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FACING HARD TIMES? LOOK UP!

In the midst of this global financial crisis, we would do well to check into an “ant motel.” It may sound foolish, but as suggested in Proverbs 6:6-11, humanity could learn a thing or two from ants. Ants know that in summer, when there is an abundance of food, they must prepare for winter, which will surely come to pass. The same was also true when Joseph, as prime minister of Egypt, prepared his people for the impending famine— their winter. When it finally came, they were prepared. But what would have happened if he and his cabinet had decided on day one of the seven years of famine how to deal with the crisis?

We must always think about the future and plan for the day when, for whatever reason, difficult situations arise and we fall on hard times. Yet, lately in the news, we’ve seen company after company collapse. How could a company, with billions of dollars in revenue, suddenly fall flat on its face? This did not happen overnight. Companies are in their present predicaments because of decisions they made years ago. When the economy was booming and all was going well, they probably set their operation on autopilot.

And governments around the world have had to pump billions of dollars into the market to prevent more financial institutions from failing.

How could a company, with billions of dollars in revenue, suddenly fall flat on its face? This did not happen overnight. Companies are in their present predicaments because of decisions they made years ago. When the economy was booming and all was going well, they probably set their operation on autopilot.

In reality what goes for corporate America also holds true for nonprofit and religious organizations like ours. Our inability to think beyond today could cause us to fall just like the corporate giants we see crumbling all around us. And who will come to the aid of the church should she not have her house in order? As stewards of God, let us be very careful how we handle what has been placed in our hands.

In the midst of these hard times, let us not only look up, let us take the opportunity to direct others who are lost and faint of heart to Jesus. And as we share His salvific plan, may they also join us in looking up!

Seth Bardu is treasurer of the Columbia Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.
Pastors, Members Encouraged to “Share the Hope” in 2009

Under the theme “Share the Hope” (sharethehope2009.com), the North American Division (NAD) is placing a special emphasis on evangelism this year. Leaders are asking every pastor—with the help of church members—to hold spring and fall meetings. Members are asked to reach out to at least three people in their communities, pray for them, and establish a friendship. The overall goal is to baptize 100,000 people for Christ in 2009.

According to Bernadine Delafield, NET evangelism coordinator for the NAD, the initiative was launched last month with three satellite programs designed to motivate and prepare pastors and members to hold local meetings. “In the past, the division has provided a satellite series of meetings to assist evangelism efforts in the local church,” she explains. “But this year, they’re asking the pastors to do the preaching.”

The Columbia Union Conference leadership is on board, encouraging each local conference and church to fully support and participate in this exciting yearlong program. “Today like never before, the church needs this type of initiative,” says Columbia Union president Dave Weigley. “We are surrounded by indicators that Jesus is soon to return, and we must do all we can to finish the work.”

To that end, Weigley—who holds evangelistic meetings every year—has asked each Columbia Union officer to conduct an evangelistic meeting this year. Union leaders will also help provide evangelism training and resources for pastors. In addition, union office personnel are being encouraged to support meetings in their local churches. “I would hope not only in 2009, but every year, every month, every week, and every day would be an opportunity for living and sharing the hope within us—Jesus Christ!” Weigley says.

Following is a brief look at evangelistic meeting this year. Union officers have invited pastors to conduct reaping campaigns; a new pastor with extensive evangelistic experience who will serve occasionally as a trainer; several major evangelistic campaigns; a new church plant in northeast Baltimore; and numerous evangelistic programs in churches involving pastors, lay leaders, youth, and conference personnel.

“Our expectation and hope is that a strong prayer ministry will be the foundation upon which all our work is built, that every church will be intentional in its approach to evangelism and will experience the joy of finding lost people, that every church will interface with its community in some meaningful way, and that every church will create a climate where people can flourish,” says president Rob Vandeman.

Allegheyn West Conference

New president Fredrick Russell and his team would like to have 1,000 baptisms in 2009. To support this evangelism goal, they plan to raise $500,000. In addition, each pastor will conduct two public evangelistic meetings, and each administrator, departmental director, and executive committee member will conduct or get involved in a meeting.

Chesapeake Conference

With an overall goal of reaching 500 new believers, the Chesapeake Conference has committed more than $450,000 to fund its 2009 evangelistic strategy. It includes the placement of two additional Bible workers in the Greater Baltimore area; a new pastor with extensive evangelistic experience who will serve occasionally as a trainer; several major evangelistic campaigns; a new church plant in northeast Baltimore; and numerous evangelistic programs in churches involving pastors, lay leaders, youth, and conference personnel.

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Mountain View Conference

Building on its success with the ShareHIM initiative, which trains church members to lead evangelism efforts, the Mountain View Conference plans to host 75 to 100 reaping meetings.

“These meetings will be conducted by graduates of our evangelism boot camps,” explains president Larry Bogges. He has also asked pastors to conduct two reaping meetings in their churches and invited Columbia Union officers to conduct meetings in the conference territory.

New Jersey Conference

While their evangelists are often called to preach the gospel in Africa, India, and Inter-America, conference leaders would like to hold more than 200 evangelistic campaigns in New Jersey this year and see hundreds brought to Christ. “We want to see an explosion of small group meetings, Bible studies, and public evangelistic meetings in every language,” says president José Cortés. He has invited all New Jersey Conference pastors to lead out in at least two large evangelistic campaigns and each department at the conference headquarters to lead at least one meeting.

Ohio Conference

“For several years, the Ohio Conference has been cultivating the creation of a culture in which God’s people discern God’s directions and activities in them, and for their communities, and live and act as missional people,” notes president Raj Attikan.

This year the conference plans to take additional steps to foster, nurture, and support the engagement of churches and schools in the redemptive work of God. The goal is that congregations will see themselves as mission outposts, and be a redemptive presence with their attention placed outside their church walls. The conference also plans to launch an experimental effort to develop networks of young adults in central Ohio, who are currently not involved in any church, and involve them in a discipling curriculum that includes truth-discovery, service, and other spiritual growth activities.

Pennsylvania Conference

“Pennsylvania is a mission field,” says president Ray Hartwell. “We continually ask the overarching question: ‘How is what we are doing about reaching the lost?’”

During the last three years, the conference has invested significant operating reserve funds to engage its churches in mission through six conference-wide training events called “Equipping Universities.” At these weekend retreats, church pastors and members cast visions and develop plans for soul winning and holistic evangelism initiatives.

This year conference leaders plan to build on this foundation by planting new churches, encouraging pastors to hold reaping meetings, training lay speakers, and holding several evangelism rallies. Hartwell plans to conduct two meetings this spring.

Potomac Conference

President Bill Miller and his team are placing a strong emphasis on growing healthy churches that reproduce. They would like to see every church hold a reaping series and are encouraging members to make discipleship a lifestyle. “We want to see every member bring two people to faith in Jesus,” he says.

The conference also has a burgeoning Hispanic ministry. Their goal is to plant eight to 10 new congregations, baptize 1,500 new believers, and have each church hold four reaping efforts this year.
Books > Church Folk in Love Deborah Hardy

As the nation celebrates love this month, first-time author and poet Deborah Hardy’s new book couldn’t be timelier. The member of Allegheny East Conference’s Berea Temple in Baltimore presents this “relaxing read” as a chance to be “intentional about enlivening our relationships,” whether you’re a newlywed or celebrating a golden anniversary. Ultimately, it is my hope and prayer that couples and individuals will be reminded of the potential and opportunity for sweetness and joy in marriage,” says the mother of one. And don’t think the book’s rhymes and humorous lines would be complete without her husband Walter’s support and amateur photography. Order a copy and read more at bennykyle.com.

I Can Read Book Series

Titles like Joash the Boy King and Herbe the Hippo will make Columbia Union kids want to start stocking their bookshelves with this new easy-to-read series. “Our vision is to provide beginning readers, from pre-K to second grade, with materials they can read,” states author and creator Rose Gamblin, PhD, a member of Chesapeake Conference’s Smithsburg Valley company in Smithsburg, Md. “These books present the gospel and are also a valuable character-building and soul-winning tool.”

So far eight bilingual (English and Spanish) titles have been published. Special features include the Flesch-Kincaid readability statistic, which helps parents know if the book is at the child’s correct reading level. And, according to Gamblin, who works as education specialist at the Review and Herald Publishing Association in Hagerstown, Md., each book concludes with critical thinking questions and activities. To stock your child’s library, visit adventistbookcenter.com.

CDs > God is for Us and Grand Praise! Tom Hughes

“It’s been a decade since I last recorded,” explains Pastor Tom Hughes of Ohio Conference’s Zanesville and Newark churches about his double Christian release. “I had many songs that people loved and were asking for.”

God is for Us—inspired by his work in West Virginia’s Appalachian region—is “happy, uplifting” country music combined with folk. Grand Praise! will appeal more to those who appreciate contemporary praise, like his self-penned “You Are Righteous.”

“Both CDs are youth-oriented and are an attempt to reach out to, and inspire, young people to love and praise Jesus Christ,” says the mother of one. And don’t think they should be doing more to safeguard their health. “What about you? Is your health your most valuable asset? What in your current lifestyle dissatisfies you? What would a change look like? A recent CIGNA HealthCare survey reported that 55 percent of Americans are now making positive lifestyle change or plan to in the immediate future. Others say they have good intentions and think they should be doing more to safeguard their health. Today’s faltering economy can spark discussions on how to prepare healthy meals, fit in exercise, manage stress, and lead to deeper issues such as healing relationships and finding meaning in life. What an opportunity to share a positive health message with people who may otherwise never visit our churches!” —Lilly Tryon, MSN, RN, Adventist WholeHealth Wellness Center

Keeping Score

Christians and Pornography

420 Number of pornographic Web pages in millions
42.7% Number of Internet users who view porn
47% Number of Christians addicted to porn
$97.06Porn revenue in billions in 2006
12 -17 Age of largest consumers of Internet porn


What You Bring to the Table

In the Spotlight > Your Story Hour Radio Ministry

For the last 60 years, Seventh-day Adventists have been producing a popular radio show called Your Story Hour (YSH). One of YSH’s original hosts, Betty Hausted Ahnberg, was from Medina, Ohio. For 35 years she was best known as “Aunt Sue.” Her father, Ray Hausted, built one of the ministry’s first recording studios in the basement of his Medina-based furniture factory. Actors from Cleveland voiced many of YSH’s most memorable characters. One was Myla Martin, a long-time member of Ohio Conference’s Cedar Avenue church, which is now Allegheny West Conference’s Givensville church. Now living in Michigan, Martin wrote and later directed many of the show’s scripts. He was best known for his voice as the sergeant in the Garden of Eden.

“All of us who were there at the beginning were captured by creator Stanley Hills” (left, with Ahnberg) vision that drama could be done for children that would bring them into a personal knowledge of Jesus Christ,” he recalls. “[Your Story Hour] is now the only surviving and in my mind, I call it.”

