indifferent deity who is unaffected by and need not notice the hundreds of billions of decisions, acts, desires, and needs that drive human life on this planet. Still others want to know Him and believe they do, but haven’t really progressed much farther in their journey than Mount Sinai.

Elijah pleaded with God for a glimpse of Him. Jesus told His disciples that having seen Him, they had essentially seen the Father as well. But you and I have never had those first-person experiences. We have not yet beheld the Ancient of Days seated on His throne. We have never heard His voice call us by name. The apostle Paul was frustrated by this too, comparing our knowledge of God to peering through a dark and imperfect prism.

Jo Ann Davidson of the Theological Seminary at Andrews University openly tells us that with this quarter’s lessons we are going to be committing theology—a mysterious word to some, but it merely means “the study of God.”

What (and why) is the Trinity? Do we find God in creation . . . or in the Sabbath? Or is His identity hidden deep inside the law that we always argue about? How do we sort out what we piece together of Him from the hundreds of different names assigned to God in the Bible?

From Noah to Daniel to Ruth to Mary and Joseph to Paul’s missionary journeys and John’s vision on Patmos the Bible holds an incredible anthology of stories, but what is their unifying theme? Do all of them contain a piece of the puzzle? Does the puzzle ultimately reveal the face of God? Are there any puzzle pieces still left in the box?

Your quarterly’s title is “Glimpses of God.” What an opportunity as we study through this winter for each of us to pull up our own mental picture of our God and adjust the color, the tint, the sharpness. Any chance that some of us might find we’ve been watching the wrong channel all this time?

When we cut through all the tragedy and suffering, the treachery and cruelty that can be found in the Bible’s compelling narratives, when we pass through Bethlehem on the way to Gethsemane and Calvary . . . and ultimately to the sighting of a cloud in the eastern sky, I believe our study will reveal to us what it revealed to Ellen White so many years ago.

“We are the third to receive a gift. When they heard of Sydney’s desire to go work with children who are victims of the massive earthquake, the employees decided to “adopt” her as their project. Sydney and I feel very blessed.”

I always tell potential mission volunteers to trust God and to never allow lack of finances to stop them from going if God is truly calling them. Sydney’s experience is evidence that HE owns the cattle on a thousand hills!
2011 CONTRIBUTIONS may be made through midnight on December 31. Contributions may be placed in the mail slot next to the double doors closest to College Drive (upper parking lot).

THIS FALL’S GCSS CONSTITUENCY REPORT is available on our website at collegedalechurch.com under the “Education” link for you to read at your leisure.

THE 55+ CLUB will start the New Year programs on Jan 8 featuring Christopher Beason, executive director of Network 7 Media Center, producer of Mission SONlight, an international production promoting the quarterly world mission offerings of the Adventist church. Food should be brought hot or cold by 11:30 a.m. to the Fellowship Hall. A-B Bread/Rolls/Sandwiches; C-G Potatoes/Rice/Pasta; H-K Entrees; L-O Dessert; P-R Salad; S-Z Vegetable. Dues for the year remain at $6 payable in January. Contact Erling Odell at (423) 591-4779 for more info.

AW SPALDING’S Kindergarten Round Up is Friday, Jan. 13. Child must be 5 by August 15. Contact Rebekah at 396-2122 or rspears@awspalding.net and make your reservation to attend.

ENJOY GIFTS, REFRESHMENTS AND CRITTERS at Lester Coon Adventist School’s Kindergarten Roundup on Thursday, Jan. 5, from 8:30 to 10:30 a.m. Call 236-4926.

VOLUNTEER TEACHERS AND ASSISTANTS are needed for classes in English as a Second Language. Call Lisa at (423) 653-7787.

DIVORCECARE: The topic for the January 6 and 13 DivorceCare is KidCare and Single Sexuality; and for DivorceCare for Kids is It’s Not My Fault and Telling My Parents How I Feel. They meet from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. at the Church.

A CA SENIORS FUNDRAISER, featuring Dr. Arlene Taylor, will be held Friday, March 12, at Collegedale Community Church. Visit Dr. Taylor’s website www. arlenetaylor.org to review her Seminar Descriptions and register for the class. The BTSA test (50% off the $200 fee when you sign up for her seminar with us) can help you identify specifics about your brain’s unique energy advantage. Deadline to submit the BTSA test is January 7.

BY HIS SPIRIT PRAYER CONFERENCE will be held February 17-19 at Cohutta Springs Conference Center. Dennis Smith, a well-known author, will be the featured speaker. Sabine Vatel, pastor for discipleship at Forest Lake Church in Apopka, FL will be leading out in the prayer seasons. Register online at www.registration.gccsda.com.

IN MEMORY

Marjory Reed, mother of Karen Reed, passed away December 15. Services were held December 17. Memorial contributions may be made to the Ooltewah Adventist Kindergarten and School worthy student fund, 9209 Amos Rd, Ooltewah, TN 37363.