Ask the Doctor
17 Health Questions Answered
Why is Our Health Message a Secret?

I hate getting sick! In fact, I despise it! I have had the flu only once in my life, and that was enough. I never want to get it again! I'm not alone in my quest for good health. A national survey recently revealed that health is our number one concern. Good health improves quality of life; without it, we are challenged.

That's why people are always trying to find ways to preserve their health and live forever. Do you remember how excited we were when the National Geographic reporter identified Seventh-day Adventists in Loma Linda, Calif., as one of the four healthiest people groups on the planet? The others were the Sardinians of Italy, the Okinawans of Japan, and people from the Nicoya Peninsula of Costa Rica. Anderson Cooper picked up the story, and we were all thrilled to see Adventists featured prominently on CNN.

The story was replayed recently when The Oprah Winfrey Show traveled to these hot spots to introduce viewers around the world to people who are enjoying a healthy quality of life well into their 90s and 100s. She featured 94-year-old Ellsworth Wareham who’s still doing surgery at Loma Linda Medical Center and 104-year-old Marge Jetton, who daily lifts weights, bicycles, and drives. While each group revealed what they believe is their secret to longevity (i.e., calcium-rich mountain water), it was a blessing to hear the Loma Lindans credit faith in God, weekly Sabbath rest, and adherence to the Adventist health message principles (i.e., vegetarianism, exercise, etc.).

It reminded me of Exodus 15:26, which states: If you diligently heed the voice of the Lord your God and do what is right in His sight, give ear to His commandments and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you. … for I am the Lord who heals you. According to this text, there’s a cause and effect to health. To some degree, the condition of our health is directly related to how we care for ourselves. And yet I am quick to recognize that our genetic code affects our health. The most health-conscious individual can be fraught with health challenges while sometimes the most careless person, who disregards God’s health laws, seems to revel in good health. But in general, the rule applies, and those who abide by God's health principles bring glory and honor to Him and are a blessing to others, much like our friends in Loma Linda.

WHAT ABOUT THE REST OF US?

We have in our possession the embodiment of a tremendous health message given to us in Scripture and reinforced by the Spirit of Prophecy. We used to be known as the “people of the book” and a church that fostered a healthy lifestyle and frowned on unhealthy habits. Are we still at the forefront of health? Do we still live by, or even know, the health secrets that lead to longevity? Are we personal stewards of the health message that people so admire and study? The Bible says, “So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all to the glory of God” (1 Cor. 10:31, NIV). As we begin 2009, let’s do an inventory, first on ourselves, and then on our churches, institutions, and organizations. Then let’s resolve to heed the principles that will lead us to live longer, healthier lives that bring glory and honor to God. And finally, let’s proudly share the health message in our communities so the secrets are no longer secret.
Columbia Union College to Pursue University Status

The Columbia Union College (CUC) Board of Trustees has voted to pursue university status. Board members made the decision at their year-end meeting after hearing a presentation from the college's University Status Taskforce. The taskforce made their recommendation after studying the process, feasibility, and requirements associated with the higher education level. They assessed current educational trends and determined that, among other benefits, attaining university status would distinguish the four-year institution from the many two-year colleges that primarily offer associate degrees. CUC currently offers 33 majors and six masters degrees. National research shows that colleges that pursue university status will only be strengthened by this new, higher status," he says.

Seventh-day Adventist minister who serves as chaplain of the U.S. Senate, has already had the opportunity to counsel Obama and witness to him. Weigley plans to send a letter to Obama welcoming him to the Columbia Union territory and introducing him to the work and mission of Adventists here.

Weigley and his colleagues also shared many reports and updates with committee members. Union membership has surpassed 126,000, and, despite growing economic woes, tithe is holding steady. They also shared plans for the 2009 Year of Evangelism initiative, use of the Washington Adventist Hospital site after it moves to Silver Spring, Md., and ideas about how to grow Columbia Union College for the future. Next meeting: March 12.

Adventists to Distribute Message at Inauguration

Allegheny East Conference members in Washington, D.C., are being recruited to help distribute 100,000 copies of Message magazine during this month's historic presidential inauguration of Barack Obama. In honor of the event, the 44th president—America’s first African-American leader—will also grace the cover of the January/February issue of the magazine.

Seventh-day Adventists founded Message magazine—the oldest black religious journal in America—110 years ago to reach blacks in the South with the gospel. "Even though we are a religious magazine, we like to address current issues, trends, and affairs," explains editorial director Washington Johnson II, DMin. "We felt we should not pass this by as a footnote. This is a milestone, something that all people should be proud of in America." Johnson said those who receive the magazines might use the cards inside to sign up for Bible studies. "Our primary objective is to have a magazine that will lead people to Christ and prepare them for His soon return," he says.

To volunteer to distribute magazines, please contact Colin Braithwaite at (610) 326-4610, ext. 226 or 227.—Taishi Rowe

Union Communicators Recognized at Convention

Several Columbia Union communication professionals were honored during the 19th annual Society of Adventist Communicators convention, recently held in Denver. William Armendaris (pictured above), a member of Potomac Conference's Washington church, was cited with an award of excellence for the innovative, social networking website pcjovenes.com. Created in 1999 the Spanish-language site, which targets young adults, offers news, Christian resources, podcasts, photos, and Bible studies. It attracts more than 160,000 visitors from around the world each month.

The late Reger Cutting Smith was also recognized for nearly 30 years of service to the Seventh-day Adventist Church. His wife, Delores (right), attended the convention and accepted SAC’s Lifetime Achievement Award on his behalf. Before his death last year at age 54, the multitalented graphic designer, public relations professional, writer, musician, and longtime member of ABC’s Breath of Life church in Fort Washington, Md., served as associate communication director for the worldwide Adventist Church. As a tribute to his name and accomplishments, SAC also introduced the Cutting Edge Award, which will recognize forward-thinking individuals and projects. “Reger was an inspiration to us all,” said organization president Celeste Ryan Blyden, announcing the new award. “The SAC board created this award to acknowledge communicators whose efforts exemplify Reger’s innovation and cutting-edge communication skills.” Learn more about SAC at adventistcommunicator.org.

Visitor Produces Musical CD

What’s the focus of the 2009 Visitor Calendar? Music! Under the theme “We Have This Hope: Favorite Adventist Hymns,” it highlights inspiring words from 13 hymns often sung in Adventist churches. “No matter our background, musical preferences, or mailing address, Adventists love hymns,” explains Visitor editor and publisher Celeste Ryan Blyden. To accompany this year’s calendar, the Visitor staff also produced a CD that features a piano rendition of each song highlighted in the calendar. “I hope listeners will find themselves singing along with the music and reflecting on the powerful and uplifting messages,” adds Blyden.

This is the fourth calendar published by the Visitor staff in the last five years. It highlights national holidays, camp meeting dates, academic graduations and alumni weekends, constituency meetings, Friday sunset times, a directory of Columbia Union organizations, and a feature about this year’s sponsor, the Columbia Union Revolving Fund. For additional free copies, call (888) 4-VISITOR, ext. 3, or email sjoness@columbiaunion.net.
Multilingual Ministries News

35 Pursue Masters in Pastoral Ministry

Some 35 pastors and lay workers (below) attended the first two classes for the master’s degree in pastoral ministry (Hispanic Track), presented by the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University (Mich.). The next class has been scheduled for February 1-5. Those interested in participating should contact Multilingual Ministries administrative assistant Sylvia Garcia at (410) 997-3141 or sgarcia@columbiaunion.net.

Churches Plant “Church-Planting Churches”

One of the key elements to experience a multiplication of churches planting churches is not only to plant healthy churches, but also to plant “church-planting churches.” The Dale City (Va.) Spanish church was planted as a result of the challenges presented by José Esposito, Potomac Conference Hispanic Ministries coordinator, at the Potomac Hispanic Camp Meeting in June 2007. At that time, Olives Villamizar and the Alvarez family accepted the challenge. A year later, after hard work and prayer, the Lord blessed their efforts with baptisms and a loving congregation determined to reach all the Hispanic families in the area.

On August 16, 2008, conference officers—Bill Miller, president; Jorge Ramirez, vice president for administration; and Kurt Allen, then vice president for finance—organized the congregation into a company. Forty-seven members signed the charter to become the Dale City Spanish company. The celebration ended with baptisms and a new challenge. Pastor Villamizar reported that Max Alvarez and his family, with the support of Dale City Spanish, would continue the church multiplication process by planting a new congregation in nearby Stafford, Va. At the end of October, Pastor Villamizar reported that more than 35 people regularly attend that new church plant.

Potomac Member’s Testimony Draws 15 to Christ

During 2008 Rubén Ramos, Multilingual Ministries director for the Columbia Union Conference, held several weeks of revival and harvest across the union that yielded more than 140 baptisms. From those baptisms came many touching testimonies of the miracle of God’s leading and grace, including this one:

Alfonso Ramirez (above, with family) was an alcoholic and a drug addict. His wife and two kids suffered because of his addiction and abuse. One Sabbath he came home drunk, and, assuming that his wife was not home, prepared to indulge in cocaine. However, when he looked across the living room, he saw his wife crying and his children standing beside her. At that moment, the Lord touched his heart and he made a decision to give his life to Christ and change his lifestyle. A few weeks later, in December 2007, he was baptized and became a member of the Martinsville (Va.) Spanish group.

Today Ramirez serves the Lord as head deacon of the church and continues to share with others what the Lord has done for him.

During the Martinsville Spanish group’s week of harvest and evangelism in October 2008, Ramirez played an integral part by greeting guests from the community with enthusiasm and love. He was also asked to share his testimony during the meetings. Upon hearing his testimony, more than 15 people came forward as a sign of accepting the Lord. The loving dedication of the Martinsville congregation and its pastor, Fismed Omar, was evidenced in the meetings when the Lord blessed them with 20 baptisms and professions of faith. Ramirez brought three of those baptized into the church.

Ohio Member Helps Plant Churches

During the last week of October 2008, Rubén Ramos held evangelistic meetings in Hamilton, Ohio. After weeks of preparation and prayer by Pastor Joel Rivera and the church leaders, they were blessed with 13 baptisms. The first elder of the Hamilton company is Jesus Jacinto (below with his wife). During the week of evangelism, he was asked to share his tremendous testimony:

“Jacinto moved to Cincinnati by himself, preparing the way for his wife to later join him. Before she moved to Cincinnati to join her husband, she had given her life to Christ and become an Adventist. When she arrived, she asked him to take her to an Adventist church. The only one nearby was an English congregation. So Jacinto took her there and promised to translate the service. When they arrived at the church, they met a member who also spoke Spanish. Immediately, Jacinto began asking questions about God. Two Sabbaths in a row, the members dedicated several hours to answering Jacinto’s questions. By the end of the second Sabbath, he insisted that he wanted to be baptized. “I have learned that the Lord can and wants to change people, that we can go to Him as we are,” he said. “If that’s true, I want to be baptized.”

At that time Jacinto was a heavy smoker and drinker. He knew that churches would not allow someone in that condition and with so little preparation to be baptized. However, on the third Sabbath, he was baptized. When he stepped into the baptistry, he felt as if the water was boiling and his body was burning, so he decided to leave. The pastor persuaded him to stay, and as soon as he was baptized, the burning sensations disappeared. He left the baptism and fell on his knees praising God.

Jacinto was one of the first Hispanics baptized in Cincinnati. He and his wife helped to plant the Cincinnati Spanish church, and he later moved to Hamilton to plant another Hispanic congregation. The Hamilton church was planted three years ago, with just five members. They now have over 80 members, Jacinto now plans to move on and plant a third Hispanic church in the area.

Pennsylvania Spanish Target Reading

The Hispanic leadership of the Pennsylvania Conference and the Multilingual Ministries department of the Columbia Union have made plans to plant a new Hispanic congregation in the sprawling city of Reading, Pa. The Hispanic community of Reading has increased so much that, along with the existing Reading Spanish and Emmanuel Spanish churches, it is extremely important to plant another congregation to better serve the community.