Now based in Michigan, YSH broadcasts in English, Spanish, and Russian on 3,000 stations worldwide. Its Russian programs reach an estimated 25 million people. Well known for its 30-minute radio program aimed at developing noble character traits, YSH (yourstoryhour.org) exposes kids to positive examples and demonstrates the possible detrimental outcomes of unwise choices. To complement the ministry, the producers now operate a Bible school and publish a newsletter and kids’ magazine, which has received several awards from home-schooling magazines.

“This spring we are planning a recording session of 25 new stories,” promises president Julie Claytourn. “We are also planning to get interactive Bible lessons online to provide quality, life-changing materials for children of all ages.” —Sam Betony

Carole Peas and Chef Damon are today’s voices of Your Story Hour’s “Aunt Carol,” and “Uncle Dan.”

Potluck

BETH MICHAELS
Weathering the Great Depression

How the Church Endured an Unprecedented Economic Downturn

Alan Hecht

Are we in a recession or is this the Great Depression all over again? Is probably the question many Seventh-Day Adventists are asking as the world economy hits a free fall of sorts. Whatever the terminology, we can agree that what is occurring now is something few of us have seen in our lifetimes.

DEFINING ECONOMIC DOWNTURN

A recession is an economic downturn in which real gross domestic product (GDP) declines by less than 10 percent. A depression is a sustained decline that exceeds 10 percent. To put this in perspective: In the period from 1929 to 1933, the GDP declined by 33 percent! Before the Great Depression, any economic downturn was referred to as a depression. Historians usually date the beginning of the Great Depression to the stock market crash of October 29, 1929. The results of “Black Tuesday” were not immediately apparent. As a matter of fact, in late 1929/early 1930, the stock market rebounded. Government and business spending actually exceeded previous levels. Credit was readily available. But this could not be sustained. Consumers, many of whom had lost money in the stock market crash, reduced spending by 10 percent. Meanwhile, a drought ravaged major U.S. agricultural areas. By late 1930, it was clear that the nation and the world were in the grip of an unprecedented downturn.

ADVENTISTS PREDICT A GRIM FUTURE

In 1928 noted Adventist scholar and preacher LeRoy Edwin Froom wrote in Seeking a Sanctuary: “Our vaunted civilization is honeycombed with dry rot; our golden age is soon to meet with a crash that will shake it from center to circumference .…” His prediction must have seemed counterintuitive. As historian Arthur Schlesinger described in The Crisis of the Old Order, business and the making of money itself had become a quasi-religion during the 1920s. No one was expecting the crisis that Adventists forewarned was just around the corner.

According to religious historian Jerald C. Brauer (Protestantism in America), during the Depression, Adventist and other churches that emphasized the soon return of Christ appealed to people who took everything for granted—jobs, money, and possessions. One church member wrote in the Atlantic Union Gleaner about how much easier it was to get his neighbors to read the literature he brought them, since they no longer had jobs to go to or money to spend on amusements.

MINISTRIES DECREASE, MEMBERSHIP INCREASES

In 1931, the year in which the full effects of the 1929 crash became clear in skyrocketing unemployment rates, hunger, and poverty, church membership increased by 10,600—a full 40 percent gain on the previous year. Throughout the Depression, annual membership growth averaged 5 to 6 percent, more than twice that experienced during the previous decade. “Paradoxically,” says Douglas Morgan, history professor at Columbia Union College in Takoma Park, Md., “the Depression was good for church growth.”

On the other hand, none of America’s churches or religious institutions were prepared for the economic consequences of the Great Depression. Brauer writes: “The Depression had a devastating effect on the churches, as well as on the nation … Many an institution of the church lost its endow in the financial crash and had to close or had to drastically cut back its activities.”

The Adventist Church was no exception. Between 1930 and 1934, church income declined by more than one-third. Among the measures taken were term limits for General Conference and division personnel, the merging of several conferences, and reduction of wages for denominational workers. Monte Sahlin, director of Research and Special Projects for the Ohio Conference, adds, “The church had to greatly cut back on the number of pastors during that time. They laid off a number of younger ministers, increased the size of districts, and significantly cut down on travel budgets.”

HARD-HIT MISSIONS SEE REPRIEVE

Especially hard hit were missions. The church appealed to members to increase giving. Typical was this appeal in the Visitor of September 4, 1930. “There is no way to send out missionaries unless we have the money to support them. Just now there is a shortage in the treasury and the General Conference is looking to the members of our churches to be faithful in the campaign that is now in progress.”

No account of the Adventist Church during this period is complete without mention of the now legendary series of events surrounding the actions of General Conference undertreasurer W.H. Williams. The story of his reaction to the indefinite bank holiday declared by President Roosevelt in early March 1933, following the epidemic of bank failures then occurring, has been told many times since, with details changed, added, or subtracted. What we do know is this: Williams had the foresight to withdraw money in small increments over the days and weeks preceding the bank closures, and it just happened that these funds were just enough to pay the missionaries and foreign workers who otherwise would have been financially adrift.

Merle Poirier, a member of Chesapeake Conferences Spencerville church in Silver Spring, Md., has done extensive research on this series of events. What we learn from this is, that the church members and officials “never lost their faith in God’s providence and were clearly led by men who were clearly led by God in their management of church affairs.”

As a result, by 1936, General Conference president C.H. Watson could report that the church had weathered the Depression while remaining out of debt. Will our church today remember the valuable lessons learned by our forefathers who weathered one of the worst economic times in world history?

Alan Hecht is director of the Rebok Memorial Library at the Seventh-day Adventist World Headquarters in Silver Spring, Md.

Queuing for Food: A Red Cross volunteer distributes food to drought victims (circa 1931). Photo by MPI/Getty Images

Failed Bank: A crowd of depositors outside the American Union Bank in New York failed to withdraw their savings before the bank collapsed on June 30, 1931. Photo by FPG/Hulton Archive/Getty Images

While serving as General Conference president during most of the Great Depression (1930-36), Charles H. Watson saw membership grow by one-third.
Riding Out the Economic Storm

Can Church Entities Stay Afloat?

Taadii Rowe

With words like “subprime mortgages,” “recession,” and “rising unemployment” swirling in the air, it’s no surprise that many conferences in the Columbia Union are seeing a significant dip in church finances. Can they stay afloat and ride out the economic storm?

Victor Zill, secretary-treasurer of the Mountain View Conference, is particularly frank as he shares that tithe in the two-state territory is flat and will probably remain so for the rest of 2009. He says many of Mountain View’s 2,500 members are older and living on fixed incomes, so they are generally not affected by big fluctuations in the U.S. financial markets. However, it is clear to him that conference leaders must make adjustments that reflect this year’s smaller budget.

“We have a few districts that have no pastors, but we are quite reluctant to fill them,” says Zill. “Right now we have three-church districts, but we will probably have to move to four-church districts.”

The financial picture in Mountain View reflects that of the entire union, says Seth Bardu, Columbia Union treasurer. And as church leaders throughout the union plan for ministry this year, flat-lining tithes are causing them to think twice. To that end, they are following the lead of the General Conference and the North American Division, which voted against cost of living and budget increases for 2009.

Schools, hospitals, and members are also facing budget cutbacks and shortfalls.

DOWNISING FOR ADVENTIST EDUCATION

Many people struggling through a weak economy find it difficult to fund private education. Dunbar Henri, principal of Potomac Conference’s Takoma Academy in Takoma Park, Md., says he has seen requests for financial aid triple (50 applications) in the past year. He has even more students looking for on-campus work to help cover tuition.

Still, there are many parents like Dwayne and Stephanie Neff who will sacrifice to give their children an Adventist education. Although the Neffs live in Chicago, their daughter, Alexandria Manson, is a junior at Ohio Conference’s Mount Vernon Academy (MVA). A combination of illness and the poor economy has caused the Neffs to sell their home and downsize. Stephanie is unable to work full-time so Dwayne cleans their son’s school—in addition to his full-time job—to help cover educational costs.

Stephanie says that even though she has had to depend on donors to keep Alexandria at MVA, she would have it no other way. “I’m educating my children for more than this world—I’m educating them for the kingdom,” she exhorts. “This was a huge commitment for us, and it comes with certain sacrifices.”

Elaine Oliver, vice president for enrollment at Columbia Union College (CUC) in Takoma Park, Md., understands the difficult choice some parents are being forced to make. She says that even with an enrollment of just over 1,000 students, “15 to 20 percent who said they were going to come to CUC last fall, but did not end up coming. In spite of the financial aid packages we offer—which are generous—they still weren’t able to make up the difference.”

One thing we did last year, in anticipation of this, was freeze tuition and that helped us retain students,” she reports.

HOSPITAL ADMISSIONS DECLINE

While churches and schools can make a connection between the economy, reduced giving, and increased requests for financial aid, Ohio-based Kettering Adventist HealthCare leaders can’t say for sure why there is a slight decrease in the number of patients using their six main facilities.

“We are seeing some decrease in our activity, but it’s hard to know exactly what’s behind that because we get increases and decreases related to everything from the flu to a change in weather,” says chief financial officer Russ Wetherell.

“We are seeing more bad debt and charity cases. Insurance is placing a heavier burden on the patient, which causes them to postpone or decide against certain procedures,” Wetherell explains. “But so far, this economy has not affected our ability to fulfill our mission of caring for the community.”

LESSONS FROM A RECESSION

Although a slowing economy is generally bad news for church members, and by extension the church institutions they support, some leaders say there is good news to be found. David Beckworth, PhD, an Adventist and an assistant professor of economics at Texas State University, has written a paper noting a positive connection between a bad economy and church growth. Beckworth looked at data spanning 40 years, from 25 different Protestant churches, and found that Adventist conversions and memberships tend to increase during an economic downturn. That’s why Michael Goetz, pastor of Pennsylvania Conferences Bucks County church in Warminster, thinks this is the perfect time to exercise trust in God. “We made a step of faith to tithe exactly 10 percent of the church’s income to direct soul winning and evangelism, even though we are not meeting our budget,” he says.

Although he estimates that it takes anywhere from $10,000 to $30,000 to put on an evangelism series, they still plan to hold one later this year. “We would rather sink while spending money to reach others, than to exist and not try.” Goetz remarks.

Jim Greene, secretary for the New Jersey Conference, shares Jeremiah 29:11, Joshua 1:5-9, Malachi 3:10, and Matthew 7 every chance he gets. For him those verses all add up to: “God honors those who honor Him, and that’s a promise you can take to the bank.”

We would rather sink while spending money to reach others, than to exist and not try.
Turning the Tide
How Adventists are Lending a Lifeline

Norma Sahlin

When citizens are facing hard times, history tells us that they often turn to God and, consequently, the church for help. Columbia Union members are responding to the flood of requests by creatively integrating service with ministry to the “invisible disenfranchised.” Here are 14 examples of churches and ministries turning the results of a poor economy into opportunities for service evangelism:

1. Ron Wiley, Adventist Community Services (ACS) of Greater Washington director, sees those impacted by this economy walk through his doors daily. He notes that in the past few months, the number of clients coming to his Silver Spring, Md., facility have doubled to more than 100 families each week. “The demand for food is tremendous,” Wiley comments. “Unfortunately, I think those needs are going to be there for a very long time.”

