Why are Adventists so Depressed?

One Member Gets Personal

Plus: 5 Church Plants to Watch


Editorial

CELESTE RYAN BLYDEN

Would Jesus Tweet?

Three years ago on this page, I challenged our church to use the Internet to nurture members and share Christ. After all, I didn’t want my church to be slackers on the Information Super Highway. I’m happy to report that we’re doing some pretty cool things online:

WEBSITES - While some still display electronic billboards, many churches and ministries maintain up-to-date, interactive sites that welcome surfers. Thanks to online editor Carlos Medley, the Adventist Review’s award-winning site, adventistreview.org, which attracts 75,000 unique visitors a month, is the standard.

EMAIL - Gone are the days of plain text. Steeped in color and loaded with links, our email news now comes imbedded with podcasts, videos and advertisements. Loren Seibold, senior pastor of the Worthington (Ohio) church, sends his Best Practices for Adventist Ministry email to 6,000 pastors and other subscribers.

FACEBOOK - With more than 71 million of us using Facebook, it’s good to see schools like Pennsylvania Conference’s Blue Mountain Academy reaching out to alumni and doing what I call “Facebook Marketing.” Thanks to the work of Advancement director Kathleen Sutton, my alma mater can easily tap into the resources of its more than 900 friends.

TWITTER – It may be new, but nearly 20 million people are microblogging in 140 characters or less. While the world organizes political uprisings, garners support for charities, and even announces snowball fights to rapt “followers,” our churches tweet news, promote events and—like Ohio Conference president Raj Atikken—connect with members.

WEBINARS - In January AdventSource asked Potomac Conference pastor Kermitt Nettburg and me to do a live, online seminar on raising public awareness. There were no travel expenses or registration fees, and with only one week’s notice, over 400 people signed up.

I’m even more amazed by TechTalk, a monthly, interactive webinar hosted by Allegheny West Conference communication director Bryant Taylor and Allegheny East Conference member and Web developer Damian “Chip” Dizard. Watch June 15, 8-9 p.m., ET, at adventistcommunicator.org/techtalk.

PODCASTS – Lots of churches podcast sermons on iTunes. Taashi Rowe produces our monthly podcast, which shares news, interviews and spiritual commentary at columbiaunion.org/podcasts. We’re also embedding short soundbites and interviews in our Visitor News Bulletin emails (sign up at columbiaunion.org/email).

YOUTUBE – When I learned that YouTube attracts 2 billion (yes!) users a day for an average of 15 minutes, I was glad that our church has a channel called Adventists About Life, which features short interviews and commentaries from Adventist leaders who share our official beliefs about racism, pollution, poverty, freedom and other timely topics. Recognition also goes to the New Jersey Conference, which broadcasts the gospel 24/7 in English and Spanish, thanks to the hard work of Jorge Pillco, assistant to the president for Media Ministries.

APPS – Need to study your Sabbath School lesson? There’s an App for that. In fact, there are 200,000 Web applications developed specifically for the world’s 3 million iPhone users. The Sabbath School One features one podcasts, video and a link to the lesson study. Amazing Facts and Voice of Prophecy also have Apps, and there’s one being developed for this month’s 59th General Conference Session in Atlanta (gcsession.org).

Just like Jesus did while on Earth, I’m glad to see our church using every available form of communication to make connections. Even Twitter.

Visitor editor and publisher Celeste Ryan Blyden (cryan@columbiaunion.net) is thankful for life, health, family, and text messaging!

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GC Session Coverage

Can’t attend GC Session in Atlanta, June 23-July 3? We’ve got you covered with news via our website, email, Twitter, podcasts and video, plus a wrap-up in our August email. Here are the links—stay connected!

Website – columbiaunion.org
Email News – columbiaunion.org/email
Twitter – twitter.com/VisitorNews
Kettering CEO to Retire

After 35 years in healthcare administration, Francisco J. “Frank” Perez, CEO of Ohio-based Kettering Adventist HealthCare (KAHC), has announced plans to retire. Perez, a graduate of Washington Adventist University, came to Kettering, Ohio, in April 1984 as president and CEO of KAHC and its flagship hospital, Kettering Medical Center. Under his leadership, KAHC—one of two Seventh-day Adventist healthcare systems in the Columbia Union Conference territory—grew into an award-winning network that comprises some 60 facilities, including six acute care hospitals, a behavioral medicine hospital and Kettering College of Medical Arts. This year the network, which has 9,300 employees, 1,500 physicians and 1,000 volunteers, was named one of the Top 10 Health Systems in the United States by Thomson Reuters, which analyzes the quality and efficiency of 252 health systems nationwide. They applauded Kettering “for raising the level of quality across our communities and for serving as an example for others to consider and for others to strive.”