The initiative is themed “Jesus Vive” (“Jesus Is Coming), and the goal is to win 200 souls for Christ this year. That will be possible only with much prayer and hard work following the biblical principles of church growth. “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few…” (Matt. 9:37-38, NIV).
Lennox S. Westney, MD

Westney, MD—Lennox S. determined ambivalence of a God-inspired, dignity and the but to applaud the accomplishments is not to laud my My intent in writing

Emmanuel-Allegheny East Conference’s (AEC) years as an OB/GYN, or his 30 years teaching at the College of Medicine at Howard University (Wash., D.C.)—where he’s still a professor emeritus—Lennox S. Westney, MD, is confident you’ll relate to his life experiences. Dr. Westney, who claims humble beginnings in Jamaica, overcome many obstacles. In his autobiography, this member of Allegheny East Conference’s (AEC) Emmanuel-Brinklow church in Ashton, Md., illustrates that anyone can “gain some tangible evidence of the faithfulness of God to take care of His children.” His fellow church member and former AEC president Meade Van Putten agrees, adding, “His life story... is at the same time interesting, inspiring, challenging, and motivating. Every young person should read his book.” Copies are available at major bookstores and trafford.com/67-2054.

It’s All Good! Message Magazine

The editors of Message magazine have not only spent the past 110 years addressing ethnic issues, they’ve also promoted healthy eating since publishing their first Food for Health column in 1947. Through this new cook-book, readers can now access some of the best international recipes from that column. “This book is inclusive, and the recipes are for everyone in the family,” reports current Message editor Washington Johnson II, DMin, a member of Emmanuel-Allegheny East Conference’s (AEC) Grand-Addis Ababa church in Findlay, Ohio. It’s All Good! Message Magazine is now available at major bookstores and at www.trafford.com.

DVD > Cooking With Clara Clara Iuliano

Step aside Rachael Ray! Hamburger (Pa.) Community church’s Clara Iuliano is bringing quick but healthy meals to your TV screen. In her first DVD, the registered dietician walks viewers step-by-step through 16 mouth-watering, plant-based recipes, even sprinkling in useful health tips. The eight-minute cooking segments include dishes like Easy Black Bean Salad, Egg Rolls, and Cream of Broccoli Soup. Known for her ability to "Clarify" complicated health concepts, this Pennsylvania Conference member and mother wants to "show people that eating healthy can be tasty and very convenient, no matter where you are on your health walk—and you don’t even have to be a vegetarian to enjoy them!"

Order a copy and enjoy more nutritional tips at nutriclaraty.com.

Books > Just as I Am: Challenged But Confident Lennox S. Westney, MD

If you don’t relate to his 33 years as an OB/GYN, or his 30 years teaching at the College of Medicine at Howard University (Wash., D.C.)—where he’s still a professor emeritus—Lennox S. Westney, MD, is confident you’ll relate to his life experiences. Dr. Westney, who claims humble beginnings in Jamaica, overcome many obstacles. In his autobiography, this member of Allegheny East Conference’s (AEC) Emmanuel-Brinklow church in Ashton, Md., illustrates that anyone can “gain some tangible evidence of the faithfulness of God to take care of His children.” His fellow church member and former AEC president Meade Van Putten agrees, adding, “His life story... is at the same time interesting, inspiring, challenging, and motivating. Every young person should read his book.” Copies are available at major bookstores and trafford.com/67-2054.

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Ask the Doctor

Q: What are the pros and cons to traditional vs. natural cancer treatments?
A: Traditional cancer treatment usually involves chemotherapy, radiation therapy, or both, because these have been proven in clinical trials. However, patients should know about side effects. Depending on the type of cancer, other—and somewhat drastic—treatments are bone marrow transplant for leukemia, amputation for sarcoma, and radical mastectomy for breast cancer. Natural treatment has more options, from attending a “healing institution” to buying specific health products—although most have no scientific support. Most natural treatments are sensational claims, nutritionally based, and are considered a food additive—giving the Federal Drug Administration no reason to approve them. Emotional and spiritual treatment, as well as what food additive—giving the Federal Drug Administration no reason to approve them.

Q: What are the top growing health concerns among infants?
A: The pediatric community is spending a great deal of time addressing poor pediatric nutrition and the resulting “epidemic” of obesity and obesity-related morbidity. Since 1981 the number of children categorized as overweight has risen 40 percent, and those categorized as obese has doubled! While hypertension is the number one cause of death in Americans over age 30, approximately 3 percent of children today have hypertension (blood pressure at or above the 95th percentile) and many more have pre-hypertension. There is also an increased prevalence of metabolic syndrome, which is defined by a group of risk factors for cardiovascular disease and diabetes: waist circumference, lipid levels, blood pressure, and fasting blood glucose. My suggestions are, firstly, to breastfeed. In addition to the benefits of maternal-infant bonding and improved long-term cognitive and motor abilities, breast milk has been shown to have a protective effect against Crohn’s disease, lymphoma, specific genotypes of type 1 diabetes, and certain allergic conditions. Breastfeeding is also associated with a 20-30 percent reduction in the prevalence of obesity through early adolescence. Secondly, choose a prudent lifestyle and diet. Reduce/stabilize weight, increase physical activity, get adequate sleep, and follow the American Heart Association’s dietary recommendations (congruent with the Adventist Church): consume more fruits, vegetables, and whole grains; and reduce the consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages/foods, saturated fats, and sodium. Read more at healthierus.gov/dietaryguidelines. —Penny Chong, MD, FAAP, pediatrician at Lawrence Pediatric Group, Camden, N.J.; Woodbury (N.J.) church

Q: What are the known causes of prostate cancer?
A: Although the causes are unknown, a combination of factors may play a role including ethnicity, hormone, diet, and environment. Heredity appears to be the most powerful possible cause, so men over age 40 must have an annual prostate exam. Early detection is key, especially in men with a family history of cancer. Lifestyle plays a major role in the fight against this disease. High-fat diets have been linked to prostate cancer. Therefore, emphasizing fruits (especially grapefruit and watermelon), vegetables, and whole fibers may help reduce your risk, as well as foods rich in lycopene (an antioxidant), such as raw or cooked tomatoes. Also, regular exercise strengthens your immune system, improves circulation, and speeds digestion, all of which play a role in cancer prevention. Although there is no confirmatory data to prove its benefit, the use of nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs is advised in conventional medicine. In natural medicine, there are some vitamins and minerals widely used—vitamin E, selenium, herbal products like saw palmetto, and potent antioxidants like ubiquinol and various forms of green tea.—Walter Umana, MD, PhD, MPH, research scientist affiliated with the George Washington University Medical Center (Wash., D.C.); pastor, New Brunswick and Perth Amboy (N.J.) churches

Q: What is the reason for the increase in the diagnosis of ADHD?
A: Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is not actually on the increase. We’ve just become more aware of the problem and given it a name. Although we still do not know what causes ADHD, we do know that it occurs in an estimated 3-5 percent of school children. It is usually more common in boys—possibly a genetic predisposition—and there is a higher incidence in children whose mothers drank alcohol or smoked cigarettes. Children exposed to certain environmental toxins may also be at risk. ADHD is treatable. It has three main components: hyperactivity, impulsivity, and inattention. Hyperactive children usually seem to be constantly “on the go”—very fidgety, easily distracted, and never complete a task. Impulsive children often speak before thinking, can’t wait their turn, and seldom learn from their mistakes. Finally, inattentive children are daydreamers, have poor organizational skills, forget to write down and turn in homework assignments, and make careless mistakes. Left untreated, many of these children have major difficulties in school, including poor grades.

Q: Is it true that immunizations are linked to the increase in autism?
A: Autism, Asperger’s, and pervasive developmental disorders, or autism spectrum disorders (ASDs), are first exhibited in childhood and result in poor social interactions and communication, and repetitive behaviors. In 2007 the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (cdc.gov) reported the prevalence of ASDs to be 1 in 150 among 8-year-old children in the United States. Population studies conducted before 1985 reported a worldwide prevalence of 0.4-0.5 per 1,000 children. The staggering increase in prevalence has caused alarm. A controversial theory explaining the increase is that infants vaccinated for measles, mumps, and
Q: Do we need fluoride and are we getting enough?
A: Fluoride is nature’s cavity-fighter with small amounts present in all water. There are two types: “systemic” fluoride is ingested into the body when added to public and private water supplies, soft drinks, and teas, and is available in a dietary supplement; “topical” fluoride is applied directly to the teeth through gels, mouthwashes and toothpastes.

As of 2006 about 70 percent of the U.S. population is served by fluoridated community water systems. The American Dental Society suggests this practice is the single most effective public health measure to prevent tooth decay by 20 to 40 percent. In some areas, such as “well water” communities, dietary fluoride supplements may be needed and are available by prescription.

Although young children with developing teeth are sensitive to higher fluoride levels, excess fluoride results in a harmless discoloring of the enamel, called fluorosis. It is a good idea to make sure that children do not ingest toothpaste or swallow rinses. Overall, more than six decades of research, thousands of studies, and the experience of more than 184 million Americans tell us that water fluoridation is safe, healthy, and effective in preventing cavities. —David Lee DDS, FAGD, AFAID; private practices in Silver Spring, Md.; SIlgo church, Takoma Park, Md.

Q: How can my dentist help me overcome obstructive sleep?
A: Obstructive sleep apnea (OSA) is a serious condition that, if not treated, can cause death. OSA occurs when a sleeping person’s airway collapses and keeps air from reaching the lungs. OSA symptoms can include snoring, irregular or cessation of breathing for several seconds, or extreme daytime tiredness. A physician can diagnose OSA by doing a sleep study.

There are three general ways to treat a person with OSA. One is by surgically removing the tissue that can block the windpipe. Another is to have a patient use a machine that forces air into the nose and keeps the windpipe open, called continuous positive airway pressure or CPAP. Many times a person can’t tolerate CPAP—due to claustrophobia or difficulty in traveling with a CPAP machine—so a third option is to use a fabricated dental appliance that brings the lower jaw forward, opening up the airway. This is also very effective for people who have mild to moderate sleep apnea. —Daniel Cobb, DDS; private practice in Centerville, Ohio; Kettering (Ohio) church

Q: What is the most preventable disease increasing in Adventists?
A: Obesity is classified by a number of major U.S. health organizations as a “disease state.” Although it remains very controversial as to whether or not one should consider it a “disease” per se, we do know that it remains one of the most preventable disease conditions. Unfortunately, it is on the rise both in the general population and within the Adventist community.

Why? It is probably a combination of what we eat and how much we eat. In my opinion, it stems more from the latter, especially when combined with our stressful, hurried lifestyles and lack of exercise. Obesity is fast becoming a U.S. epidemic and is the main contributor to an alarmingly large growth of type 2 diabetes. As we choose to eat healthy, the prescription for preventative success is always striving to keep a control on portion size and get a regular dose of exercise. —Roland Newman II, DO; Creeds Hills Family Medicine Associates in Reading, Pa.; Kenhorst Boulevard church, Reading, Pa.

Q: What is the truth to claims that red wine and coffee are healthy for us?
A: According to the Copenhagen City Heart Study published in 2000, those who drank red wine had a lower risk of dying from heart disease. However, researchers have since discovered that the grapes used in making red wine are what contain a plethora of healthy chemicals, including antioxidant polyphenols, which help reduce oxidative damage to the lining of blood vessels. Also the grape skins and seeds contain resveratrol, a powerful substance believed to have anti-cancer, anti-inflammatory, and blood sugar-lowering effects.