2. Similarly, Pastor Darriel Hoy of Baltimore Adventist Community Services (BACS) reports an increase of 25 percent in requests for assistance. However, the faces of those requesting help have changed. In 2007 about 95 percent of the people who contacted BACS were women. Now, middle-aged men make six out of 10 requests. BACS has also resumed their job training seminars.

3. The Atkinson Men’s Shelter (left) operated by the First church in Coatesville, Pa., says the increasing number of those seeking shelter is related to loss of jobs, coupled with inappropriate coping mechanisms—alcohol and substance abuse. “We sheltered 181 men during 2007,” reports Minnie McNiel, Allegheny East Conference (AEC) ACS director. “In 2008 we sheltered 284 men—the highest number of men we’ve serviced in one year.”

4. The Good Neighbor House in Dayton, Ohio, helps feed a local family.

5. Newark church’s ACS center in Ohio has also seen the need to move to a new building (above, right) and expand its services, including more classes for the unemployed. They have also added a thrift store and food pantry as well as health screenings.

6. The Glen Burnie ACS center serving Anne Arundel County, Maryland, dishes up 150-plus hot meals each Tuesday, but the number of their clients has more than doubled. They also distribute clothing, sleeping bags, and other items.

7. Mountain View Conference claims seven thrift shops and food pantries that consistently serve the Appalachian region. They continue stocking their shelves as the community’s needs increase.

8. In Portsmouth, Va., members of AEC’s Prentis Park church prepare a weekly hot lunch for 50 to 65 of the local working poor, which also continues to increase. Pastor Armando Reid says he

9. Jair Pinilla, pastor of New Jersey Conferences’ Esperanza, Englewood, and Hoboken Spanish churches, reports, “Every Wednesday night, we hand out groceries to visitors. Many then choose to stay for a Christ-centered message.” As a result, at least 65 people have joined La Esperanza, in Union City, and Hoboken Spanish.

10. The Walk of Faith Fellowship in Cleveland has expanded their children’s after school and tutoring program to include teenagers. They also have a food pantry.

11. Ohio’s Toledo First church took a different approach to addressing community members’ concerns. They participated in the National Pray Down the High Gas Prices Summit, a nationwide initiative spearheaded by Rocky Twyman, a member of AEC’s New Life church in Gaithersburg, Md. “When gas prices are high, they affect all of us, but none more than those who are on a limited or fixed income,” explains senior pastor Mike Fortune.

12. The Potomac Adventist Book and Health Food Store (ABC) in Silver Spring, Md., will be offering Financial Peace seminars to their customers this spring. “The courses will help attendees develop a whole new philosophy for personal money management,” reports general manager Lisa Myaing. The store has also expanded help through their website (potomabc.com). Through the Eating Well for Less homepage link, they list the health and economic benefits of preparing healthy foods at home. The Finding Peace in Chaos link focuses on how a relationship with Christ provides peace in troublesome times, and features an assortment of books.

13. Allegheny West Conferences’ Southeast church in Cleveland organized an informational mortgage crisis seminar in late October to help community members prepare for more difficult times. And as a result of a recent evangelistic crusade, now twice as many families are showing up for their community meal.

14. Through the Hagerstown (Md.) church’s recent two-day Hope for Today, Confidence in Tomorrow seminar, members were able to discuss the uncertainty of the current economy and how the promises of God provide assurance and hope. More than 30 community members attended and 11 attendees requested baptism reports Pastor Rick Remmers (below). Church members are also continuing to participate in local, small group studies focusing on the biblical principles of money management.

Norma Sahlin is a member of the Village church in Mason, Ohio, and is communication director for the Center for Creative Ministry.
We've Come a Long Way
Emory J. Tolbert

I never thought that I would live to see this day. Until recently, I have been reluctant to acknowledge with any enthusiasm the extent of recent progress in American race relations. The economic divide, the learning gap, the high incarceration rate for minorities—including a million black men—are real and frustrating. Yet, in a nation that continues a tradition of institutionalized racism in many ways, something extraordinary happened.

My father and mother would be astounded. Dad was a black teenager in Sanford, Fla., when he happened upon a tent meeting for whites. The Seventh-day Adventist minister who conducted the meeting allowed him to sit behind the projection screen, where the audience could not see him. Dad joined the meeting, which continued for three days, and his curiosity was piqued. The message was race-neutral, and people were invited to a church a few blocks away. Dad attended the church and denounced segregation, which his parents had always defended.

We've Come a Long Way

Let's Embrace New Realities
Monte Sahlin

It's truly historic, something I never expected to see in my lifetime—the first African-American president. Barack Obama, 47, was elected over tremendous odds; yet, people of all races elected him with a larger mandate than any president in several decades, ages, and generations. What can our church learn from this?

CRUNCHING THE NUMBERS

Let's start with race. Recently the U.S. Census Bureau released its latest projections on race. Blacks, Hispanics, and other ethnic minorities today make up a third of the nation and in 2042 will become the majority. The Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America is ahead of the curve. What the Census Bureau estimates will happen in 2042 for the whole nation occurred within the church last year. We are a community that no longer has an ethnic majority. The new reality is that whites are simply another minority group among Adventists.

The practical evidence of this new reality can be seen in our church schools. White congregations can no longer sustain the schools they started, and the majority of the students are now from other ethnic groups. Let's chronicle the change in terms of three generations in my family: My father attended a boarding academy in the Midwest where there were no people of color. I attended a day academy in the 1960s with a small percentage of black, Hispanic, and Asian students. My daughters attended a Columbia Union Academy in the 1990s and were a definite minority.

Another demographic reality—age—is also pertinent. The median age is inching up and here, too, Adventists are ahead of the curve. The newly published Demographic Profile of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America (published by the Center for Creative Ministry on behalf of the North American Division Secretariat, which sponsored the study) shows that the median age for Adventists is 51 compared to 36 for the entire nation. This is one reason so many church schools are hurting. Surveys show that the percentage of Adventist parents who place children in church schools has remained the same for decades. There are simply fewer Adventist children.

In addition to race and age, the election of Obama to the presidency also represents a generational shift. Some 24 million people between ages 18 and 28 voted for him. They are part of what's called the Millennial generation. Born between 1977 and 1994, they are characterized like their grandparents in the World War II generation. They have a can-do attitude, or, as they put it, “Yes we can!” and “Si se puede!”

In an article analyzing the election, William Johnson, retired editor of the Adventist Review, pointed out that President Obama knows how to express a sense of hope, how to use the power of public speaking, together with the power of the Internet and community organizing, to mobilize people around a cause and to call people to sacrifice and to care.

Regardless of your opinion of the new president, he effectively engaged the Millennial generation, and so should Adventists. We need to harness the power of hope and mobilize these young people to make real change. We have lost the majority of the Baby Boomers and Gen Xers who were born into Adventist families. Let's not do that with the Millennials.

TO EVERY NATION AND TRIBE...

As I read the three angels' messages, it seems to be a part of our unique destiny as the remnant church to proclaim the gospel to every nation and tribe and language and people group. Let's stop pretending we can be the Adventist movement in isolated envelopes and embrace our diversity as a fulfillment of Revelation 14:6. Will we respond to this moment of hope and energy with new, creative ideas for the mission of the church? Or will we sleep through the revelation and wake up to find we have no oil for our lamps when the bridegroom arrives?

Monte Sahlin (msahlin@creativemini-stry.org) is director of research and special projects for the Ohio Conference, headquartered in Mount Vernon, Ohio.
In these uncertain economic times, we are all more concerned about the well-being of our families, churches, and schools. The resources below will help you safeguard and manage your money while staying true to God’s principles of good stewardship:

**BOOKS/PAMPHLETS**

- **It’s Your Money! Isn’t It?**—Inspired by scriptural references, G. Edward Reid’s handbook on everyday money management outlines principles for home buying, eliminating debt, preparing for retirement, etc. Order from adventsource.org or Adventist Book Centers (ABC). Price: $9.99; audio seminar on CD ($29.99), DVD ($59.99), workbook ($3.99)

- **“Stewardship… It Really Is Worship”**—This powerful new brochure reminds us that faithful stewardship, even in difficult economic times, is part of God’s directive to Christians. Call (301) 680-6157, or email FlomoJ@gc.adventist.org. Price: $30/100 (plus S&H)

- **Dollars & Sense from Grandmommy**—Author Kathy Reid, a member of Chesapeake Conference’s Atholton church in Columbia, Md., teaches children basic money management and tithing through 11 lessons and activities. Available at adventsource.org or ABCs. Price: $13.99

- **Faith and Finance**—Geared toward personal and small group study, this financial book, released last month by the North American Division (NAD) Stewardship Department (adventiststewardship.org), contains 12 lessons designed to guide Adventists in managing finances based on biblical principles. Available in English and Spanish at adventsource.org or ABCs. Price: $12.99

- **LET GOD BE GOD: BIBLICAL STewardship Foundations**—A comprehensive training seminar for church leaders to use in educating their congregations about stewardship. Set of three DVDs with student handbooks available. Call (301) 680-6157, or email FlomoJ@gc.adventist.org. Price: $15

**PUBLICATIONS**

- **Gifts of Heaven**—Congregations can use this new packet of resources to help members understand how tithes and offerings are used locally—an especially relevant topic during a poor economy. Get copies at gifts@heaven.org.

- **“How to Survive the Coming Economic Crisis”**—This article by G. Edward Reid, director of the NAD Stewardship Department, was published in the November 2008 issue of Signs of the Times (signstimes.com). It is also available en español in the October 2008 print edition of El Centinela.

- **Dynamic Steward**—This newsletter, published quarterly by the Stewardship Department of the worldwide Seventh-day Adventist Church, offers helpful resources and tips. Learn more at adventiststewardship.com. Price: $1/copy

**ORGANIZATION**

- **Bankers Financial Group**—This is the only Adventist mortgage lending company in the Columbia Union, owned and operated by the Holland brothers of Greenbelt, Md. These Allegheny East Conference members present home ownership seminars and offer special loan programs. Visit bankersfinancialgroup.com.

Kara Watkins writes from Columbia, Md.
DO YOU BELIEVE IN MIRACLES?

Pennsylvania Conference Does

Their Miracle Was Acquiring the Pocono Grace Church

Although no church growth happens by accident, the 40 people who recently signed an charter members of the Pocono Grace church in East Stroudsburg, Pa., see the acquisition of their new “home” as nothing short of a two-part miracle.

Part I: The Lutheran church that Pocono Grace was renting was up for sale. Although two other groups placed higher bids, Pocono Grace had already impressed the Lutheran members with their grand vision of community service—they just needed to raise their offer.