Reflecting on his 16-year tenure at Kettering, Perez says, “I have been very blessed in meeting and working with amazing, talented people accomplishing dreams that we dared to dream, but that all came true. I feel that we have significantly improved the environment for our healthcare teams and physicians and especially for the patients we all dedicate our lives to caring for.”

Columbia Union Conference President and KAHC Board chair Dave Weigley, who has worked with Perez since 2006, expressed appreciation for his innovative leadership: “He never sits back and says, ‘That was good enough, we can rest now,’” Weigley said recently. “He continually pushes himself and the entire organization to excel, no matter what we achieve, because we can always improve.”

Weigley says Perez plans to retire in May 2011, which leaves the board ample time to select a successor and facilitate a smooth transition.

FCC Rule Impacts Churches and Schools

Under a new Federal Communications Commission (FCC) rule, anyone using a wireless microphone that operates in the 700 MHz Band must stop using it by June 12. The FCC is allocating this frequency to public safety entities—police, fire and emergency services—as well as commercial providers of wireless services, such as AT&T, Verizon, etc. While the ban only applies to wireless microphones that operate in the 700 MHz Band—between 698 and 806 MHz—churches, schools, conference offices and other organizations using it could hamper the work of public safety officials.

“This largely affects those who have had their equipment for five or more years,” says Harold Greene (bottom), director of Information Technology Services for the Columbia Union Conference. Find a comprehensive list of microphones that operate at the newly banned frequency at fcc.gov/cgb/wirelessmicrophones.

Documentary Airs on PBS 300 Times

Reports from Trac Media, a media monitoring service, indicate that the documentary The Adventists aired on local PBS stations across the United States more than 300 times this past spring and has likely been viewed by millions. The film, produced by Journey Films founder Martin Dohlemeier, premiered in April on PBS member stations, and some aired it two and three times. “This gives the Seventh-day Adventist Church positive exposure to the largest audience in North America in the church’s history,” says Fred Kinsey, communication director for the North American Division. The 60-minute film and additional special features, lauds the Adventist health message and ministry, chronicles the history of the Adventist faith and investigates the reasons why Adventists are among the longest living people in the world.

Columbia Union Adventists organized screenings and discussions with Dohlemeier in Baltimore; Cleveland; Kettering, Ohio; Richmond, Va.; Newark, N.J.; Philadelphia and Washington, D.C. At the D.C. premiere held at Sligo church in Takoma Park, Md., leaders from the Columbia Union Conference, Adventist HealthCare, Potomac Conference, and Washington Adventist University thanked Dohlemeier for making the film and presented him with an award of recognition (opposite page, holding award).

On June 30, Dohlemeier will participate in a special screening at the General Conference Session in Atlanta. DVDs are now available at Adventist Book Centers.

Alumni Convene Think Tank on Adventist Education

“arresting this is not about pining, throwing stones or remembering yesteryear,” announced Gordon Bietz.

“It’s about finding solutions.” Bietz, president of Southern Adventist University (Tenn.), was speaking to nearly 200 educators, administrators, parents and alumni of Adventist schools who gathered on a recent Sabbath afternoon to talk about Adventist education and how to move it forward.

They came together at the invitation of the board of the Alumni Awards Foundation (AAF), a non-profit group that in 15 years has awarded 79 teachers and 14 academics with $1.4 million. In an effort to address the “critical concerns facing Adventist K-12 schools,” they decided to organize regional Renaissance Adventist Education summits. Previous summits were held in Riverside, Calif.; Col- legedale, Tenn.; and Orlando, Fla. AAF Board member George Hard- ing, MD (above), says the goal is to convene a national conference. “We wondered what was the attitude toward Adventist education across our country,” he told atten- dees of the Washington, D.C., event. “We felt that if we could get the concerns and ideas of a broad spectrum, we could address opportunities and see our education (system) move forward.”

Many attendees, most of whom attended or graduated from an Adventist school, came for the same reason AAF Board co-chair Bob Summerrour did—they want to save Adventist education. “I believe that the very fabric of our tight-knit Adventist community is held together by our experience in Adventist education,” he said. “This is why we cannot afford to let the inertia of declining enrollment or limited financial resources define our future.”

Larry Blackmer, director of education for the North American Division, agreed: “We have a lot of fine schools taught by dedicated teachers, but we need to find out how to best deliver Adventist educa- tion because our kids deserve the best, best!”

In a dozen or so breakout groups (below), attendees pro- posed practical solutions for doing just that. From consolidat- ing schools and restructuring the entire system, to raising academic standards and accountability, the suggestions flowed freely.