A few 2006 studies showed conflicting evidence on the benefits of coffee drinking. Some newer studies point to its protective power against type 2 diabetes or even colon cancer, but further investigation is needed. Unfortunately, most of the coffee Americans drink is loaded with added sugars, creams, etc., plus the caffeine in coffee is a stimulant often times linked to negative health effects such as heart palpitations, anxiety, and urinary frequency.

As Adventists, we should approach such information with discretion, and should remember Ellen White’s direction to “disclose” such beverages. Read more at health.harvard.edu and http://stroke.ahajournals.org—Roland Newman II, DO

Q: How do toxins build in the body, and how do we get rid of them?
A: God wonderfully designed the human body to be an efficient elimination system, yet toxins accumulate in our bodies, and affect our physical, mental, and spiritual well-being. Of special significance is the affect on the brain’s frontal lobe, which affects every aspect of our lives: personality, morality, discernment, reasoning, focus, temperament, social behavior, will power, and spiritual life.

The human body becomes toxic, or polluted, from both external and internal sources. The most common external pathways are from inhalation (air pollution, dental amalgam fillings, sick buildings), ingestion (chemical residues on food, heavy metals, food additives, and chemical fertilizers), and irradiation (X-rays, nuclear power plants, cell phones, computer monitors, televisions, microwave ovens). Internal sources of toxins include foods, fermentation, putrefaction, and rancidity from undigested foods consumed; and even toxic thoughts and emotions.

When we comply with God’s natural laws of health, we can restore ourselves to the highest possible level of health and well-being. Following the NEWSSTART (new ways to start) philosophy promotes the elimination of toxins through the
Q: What about eating irradiated or genetically altered foods?

A: With the emergence of new strains of bacteria and food-borne illnesses, new processes for preserving and storing foods have become essential. The Food and Drug Administration has approved irradiation of meats, poultry, and certain fruits and vegetables. This has been shown to reduce or eliminate harmful bacteria. Genetically altered foods have been grown to resist diseases, grow in adverse weather, and improve nutrient contents in foods. But, are they safe to eat?

Irradiation does cause a small decrease in nutrients, but overall does not cause any known chemical changes. Irradiated foods do not become radioactive, but the fairly new process needs longer-term investigation. Genetically altered foods might increase the development of allergies, but are generally accepted as safe. Read more at fda.gov.

Q: Does milk really “do the body good?”

A: Milk is a good source of calcium, which helps build and maintain bone density, and vitamin D, which promotes the absorption of calcium and phosphorus. It also helps strengthen bones and proteins, which help build and maintain muscle mass. Despite its benefits, growth hormones and antibiotics used to help cows produce more milk reportedly makes the beverage potentially harmful. Despite its benefits, growth hormones and antibiotics used to help cows produce more milk reportedly makes the beverage potentially harmful. Moreover, the bacteria in milk, which have been shown to reduce or eliminate harmful bacteria, development of allergies, and other illnesses.

Soy, rice, and almond milks are plant-based alternatives that provide some of the same benefits of cow’s milk without the potential risks. They are also fortified with calcium, vitamins D and B12, proteins, and high in polyunsaturated (good) fats. —Kenneth F Khandagle, MD; Khandagle Medical Associates, Laurel and Silver Spring, Md.

Q: Should Adventists fast?

A: Yes! The scriptures are replete with many examples of fasting (Matt. 4:2, Dan. 9:3). A fast, sometimes called cleansing or detoxification, is voluntarily abstaining from something you like (i.e., sweets), not eating at all, or eating only certain foods for a period of time.

Q: What is true depression and its causes?

A: Many of us can identify with that “d” word. Even more of us have had some and don’t know it. That’s partly because we each have our own definition of it and biases affecting our acknowledgement of it.

Scientific definitions help and complicate this. For example, the diagnosis of “major depression” is the best-known and -studied mood or “affective” disorder. The term implies at least five of nine symptoms must occur for at least two weeks, and represent a change from previous function: persistently sad or empty feelings;Not eating much for days, much; guilt or shame; diminished interests, changes in sleep, concentration, weight, energy, or activity; or suicide ideas.

The symptoms cause distress; impair social, home, or job functioning; and must not be due to drugs, medical condition, or bereavement, etc. But what about those who always seem to suffer, yet it’s not a “change”? What if a person doesn’t think they’re “impaired” (even though others know it), or are able to go through a workday but without the same level of enthusiasm? What about those who aren’t over the death of someone months or years later? If a doctor says their headaches, indigestion, and/or pain are “from stress”?

There are labels for these. Some are well known, such as the various forms of bipolar disorder (once called manic depression). There are other major forms of depression such as, “depression with psychosis” or “melancholia”; dysthymia (a mild form lasting months to years); depression related to a medical condition (i.e., head injury, stroke, hypothyroidism, infections); drug-induced depression (related to street drug); depressive personality (old term); bereavement, schizoaffective disorder, or depression with other diagnoses (i.e., traumatic stress order).

A big challenge is that only a small portion of people admit they even have a problem, may not realize that some lesser forms of depression can be much more suicidally dangerous; and that some statistically get worse with time. The average bipolar disorder takes 11 years to get diagnosed.

Q: What about eating irradiated or genetically altered foods?

A: Veggie meat comes in many forms. Homemade versions are preferable to those bought in stores, mostly because the cook has control of the additives mixed in: spices, salt, and preservatives. Veggie meat is often produced from wheat (gluten) or soybeans. Soybeans contain significant amounts of all essential amino acids and are also high in vitamins, minerals, fiber, and polyunsaturated (good) fats, making it a great meat substitute.

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Individuals who do a total fast (no liquids or solids) or water fast must do so under strict supervision; it can be dangerous for the untrained person.

Women who are pregnant or nursing should not fast and neither should individuals with gout or colitis.

During a fast, individuals notice increased energy; healthier, glowing skin; lessened joint inflammation; decongested sinuses; opened bowels; improved sleep; weight loss; and decreased depression.

Conditions such as diabetes, elevated cholesterol, and hypertension are also better controlled.—Theodore Watkins, MD; private practice in Washington, D.C.; Emmanuel Brinklow church, Ashton, Md.

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There are several types and lengths of fasts, including water, juice, and fruit. I generally recommend a 14-day modified juice fast, which includes water, juices, herbal teas, and a vegetable broth. Individuals who do a total fast (no liquids or solids) or water fast must do so under strict supervision; it can be dangerous for the untrained person.

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Getting Back to Health Basics

Seventh-day Adventists in Loma Linda, Calif., aren’t the only ones making headlines for their healthy lifestyles. Churches and ministries across the Columbia Union are getting back to health basics, encouraging members to adopt healthier lifestyles and coordinating a number of community-focused health ministries initiatives:

Members Get “InStep” for Health

Although it didn’t officially start until January 1, Columbia Union churches have already been showing their support of the new North American Division (NAD) Health Ministries initiative—InStep for Life (instepforlife.com). The program, which culminates at the 2010 General Conference Session in Atlanta, encourages church members in Bermuda, Canada, and the United States to embrace and promote healthy living.

Health Ministries directors in all eight Columbia Union conferences have updates and free material—bulletin inserts, PowerPoint presentations, health articles, mile charts, etc.—available to any church, group, or individual wanting to participate.

Chesapeake Conference’s Capital Brazilian Temple in Highland, Md., was one of the first about 400 are participating, and more are joining community participants.

“We have been really motivated and engaged,” reports Katia Reinert, RN, MSN, a Capital Brazilian member and one of the union’s InStep coordinators. “Some had never seen a pedometer before but are now wearing them every day. Some are walking with a friend, others with their spouses.” She also notes that InStep has attracted several community participants.

DeWitt Williams, EdD, MPH, NAD Health Ministries director (above), recently launched the InStep program at the Seventh-day Adventist World Headquarters in Silver Spring, Md. “I am really excited about the way our workers are walking for health. About 400 are participating, and more are joining every day,” reports Williams, a member of Allegheny East conferences, and 12 churches of other denominations.

“I found the training informative and very beneficial in helping promote wholeness and health in the church,” commented one participant.

The next team-building course will be held February 21-22 at WAH. For more details and to register, contact Reinert at (301) 891-6102. —Cindy Glass

Allegheny East Releases New Health Resources

EC’s new Health Survival Kit contains health-related DVDs and books by leading authorities, along with motivational posters, live and online support, and other helpful resources on diet, exercise, and preventive medicine programs.

“More and more people are looking for help in learning how to take control of their health,” says A. Leah Scott, AEC Health Ministries director. “Too many people are dying needlessly just because they don’t really know what to do.” For more information, call (800) 830-0224. Allegheny East is also leading the charge in health webcasts. Scott (left) reports that the “Awesome Body 101” monthly webcasts, which debuted in January 2008, have received positive response. “We feature health professionals who present information about this wonderful machine we call the human body,” she explains. The most recent webcast featured Gwen Foster (right), health czar under former Philadelphia Mayor John Street. Foster, a lifelong member of AEC’s Ebenezer church in Philadelphia, led the discussion on the eight laws of healthy skin, the body’s largest organ. Read more about the webcasts, and view the entire series at fit4yourevertreat.org.—Robert Booker

Potomac Churches Host Health Expos

Potomac Conference’s Fairfax (Va.) church recently conducted a community health fair. Six local physicians, including Angie Huang, GP, from the nearby Vienna church, conducted blood pressure and blood sugar screenings for about 100 attendees. “It was a good reminder to church members about the unique responsibility that the Adventist Church carries, especially in the area of prevention,” said member Ayaana Touré.

Adventist HealthCare Training Draws 58

As part of its commitment to building healthy communities, Adventist HealthCare’s (AHC) Health Ministry department recently held its first Team Building Training Course at Washington Adventist Hospital (WAH) in Takoma Park, Md. The course helped 58 participants understand community health issues, principles of whole-person health, and health behavior change; identify community resources; implement successful congregational health surveys; and plan and implement successful health awareness and lifestyle programs.

“We were overwhelmed by the interest and response to this much-needed training,” reports Katia Reinert, RN, MSN, health ministry clinical supervisor/family community nursing coordinator, who developed the course along with two AHC colleagues.

Participating chaplains, nurses, pastors, physicians, parish nurses, nurse practitioners, social workers, and lay health ministers represented 14 churches in the Potomac, Chesapeake, and Allegheny East conferences, and 12 churches of other denominations.

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Potomac ABC Conducts Health Fair

The Potomac Adventist Book and Health Food Store, in Silver Spring, Md., recently hosted its first health fair, offering free health screenings, vegetarian cooking demonstrations, complimentary massages, and fitness instruction. Visitors also sampled delicious, healthful foods, while store staff demonstrated how to grow sprouts, juice carrots (below), and prepare fruit smoothies while store staff demonstrated how to grow sprouts, juice carrots (below), and prepare fruit smoothies.

First-time visitors were thrilled to learn of a local store offering health-focused, lifestyle alternatives. One attendee, a physician, spent most of the day chatting with staff about Adventist health philosophies. He left with more than a dozen books, including Ellen White’s Counsels on Diet and Foods.

Ohio Church Responds to Community Health Needs

A recent community survey conducted by the Health Evangelism Outreach Team of Ohio Conference’s Newark church has revealed residents’ whole body health needs. “The results were clear,” reports Linda Brown, Health Evangelism leader. “The number-one need was for stress management.” In order to address all of the top health needs listed, each of the team’s outreach ministries—Divorce Care, Grief Support, Smoking Cessation, and Stress Management—plans to conduct related seminars.

The Newark church also recently co-sponsored a community health fair. Vendors included the American Red Cross, the Newark Fire Department, and the Ohio Adventist Book Center. Pastor Tom Hughes (right) even manned an “Ask a Pastor” booth.

A total of 185 attended the fair, including 60 children who enjoyed the inflatable obstacle course, face painting and prizes, and a booth promoting Children’s Ministries and Pathfinders. Nearly 60 attendees who registered for the grand door prize also agreed to be placed on the church’s mailing list. “These people will be prayed over and invited to upcoming health seminars,” notes Brown.