Part II: The Columbia Union Revolving Fund (CURF) stepped in with the necessary funding.

By answering the call, CURF was living up to its 40-year goal of promoting the mission of the church. As they have done with hundreds of churches, schools, conferences, and other entities across the Columbia Union over the years, CURF provides cost-effective financing, making ministry possible.

Making Ministry Possible

Columbia Union Revolving Fund (866) 721-CURF

Profiles in Caring

Inside: Prenatal Center for Low-Income Families Opens in Germantown

Happiness Is Contagious

A new study seems to indicate that it is happiness—and not misery—that loves company. In fact, in a study of nearly 5,000 people over some 20 years, it appears that happiness spreads like a virus from one person to another, and then to another, and then to another, your happiness actually impacts your friends’ friends’ friends.

James H. Fowler, from the University of California, San Diego, and Nicholas A. Christakis, from Harvard, set out to learn whether happiness can spread from person to person. They made use of data collected from 4,539 people over a 20-year period. They discovered that the relationship between people’s happiness extends up to the friends of one’s friends’ friends.

They found that people who are in close touch with many other happy people are more likely to become happy as a result. And they also found that our personal happiness depends on the happiness of other people to whom we are connected, even through three degrees. Happiness, it turns out, is a collective experience, and not one that we sustain by ourselves. Our own happiness probably has an impact on many people we don’t even know, just as we are impacted by the happiness of others.

The study also suggests that when it comes to happiness, proximity matters. The study suggests that the people who make us happiest are the ones who are physically the closest: a next-door neighbor who is cheerful has a much greater impact than someone who lives far away. Happiness is contagious. It spreads from friend to friend, from person to person, in social networks of interconnected individuals.

It all makes me mindful of a text I learned as a child: “A merry heart doeth good like a medicine” (Proverbs 17:22). It was always good advice, now it turns out it was good science, too.

William G. “Bill” Robertson
President & CEO
Adventist HealthCare
For the Babies

Shady Grove Adventist Hospital is proud to announce a new arrival: Shady Grove Prenatal Program in Germantown.

Shady Grove has been working with the Montgomery County Maternity Partnership Program since 2006, offering prenatal care to uninsured, low-income women at a Rockville location. The Center moved into its new location in Germantown in October 2008.

The new site is located in a part of Montgomery County that has grown rapidly in recent years. This new location, close to major bus routes and the busy I-270 freeway, is more convenient for many of the patients.

Good prenatal care can prevent many problems for both mom and baby. Healthier mothers and babies result in a stronger and healthier community, and are truly an excellent return on this investment. Shady Grove’s Prenatal Program through the Maternity Partnership provides vitally important prenatal care to patients who may otherwise not afford the care outside this program.

Patients pay a $350 flat rate for all normal prenatal care through the program, reducing prenatal visits, labs, ultrasounds, delivery, postpartum care and the six-week checkup. The babies are delivered at nearby Shady Grove Adventist Hospital by obstetricians who have partnered with the hospital to support the program. Washington Adventist Hospital in Takoma Park also participates in the Maternity Partnership Program.

Shady Grove’s Prenatal Program is unique in that it is staffed by nurse midwives. Not only do the midwives provide clinical care, they also work to educate their patients about the pregnancy, birth and parenting experiences.

Frayda Diamond, who has been a midwife for 16 years, is a Women’s Health Nurse Practitioner at the Prenatal Program. She says that her job involves a great deal of teaching and training. She has put together a booklet for her patients that describes what will happen at each visit. It lists in detail what they should know at each stage of their pregnancy. It is very specific about what the patients should be doing to take care of themselves.

Frayda states that she is a fairly strict teacher. She asks her patients to carefully read the section for the upcoming visit so they are able to ask the right questions. They discuss basics, such as proper nutrition and exercise. She explains complicated topics, such as differences between diagnostic tests, as well as simple things, such as what to bring to the hospital for the baby’s birth.

The clinic also educates patients about the birth process and post-birth issues such as breastfeeding and family planning. The nurses and midwives also find themselves trying to peer into the past to discover any pre-existing conditions, such as diabetes or high blood pressure. Many of the Prenatal Center’s patients have not had any previous medical care so they are unaware of their health history and health issues that could impact their pregnancy and their baby. The booklet that Frayda uses for patients is available in English and Spanish, which is the native language of many Prenatal Center patients.

Because the two nurses at the clinic both speak Spanish, the patients feel comfortable asking questions and the chance of miscommunication is reduced. The nurses’ language skills also are useful when patients call in, because this allows them to talk to a staff member immediately. And the nurses are available to translate for the two midwives—although Frayda says she has picked up enough Spanish to be able to conduct a physical exam.

Terry Francis is the Director of Prenatal Services for Shady Grove Adventist Hospital and oversees the Prenatal Program. She believes that having nurse midwives provide care to Prenatal Program patients provides an exceptional experience for these women. “The nurse midwives are serious about teaching our patients,” she points out. “They take more time with them and communicate on a more personal level.”

The new program, which is open three days a week, has four exam rooms, a large lobby, and private consult space for staff to meet with patients. The building is new and all of the equipment is new. In addition, the staff members are pleased to be near Shady Grove Adventist Emergency Center, which makes it convenient to access emergency equipment or services if necessary.

During their prenatal visits, the patients also have access to county staff who can direct them to resources and services such as medical assistance and local pediatricians. “We recognize that these women need support to help them prepare for the birth of their babies and to provide care for those babies after they arrive,” Terry Francis explains. “We work to provide all of this through our program.”

During the Prenatal Center’s opening celebration in December, Shady Grove President, Dennis Hansen, sounding not unlike a proud father, noted that “the Prenatal Program is the most recent example of Shady Grove Adventist Hospital’s commitment to improving access to health care services for the community.”

“This is a huge commitment for the hospital,” Terry Francis acknowledges. “But we do it for the babies. It’s a gift we give to ensure the healthiest babies we can get.”
On the day of their wedding, Ricardo and Melvina Bryant not only made a commitment to each other, they also made a commitment to God. The couple was among five people recently baptized at the Southwest church in Philadelphia.

Calvert Brown, an elder at the 300-member church for the past 17 years, recalls the day he met Melvina. He had preached the Sabbath sermon titled “God Wants to Make a Deal With You,” and was impressed to make an altar call. He had been praying for the Lord to bring him someone with whom he could work.

“A lady came up who I didn’t recognize,” said Brown. “We handed out request cards, and on the card she requested prayer and baptism. When she came into the vestry afterward, her boyfriend was with her. She told me she just felt impressed to come to church that morning, and after hearing the sermon, knew she wanted to be baptized. Her boyfriend said, ‘If she wants to get baptized, I do too.’”

They started talking and her boyfriend, Ricardo, shared that he left the Seventh-day Adventist Church 25 years ago. Even so, he always reminded Melvina about the Sabbath. That same day, the couple also asked to be married. Every Sunday thereafter, Brown gave Bible studies to them both. They were so hungry for knowledge of the Lord that the Bible studies would sometimes last three hours.

The couple decided that they wanted to be baptized on the day of their wedding. The entire church helped with food, decorations, and photography. “Southwest church is small, but it is also a very loving church,” Brown says.
Women’s Ministries Hosts Five Area Retreats

Hundreds of women from all over the Allegheny East Conference, from New Jersey to Washington, D.C., recently gathered for five area retreats to receive a fresh anointing from the Holy Spirit. Here are the highlights:

North New Jersey Women Learn to Rest in Jesus

Under the theme “Give Them Heaven: Come Find Rest Unto Your Souls,” the women of North New Jersey came from eight area churches to learn how to cultivate an attitude of peace and how to rest in Jesus’ love. Held at the Embassy Suites Hotel-Piscataway, attendees were blessed with music from singing evangelist J. Evan Brown, who attends the North Bronx, New York City church, and powerful speakers Beverly Francis, first elder at the Berean church in Newark, N.J.; Sheron Roberts, elder at the Brooklyn church in New York City; and a licensed social worker who taught stress reduction.

Baltimore Area Women Freed, Empowered

“Empowering Women Through Unity” was the theme of the ‘eight biennial Baltimore Extended Area Women’s Ministries retreat held at the Wyndham Hotel in Gettysburg, Pa. The weekend was packed with music and ministry from Minnie McNeil, AEC’s Women’s Ministries leader; speaker Loretta Spivey, a member of the Ethan Temple in Wilkinsburg, Pa.; and keynote speaker Gina Brown, PhD, dean of the School of Graduate and Professional Studies at Columbia Union College in Takoma Park, Md. Some 10 percent of the visitors were not Adventists.

Washington Area Women “Chosen”

Dressed in red, women from Washington Area Women’s Ministries gathered for their biennial retreat at the Hyatt Resort in Cambridge, Md. The weekend brought together women from 42 different faiths, a third of whom were first-time attendees. The retreat theme “Chosen: Created, Committed, Consecrated” was vividly illustrated throughout the weekend by speakers who included Brenda Billings, pastor of the Metropolitan church in Hyattsville, Md.; Pastor Donnette Blake from Kingsboro Temple in New York City; and author Debra Anderson from the Emmanuel-Brinklow church in Ashton, Md.

Virginia Women Embrace Wonderful Change

It was on a chilly weekend that the Virginia women gathered to testify of “The Wonderful Change” that God has created in their lives. After a long hiatus without a retreat, there was joy in the air to be together again. Featured speakers Gina Brown and Loretta Spivey spoke about the changes all must make to serve God properly. There were six visitors.

Delaware Valley Women Celebrate Their “Value”

In what they have deemed the “best retreat ever,” the women of the Delaware Valley celebrated the “Value of Women” in their annual three-day event held at the Inn at Reading, Pa. Keynote speaker Kelly D. Darby Holder, a clinical psychologist from Hummelstown, Pa., used the theme as the topic for her discourse. The retreat was accentuated by numerous workshops and special presentations throughout the weekend.

Watch for information on the upcoming Women Ministries conference-wide retreat scheduled for October 15-18 in Atlantic City, N.J.

Glennievle Church Serves 500 Meals

In a season when families gather around the table and give thanks for family, a warm home, and delicious food, members of the Glennievle church in Ohio did not forget those in need. On Thanksgiving Day, church members took time away from their own families to give to those who may not have all the things associated with a happy holiday.

Some 90 volunteers, led by Orlean Whitehead, came together to cook, bake, decorate, host, pray, and share literature during a Thanksgiving feast at the church. They decorated and set up the fellowship hall to feed 200 people and contacted local shelters to supply the residents with a scrumptious meal. In addition to food, there was a prayer room where individuals could go to pray or to have someone pray with or for them. Also, as people left they were given fruit baskets, and a copy of Steps to Christ and Message magazine.

While individuals were being fed at the church, a delivery crew dropped off meals to homes and shelters around the city. Each of the takeaway meals included fruit baskets, and to have someone pray with or for them. Also, as people left they were given fruit baskets, and a copy of Steps to Christ and Message magazine. With more than 500 meals served, the church has modeled what the holidays are truly about.