In the end, attendees like Alayne Thorpe and Lois Peters were glad they came.

“I met people who want Adventist education to work, have ideas to help make it work and are willing to participate in making those ideas reality,” said Thorpe, vice president of education for Grieg University/Grieg Interna- tional Academy, the homeschooling arm of the Adventist Church.

Peters, a member of the Emmanuel-Brinklow church in Ashton, Md., appreciated the opportunity to hear from so many people who care about Adventist education. “If they follow through on the suggestions, we can create effective change,” she concluded.
Ohioans Re-Elect President for Fourth Term

What happens in Ohio happens because of you,” said Raj Attiken to the 452 delegates who packed the Worthington (Ohio) church Sunday for the 40th Regular Constituency Session of the Ohio Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. Attiken (far right), who had just been re-elected president for an historic fourth full term, stood with his wife, Chandra, and the newly elected secretary/treasurer Doug Falle and his wife, Ursula, as delegates showered them with a standing ovation.

“Thank you for your confidence, thank you for your efforts,” he continued. “And be assured of the best service we can offer.”

Attendees voted to consolidate the conference and its association, a step many conferences are taking to streamline operations and limit liability. Then Attiken introduced a new public campus ministry initiative that will cost $180,000 and then proceeded to ask for an offering.

“Over the next two years, we plan to place taskforce workers on these campuses.” So far, members have donated $101,000 to the project, and the session offering yielded another $1,400.

Another change came when delegates approved the conference’s proposal to consolidate the executive secretary and treasurer positions and use the salary to fund Hispanic work. The secretary’s position has been vacant since March 1 when Hubert Cisneros accepted a call to the Mid-America Union Conference.

Falle—officially elected to that role at the session—also replaces outgoing treasurer Andy Sutton, who desires to serve in a supporting capacity that will allow for more family time. In his report to members, Sutton acknowledged the tangible effects of the recession, but rejoiced that Ohioans still saw a 5.15 percent tithe increase over the last quadrennial (2002-2005). After electing a new executive committee and board of education, delegates heard an impassioned report from new Mount Vernon Academy MVA principal Robert Stevenson: “We’ve had an outstanding year at MVA, if you don’t count finances,” he said, referring to 15 Week of Prayer baptisms, “excellent” test scores, a life-changing mission trip and his visits to half of Ohio’s 52 churches. His summation drew their applause: “Our schools exist as a haven where our young people can come to be nurtured, loved and find Jesus Christ in every classroom and every corner,” he said. “I want to be in the kingdom with your children.”
visit or of messianic Jerusalem, Allegheny West Conference pastor Andre Saunders, DMin, PhD, brings to Time, Overcomers Mark A. Finley Remember Andre L. Saunders in Eternity

Books>
When God Said Remember Mark A. Finley
In his newest manuscript, evangelist Mark Finley addresses the tough questions many ask about the Sabbath, and presents biblical facts in an easy-to-understand manner. But be prepared for some shocking surprises and straightforward answers, says the vice president for global evangelism for the worldwide Seventh-day Adventist Church. “Reading this book can be dangerous if you do not want your traditional beliefs challenged,” he remarks.

The 128-page booklet is also intended for use with any evangelistic outreach. Order copies at adventistbookcenter.com.

What’s New?

Underestimated in Time, Overcomers in Eternity Andre L. Saunders

By discussing biblical symbolism, ancient Hebrew tribal personalities and Hebrew characteristics of messianic Jerusalem, Allegheny West Conference pastor Andre Saunders, DMin, PhD, brings to the fore Christ’s inclusive and multicultural kingdom. “I discovered that, in my own brokenness as a sinner saved by grace, I am irreversibly linked to a divine jeweler’s perception of me as His protected, eternal Hebrew gem,” says Saunders, who leads the Three Angels Messages church in Danville, Va., and Emmanuel church in South Boston, Va. It is this discovery that motivated him to publish his first book. Read more and get copies at gye-nyameproductions.com.—Tiahsh Stained Glass

Three Seventh-day Adventist documentary filmmakers spent nearly two years recording the life and habits of three West Coast congregations. This unprecedented documentary series, commissioned by the North American Division’s Church Resource Center, addresses congregations’ changing roles in the 21st century.

“We’re trying to get people to engage in the culture of the church,” says Paul Kim (pictured below), who produced all three DVDs and is a member of the New Hope church in Fulton, Md. “We hope to start dialog between leaders and members about what their mission is.” Each DVD is divided into several episodes. Read more and order at stainedglassfilms.org.