Kettering Member, 92, Makes Friends Through CHIP

Ohio Conference’s Kettering church recently hosted its first CHIP (Coronary Health Improvement Project) program. The 30-day healthy lifestyle course drew nearly 50 attendees and nurtured new friendships.

Kettering member Millie Mills, 92, a long-time CHIP (adventischip.org) participant, relishes her job as a CHIP table host and delights in making new friends. Recently, during her daily four-mile walk, Mills met Todd, a young man walking his dog. She couldn’t resist telling him about Kettering’s CHIP program, set to start that evening. Intrigued, Todd agreed to bring his girlfriend, Kim. The couple came and joined Mills at her table. Impressed with the program and eager to learn more, Todd and Kim attended faithfully. Since graduating from the program, the three have remained close, walk regularly together, and enjoy healthy dinners and monthly CHIP alumni meetings.—Chris VanDenburgh

Mountain View Gets Members Moving

Exercise programs in the Mountain View Conference are transforming the lives of conference employees and church members—one step at a time.

In spring 2007 the conference rolled out the StepByStep program for employees. By wearing pedometers, participants tally steps each month and receive monetary rewards for achieving goals. Congruently, the Walk 100 Miles in 100 Days program, held each spring, encourages all members to be more active.

Many participants, like those from the Wheeling (W.Va.) church, continue walking well past the 100-day mark in pursuit of greater personal health goals.—Alisa Turnewitsch

Brooke Grove Staff “D’Feet” Alzheimer’s

The fundraising efforts of Brooke Grove Retirement Village (BGRV) for Memory Walk 2008 garnered more than $24,000 in contributions to benefit their local Alzheimer’s Association. This year’s team—60 strong and sporting bright yellow “D’Feet Alzheimer’s” T-shirts—topped the amount raised by BGRV for the previous eight years combined. They also contributed $5,000 as a “silver” corporate sponsor.

Toni Davis, BGRV director of marketing and a member of Allegheny East’s Reaching Hearts International church in Spencerville, Md., chaired the Memory Walk planning committee. The team included nursing center assistant administrator Debbie Schyllander Bass and mother/daughter team Lynne and Marc Corea, all from Chesapeake’s Highland View church in Hagerstown, Md., and BGRV administrator Greg Porter (above) and his daughter, Summer, both from Chesapeake’s New Hope church in Fulton, Md.

Metropolitan Church Unites Revelation and Health

For their recent Revelation seminar, Allegheny East’s Metropolitan church in Plainfield, N.J., added an informative health component. While Pastor William Linthicum (far right) used colorful PowerPoint presentations to highlight the lesson studies, Shelly Patton-Lionel (in black), health coordinator for Northern New Jersey, shared NEWSTART health principles with the 40-50 regular attendees.

To practice what they preached about health, the church offered nightly “oxygen cocktails” that engaged attendees in short exercise breaks. At the close of the weeklong seminar, eight people accepted Christ. Three were baptized; five others are preparing.
The debate between God and science garners much attention in the academic world. I just have to shake my head sometimes! When you live and work in the healthcare environment, however, you see firsthand the impossibility of removing one from the other. God’s incredible design, the human body, is beyond comprehension and yet we strive to understand it and to assist in defying age and illness. The two worlds, scientific understanding and the mystery of God’s love, are uniquely and mysteriously inseparable.

Kettering Adventist HealthCare is heavily invested in furthering our scientific understanding of the human body. For instance, we own one of only 50 DaVinci surgical robots in the nation, which is a prime example of our commitment to increasing the best possible outcome for our patients. The robot can be used for hundreds of different surgical procedures and dramatically reduces a patient’s recovery time.

However, what would the latest technology be without intercessory prayer? How can we possibly measure the power released when administrators, chaplains, surgeons, nurses, and even the food service and accounting staff take time to pray for our patients? Or when meetings start with prayer as we daily commit ourselves to seeking God’s guidance and blessings?

DOUBLE DUTY

Nehemiah is one of my biblical heroes because he so beautifully embodied that mysterious mix of reliance on God and personal discipline. Filled with the Holy Spirit, he boldly asked for what he needed, traveled through enemy territory, recruited a team of builders, acquired stones and lumber, and started to rebuild Jerusalem. Can you imagine tackling such an enormous task? Then, to make things even more interesting, the construction workers fell under attack and had to double as soldiers!

It’s not so different in healthcare. Challenged with ever-increasing demands, we put all medical procedures through vigorous review. Our chaplains go through a rigorous accreditation process, nursing staff have ever higher standards to reach and achieve, and we provide the most up-to-date continuing education opportunities for all staff, all as we ensure the best care for our patients.

We also have initiated a medical innovations program where we build on an already solid commitment to increase our understanding of the human body, and find more ways to improve the quality of life for the communities we serve. For Kettering Adventist HealthCare, we don’t see a divide between scientific developments and the undeniable power of God. We see them as intersecting, and our job is to get as much done as we can, in His name!

I pray that the Lord will bless you and your family in 2009.

Fred Manchur, former president of Kettering Medical Center, was recently named president of the Kettering Health Network in Kettering, Ohio. He and his wife, Mary Kaye—members of the Kettering church—recently celebrated their 35th wedding anniversary.
Kettering Adventist HealthCare (KAHC) chaplain Basharat Masih (below) recently returned to the Kolkata Seventh-day Adventist Church in India, a congregation he pastored 26 years ago. This time he traveled with a team from the Adventist Church world headquarters for the Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries Advisory, an event organized by Pastor Paulraj Isaiah, Southern Asia Division chaplaincy director and director for the Stewardship and Ministerial Association. Through the program, the leaders hoped to educate and share ideas while also meeting the spiritual needs of patients and church members.

Masih was one of the event’s three teaching partners, along with Gary Councell, director of Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries (adventistchaplains.org); and Mario Ceballos, DMin, associate director. The team lived on the streets of Bombay selling illegal sweet bread but was eventually arrested. A priest from a local mosque helped Masih get back to his hometown, but his father would have nothing to do with him since he had disgraced the family. Masih was able to get a pharmacy certificate and worked in a local hospital, where he met a Methodist nurse, Sheila. While they passionately discussed opposite religious viewpoints, they fell in love and married in 1959.

After their marriage, Masih visited an Adventist church and started studying the Bible. He had to hide his efforts from his Muslim friends, co-workers, and family, but as time went on, he could no longer hide his convictions that Jesus Christ truly was the Son of God and his Savior. “I cannot explain the power that caught me, and the belief I had, when I read the gospels, that indeed Jesus is the Savior of the world. And I needed Him in my life,” Masih explains.

Masih and Sheila were baptized in an Adventist camp in the Toke River in April 1960. “It was such a profound experience being baptized in the name of Jesus,” he recalls.

The experience was impossible to hide, and soon his family ordered his death. Muslims believe that people who leave their faith are workers of Satan (a kaffar), and any Muslim who kills one will go straight to heaven upon death.

The husband and wife team escaped town with only a few suitcases and headed to Bombay. One train stop in Khandwa changed their lives as orderlies quickly greeted and directed them to the hospital where they could shower, sleep, and eat. The next day the hospital offered them jobs.

Eventually, Masih obtained his pastoral degree and served in India until he and Sheila came to the United States in 1983. Since then Masih has served in a variety of roles throughout the states and is currently serving the patients and clergy of Kettering Adventist HealthCare. He and Sheila, still happily married, have three grown children who are all Adventists, and six grandchildren.

For Masih, serving his colleagues in India is truly a full circle experience, one that he never dreamed possible when he and his wife were running for their lives.
Kettering President Assumes New Role
The Kettering Adventist HealthCare (KAHC) Board, along with CEO Frank Perez, has named Fred Manchur (below) new KAHC president. While Perez will retain his position, the rapid growth of KAHC in Dayton, Ohio, has required that he divide his responsibilities in order to continue effectively serving the six-hospital, 8,000-employee network. Manchur, formerly KAHC vice president and president of Kettering Medical Center (KMC), assumed his new full-time role January 1.

KAHC has been among the fastest-growing companies in Dayton since its inception 10 years ago, steadily increasing its market share and nearly doubling its employee base in that span. As KAHC president, Manchur—a member of the Kettering church—will oversee hospital systems operations for all six of the network’s hospitals and their affiliates, as well as KAHC joint ventures. Perez will continue to have strategic, policy, and governance responsibilities for KAHC and its affiliates.

“During the past eight years, Fred has served with great distinction and has been instrumental in KMC’s exceptional growth of 45 percent,” said Perez.

Kettering, Sycamore Make Magazine Top Listings
Kettering Medical Center has been named to the 2008 U.S. News and World Report annual Top 50 “Best Hospitals” lists in two clinical categories. From the lists’ 16 clinical areas, KMC ranked 38th for endocrinology and 43rd for gastrointestinal disorders. No other area hospital received as many Top 50 rankings in 2008, and KMC has now been included on the magazine’s Best Hospitals lists on seven occasions over the past three years.

Kettering and Sycamore (below) Medical centers were both listed in U.S. News in the July 21 issue of “America’s Best Hospitals.” The centers received the Bronze Award from the American Heart and Stroke Association’s “Get with the Guidelines” quality improvement program. This award recognizes the high quality of stroke care provided at the two hospitals with the achievement of 85 percent or greater for seven performance measures sustained for three months.

Grandview Achieves Zero Infection Rates
The award-winning care provided by Grandview Medical Center (GMC) in Dayton, Ohio, has expanded in excellence through the zero infection rates the hospital has achieved in a wide variety of surgical procedures. This means that the staff is operating with an intense awareness of everything they touch and do while assisting or performing surgeries. Reducing infections is one of the biggest challenges in healthcare today, and GMC staff and physicians are to be commended for their extra effort in making each patient’s recovery a success.

Roy Chew, CEO of Grandview Medical Center in Dayton, Ohio, speaks to the press about the west wing expansion project that will give the building more convenient access for patients and their families.

Wright State Partners With Kettering Adventist HealthCare
The renowned Wright State Research Institute in Dayton, Ohio, is forming a strategic alliance with Kettering Adventist HealthCare (KAHC) to attract research opportunities in innovative technology for the future of biomedical engineering and healthcare. The partnership is about sharing facilities, resources, and personnel. While KAHC conducts industry-sponsored research in medical fields and equipment with a special emphasis on medical imaging, Wright State performs use-inspired research for increasing the practical application of advanced technology in the areas of medical imaging and diagnostics.

Yes, He Can!
I thou hast run with the footmen, and they have weared thee, then how canst thou contend with horses? And if in the land of peace, wherein thou trustedst, they weared thee; then how wilt thou do in the swelling of the Jordan” (Jer. 12:5)?

On November 4, 2008, one of the greatest lessons in American civics was realized. A young man, full of courage and determination, overlooked the fact that his skin color was supposed to automatically deny him access to the highest office in the land, and broke through longstanding racial barriers when he was elected the 44th president of the United States. Never before had the world been witness to the “impossible”—a black person becoming the leader of the free world. One of the realizations Barack Obama had to face was that God allowed him to catch up with the future. With the slogan “Yes We Can!” he did. The future stopped running from him. Social and political boundaries were broken. He had run with the footmen and had achieved the greatest political victory in history. No doubt we look at that accomplishment and say that the hardest part is over. He made a breakthrough. However, he must now contend with forces more powerful than those he had to overcome with the political ballot. He has to contend with pride, principalities, powers, and the rulers of the darkness of this world; the virtual “swelling of the Jordan.” Can he do it?

President-elect Obama, as did Jeremiah, and as do you and I, must realize that we cannot overcome; we cannot be victorious without God, the ultimate source of strength. When God revealed Himself, Jeremiah exclaimed, “The Lord liveth! If Obama keeps that in mind, then yes, he can!”