Cleveland Churches Support Prayer Initiative

Years ago, after reading 2 Chronicles 7:14, the Lord gave Carolyn Henry Hurst, DPM (below), a vision of church members coming together in corporate prayer. When she moved to Cleveland, she took the opportunity to make the vision a reality. She met with Women’s Ministries leaders around the city, and together they hosted a series of prayer meetings themed “Intimate Moments with God” and “One Night With the King.” Some time later a series of crises gravely affected many in the seven Adventist churches throughout Cleveland. It was from this need for intense, fervent, corporate prayer that Hurst and Glennville member Malinda Woods formed the City Wide Prayer Initiative (CWPPI).

A bevy of questions hit them: how, when, and where would they be able to get the seven churches together? The Lord provided the answer in the form of a citywide revival sponsored by pastors in the Cleveland area. For an hour before each meeting, members of the area churches gathered to pray. 

Exhilarated by the positive response from the weekend revival, CWPPI is planning a 24-hour prayer chain, a weekly prayer conference call, and a prayer service before each of the joint assemblies.

Watch for information on the upcoming Women Ministries conference-wide retreat scheduled for October 15-18 in Atlantic City, N.J.

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The City Wide Prayer Initiative encourages corpo-rate prayer throughout Cleveland.
Cleveland Churches Gather for Praise and Thanksgiving

The Northern Ohio Pastor’s Association recently organized an evening of praise and thanksgiving at the Southeast church in Cleveland, pastored by Jerome Hurd. All seven of the Cleveland churches, and a few from the surrounding areas, joined together to worship and show gratitude for blessings received during the year. The Cleveland pastors have two major emphases—evangelism and prayer. They have even joined with City Wide Prayer initiative, a lay ministry that coordinates prayer for the seven churches. The group held a season of prayer one hour before the service began. Members and friends gathered for this time of teaching and renewal. They prayed individually and in small groups. They praised God for His provisions, thanked Him for His blessings, and requested an outpouring of His Spirit.

Following the Spirit-filled prayer session, the praise team led the congregation in songs of praise, adoration, and thanksgiving. Area pastors joined in the testimonies, Scripture readings, and prayers. The air was also filled with songs of Zion from featured groups Westside Youth from the Westside church and Women of Worship from Glenville.

Guest speaker Allen Baldwin, a native of Cleveland and pastor of Ethan Temple in Wilkinsburg, Pa., listed reasons to be thankful and encouraged all to always have a word of gratefulness on their lips. Pastor Allen Baldwin of Ethan Temple in Wilkinsburg, Pa., encourages Cleveland members to always have a grateful heart.

Calendar

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<td>7 Education Rally Day</td>
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<td>8 Bible Training Workshop, Pennsylvania</td>
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<td>Central/Southern Ohio</td>
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<td>4 Multicultural Workshop Training Haitian Leaders, Roanoke, Va.</td>
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<td>19 Constituency Organizing</td>
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<td>24-25 Conference-wide Music, Worship Conference and Championship Basketball Game</td>
<td>24-25 Women’s Ministries 3-in-1 Conference</td>
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We live in a world where people assume that if something can be done at all, it can be done quickly and efficiently. Our attention spans have been conditioned by 30-second commercials. Our sense of reality has been flattened by 30-page abridgements. While it may be difficult, in such a world, to get a person interested in the gospel, it is even more difficult to sustain that interest.

Discipleship—the biblical designation for people of faith—flies in the face of this trend. As disciples, we are people who spend our lives apprenticed to our Master, Jesus Christ. We are in a growing-learning relationship—always. A disciple is a learner (literal meaning of the Greek word “mathetes”), where we learn not in the academic setting of a schoolroom, but rather at the work site of a craftsman. It is not enough for us to acquire information about God. In order to be disciples, we must learn skills in faith.

I dare say that what the church—Christ’s gathered disciples—really needs is not more money, better buildings, or newer programs. The church has always been at its best when it had little or none of these. What we really need is the quality of life—abundant life—Jesus makes real in the lives of His disciples. Therefore, the greatest issue facing the world today, with all its heart-breaking needs, is whether those who call themselves Christians, or Adventists, will truly become disciples. Are people who do not just profess certain views about God, but apply their growing understanding of spiritual realities to every aspect of their life on Earth.

**DISCIPLESHIP IN AN INSTANT SOCIETY**

**Frederick Church Connects With Community**

A group of Frederick (Md.) church members, passionate about reaching and serving people in their local area, have formed an outreach ministries team. Angela Ball, who heads the Health Ministries branch of the team, recently coordinated a vegetarian cooking class that drew 30 participants. Members Rachel Santamaria and Grace Matharu demonstrated how to prepare authentic heart-healthy Indian cuisine. “The food tasted and smelled delicious,” says attendee Yvonne Ponton-Rozman.

The outreach team taps into people’s varied interests by offering a free, twice-weekly aerobics class, a book club, and a Music Ministries program. “It’s exciting to see our members helping to meet the needs of the Frederick community,” says Senior Pastor Robert Quintana. “They are finding ways to be an integral part of their neighborhood.”

**Hagerstown Church Studies Economy Prophecy Link**

More than 300 people attended a weekend evangelism series held recently at the Hagerstown (Md.) church. Presenter Dave Wiegley, president of the Columbia Union Conference, led an in-depth study of the prophetic significance behind economic, political, and religious events that are taking place today. Of the attendees, 24 families were not Seventh-day Adventists. Eleven individuals requested baptism, and following the series, many others asked for additional Bible prophecy studies.—Rick Remmers

Hagerstown church pastor Rick Remmers baptizes Somadny Chambers, a young woman raised in a Buddhist home who is joyfully embracing Christianity. She attended the church’s recent economy series.
**THE CHALLENGE**

**President Meets Pastors Face2Face**

Conference president Rob Vandeman conducts annual reviews called Face2Face with Chesapeake’s 60 pastors. Here, in an interview with Samantha Young, assistant to the president for communication, he offers an inside look at the experience:

Q: How did you find the time to conduct these pastoral interviews?
A: It was a challenge given the nature of my schedule. I set aside one day a week during most of November and December to dedicate to the process. Some days I had a steady stream of pastors coming to sit down in my office, other days I was on the road to meet with them on their turf.

Q: Were the interviews part of an annual evaluation?
A: Not this year. John Appel, our director of pastoral development, has more direct contact with the pastors and is in a better position to help a pastor assess his role or ministry.

Q: What have you learned from this round of interviews?
A: I’ve been reassured that we have some highly competent, effective, and committed pastors. Pastors are confronted many times by unrealistic, even conflicting, expectations from different groups within the church, community, their family, or even within themselves. They are expected to be all things to all people, and that is simply impossible. Some days they need to lead and challenge people with visionary preaching and careful administration. Other days they need to be tender shepherds, accepting people as they are and carefully loving them. On one hand, pastors throw themselves sacrificially into their work and strive for excellence, never shirking any task or person who needs ministerial attention. On the other hand, they are to guard their personal and family time. I encourage them to find balance. I am impressed how many genuinely seek to perform an authentic, biblical ministry and desperately desire to be faithful to their calling. There is a role that can never be mastered. Living the pastoral role is an art, something that demands both intuition and practiced skill. And it requires years to learn to do well. So I will pray more, encourage more, show my appreciation more, and hope others will join me!

Q: What was your goal in personally meeting with the pastors?
A: I seldom have the opportunity to sit down with a pastor when the agenda is not already established by circumstances—a crisis, a decision, or a request. Face2Face gave me the chance to just talk, probe, listen, and offer encouragement. I have a pretty good feel for what is happening in the churches. Information comes to me from a variety of sources, but I wanted to learn how they saw things—what was bringing them joy, what heartaches or burdens they carried, what kept them awake at night—on both a personal and professional level. I can pray for them with greater clarity after talking as colleagues in ministry, rather than as employer and employee. I hope they went away with a greater sense of my support for them.
COLUMBIA UNION COLLEGE

THE GATEWAY

Emile John Appointed Associate Dean

Emile John is the new associate dean of Admissions and Records at Columbia Union College. He has served the college for over 10 years, and remains passionate about the Adventist education that CUC provides students. “Adventist education is indeed the greatest education system. It’s where lives are transformed and students are prepared for service to God,” said John. He promotes a commitment to excellence through his administrative talents, and also guides freshmen in honing essential study skills.

John, who attends the Spencerville church in Silver Spring, Md., ensures that every student who passes through CUC’s halls accomplishes the steps needed to achieve academic excellence. “I love working with our students. They are the reason why I continue to do what I do,” he said. - Michael Martell and PR Staff

Students Broadcast Beliefs to Millions

Several students and recent alumni got the chance to discuss the relevance of their faith during a taping for the Light of Hope International Television Ministry. The program was developed by associate professor Michael M. Kulakov Jr., PhD, and was taped at CUC’s Center for Law and Public Policy.

Some 13 students gathered in small groups to discuss issues ranging from Adventists in public service, to the impact of globalization and multiculturalism on evangelism in the 21st century, and the future of the Adventist mission.

“Some programs featured passionate young people sharing their faith and reflecting on the most pressing issues in their spiritual, academic, professional, and personal lives,” said Kulakov, who teaches political studies and philosophy at CUC.

He believes that each young person brings a unique perspective into the classroom that is based on his, or her, diverse cultural, ethnic, and social background.

The taped segments will be divided into a series of 30-minute inspirational shows that will air on a public network station in Atlanta.

The programs can also be downloaded online at lightofhopetv.com/broadcast.html. “CUC has a very rich heritage. We appreciate the willingness of its students and faculty to join with us in this effort to create a new series of programs to give a fresh perspective on topics that are not very openly discussed,” said Peter Kulakov, director and speaker for Light of Hope.

News

Canned Food Drive Helps Local Families

By the end of the day, there were some cold hands and feet, but hearts were warmed as approximately 1,200 items were counted and boxed (above). “It was really cold, but well worth it to know that we were able to help a lot of families,” said Jennifer Calhoun (’10).

Students spread Christmas joy through a Holiday mini-project. HVA students take part in Operation Christmas Child, a program that provides gifts to children in need. Participants pack small gifts and treats into shoeboxes that are collected from all across the United States and sent all over the world to children who would otherwise have few, if any, gifts at Christmas.

One student, Jill Rent (below) and her sister, Katie, a junior, provided four boxes packed with toys, T-shirts, toothpaste, and school supplies. “We packed them in glittery boxes with angels on them,” said Jill. “It would be really cool to know what country our boxes end up in and who gets them.”

To learn more about Operation Christmas Child, visit samaritanspurse.org.