CD > Real Talk: Life, Love, God. DJ “MLIK” Moore

“I hope listeners will take away that God can be applied to all aspects of your life,” says DJ Moore of his new CD. A member of Allegheny East Conference’s Emmanuel-Brinklow church in Ashton, Md., Moore self-produced the gospel R&B and rap album under his record label Rock-Da-Truth Records (rockdatruthrecords.com).

Full of passionate lyrics, the CD includes songs like “My God,” which states: My God, You didn’t have to come and die. You couldn’t have killed us all and said, “Again I’ll try.” You could’ve folded Your arms, but You stretched them wide. And said, “For you I will give My life.”

Order copies at thechristian-jukebox.com.

DVD > Stained Glass

Underestimated in Time, Overcomers in Eternity

Andre L. Saunders

by discussing biblical symbolism, ancient Hebrew tribal personalities and Hebrew characteristics of messianic Jerusalem, Allegheny West Conference pastor Andre Saunders, DMin, PhD, brings to the fore Christ’s inclusive and multicultural kingdom. “I discovered that, in my own brokenness as a sinner saved by grace, I am irreversibly linked to a divine jeweler’s perception of me as His protected, eternal Hebrew gem,” says Saunders, who leads the Three Angels Messages church in Danville, Va., and Emmanuel church in South Boston, Va. It is this discovery that motivated him to publish his first book. Read more and get copies at gye-nyameproductions.com.—Tiahsh Moore

D VD s and is a member of the Global Missions department at the North American Division. The DVDs are a member of the church’s video-on-demand series.

On the Web

Retweets>
Siguen

When I stress ‘bout how I don’t get much sleep, I think of the song, “He never sleeps, He never slumbers. He watches me both night and day.”—Mark Sigue, Pastor for Children, Sligo Church, Takoma Park, Md.

Facebooked>
Mount Vernon Academy

[Our] mission trip group left this morning for Peru where they will be spending next week helping with alumnus Paul Opp’s organization, People of Peru (http://peopleofperu.org). We pray for their safety and that they will be a blessing.

Hans Olson

Sitting in the Global Mission Issues Committee ... to discuss the major issues facing the church today.—Communication Projects Manager, Global Mission; Member, Spencerville Church, Silver Spring, Md.

In the Spotlight

What You Bring to the Table

Greeting Card Creator Dionne Finney

During an inspirational sermon series about the Sabbath given by her pastor, Henny Wright, Community Praise Center (CPC) member Dionne Finney got an idea, “There are greeting cards for every occasion, but I never saw any for the Sabbath,” she recalls thinking. Wanting to spread the joy of the Sabbath, Finney decided to design some cards. Now, it’s All in the Best greeting cards range from the serious—like a series with quotes from Charles E. Bradford’s book Sabbath Roots—to the humorous.

CPC, a Potomac Conference church in Alexandria, Va., plans to distribute the cards during an upcoming evangelistic series. The church has also mailed the cards as gentle reminders to newly baptized members. Members have sent them to individuals who no longer attend, letting them know that someone is “saving you a seat.” Other buyers report sharing the cards with Adventist friends, to connect with them and remind them that, no matter where they live, Sabbath is universal.

Finney believes the greeting cards “are an accessory to any ministry, for any situation,” and has many more ideas to implement. The cards will be available in Spanish and French soon. She also has a Sabbath CD titled Music To Rest By in the works. Read more and order at 7thdayrest.com.—Ruth Collins

What You Bring to the Table
Wounded in the Pew

Church members are not immune to the universal disease—depression

Lynnda* is vibrant, funny and talented. She enjoys helping people and loves the Lord. She’s active in the choir, children’s and homeless ministries and Vacation Bible School. Lately, though, she hasn’t been attending church. She hasn’t been feeling like her enthusiastic and energetic self. It’s a struggle even to get out of bed. “I don’t want people to see me this way. I just can’t seem to get it together,” she confides. “I hate feeling this way. I feel so out of control.”

DEFINING DEPRESSION

Lynnda is one of 121 million people worldwide affected by depression, which the World Health Organization (WHO) reports is the leading cause of disability around the world. According to WHO, depression is “a common mental disorder that presents with depressed mood, loss of interest or pleasure, feelings of guilt or low self-worth, disturbed sleep or appetite, low energy and poor concentration.”