Church of the Oranges Celebrates 30 Years
Under the leadership of Pastor D. Robert Kennedy, EdD, PhD, (right) the Church of the Oranges in Orange, N.J., recently celebrated its 30th anniversary with an international homecoming weekend. Themed “E Pluribus Unum,” Latin for Out of Many, One, the weekend reinforced that even with 22 nationalities represented in the church, all were one in the Spirit and one in the Lord. Members found the weekend extremely uplifting with dynamic preaching from Pastor Andre Campbell, a former assistant pastor of the church, and Harold Lee, former president of the Columbia Union Conference. Both speakers reminded the congregation of the importance of persistence and perseverance in serving God. On Sabbath afternoon, groups from various countries presented Christian music and on Sunday afternoon more than 1,000 members and well wishers gathered at the Robert Treat Hotel in Newark to witness a showcase of various national cultures.

Robert Booker
Church Ministries Director and Assistant to the President

Marsha Cain
People of all ages and cultures celebrated Christ at the Church of the Oranges’ recent 30th anniversary weekend.
Irvington Church Celebrates 10th Anniversary

The Irvington (N.J.) church, which started as a lay-led church plant, recently celebrated their 10th anniversary in grand style. The weekend began with a consecration service on Friday evening with former Columbia Union president Harold Lee presenting a soul-stirring message titled “The Audacity of Hope.” He emphasized that our hope in the Lord’s return is real and sure, and that hope burns within our hearts, during Sabbath’s divine worship, first elder Andrew A. McDonald shared the church’s Christian testimony. Preacher Andre J.W. Campbell, was challenged to continue leading the congregation to the next level in its glorious future.—Andrew McDonald

Fourth Street Hosts Evangelism, Lifestyle Program

The Fourth Street Friendship church in Washington, D.C., recently combined its evangelistic efforts with the “30 Days to Wellness” program. Led by Theodore Watkins, MD, and his team of health professionals—and with the support of the director of health ministries department, A. Leah Scott, MPH—it was an intensive spiritually-based lifestyle change program that started with an initial health screening and evaluation. Participants were taught to implement lifestyle changes that would lead to measurable results as they attended weekly meetings over a period of 30 days.

Church members and visitors also learned that their ability for change was enhanced as they incorporated the spiritual principles taught and as they utilized God’s power to go along with their talents to the service of their heavenly Father as the participants got from seeing those pounds roll off and their blood pressure, blood sugars, and cholesterol fall.

Since the event, 33 persons have been added to the church’s roster by baptism and profession of faith, said Pastor Andrew Harewood, PhD. The church is also responding to a list of 204 persons who are asking for more information about the program. “People are eager to learn more about the health message,” said Harewood. “God is directing them to us.”

The church also held a follow-up food preparation class the first week in January.
New Life Christian Fellowship Hosts Interdenominational Concert

The New Life Christian Fellowship in Akron, Ohio, recently hosted its annual celebration concert. The concert is the new church’s way of raising funds for their building project. The congregation, under the leadership of retired Allegheny West Conference publishing director Robert C. Lewis, is committed to building a multipurpose facility that will serve as a worship, recreation, and family resource center, as well as a food bank distribution site.

The youth choir from the West Side church in Cleveland also participated in the concert.

Choirs, groups, and soloists from various denominations in Akron, Canton, and Cleveland came to lift the name of Jesus in praise. The audience clapped their hands, stomped their feet, and lifted their voices in praise. New Life members said this was a wonderful way of meeting brothers and sisters of different churches united in a common belief that music lifts the spirit and encourages the soul.

Retired Lake Union President Returns Home to Dale Wright Memorial

After retiring from his five-year position as president of the Lake Union Conference in Berrien Springs, Mich., Walter L. Wright Sr., DD, and his wife, Jacqueline, recently returned to their hometown of Germantown, Ohio. Prior to his presidency, he had served six years as executive secretary of the same union. The Wrights have spent more than 40 years in the ministry of the Adventist Church.

They have returned to their home church, Dale Wright Memorial in Germantown, where their ministry began. Wright served there as a local elder before he was ordained as a minister for AWC. He then served as director of AWC’s Ministerial, Communication, Religious Liberty, and Sabbath School departments before becoming vice president of the Southwestern Union. Wright has also taught and conducted numerous family seminars and evangelism series in 16 countries and on four continents.

Although the Wrights have retired they are busy working for the Lord. They already started a teaching series in 16 countries and on four continents. They have returned to their home church, Dale Wright Memorial in Germantown, where their ministry began. Wright served there as a local elder before he was ordained as a minister for AWC. He then served as director of AWC’s Ministerial, Communication, Religious Liberty, and Sabbath School departments before becoming vice president of the Southwestern Union. Wright has also taught and conducted numerous family seminars and evangelism series in 16 countries and on four continents.

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Pardon Our Dust

Let the demolition begin! On a recent Sunday morning, volunteer alumni, staff, and students filled the first-floor bathroom in the boys’ dorm, ready to “tear into” Phase I of our renovation project. Their team effort completely disassembled the showers, sinks, and the most fun of all—the walls! This is cause for celebration as we work toward making our dormitories a better place for our students to live.

It’s wonderful to be part of a program that understands the value in planning for the future. This project is the beginning of purposeful renovations and improvements on our campus. The response to the reality of this project from our students has been overwhelming. Knowing that many people have joined their talents and resources to make their dream come true has given them a real sense of being embraced and loved. As we move forward with Phases II-IV (renovating eight bathrooms), there are plenty of opportunities to get involved in this exciting project. If you would like to share your time or talents with us, we are still in need of experienced tile layers, donors, prayer warriors, and, of course, demolition volunteers. Please watch for future updates on our progress. You may also visit our website at bma.us to view great photos of what is happening on our campus.

Alumni Send Care Packages

For the third straight year, members of the 50s Club—a group of alumni who attended Blue Mountain Academy (BMA) at least 50 years ago—prepared surprise packages for the students. The group wanted to let students know they are prayed for and valued.

Students FOCUS on Christ

At BMA’s Focusing On Christ’s Ultimate Sacrifice (FOCUS) week, Florida-based Willie Ramos, the “Ghetto Preacher,” challenged everyone to make a commitment to God. His deep love for God’s Word drew students deeper into their Bibles and led more than 20 students to request Bible studies and baptism.

Calender

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Catch the Vision is published in the Visitor by the Allegheny West Conference • 1539 East Broad Street, Columbus, OH 43205 • Phone: (614) 252-0271 • awconf.org • President, Frederick Russell • Editor, Bryant Taylor

Seniors Recognized

BMA’s annual Senior Recognition weekend began with vespers on Friday night. The service included a traditional candle-lighting segment and talent from the senior class.

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Rob Getsys

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**Students Get Involved in Service**

Every year on Service Explosion Day, students go into the community to do volunteer service. Diana Cordero (’10), visited a local nursing home. Asked about her experience, she said, “I had been there before, and some of the residents were familiar to me. We had an opportunity to share a bit about ourselves with a group of residents. I was moved as one lady said, ‘I’m nearing 100 years old. My husband died a few years ago, and I never had children. I’m alone in this world.’ I couldn’t help but notice her eyes well up with tears. These people matter, and absolutely cannot be forgotten.”

Sebastian Mayer (’09) plays with children at a local day care center as part of BMA’s Service Explosion Day.

**Pringles Cans Bank Pennies for God**

Ever since I was a very little girl, pennies have held an attraction for me. Whenever people gave me loose change, I took only the pennies. As my understanding of monetary value grew, I still clung to pennies. My father tried to give me other loose change, but I continued collecting pennies, and when the appeal was made for the first BMA Capital Campaign, I had nothing to give. But wait, I had pennies! They were sorted by date in various boxes and jars in a box so heavy I couldn’t lift it. So I asked a co-worker to come get the heavy box of pennies. The total came to about $80.

I continued collecting pennies, and when the appeal was made for the first BMA Capital Campaign, I remembered my pennies and pulled out six very heavy Pringles cans and boxed them up for BMA. This time the amount totaled about $76. One more time my heart was tugged to give pennies for the Capital Campaign, and recently three more cans of pennies, worth about $40, went to BMA.

It doesn’t seem like much—a penny here and a penny there—but they add up for a very worthy cause. It enables me to give when I really don’t have anything to give. So if you want to have something to contribute for God’s work, start saving loose change. It’s amazing how those coins can add up!—Kim Elaine Collins

Pringles cans of pennies

**Want to Get BMA News Fast?**

We can email the Communiqué as soon as it is printed. Send your name and email address to Kathleen Sutton at kathys@bma.us. Also check our website for up-to-the-minute information, news, and happenings at bma.us.

**Mt. Aetna Students Experience U.S. History**

Students from Hagerstown, Md., “What did you do in school today?” the answers might surprise you: “I picked cotton”; “I stood in a gun embrasure at Fort Sumter and faced down the Confederates at Fort Moultrie”; “I slept in the crew quarters on the aircraft carrier U.S.S. Yorktown”; and “I ran the flight path of the first airplane.”

Each year seventh- and eighth-graders on the aircraft carrier U.S.S. Yorktown; and “I ran the flight path of the first airplane.”

Our students have the opportunity to visit four historic regions during their years in the upper grades. These experiences are life changing,” declares principal and history teacher Kandace Zollman. Before the tour each student prepares a written report and gives a presentation on an aspect of one of the sites they will visit. Seventh-grader Allison Calhoun says, “These trips really make history exciting, and visiting them with friends makes the memories even better!”—Glen Milam

**Help Wanted**

S
ome time ago, while browsing the classifieds of a newspaper, a large advertisement jumped out at me. It was listed under the Help Wanted section and read: “Wanted: SERVANT—Someone to do what is often undesirable work for the sake of others. Needs strong sense of self-worth in God’s eyes and true compassion for others. Must be personally acquainted with the greatest Servant of all in order to continue his/her training. Work requires being available 24/7 to meet the needs of family, friends, and even strangers. Must be willing to set aside personal rights. No experience necessary. Job begins today—right where you are.” The ad included the phone number of a local church.

It was a clever piece of church marketing, but it did make a crucial point. Isn’t servanthood at the heart of all we do as a church? In Mark 10:45, which may be the central text in that Gospel, Jesus speaks to the essence of His life on Earth. “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (NASB). He came to serve and to give, and the way in which He did it comprises the greatest story ever told. Sooner or later all who believe the story and follow Jesus must learn for themselves how much the Lord wants them to serve and give. Ellen White put it this way: “To give is to live. The life that will be preserved is the life that is freely given in service to God and man” (The Desire of Ages, p. 623). Join me in renewing that call to service. We can begin today—right where we are!

**Coming EVENTS**

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Second Semester Begins
Student FOCUS Week
Elementary Music Festival
Phon-a-thon
Junior Presentation

For a more detailed schedule, see our calendar online at bma.us.

**Mt. Aetna Adventist Elementary School (MAAES) students**

**Mt. Aetna Students Experience U.S. History**

**Students practice traditional colonial trades at Roanoke Island Festival Park located in North Carolina’s Outer Banks. The small island was home to the first temporary English settlements in the New World.**

**Kathys@bma.us**

**Kathleen Sutton at kathys@bma.us.** Also check our website for up-to-the-minute information, news, and happenings at bma.us.