Columbia Union College

February 2009
Class of 2009 Honored

Recently members of the Class of 2009 were recognized by HVA faculty, parents, and peers during a special service. Class sponsors Ophelia Barizo and Brad Durby read a tribute for each class member, highlighting their accomplishments and personality. Of the class’ 29 members, 16 are in their fourth year. Reflecting on her four years at HVA, Mary Hostetler said, “It was a great environment for me to experience growth in many areas of my life.” For Michael Nyatta, also a four-year senior, friendships stand out. “Getting to know so many people and make such good friends has been awesome,” he said.

The Class of 2010 hosted a reception for the seniors and their guests immediately following the service.

Highlights From Academy Day

During its annual Academy Day, sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-graders recently came to HVA’s campus to learn more about the school. Guests got a chance to learn more about the school’s academic program, scholarships, and extracurricular activities. The visitors also got acquainted with many of the current students and teachers.

Visitor Kullen Nipe participates in a geometry contest. Science teacher Ophelia Barizo demonstrates how to make foam.

God is Able to Provide

Hearing the word “economy” causes many to think about money. For some, their thoughts focus on immediate needs such as how to pay for the groceries and how to pay the mortgage. How do we maneuver this economic road of uncertainty? My mind is drawn to the story of the New Testament church in Macedonia as recorded in 2 Corinthians 8 and 9. Members had a willingness to help others, even those who had little. “They were freely willing” (chapter 8:3), and “He who gathered much had nothing left over, and he who gathered little had no lack” (chapter 8:15). A spirit of willingness to help others was applauded and was indicative of a right relationship with Him. Thus, Paul says in chapter 9:7, “So let each give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.”

As a church family, let each of us be sensitive to the needs around us. By God’s grace, let us cultivate a heart of willingness to give to others in need so that we too will give “ungrowingly and not out of obligation. God loves that kind of giving. Paul says in chapter 9:8, “God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have abundance for every good work.” Be of good courage because God is able to provide for all our needs.

West Virginia District Prays for 40 Days

For 40 days, members from the West Virginia churches of Franklin, Moorefield, and Romney gathered to pray for themselves, their church, and their community.

The idea for the 40 days of prayer originated at a district planning session. The purpose of the meeting was to determine what steps could be taken to reach their communities for Christ. The gathered members recognized that for them to know how they are to be used by the Lord, prayer would have to be the first step.

Walter Cardenas, Moorefield’s associate pastor, offered to lead his congregation in 40 days of prayer and in the consecration of each member to God’s service. Every morning at 5 o’clock, the Moorefield group began with prayer and songs. Next, they discussed what they had read in the day’s assigned chapter from Prayer, a compilation of readings on prayer by Ellen White. During the last half hour of the meeting, each individual specifically prayed for five church members and five people outside of the church.

Franklin and Romney church members also read a chapter each day from Prayer and prayed in their homes. Every Monday evening, Romney members met at the church to pray and to discuss their personal experiences.

As much as 60 percent of the active membership in the district participated. Church members have seen prayers answered through requests for baptism, improved health, financial miracles, enhanced relationships, and personal victories. Many have also experienced a closer connection with the Lord.

“We praise God for His faithfulness and are noting each and every prayer answered, though they may be small,” said Moorefield church member Piper Ivins. “God is growing our faith through this experience.”

Moorefield church members and friends found that 40 days of prayer were key in helping them grow in their faith.
Seminar Prepares Point Pleasant Members for End Times

Approximately 54 members, guests, and baptismal candidates learned how to prepare for end-time events at a recent weekend seminar at the Point Pleasant (W.Va.) church. Author and speaker Jere Franklin from British Columbia, Canada, led the seminar titled “You Can Survive.”

The seminar included six sessions covering such topics as “The Soon Return of Jesus,” “National Sunday Law,” and “God’s Call to Country Living.” Franklin shared how Jesus will provide for His people as they prepare for the end-time events that are swiftly approaching. He also encouraged members to share the gospel with others.

“One of the major blessings of Franklin’s seminar is that he so beautifully encourages the people to be motivated by love for Jesus, rather than being motivated by fear,” said David Morgan, Point Pleasant’s pastor.

Member Violet Davis said she believed “the seminars were real eye openers and heart renewing for a lot of people.”

Frostburg Church Fills Backpacks With Food, Love

Children who receive free meals at schools in Western Maryland often go home to an empty kitchen on weekends. That is why each weekend the Frostburg (Md.) church sends 24 food-filled backpacks home with hungry children. The church’s participation started when Frostburg Adventist Community Services leader Heidi Shadel made a routine visit to the Western Maryland Food Bank in Cumberland, Md., last year.

The backpack program depends on sponsors to pay for kid-friendly food to fill the backpacks, then deliver the packs to the schools. When Shadel learned that there were not enough sponsors for all of the hungry children, she knew her church could help.

Frostburg member Faith Leasure and her husband, Brian, pick up the food, fill the backpacks, and deliver them to two elementary schools. The Leasures fill the backpacks with food that can be easily prepared by children. They include at least two microwavable meals each week, along with individual servings of vegetables, fruits, and puddings.

The backpack program provides an outreach opportunity by allowing the church to include anything in the backpacks. The Leasures have added holiday packages, Sabbath School papers, and invitations to church or special events.

Frostburg (Md.) church member Faith Leasure fills backpacks with food for children who would otherwise go hungry on the weekends.
God is Not Bankrupt

As mentioned in last month’s editorial, 2009 will bring challenges. For many the stress will continue to be related to the economic crisis that exists, not only in our country, but worldwide. The news on the radio, television, and Internet continue to be hopeless. The time before us is not expected to be easy. It is possible that we will continue to hear about many companies having massive dismissals of employees. We will also continue to hear the echoing sound of the word “bankruptcy” as it accompanies the names of once large businesses and commercial chains. And if that wasn’t enough, the so-called “prophets of terror” continue to make their gloomy comments, which increase fear and disturb the mental peace of believers and unbelievers alike. To all I repeat a great truth that should serve as an anchor during the difficult times closing in: God is not bankrupt! He has never been and never will be.

The promises of God to His faithful children are clear in His Word, “...his bread will be supplied, and water will not fail him” (Isa. 33:16, NIV). We do not need to be anxious, nor shall we torment ourselves. Ellen White reminds us, “We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history” (Life Sketches, p. 196). I have lived through situations much more difficult than these in disastrous places. I have seen the hand of the Almighty work in favor of His people. Do not fear! He has promised to be with us until the end. And next month, I will share some suggestions for dealing with these tough times.

Burlington Celebrates International Day

Burlington recently celebrated its international day under the theme “United We Stand, Divided We Fall.” The church family comprises more than 50 members from diverse backgrounds. One church member noted that “even though we are all from different cultures, we blend together in Christ as one family. We are not divided by language, color, nor culture, but united through One in whom there is ‘no Jew, no Gentile.’”

Members, representing 15 countries—including St. Vincent, St. Lucia, Trinidad, Haiti, Montserrat, and St. Kitts—marched into the sanctuary with their respective flags while the voices of the congregation sang with the hymn “They Come from the East and West.” There was also a segment where members learned how the work started in each of these countries and how it grew to where it is now.

As if expressing the sentiments of all the members, soloist Yaki Francis sang the words of the beautiful song “Each One Reach One.”

Pastor David Cuke, from the Northeastern Conference, presented a veryousing, and inspiring sermon, which placed emphasis on the theme “United We Stand, Divided We Fall.”

The day culminated with a special luncheon of exotic and succulent international dishes and the thought that, someday soon, we will all partake at the long, grand table with Christ Himself at the head.

Burlington members celebrate their diverse cultures with an international Sabbath.
Dios no esta en bancarrota

Otro desafío importante es el de la ocupación laboral. En muchos lugares, las empresas están cerrando y dejando a los empleados desempleados. El pastor David Cuké de la Conferencia del Noreste dijo que “el Señor nos ha conducido, y lo que nos ha enseñado en nuestra historia pasada”; y afirmó “¡El Nunca lo ha estado y nunca lo estará!”. La verdad que debe servir de ancla durante los tiempos difíciles que se avecinan: ¡Dios no esta en bancarrota!

La crisis económica también está afectando a los creyentes y no creyentes. Para todos quiero decir una gran noticia: ¡Las noticias en la Radio, la Televisión y el Internet siguen siendo desalentadoras! Se espera que el período de ocupación continua siendo la crisis económica que vive no solamente en nuestro país sino el mundo entero. Las noticias en la Radio, la Televisión y el Internet siguen siendo desalentadoras. Se espera que el periodo de tiempo que tenemos por delante no va a ser fácil. Es posible que sigamos oyendo hablar de despidos masivos de empleados en muchas compañías. También seguiremos escuchando resonar la triste palabra “bancarrota” acompañando el nombre de las que un día fueron grandes empresas y cadenas comerciales. Y como si todo esto fuera poco, los llamados “Profetas del Terror” siguen haciendo sus júbilos comentarios, que aumentan los temores del pueblo y desestabilizan la paz mental de los creyentes y no creyentes. Para todos quiero decir una gran verdad que debe servir de ancla durante los tiempos difíciles que se avecinan: “Dios no esta en bancarrota” ¡Eh! Nunca lo ha estado y nunca lo estará!

Las promesas de Dios para sus hijos fieles son claras en la Palabra, “…se le dará su pan y sus aguas tendrá en abundancia” (Isaías 33:16). No necesitamos estar angustiados, no necesitamos alabarnos. Elena de White nos recuerda “No tenemos nada que temer del futuro, a menos que olvidemos la manera en que el Señor nos ha conducido, y lo que nos ha enseñado en nuestra historia pasada” (Notas Biográficas, p. 216). Yo he vivido en situaciones mucho más difíciles que esta, en lugares realmente desastrosos. Yo he visto la mano del Todopoderoso obrar a favor de su pueblo. ¡No tengan temor! El ha prometido estar con nosotros todos los Días hasta el fin. El próximo mes compartiré algunas recomendaciones de cómo lidiar con estos tiempos difíciles.

Burlington celebra un día internacional

Unidos Nos Paramos, Divididos Nos Caemos fue el tema del día internacional que fue celebrado recientemente en la iglesia de Burlington. La familia de la iglesia está compuesta de 50 miembros de fondos diversos. Un miembro de iglesia nota, “aunque somos de diferentes culturas, nosotros mezclamos juntos como una familia en Cristo. No estamos divididos por lenguaje, color, o cultura, pero unidos por medio de Uno en quien ‘no hay Judío, ni Gentil.’”

Los miembros de Burlington celebran sus diversas culturas con un Sábado internacional. El día culminó con un almuerzo especial con platos de 15 países representados incluyendo St. Vincent, St. Lucia, Trinidad, Haití, Montserrat, y St. Kitts entraron al santuario con sus banderas respectivas. Había también un segmento histórico donde comparamos el proceso de la iglesia de tomas de creencias sobre la comida. Las promesas de Dios para sus hijos fieles son claras en la Palabra, “…se le dará su pan y sus aguas tendrá en abundancia” (Isaías 33:16). No necesitamos estar angustiados, no necesitamos alabarnos. Elena de White nos recuerda “No tenemos nada que temer del futuro, a menos que olvidemos la manera en que el Señor nos ha conducido, y lo que nos ha enseñado en nuestra historia pasada” (Notas Biográficas, p. 216). Yo he vivido en situaciones mucho más difíciles que esta, en lugares realmente desastrosos. Yo he visto la mano del Todopoderoso obrar a favor de su pueblo. ¡No tengan temor! El ha prometido estar con nosotros todos los Días hasta el fin. El próximo mes compartiré algunas recomendaciones de cómo lidiar con estos tiempos difíciles.

Visitors Outnumber Members at Mount Vernon Hill Health Seminar

For years the Mount Vernon Hill church family longed to experience an outreach series where friends from the community outnumbered the church members. It finally happened when the church hosted the “Boost Your Health & Vigo’s” seminar in the church sanctuary.

After several months of planning, working, and praying, the church billed the event as a “free seminar as a gift to our community.” Approximately 250 people came to experience and see for themselves what the church had to offer. The keynote presenter, Wes Youngberg, DFH, is director of Rancho Wellness Center and Lifestyle Medicine Clinic at the Rancho Family Medical Group in Temecula, Calif. He founded the church’s wellness center on the Pacific island of Guam and is one of the founding directors for the American College of Lifestyle Medicine.

In three separate sessions over the course of the weekend, Youngberg focused on how to treat and reverse many lifestyle-related diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, cancer, and depression through the use of a healthful diet, daily exercise, and natural remedies.

Visitors voiced overwhelmingly positive responses to the seminar, prompting the church to invite Youngberg back for another session. In the meantime, the church is planning to offer a cooking class and stress management course.

All sessions were recorded and are available for purchase by contacting the Mount Vernon Hill church at (740) 397-3331. — Dale Glass

Historical Notes: Ohio Adventism in the 1860s

In 1858 the Great Controversy vision came to Ellen White while she and her husband, J. ames, were with a company of believers at Lovett’s Grove near Bowling Green, Ohio. They returned to the area in 1860 to hold evangelistic meetings. J. ames had family ties there. His brother, J. osh, was a minister in the Methodist Conference of Ohio.

Ohio was one of the seven-state conferences that formed before the General Conference was organized. As early as 1859, it was the first to have an annual meeting called the “state conference,” which included church delegates, business sessions, and the election of a chairman and secretary.

In May 1863, when the first General Conference Session was held in Battle Creek, Mich., the Ohio Conference sent two of the session’s 20 delegates, helping to form the denomination as an official organization.

One of the young men converted through J. ames White’s efforts was Oliver Mears, who became an elder in the Lovett’s Grove congregation and later the first president of the Ohio Conference. Mears served for more than seven years, spread over three different terms (1863-66, 1869-70, and 1873-75) but never stopped making his living as a farmer. — Monte Sahlin

To be continued...
Galion Church Member Helps Kids Have “Sweet Dreams”

Galion church member Jennie Bittner’s “Sweet Dreams” clothing drive is ensuring that needy kids in the community will have warm pajamas to sleep in this winter. She collected pajama sets for children, ranging from infants to age 16, and distributed them at the church shortly before Christmas. Bittner says she got the idea from watching an episode of The Oprah Winfrey Show in which the host donated pajamas to foster children.

“I thought, ‘Oh, that’s a good idea to do something like this for the kids, because this economy is very hard for some families,’” she said. “This has given me a way to grow with God and develop relationships with fellow church members.”

Not only does Sweet Dreams provide the children with comfortable PJs to sleep in, but Bittner says this project is her calling from God to get her back in church. “I’ve hit roadblocks, but I keep moving forward because I know this is my calling from God to get her back in church. “God works in such mysterious ways. I feel like He is using me to help others,” she said. “This has given me a way to grow with God and develop relationships with fellow church members.”

“I thought, ‘Oh, that’s a good idea to do something like this for the kids, because this economy is very hard for some families,’” she said.

“I was afraid to talk about God, and now He is using me to tell others. If I can touch one person, to bring them closer to God, then I’ve done my job,” she said. “I will be praising Him forever.” —Terricha Bradley/ Bucyrus Telegraph-Forum

What is the Lead Sentence?

In the book Made to Stick, authors Chip and Dan Heath give an illustration. A professor gave his writing class a paragraph to read and asked them to create a lead sentence for the school newspaper. The paragraph stated: “Kenneth L. Peters, the principal at Beverly Hills High School, announced today that the entire faculty will travel to Sacramento next Thursday for a colloquium in new teaching methods. Among the speakers will be anthropologist Margaret Mead, college president Robert Maynard Hutchings, and California governor Edmund ‘Pat’ Brown.”

The class worked on the assignment, and after the professor collected the papers, he announced that the best lead sentence would be: “There will be no school next Thursday.” This is what the students reading the school paper would find most relevant and interesting. Apply that illustration to your local church. What is the lead sentence you would use to describe all that your church does and believes in? What would be most relevant for your community to hear? Your answer would give an indication of your own theology—so it should be written carefully. Most importantly, I hope that your lead sentence would focus on Jesus and His unconditional love for all humanity.

Mission Ohio is published in the Visitor by the Ohio Conference P.O. Box 1230, Mount Vernon, Ohio 43050 Phone: (740) 397-4665 • ohioadventist.org • President, Raj Attiken • Editor, Nancy Barrett

Pennsylvania Conference’s Secretariat and Ministerial depart- ment staff includes: (left to right) Barry Tyron, Jeannie Hartwell, Lori Landa, and Lisa Larrabee.

Secretary, Ministerial Helps Ministry Run Smoothly

Barry Tyron, DMIn, leads the Secretariat and Ministerial departments of the Pennsylvania Conference. His secretariat duties include keeping minutes for official meetings, dealing with immigration and legal matters, and organizing constituency meetings. Working with him is administrative assistant Lori Landa, who takes care of credentialing and service records and general human resource concerns. Lisa Larrabee works as conference clerk and deals with membership issues, church and conference transfers, and assists local church clerks.

The ministerial side of Tryon’s duties include pastoral support, training, providing resources for pastors, and conducting pastors meetings. Working with him in this department is Jeannie Hartwell, associate ministerial director. She assists Tryon in his duties and also provides support for pastors’ wives.

These departments are not in the limelight. Much of what these staff members do provides the infrastructure for ministers and teachers to carry out the church’s mission of reaching souls for Jesus. In any given week, the departmental staff can provide orientation to a new employee, begin the retirement process for another, and help a third work through immigration issues. They might field a question from a pastor about policy and procedure, and take a call from a member about how soon they will be getting a pastor. Their job is to keep the machinery in working condition so that those in the field can better perform the work of mission.

This dedicated team works hard to ensure that many behind-the-scene items are addressed so that ministry can run smoothly.
**Pennsylvania Pen**

**PENNSYLVANIA CONFERENCE OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS**

720 Museum Road, Reading, PA 19611-1492 Phone (610) 374-8331

**June 12-20, 2009 Camp Meeting Reservation Application**

**FAXES AND WALK-INS NOT ACCEPTED**

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**Part time requests will be considered after full-time requests are filled.**

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**Full Time Rates**

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<td>Trailer w/limited Electricity usage (Extra single cot available) (Trailer Only)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cabin – Keystone (5 sets of bunk beds)</td>
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<td>Small personal tent/trailer space up to 20 ft. No Electricity (Field by Boys’ Dorm)</td>
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<td>Trailer space w/limited Electricity usage Grove City (trailer size __ ft.)</td>
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**Payment Enclosed**

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**Total Charges**

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**Due**

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**PROTOCOL:**

1. A completed application with payment in full is required for all reservations. Partial payments will be returned to sender. Checks should be made payable to Pennsylvania Conference of Seventh-Day Adventists. Applications will be processed on a first come first served basis only.

2. Telephone reservations for late applicants will only be accepted within the last week prior to camp meeting.

3. Reservations must be made by the party attending camp meeting. Reservations cannot be made by one party for another.

4. Children under 18 years of age are not permitted to stay overnight at any of the camp meeting facilities unless accompanied by an adult.

5. **Absolutely no pets** are allowed on campgrounds or in camping areas. Please be aware that if you should choose to bring a pet, you will be required to remove it from the campus/campground. Names of local kennels are provided upon request.

6. Use of microwaves, air conditioners, and other electrical appliances are **Strictly Prohibited** due to the lack of adequate electricity. **This includes all recreational vehicles parked in Keystone and Grove City.**

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**Let the Growth Begin!**

If you want a pastor church for growing healthy congregations, I believe the Buena Vista (Va.) church, which I have pastored for three years, is an excellent candidate! This story began in the spring of last year, when we first planned our evangelism meeting for the fall. We started with a prayer box and encouraged every member to put into the box the names of friends and relatives who needed to find God. Next, we trained 22 people to give Bible studies, divided up the church into three groups to pray for the names in the box, trained members in proper evangelism meeting protocol, and held a special prayer-filled fellowship meal on the Sabbath before the meetings were to begin.

We continued to pray until and during the two weeks of the meetings. Still, imagine our surprise when we started the meetings and the guests just kept coming and coming. We didn’t start our meetings in a neutral location, but in the fellowship hall/gymnasium part of our church. We had not or two visitors show up, as had happened in the past, but 58! Needless to say, when I saw the response, I was overwhelmed! It was like a dream unfolding before my eyes. It shows me what can happen if a church does its part and then leans on God.

Remember this is Buena Vista, Va., a small, independent city of only 6,300 people. We’re not talking about a church in a metropolitan area, nor are we talking about growth among new, growing ethnic populations. With 150 members, Buena Vista is typical of some Potomac Conference churches that have not experienced significant growth and probably would not be expected to grow.

When we planned to have our evangelism series, there was a fair amount of negativity toward the idea, based solely on discouragement from past evangelism failures.

Now, contrast that with what happened afterward. We have 13 solid interests to date, plus some who have already joined through baptism and profession of faith. We have about 15 more people studying the Bible with a member and another 60 taking Bible studies through the mail.

When you add up the numbers, it means that within the space of a couple of months, we’ve had over 130 people either attend our meetings or are presently taking our Bible studies! Obviously, real God-stuff is happening in Potomac!

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**Staunton Sabbath School Class Cares in Small Ways**

Encouraged by the Sabbath School superintendent at the Staunton (Va.) church, members of the Seekers Class came up with two outreach ideas. They started sending a sympathy card with a letter from the pastor and a booklet on grief to the bereaved families of each obituary from the local newspaper. The card includes a handwritten note telling the family that Staunton church members are praying for them. The class has received positive feedback from this project, including thank-you cards.

Class members are also visiting local laundromats and giving patrons a bag with $6 in quarters. Enclosed is a card that reads: “I just want to bring a little change into your life.” The church name and address are also on the card. Recently one person wrote a note to the church recalling that when she received the bag of quarters she was faced with a decision to finish washing her clothes or buy some gas. The gift of quarters allowed her to do both.