**Kathys@bma.us**

**Kim Elaine Collins (’77), BMA’s Alumni Association secretary, collects pennies to help not only BMA but other church projects.**

**Rob Vandeman**

President
Students Advocate Healthy Lifestyle

Red Ribbon Week, an annual event aimed at creating awareness of the dangers of alcohol and drug use, made a lasting impression on the Spencerville Adventist Academy students in Silver Spring, Md., who recently participated. Students arriving at school caught sight of something unusual—a wrecked car from a real drunk driving accident parked on the front lawn. The students and staff wore red ribbons and clothing in support of a clean lifestyle and assembled to hear Betty Jones and Donna Hathaway, representatives of Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD), share their personal encounters with drunk drivers. Three hundred red tulip bulbs, expected to bloom in April—Alcohol Awareness Month—were planted in front of the school. The flowers will serve as a visual reminder to live drug free.—Melissa Mendez

Spencerville Church Celebrates Religious Freedom With Community

The Spencerville church in Silver Spring, Md., hosted a Festival of Religious Freedom, the first of its kind in the continental United States. Because of the vast diversity of faith groups located on New Hampshire Avenue in Silver Spring, the Spencerville church was the ideal location to welcome this event statewide. Sponsored by the International Religious Liberty Association (IRLA), the event was a celebration of religious freedom and was highlighted with a special concert by the New England Youth Ensemble and the Columbia Union College Collegiate Chorale. Jennifer Mendez

Engaging Minds, Transforming Lives

My friends, thank you for keeping Columbia Union College (CUC) in your prayers. Having just completed my first year of service at the college, it is clear to me that the Lord has richly blessed CUC. There are still some challenges to work through, but I am excited about the leadership of our Board of Trustees and the actions they have taken since my arrival.

A few of those board actions included: an approval of The Plan, the college strategic plan for 2008-13, approval of a revised Campus Master Plan, which includes new building continuation by 2012; and the decision to pursue university status and the likely renaming of the college by fall 2009. Our students, faculty, and staff are encourage by the positive actions that support the sustainability of our institution.

The fact that one of our May 2008 graduates said to me, “I entered CUC as a Muslim and I am graduating as a Christian,” is a testament to the soul-winning that is taking place on our campus. It is my hope that you will catch the excitement that we are experiencing. Please remember to celebrate with us on our CUC Sabbaths scheduled for January 31 and August 29.

To review additional strategies that CUC has identified in The Plan, visit our website at cuc.edu, and click Offices and Services, then click on the link for President’s Page. Please share your comments and well wishes with me at president@cuc.edu.

Weymouth Spence
President

Union Designates January 31 CUC Sabbath

The Columbia Union Conference has designated January 31 as “CUC Sabbath.” It will be a time for congregations to hear exciting news, success stories, and receive updates about the status of the college. If you would like CUC representative to come to your local church on “CUC Sabbath,” or if you are an alumn and would like to make a presentation at your own church, please contact Lahna Farver in the Office of Advancement at lfarver@cuc.edu, or at (800) 835-4212.

Students Stride Against Breast Cancer

This year more than 100 students in the Edyth T. James Department of Nursing joined with almost 6,000 other participants in the American Cancer Society’s “Making Strides Against Breast Cancer” walk on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. This is the fourth consecutive year that CUC’s nursing classes have participated in the event.

“It is always an awesome experience to participate in this cause to help others,” said senior nursing major Amarmend Bayaraa. More than 30 seniors pounded the pavement while sophomores and juniors helped with registration.

Community Enjoys Annual Christmas Concert

The familiar strains of seasonal holiday music wafted through the doors of Sligo church as CUC’s Department of Music presented their annual series of Christmas concerts (right).

Bruce Wilson led the band in several seasonal favorites. During an evening concert, the Columbia Collegiate Chorale along with the New England Youth Ensemble performed cards from around the world. Mixed choir Pro Musica, directed by James Bingham, performed Bach’s “Magnificat.”
Elkins Church, Highland School Create Bundles of Joy

Elkins (W.Va.) church members, along with the students and staff of nearby Highland Adventist School, are working together to provide layettes for newborns. The layette program started as a school service project about 10 years ago,” explains principal Cheryl Jacko. “This program is meeting a real need in our community. The Elkins church provides most of the funding to buy the layette supplies.”

Elkins church member Susan Frame puts the layettes together and coordinates the project, and the students help with delivery to the hospital.

Frame has been involved with the layette program for a number of years and prepared 60 layettes in 2008 alone. She got involved when she learned that nurses at the Davis Memorial Hospital were personally buying newborn supplies for needy mothers.

The layettes are left in the care of the nurses in the Labor and Delivery department of the hospital. When the nurses find a mother who is in need of supplies for her new baby, they provide her with a layette free of charge. The layettes consist of newborn clothing, diapers, bottles, lotion, shampoo, and other supplies. A spiritual tract and a congratulatory note are also included. Over the years, the school and church have received a number of thank-you notes from grateful moms.

Little is More Than Enough

It’s been more than 20 years since I first heard the song “Little is Much.” It holds such depth of meaning. Let me begin with the chorus:

“Little is much when God is in it.
Labor not for wealth or fame.
There’s a crown—and you can win it,
If you go in Jesus’ Name.”

Did you know there is a special work for you to do? That work was tailor-made by God for you! What you may view as insignificant is really great and big in God’s eyes. God has called and chosen you: He’s given you ideas on how to impact others for Him. Even if you do not see results right away, He is blessing your efforts. God desires your faithfulness and obedience to His will and way, and He will bring about the accomplishment in His time.

We are not to be discouraged but to gather courage from the promises of the Lord, expecting great things because God is in it! One Bible promise I really like is, “For I the Lord thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not: I will help thee,” (Isa. 41:13). The Lord is asking, “What do you have in your hand?” Even though it may seem small or of no importance, like the widow’s two mites, the end results are astronomical. Let God be the mathematician and do the multiplying.

*Words and music by Kittie L. Suffield, 1924.

**Faculty Contribute Perspectives on Faith for Hope Channel Program**

Four CUC professors were selected to participate in a television taping for a new series on faith, science, and social responsibility titled Intersection: Your Faith, Your World. The program, created by Jan Paulsen—president of the worldwide Seventh-day Adventist Church—will air on the Hope Channel this month.

“Paulsen wanted a program that would discuss topics that affect every Christian’s life, and would present a unique Adventist take on current issues,” said Jennifer Stymiest, assistant producer for the show. “The discussions on intersection range from social to spiritual to family and feature a variety of different experts, church employees, teachers, and lay members of the Adventist Church.”

Biologist assistant professor Melinda Eikken Villanueva, PhD, shared her perspective in a segment about Christian responsibility and the environment. CUC’s director for the Center for Metropolitan Ministry and religion professor Gaspar Colon, PhD, explored the necessity and importance of Christianity living, working, and interacting among various communities. Zdravko “Zack” Plantak, PhD, chair of the Department of Religion, assessed the moral absolutes found in various cultures, and the value of honesty in today’s culture. Chemistry professor Melvin Roberts, PhD, explored the integration of faith and science with members of his panel.

Producers hope that intersection: Your Faith, Your World will challenge hundreds of millions of people of various faiths who are at a spiritual crossroads. The show starts airing February 6. Every Intersection episode will be available for download at intersection.adventist.org.

Poet Laureate Commends Students at Writers Conference

Columbia Union College’s Department of English and Modern Languages recently hosted their annual Writers Conference which featured a visit from a local poet laureate, and offered workshops, and lectures. Students came from Blue Mountain, Highland View, Shenandoah Valley, and Takoma academies. This year’s conference focused on improving performance on standardized essay tests, editing assignments, evaluating various media formats and reading, writing, and listening to poetry.

“I think the Writers Conference helps holistically. Our worship on Sunday evening was on the almost sacred nature of writing, in that its demands and benefits mirror God’s character,” said conference coordinator Richard Grant. “Along with the spiritual nature of the act of writing, there’s a social benefit that the students receive from attending and the practical help that develops students’ writing knowledge and skills.”

Conference participants included CUC English professors and Anne Becker, poet laureate of Takoma Park, Md. Many students found her poetry workshop the highlight of the program. After listening to their prose, Becker was impressed and expressed a desire to begin a closer working relationship with the nearby Takoma Academy students—André J. Hardy.

The Gateway

**January**

12–16 Missions Week
13 Classes Begin
18, 19 SA Ski Trip
26 Student Week in Spiritual Emphasis
31 CUC Sabbath

**February**

1–28 Black History Month
11–14 Choir Festival

The Gateway is published in the Valley by the Columbia Union College 7600 Flower Ave., Takoma Park, MD 20912 Phone: (301) 835-4212 • cuc.edu President, Waymon Spence Executive Director of Marketing and Communications, Saschane Stephenson Editor, Tanisha Greenidge

**CALENDAR**
Family Learning Center in Summersville, W.Va.

Between 15 and 25 women now attend a step aerobics class at the Friends-R-Fun Center.

“Computation Genius” certificates were given to each student who participated in the two-minute timed drills covering basic math skills. "Mathlete" certificates were given by the Mountain View Conference's MVC Education Department. The Conference Hosts Math Field Day.

Make Family First This New Year

The New Year has arrived! Ahead of us are 365 blank pages representing the days our God has given us in 2009. I recommend living one day at a time because no one has the strength to live with the burdens of two days at the same time. It is true that during this new period of our lives we will encounter problems, the unexpected, and many challenges. However, remember God was good to us in a great way during this past year. Today I invite you to take a pen and paper and write a list of the blessings you received during 2008. It will prove that the blessings exceeded the difficulties. So let us glorify and praise His name with thanksgiving.

For the coming year let us make vows of faithfulness and not be afraid to fight the good battle of faith. Give the best of you, be a wise steward, and above all things, be faithful to God. Also give your family the priority they deserve. The family is the pillar that holds our society together. It is one of the fundamental pillars of our church, which is why we in the New Jersey Conference are dedicating this year to placing great emphasis on family. We know that God has a special interest in each family member and He desires to see your family and mine shining for Him. We can shine for Him by evangelizing to our family members who have not yet given their lives to Christ. We can show our friends and neighbors—through perception and example—that we believe what we preach, that God is love, and that Jesus is coming soon!

Friends-R-Fun Steps Up Community Involvement

Summersville (W.Va.) church's Friends-R-Fun Family Learning Center has stepped up their community involvement with exercise. The center now offers a step aerobics class that meets twice a week with two classes per evening. Some 15-25 women regularly attend each class. Bible worker Elaine Buchanan, along with members Judy Olsen, Barbara Trent, Amy Smith, and Jane Sherwood, started the class for friendship evangelism. “We want to be friends with the women and be there when they need a friend to talk with or help in the area of health,” said Buchanan. “The class will continue on a regular basis, which I feel will give participants the opportunity to develop long-term, lasting relationships.” Trent added.

Students from grades 3 through 12 participate in the two-minute timed drills covering basic math skills such as addition and subtraction.

Buchanan begins each class with prayer and uses Christian instrumental music. Their goal is to reach people with physical fitness and to respond to spiritual needs when asked.

Mountain Viewpoint

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New Jersey

N ine-year-old Luisa Macena (below), and other members of the Luzo Brazilian church’s Adventurer club in Newark, are helping to protect endangered animals. “I have loved animals since I was very young. When I was five, I was a vegetarian because I never wanted to eat animals. Then last July I saw on the Internet that animals were getting endangered. I felt very sad when I found out, and decided to start a club. It is called the Endangered Animals Friends Club.” said Macena. She also started a webpage at eafc.webs.com. To support Macena, the Adventurer and Pathfinder clubs began working together. “We wanted to combine teaching honors with raising awareness about pollution and protecting animals,” says Gislaine DaSilva, an Adventurer staff member.

Friends-R-Fun Family Learning Center in Summersville, W.Va.

Between 15 and 25 women now attend a step aerobics class at the Friends-R-Fun Family Learning Center in Summersville, W.Va.