Class members hope that through these contacts in the community, more opportunities will come to share the love of Jesus with them. —Charlene Sheffer

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**Pennsylvania Pen** is published by the Pennsylvania Conference • 720 Museum Road, Reading, PA 19611 Phone: (610) 374-8331, ext. 210 • paconference.org • President, Ray Hartwell • Editor, Tammy Harst
Potomac People

Roanoke Member Spreads Gospel of Health Evangelism

John Kelly, a lifestyle physician and member of the Rocky Mount (Va.) church, has a vision of bringing lifestyle medicine and health evangelism to the medical community in collaboration with the Seventh-day Adventist Church. He is finding the Coronary Health Improvement Project (CHIP) a great way to do it. He and his wife, Sally, learned of the CHIP program while John was finishing his medical residency at Loma Linda University in California. When the couple returned to their home church near Roanoke, Va., in 2005, they organized and conducted a very successful "microCHIP" program at the Rocky Mount church. They were then able to form a solid CHIP team and conduct a CHIP program for the community. Many visitors attended, including two pastors from other denominations. One of the CHIP graduates pledged to donate a suitable facility for establishing a CHIP evangelism center. Before long a local bank building was remodeled for that purpose.

Soon the team was invited to help start CHIP programs at other local Adventist churches. Plans were laid to conduct a medical conference on Lifestyle Medicine in Roanoke featuring Hans Diehl, DrHSc, MPH, CHIP founder and director of the Lifestyle Medicine Institute of Loma Linda.

Taking advantage of the interest, a special CHIP evangelism visitor’s day was planned to coincide with the medical conference. The North Valley church in Roanoke hosted the event. The 11 a.m. service was filled with over 200 people. All listened intently as Diehl shared a message of health transformation and new life. Many returned for the evening program, which included participation by Kelly.

North Valley pastor Mike Hewitt said the event was "a tremendous success." It brought many new people to his church, and each one received a very positive impression of Adventists and their health principles. A December microCHIP program was organized, and a CHIP event for the community starts this month.

The medical community is very open to the CHIP program, and local doctors refer patients to the program. The Kellys intend to keep planting CHIP health evangelism programs wherever God opens a way.

Want to learn more about Dr. Kelly and his work on the CHIP program in the Roanoke area? Read the entire story at pcsda.org.

Amicus Makes Outreach Continuous

Since spring of last year, the Amicus church in Ruckersville, Va., has been having one outreach program after another. They started with the "Living Well" lifestyle seminar, which ran one night per week for eight weeks. Twenty-two attendees heard lectures on a variety of healthy living topics and then ate a meal consisting of the food demonstrated.

Several continuing education seminars have followed. These well-attended seminars covered bread-making, hydrotherapy, the uses of charcoal, and a vegan Indian cooking demonstration. Immediately following the Living Well seminar, the church held two evangelistic series. One of the speakers, Ron Foutz of Faith by Prophecy Seminars, presented a series on Daniel (left). The continued interest of those who attended the seminars was evidenced by the good attendance.

The church ended the year with a series on Revelation, also led by Foutz. That series was designed to help those who attended the previous meetings to make their decisions for the Lord and His church.

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Students “Pack” Financial Aid, Work Skills Into Learning

Students at Shenandoah Valley Academy (SVA) understand that part of their education includes on- or off-campus work. Before acceptance to SVA, each student has a financial plan that includes earnings from their work. Even certain scholarships SVA awards require student labor or allow for community service hours to complete this requirement.

At SVA there are many jobs for students to do, including working in the dorms as a resident assistant, helping teachers grade papers, assisting in the music or athletic departments, working in the maintenance and grounds department, or working in the cafeteria.

One of the work opportunities on campus is at SVA Packing, also known as the Rubbermaid Return Center. Students clean and repack Rubbermaid products and then return them to the Rubbermaid plant.

In addition to an hourly wage credited to her student statement, sophomore Amy Frost generally earns a $30 to $40 cash bonus each month.

At SVA Packing, students remove the item from the box, check the product for damages, clean the product, select a new box, and then repackage it. Next, they print a new bar code and place this on the box. The newly boxed product is then placed on a pallet. When the pallet is full of the same product, the entire pallet is stretch-wrapped and prepared for return to the Rubbermaid plant. Adult staff at SVA Packing deliver the repackaged products by semi-truck to the Rubbermaid plant in Winchester, Va.

Students are particularly happy to work at SVA Packing because they have the opportunity to earn cash bonuses for their work. Amy Frost, a sophomore from Fishersville, Va., explained that she can make a 10-cent bonus for each re-packaged product that is finished correctly. She generally receives $30 to $40 per month in cash as a result of her work. This is in addition to the hourly wage that is credited to her student statement each month.

Kevin Larlos, a senior from Haymarket, Va., says, “I enjoy the chance to do different things each day. It gives me a way to exercise my brain.” Students also say one of the things they enjoy most about SVA Packing is that Tom Hall, the industry manager, holds daily devotions and prays with them.

In addition to Hall, SVA Packing employs six adults and 35 to 40 students.

Happenings is published in the Visitor by Shenandoah Valley Academy. 234 West Lee Highway, New Market, VA 22844. Phone: (540) 740-3161. www.shenandoahvalleyacademy.org. Principal: Spencer Hanson, PhD, Editor: J. Osborne.

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Students at Shenandoah Valley Academy (SVA) understand that part of their education includes on- or off-campus work. Before acceptance to SVA, each student has a financial plan that includes earnings from their work. Even certain scholarships SVA awards require student labor or allow for community service hours to complete this requirement.

At SVA there are many jobs for students to do, including working in the dorms as a resident assistant, helping teachers grade papers, assisting in the music or athletic departments, working in the maintenance and grounds department, or working in the cafeteria.

One of the work opportunities on campus is at SVA Packing, also known as the Rubbermaid Return Center. Students clean and repack Rubbermaid products and then return them to the Rubbermaid plant.

In addition to an hourly wage credited to her student statement, sophomore Amy Frost generally earns a $30 to $40 cash bonus each month.

At SVA Packing, students remove the item from the box, check the product for damages, clean the product, select a new box, and then repackage it. Next, they print a new bar code and place this on the box. The newly boxed product is then placed on a pallet. When the pallet is full of the same product, the entire pallet is stretch-wrapped and prepared for return to the Rubbermaid plant. Adult staff at SVA Packing deliver the repackaged products by semi-truck to the Rubbermaid plant in Winchester, Va.

Students are particularly happy to work at SVA Packing because they have the opportunity to earn cash bonuses for their work. Amy Frost, a sophomore from Fishersville, Va., explained that she can make a 10-cent bonus for each re-packaged product that is finished correctly. She generally receives $30 to $40 per month in cash as a result of her work. This is in addition to the hourly wage that is credited to her student statement each month.

Kevin Larlos, a senior from Haymarket, Va., says, “I enjoy the chance to do different things each day. It gives me a way to exercise my brain.” Students also say one of the things they enjoy most about SVA Packing is that Tom Hall, the industry manager, holds daily devotions and prays with them.

In addition to Hall, SVA Packing employs six adults and 35 to 40 students.

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Student Reflections of Black History Month

We at Takoma Academy (TA) are blessed to minister at an international school, with students from many parts of the world. Our mission statement effectively reflects our goal to “welcome all races, cultures, and religions for the purpose of leading young people to a personal commitment to Jesus Christ.” We celebrate our diversity and the history that each culture and race brings. February is Black History Month, and I asked senior Sheri Thorn (left) to share what the month means to her: “This month reminds us that African-Americans have come a long way, and that we have worked tremendously hard to get where we are today.”

She also shared a quotation from George Santayana’s book The Life of Reason: “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.”

Unfortunately, not so long ago, segregation, discrimination, and racism ran rampant in our country, including the Seventh-day Adventist Church and here at TA. When our school was established, it was in a segregated United States, and yet, with the encouragement of Adventist Christians, the school was opened to African-Americans and all others to share the gospel of Jesus Christ.

“It’s important to remember that many of our ancestors encountered much turmoil to render the advantages we enjoy today. What would Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X, W.E.B. Du Bois, and, most importantly, what would Jesus say about this?” said Thorn. “Sadly for some, these liberties have lost their meaning. Some have forgotten all the turmoil that many of our ancestors encountered to render the advantages we enjoy today. “What would Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X, W.E.B. Du Bois, and, most importantly, what would Jesus say about this?”

I think the message is clear. Taking time for reflection provides direction. We should know and respect our history.

Thorn agrees and challenges each of us to use this month to advance the study of black history beyond what is taught in school. By showing others the history we all share, we can all change the world in our own small, but very significant way.

Soccer Team Places Second in State League

TA’s boys’ soccer team proudly hold their trophy. They came in second place in the Maryland Independent Schools Athletic League.

Calendar

February
8 Valentine’s Banquet
9 2-Hour Delay—School Starts at 10 a.m.
9-27 Pennies for Patients Campaign
15-20 Senior Class Trip
16 No School—Presidents’ Day
17 Parent/Teacher Conferences
18 Black History Assembly
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Department of Nutrition and Dietetics
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Baggage: It’s Time to Let it Go!

When we go on trips, our wife, Sarah, for such a petite thing, carries a lot of baggage. So, when we decided to purchase a new set of luggage, we sought after one high-quality, very large bag for her. We found the perfect one, but then the airport weight limit for baggage was reduced from 70 pounds to 50. This was a problem.

You see, her new bag, alone, weighed 22.5 pounds—with nothing in it! This prompted our decision to go back and purchase a bag for Sarah based on how much it would carry.

Recently we decided to make a trip to Chile to bike through the Andes Mountains along the Chilean and Argentinean border. Because we had to carry all of our baggage on the bicycles, we decided that we better travel very light. How we utilized space was essential. What we chose to take was crucial. Planning was paramount.

We mapped out a plan based on our destination, selectively choosing only necessary items for the journey. Then, we packed our bags accordingly.

ARE YOU CARRYING EXCESS BAGGAGE?

You love Jesus, you go to church, and you pray to God regularly, but is there some excess baggage in your life? Are you carrying something that God is asking you to let go? Are you letting God map out a plan based on your destination? Are you being selective with the items you choose to put in your bags? Have you packed your bags accordingly?

In heaven, Lucifer had some excess baggage called pride. He was sent away from heaven with all his baggage, which he brought here to Earth.

Immediately, heaven’s action plan went into place. Jesus left all the benefits of heaven and came to Earth. He took on our baggage; He, who knew no sin, became sin for us. Why? So that in Him (Jesus), we might become the righteousness of God (2 Cor. 5:21).

Jesus came to show us that we no longer have to carry all of our excess baggage. He came to show us all what it means to let go of our baggage. If excess baggage is present in your life, let’s let it go.}

Joey Pollom is pastor of Potomac Conferences Manassas (Va.) church. He and his wife, Sarah, have three sons and a daughter.