José H. Cortés
President

Luzo Brazilian Adventurer Helps Endangered Animals

First, the Adventurers and Pathfinders learned about the environment and how they can help to protect God's creation. Next, they decorated their bikes and made posters about endangered animals. Then, with a police escort, the Adventurers went on an endangered animals awareness bike ride through the city of Newark. They also received awards for the most creatively decorated bikes.
Ponga a su familia primero en el nuevo año

El Nuevo Año ha llegado! Delante de nosotros se abren 365 páginas en blanco, que representan los Días que el Señor nos da para este año 2009, les recomendando vivirlos “un día a la vez”, pues nadie tiene las fuerzas para vivir con las cargas de dos días al mismo tiempo. Es cierto, durante este nuevo período de nuestra vida encontraremos problemas, llegará lo inesperado, muchos desafíos. Sin embargo, recuerda que Dios fue bueno en gran manera con nosotros durante el año que pasó. Hoy te invito a tomar pluma y papel, hagamos una lista de las bendiciones recibidas durante el 2008. Comprobaremos que las bendiciones exceden a las pruebas. Entonces abrámonos y glorifiquemos su nombre con gratitud.

Para este año entrante hagamos votos de fe, que no tengas temor de pelear la buena batalla de fe. Da lo mejor de ti, sé un buen mayordomo, y sobre todas las cosas sé fiel a Dios. Tambien dale a tu familia el lugar que le pertenece. La familia es el pilar que sostiene la sociedad. Es uno de los pilares fundamentales de nuestra iglesia, por eso en la Asociación de New Jersey hemos dedicado este año a trabajar con un gran énfasis en la familia. Sabemos que Dios tiene un interés especial en cada miembro de nuestro círculo. Dios desea ver tu familia y la mía brillando por el Reino de Dios. Podemos mostrar a nuestros vecinos y amigos—por precepto y por ejemplo—que creemos lo que predicamos, que Dios es amor, y que ¡Cristo viene pronto!

José H. Cortés
Presidente

Aventurera de Luzo Brazielena Ayuda a los Animales en Peligro de Extinción

Luisa Macena de nueve años y otros miembros del club de Aventureros de la iglesia Luzo Brazielena en Newark están ayudando a proteger los animales en peligro de extinción.

“Yo amo a los animales desde que soy muy joven. Cuando yo tenía cinco años decidí ser vegetariana porque yo no quería come- rme a los animales. Luego este Julio pasado vi en el internet que hay animales en peligro de extinción. Cuando me entere de esto me sentí muy triste y decidí empezar a luchar. Me llamó El Club de Amigos de los Animales en Peligro de Extinción,” dice Macena. También empezó una página cibernética en eafc.webs.com. Para apoyar a Luisa con su idea el club de Aventureros y Conquistadores empezaron a trabajar juntos. “Queríamos combinar las enseñanzas de los honores con levantar el conocimiento acerca de la contaminación y protegiendo a los animales,” dice Gislaine DaSilva, una de las líderes en Aventureros.

Aventureros y Conquistadores de Luzo Brazielena decoraron sus bicicletas para levantar conocimiento acerca de los animales en peligro de extinción durante un paseo en bicicleta por la ciudad de Newark. También recibieron reconocimiento por las bicicletas más creativamente decoradas. Primero, los Aventureros y Conquistadores aprendieron acerca del ambiente y como ellos pueden proteger la creación de Dios. Después, decoraron sus bicicletas y dibujaron en carteles acerca de los animales en peligro de extinción. Luego, con la dirección de un policía, los Aventureros fueron a un paseo en bicicleta para levantar conocimiento de los animales en peligro de extinción por la ciudad de Newark.

José H. Cortés
Presidente

Hitchhiking With God

January is a time to look back and look forward. I like the looking forward part better. Living expectantly for the surprises that God will bring to us each day infuses life with new energy and anticipation. It makes us ask, “God, help me to see Your image in the people I meet and recognize Your presence in the experiences I have.” I also like to think about the church and wonder where God will take us each day. After all, the church is the body of Christ in motion—always on the move, going into a future with God. In some ways, I think the church is like a hitchhiker, traveling with God into His mission field.

This image of the church keeps me from seeing the church as a museum—where everything is either bolted to a wall or enclosed in glass cases. Museums are about fixed structures, static exhibits; they are about permanence and preservation. So are monuments. They market themselves with the invitation, “Come and see.” The church, in contrast, is a movement—dynamic, changing, advancing, fluid, and seeping into the cracks and crevices of society. And a faithful church is a “go and do” community.

Why not hitchhike with God this year, and be a missionary with Him in your neighborhood, your community, and your world?

Newark ACS Center Finds New Home

After two years of searching, the Newark Adventist Community Services (ACS) center has found a new home on Main Street. This began when local philanthropist Howard LeFever offered to purchase the center’s First Street location to build a museum. He even began searching for an alternate location for the ACS center. “I knew this was God’s project,” says Lynda Karr, ACS director. “He would come through when the location where He wanted us became available.”

Soon real estate agent Phil Manogg showed Karr a two-building property right on the edge of downtown. “As we walked through the building, we talked about God, Jesus, and ministry a lot more than the building,” Manogg recalls. Between LeFever’s above-market offer for the old building and the lowered price of the new building, the center received enough money to cover renovations at the new location.

The center’s food pantry, clothing distribution center, and Carrousel Thrift Store are staffed entirely by volunteers each Tuesday and Thursday morning. —Trish Tickle

Vera Norman, 93, is just one of Newark ACS’ many volunteers who distribute more than 350 bags of groceries each month.

Local contractors and volunteers completed renovations to the Newark ACS thrift store, food pantry, and clothing closet. Phase II will add classrooms to the rear for expanded ministry.

José H. Cortés
President

Raj Attiken
President
Teen Lives Faith “Out Loud”

Tyler Moody (pictured left with friends Nikhil Vengal and Will Adams), a member of the Worthington church and a junior at Upper Arlington High School, is a teenager seeking to live his faith “out loud.” He and two friends established a club at their school called Tractus (Latin for “movement”), to share the gospel of Christ and have fellowship with other Christians. The club is currently planning a bake sale with proceeds going to benefit hungry children through World Vision organization. Tyler also enjoys playing the guitar and singing with the praise band, Grace Notes, at the Worthington church.

Pastoral Transitions

Peter Simpson (pictured with his wife, Elia) is the new pastor of the Trinity/Hicksville district. The Trinity church was formed when the Defiance and Bryan churches merged to form a single congregation. The Simpsons previously served at the Mount Vernon Hill church.

Rick Szilagyi (pictured with his wife, Shirley), pastor of the Mansfield church since 1999, has accepted a call to the Avon Park (Fla.) church, where he will be the associate pastor of Family Life and Children’s Ministries.

Why Does Your Church Exist?

During pastoral transitions, I will often meet with a church to prepare for a new pastor and ask the congregation, “Why does your church exist? What is its purpose?” When members reflect on its purpose, it is easy to think of the good that comes to them as members and the needs that are being met. However, in Matthew 28:19, 20 Jesus gave to us—our church—His mission statement and our reason for existence: “Go and make disciples … baptizing them … teaching to observe all things that I have commanded you …” (NRSV).

Making disciples is our only reason for existence and is our true mission statement. Fulfilling the gospel commission of Jesus is where our joy is in Pennsylvania. We are seeking to be faithful to Christ’s call, and, through our faithfulness as conference leaders, we challenge, encourage, and support church families who are attempting to fulfill His gospel commission. Throughout this year, we will share in these pages how all the ministry departments of the Pennsylvania Conference fulfill mission and support each church’s ministry.

President Prioritizes and Lives for Mission

Jesus’ mission is front and center in the ministry of conference president Ray Hartwell and his administrative assistant, Judy Pelley. There are four key priorities that Pastor Hartwell has identified in his role as conference president and that determine his time and attention as he seeks to keep the mission of Jesus the central focus in Pennsylvania:

- Cast the vision for Christ’s mission in the Pennsylvania Conference, which includes biblical teaching, focusing on Christ’s mission, being motivated by the gospel, and sharing the Word personally and publicly.
- Design, empower, and utilize organizational structures with the conference and with local churches to be effective for mission.
- Develop an effective team of departmental and organizational leaders.
- Seek and hire quality personnel to fulfill the vision.

Hartwell seeks to not only lead the conference in treating Pennsylvania as a mission field, but lives it daily in his own personal life. For the last few years, on each Wednesday evening, he and Adventist neighbor Tim Carlson have led a neighborhood men’s Bible study group for growth and discipleship. Two community men are among the participants in that group. Hartwell and his wife, Jeane, also look for opportunities to connect with their neighbors and Hamburg community residents for mission.

Hartwell will also be joining the evangelistic outreach of two church families. In March he will be conducting a short reaping series with the Lehigh Valley Spanish church. Then from April to May he will be conducting a short evangelistic meeting with the New Castle church.

President Ray Hartwell and his administrative assistant, Judy Pelley, work together to execute the mission of the Pennsylvania Conference.
New Outlet Offers Grace Instead of Designer Labels

Grace Outlet has come to Reading, a city known for its outlets. However, this Seventh-day Adventist Church plant offers something different: authentic worship to everyone, especially young adults who are no longer regularly attending church.

The idea for a casual but worshipful gathering began with a burden on the heart of Kris Eckenroth, director of the conference’s Youth and Young Adult Ministries. He invited others to join him in praying for and discussing ways to reach the growing numbers of young adults who are no longer attending church, or who may be attending but aren’t involved and connected.

More than 30 people attended the first service of Grace Outlet, currently meeting in a room at the Goggle Works Center for the Arts at 201 Washington Street in Reading. The plant is designed intentionally to build community and connected.

Grace Outlet offers an experience of community, singing, a sermon, and prayer. The vision is that folks will come and experience community singing, a sermon, and prayer.

Retreat to Offer “quietness and Confidence”

How do we live in quietness and confidence when our incredibly busy lives are filled with problems, tension, and struggles? Join author and speaker Lou Blanchfield, PhD, MSN, as she shows how God can bring calm and peace to our souls in a troubled world at the conference’s Spring Women’s Retreat. The retreat will feature seminars such as “Itty-Bitty Lies and Their Great Big Problem”; “CSI: Your Life, Me, Friends, and the World” (for teens); and “If the Shoe Fits: What Every Cinderella Needs to Know.”

Themed “In Quietness and Confidence,” the retreat will be held March 13-15, at the Holiday Inn Harrisburg-Hershey on 145 Sheraton Drive, in New Cumberland.

For more information, visit paconference.org, or call the conference at (610) 374-8331.

February

6-8 Hispanic Lay Festival
13-15 Youth Spiritual Retreat
Blue Mountain Academy

Pennsylvania Pen is published in the Visitor for the Pennsylvania Conference 725 Museum Road, Reading, PA 19611 Phone: (610) 374-8331, ext. 310
paconference.org © President, Ray Martell • Editor, Tammy Hord

Who Do You Want to Be Like?

Growing up my older sister was in Pathfinders and told me about all the “cool” things that the group did. When I was in the fourth grade I was finally old enough to join Pathfinders. So I remember the first night I dressed up in my uniform. I did my best to stand at attention, follow what my counselor said, and I thoroughly enjoyed the activities. I remember that my counselor was a tall, fun, witty, and popular college student. I went home and told my mother I wanted to be like him.

Is there anyone you have ever wanted to be like? I have lost track of my counselor, but when I accepted Jesus as my Savior, Friend, and Lord, I knew I really wanted to be like Him. “It is enough for a disciple to be like his teacher” (Matt. 10:27, RSV). For you and me to be spiritually healthy, we need to be like our teacher Jesus. “If we love Jesus, we shall love to live for Him... We shall sympathize with His longing for the salvation of men. We shall feel the same tender cravings for souls that He has felt. This is the religion of Christ, Anything short of it is a deception” (Christ’s Object Lessons, p. 49-50). To be spiritually healthy we must, like Him, long for the salvation of our neighbors, those we come into contact with, those we do business with, shop with, fellowship with, and work with. To be spiritually healthy we need to pray for “the same tender craving(s) for souls” that He felt. I am praying for that “same tender craving.” Will you? Every church, every member should pray for this. What will happen in your life and your church if that is the focus? Let’s be like Jesus.

Sligo Church Welcomes New Pastor

Pastor Charles Tapp (below), senior pastor of the Seabrook church in Lanham, Md., has accepted a call to serve as senior pastor of Sligo church in Takoma Park, Md.

Over the past 27 years, Tapp has served in the Northeastern Conference, the Inter-American Division, and the South Central and Potomac conferences. In addition to his pastoral ministry, he has worked in the field of radio and television broadcasting as an announcer, producer, and host of several programs. He has also served as an instructor on several Adventist college campuses in the United States and abroad.

Pastor Tapp has been married to Maureen for 24 years. They have three daughters: Maelynn, a PhD student at Georgia Tech University in Atlanta; Tiffany, a junior education major at Oakwood College in Huntsville, Ala.; and Victoria, a junior at Pine Forge (Pa.) Academy.

Information Technology Director Joins Conference

Frank Cox has accepted the call to be the new Information Technology director for Potomac Conference. He previously worked as a Network Engineer for a local technology company. His experience includes working with corporations of all sizes with their networks, servers, and telecommunications. He has a passion for missions and frequently speaks at The Valley Mission in Staunton, Va., as well as the Rockingham County Jail in Harrisonburg, Va. Frank and his wife, Cherith, have two young daughters, Elyse and Sarah.

News Wanted

Is there anything happening in your church or school? Help us tell Potomac’s story. Send news and photos to the Potomac Conference Communication Department at crystal@epcsda.org.
Potomac People

Capital Memorial Members Tackle the Marine Corps Marathon

Among the 18,260 runners who finished the recent Marine Corps Marathon, three were members of Washington, D.C.’s Capital Memorial church. Steve Retz, Vive Miharoti, and Pastor C.J. Yoon participated in the race. To participate in the race, commonly known as the people’s marathon, participants need to be able to keep a pace of 14 minutes per mile.

“I think a marathon disciplines you in all areas of life spiritual, physically, and mentally,” Yoon said. “The spiritual lesson for me is that it helps me focus on the bigger picture. Oftentimes when God gives us a task, we wonder, How am I going to handle this? But if we look at the eternal picture, we can accomplish so much.”

Although other members have participated in this marathon in past years, this was the second year that the trio ran together. Pastor Yoon has run six marathons and plans to run again next year.

Waynesboro Church Sends Youth to Camp

Last summer Waynesboro (Va.) pastor Will Johns and member Richard Anderson approached Marcus Thompson of the Boys & Girls Club mentoring organization with the idea of sending youth to summer camp. He was amazed that the church would send some of his boys and girls to the church’s Camp Blue Ridge in Montebello, Va., for a week at no cost to the Boys & Girls Club. Denny Grady, director of Camp Blue Ridge, partnered with Waynesboro church and donated several gift certificates. What happened next was way beyond anyone’s expectation.

Seven boys from the Boys & Girls Club of Waynesboro attended, and many, for the first time, experienced the excitement of summer camp. The staff at the camp was most generous in giving of their time and talents to the boys, particularly Ryan Elliott, a member of the Waynesboro church and a student at the University of Virginia. It didn’t take long before the boys were participating in the myriad of activities of the camp such as basketball, canoeing, and soccer. The crowning experience came during Friday’s vespers campfire gathering, when six of the seven boys stood up for Jesus.

Elliot and two of the camp counselors that worked with the boys during their week at camp continue to visit the boys at the Boys & Girls Club facility and play basketball with them.

“What a wonderful experience all this has been!” said Pastor Johns. “Needless to say, we hope to expand participation for next summer so that more young people can share in the wonderful Christian atmosphere offered in the mountains of Camp Blue Ridge.”

Waynesboro church sponsored boys from the Waynesboro Boys & Club to attend summer camp at Camp Blue Ridge.

More Than Book Smarts

Our students in the National Honor Society (NHS) are not just developing book smarts while at Shenandoah Valley Academy (SVA), they are also developing caring hearts. We are called to witness for Jesus, and NHS members are answering the call by getting involved in activities that benefit the community.

In addition to meeting grade and citizenship requirements, each member of the NHS must complete a minimum of 10 hours of community service each semester. Students meet and even exceed this requirement in a variety of unique and interesting ways. Chad McLennan, a junior, recently helped his church, the Roanoke church, move to a new location. Senior YeBin Lee spent part of her summer making braille books for the blind. Many go on overseas mission trips during their spring break. As a group, the NHS has adopted a young girl in India and sends money to make it possible for her to go to a Seventh-day Adventist school in Jeypore, India.

“I am proud of the students and their involvement in the local community as well as in the world at large, and encourage them to continue in a life of service after they leave SVA.

Waynesboro church counselor Ryan Elliott (center) and Corey Johnson (far right) began volunteering at the Boys & Girls Club of Waynesboro, Va.

NHS Members Move Library

When it was time for the town of New Market, Va., to set up its new library, members of SVA’s National Honor Society offered to help move all the books from the old library to the new facility.

“The ‘green move’ depended solely on manual labor and used no electric- or gas-powered equipment. Traffic was stopped on the main street while SVA students and other volunteers carried boxes across the street from the old library to the new library.

“It was really fun to be able to help the town with such a big project. The people appreciated our help and thanked us over and over again,” said senior Kristin Dickerhoff.

In addition to the physical labor, NHS members also donated $1,000 to the library’s building fund.

NHS Students Participate in Blood Drive

NHS students recently helped with the American Red Cross blood drive held in the New Market (Va.) church’s fellowship hall. SVA students were responsible for registering the donors and assisting with all aspects of the blood drive.

Students also encouraged their classmates to become involved by donating blood themselves. This resulted in quite a few students and staff members rolling up their sleeves and contributing to the cause.

Zach Swanson, a senior, said, “I am glad that I was able to donate blood to help someone who might need it.”

Camp Blue Ridge counselor Ryan Elliott (center) and Corey Johnson (far right) began volunteering at the Boys & Girls Club of Waynesboro, Va.
So Goes A New Year

When we begin a new year we are no different from a newborn. We are completely oblivious to what lies ahead and are totally dependent on our parents. Each new year starts with short- and long-term goals, resolutions, and other things we want to accomplish. If we keep God at the center of our life and decisions, we will have a successful year.

When I started my senior year at Takoma Academy (TA), I came to the realization that this would be an exceptional year for me. There are college applications to be filled out, SATs to be taken, and a class trip to go on, which all culminates in the long-awaited graduation day. You could call all these goals daunting, but my journey has been made easier with the help of TA’s supportive, godly staff, and Christ-like, nurturing environment. As an infant is dependent on its parents, I’ve learned also to be dependent on God, our heavenly Father. He provides opportunities for us just as earthly parents would, but the choices we make will dictate the kind of year we’ll have.

So as you begin this new year, be sure to include God as the main building block in the foundation of your life.

Students Bring Music, Drama Ministry to Church

Teachers, staff, and students are serious about fulfilling TA’s mission statement: Takoma Academy is a Seventh-day Adventist Christian high school, which welcomes all races, cultures and religions for the purpose of leading young people to a personal commitment to Jesus Christ, providing excellence in academics, which will promote serving others in this world as they prepare for the world to come. With the mission statement in mind, TA’s band, strings, drama, choir, Camerata, and gospel choir joined Community Praise Center in Alexandria, Va., for its Youth Sabbath themed “Ready or Not.” Students participated in the morning service and were the main performers at an evening concert. “We are blessed to see Christianity in practice and the fulfilling of our mission statement,” said principal C. Dunbar Henri.

Calendar

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www.ta.edu • Principal, C. Dunbar Henri
EMPLOYMENT

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GORDON HOSPITAL

August 2009

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MISCELLANEOUS

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Hampden Heights church in Temple, Pa. She spent most of her life in the childcare field and was the originator of the first “hiding and dropping” policy in Berks County, Pa. She was proud to be the first woman to apply for and receive a Bishop’s department store credit card. She enjoyed playing the piano and crocheting. She is survived by two daughters: Sherry L. (Kistler D.) Bokony of Glen Township, Pa., and Nancy R. (Kistler) Dealb of Washington, N.J.; three step-grandchildren; three great-grandchildren; three step-grandchildren; and a great-great-granddaughter.

PINO, JOSEPH A., Jr., born February 16, 1949, in Passaic, N.J.; died October 17, 2008, in Stroudsburg, Pa. He was a member of Stroudsburg (Pa.) church. Joe was an elder of the Temple (Pa.) church. He had a beautiful voice and was always ready to have special music for church or evangelistic meetings. He was a graduate of Garden State Academy in Tranquility. He also graduated from Atlantic Union College Academy in Tranquility. He was a member of the Southeast church in Cleveland. He was married to Linda Kathy Pino of Stroudsburg. Pa. His sons: Joseph A. Pino II of East Stroudsburg, Pa., and Edward L. Pino of Stroudsburg; grandchildren: Jacob J. Pino, Joshua E. Pino, and Zachary J. Pino, all of East Stroudsburg. His mother, Mary G. Pino of Washington, N.J.; and brothers Carmine Pino of Martinsburg, W.Va., and Daniel Pino of Fairfield, N.J. He was preceded in death by his father, Joseph A. Pino.

STYCHI, Ruth H., born September 13, 1915, in Granville, Ohio; died May 5, 2007, in Columbus, Ohio. She was a member of the Coshocton (Ohio) church. She leaves a daughter: Norma Jean Umbarger of Granville; a son-in-law: James F. Umbarger of Granville; a sister: Faith Van Niell of Stroudsburg, Pa.; a son-in-law: James F. Umbaugh of Stroudsburg, Pa.; and a grandson: Zachary J. Pino of Stroudsburg, Pa. She was preceded in death by her husband, Ruth H. Stychi.

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WITNESS TO HISTORY

I grew up in the segregated south of Birmingham, Ala., during the height of the Civil Rights Movement, where my family and I attended the Ephesus Seventh-day Adventist Church. One Sabbath my mother was ill, so I drove to church. Shortly after arriving, my friends and I decided to head downtown to watch the demonstrations. Little did we realize the danger we were in until the police turned the fire hoses on us, knocking us to the ground. We managed to find safety in a car and return home, where I had to explain to my shocked parents why my Sabbath clothes were worn and torn. Rather than deter me, the incident increased my resolve to support the fight against the unfair Jim Crow laws and segregated system that disenfranchised so many. I also clearly remember the date September 15, 1963, a day a bomb killed three little girls in the now-famous Sixteenth Street Baptist Church. One of the girls' mothers had been my elementary school teacher. In those days, people stood guard at night to protect church property because all black churches were targets for bombings or burnings. While these and other experiences shaped my view of the world, they didn't quell my drive to serve. I believe God has called us to be public servants to our families, churches, communities, and humanity. That's why I've voted in every election since my 18th birthday and am proud to serve my community as an elected official.

While I'll never forget these historic events, there's another one I'm greatly anticipating—Jesus’ return. That's when history will be rewritten and the world will witness another life-changing inaugu- ral event. Not only do I believe that will happen in my lifetime, I'm working every day to prepare others for myself and for the future.

Deborah A. Hill is a second-term councilwoman in Warrensville Heights, Ohio, and a member of the Southeast church in Cleveland. She also serves on both the Allegheny West Conference and Columbia Union Conference executive committees.

Dates to Remember

F or the rest of my life, I will remember the date January 20, 2009. On that historic day millions of people will converge on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., to witness Barack Obama take the oath of office and become the 44th president of the United States of America. I will be among them.

Like so many of you, I never thought that in my lifetime, I'd see an African-American elected to the highest public office in the land. But that's exactly what happened November 4, 2008, another day I will always remember. Obama was supported and elected by people of all ages, races, and backgrounds. And now when we say “we the people,” it has a more inclusive meaning to me.

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