The National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) places the majority of diagnoses within two categories: major depressive disorder (major depression) or dysthmic disorder (minor depression). Each category can present the same nine symptoms: deep sadness, apathy, agitation or restlessness, sleep disturbance, weight/appetite disturbances, fatigue or pain killers. “Reinert probed into the patient’s personal and professional life and discovered that the woman was ‘extremely unhappy at work.’ She was depressed and it had affected her body. Reinert notes that in this and many other cases, including those diagnosed with anorexia or another eating disorder, depression can be defined as hostility turned inward. In these cases, ‘Forgiveness is essential,’ Reinert insists. ‘It’s about releasing the anger toward that issue or person who hurt you.’”

TEN CAUSES OF DEPRESSION

What causes depression? Is it something passed down through generations? Dr. Nedley feels this theory is given too much credence. “Genetics and life events are not enough to cause depression,” he reasons. “If the rapid rise in depression is due to genetics, then that would mean that depressed people are increasingly more reproductive than nondepressed people.”

Nedley, the founder of the Nedley Depression Recovery Program at the Lifestyle Center of America in Ardmore, Okla., reports that his patients experience a 98 percent success rate in recovering from depression after completing the 19-day residential program. He views the causes of depression as a series of “hits” to the brain that fall under 10 categories: genetic, developmental, nutritional, social, toxic, circadian rhythm, addiction, lifestyle, medical condition and frontal lobe. “The brain can often sustain hits in three categories and still function somewhat normally,” he adds. “Once the fourth hit occurs, depression, or some other mental illness, will most likely occur.”

For instance, Lynnda experienced sexual abuse while a young girl—(1) developmental. She also suffers from insomnia and irregular sleep patterns—(2) circadian rhythm. A “couch potato,” she rarely exercises and is often forced to work late hours in her office away from fresh air and sunshine—(3) lifestyle. With a diet nutritionally low in omega-3s and high in cholesterol, saturated fats and sugar from her fast-food lunches or late-night dinners in front of the TV, she now has a total of five hits—(4) nutritional and (5) frontal lobe categories.

EVEN IN THE CHURCH

Depression is not just a disease that affects the unchurched. “We are seeing the highest rates of depression in human history,” remarks Dr. Nedley. “And those numbers are being mirrored within our churches.”

Reinert concurs and adds, “About one-half to one-third of patients we treat with mild depression are in the church.”

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...
Just because someone has depression doesn’t mean that they are not in Christ, nor does it mean that they need to be hospitalized. But it does mean that they need help.—Neil Nedley, MD
One Member Gets Personal About Depression

Interview by Celeste Ryan Blyden

H eather Gryce* is a psychotherapist, a wife, a mother of two and a fourth generation Seventh-day Adventist. While she’s known by many in her church and community as an enthusiastic Children’s Ministries leader, they don’t know that she suffers from depression. She talked with us in hopes that her testimony will dispel the myths and remove the stigmas associated with this disease:

Why are Adventists so depressed?

Because life happens. Many people don’t understand that depression is an illness or disease. And they believe that with prayer and being more diligent or disciplined, they should be able to handle their problems and sadness. That may sound glib but it’s often what people say: “I’ve been praying about it for so long.” My question to them is, if you break your leg, are you just going to pray about it or are you going to the doctor? I also think that, as Adventists, we don’t pay as much attention as we should to our emotional health.

What do you mean?

We believe we should be happy and positive all the time, and if we’re not, there’s something we’re doing wrong in our lives or spiritually. We shouldn’t feel anger, resentment, bitterness, regret, guilt or shame. We shouldn’t feel those things because we’re Adventist Christians. We should recite scripture, pray and decide to be happy, and then we’ll be fine.

It doesn’t work that way?

No, it’s important to experience a range of emotions, be aware of them and know how to deal with them in a healthy and productive way.

What’s your story?

I suffer from dysthymia, a low-grade depression diagnosed by having a number of symptoms over a period of two years or more. It’s a less debilitating depression than major depressive disorder; but it can have a very negative impact on your life.

Our theme song is “We Have This Hope!” We don’t have time to be depressed!

That is such a common, yet so inaccurate perspective of depression. Oftentimes, we don’t recognize that the emotions we are feeling are not healthy or normal. And that’s because depression is caused by a chemical imbalance in the brain caused by a deficit of serotonin. Serotonin helps us maintain an appropriate balance of emotions. When that is depleted, for any number of reasons, including unresolved issues, we feel bad. It’s insidious, and the negative feelings and other symptoms creep up on you.

How did this affect your life?

It caused me to be sad all the time. I had great difficulty finding the positive; I would ruminate on the negative—about myself, who I was and my abilities. I wasn’t able to problem-solve effectively. I didn’t have energy. My self-perception was very low. I didn’t have motivation to accomplish much, and what little motivation I had was impeded by my inaccurate belief that I couldn’t do anything well.

How did this manifest itself in your everyday existence?

I was isolative; I didn’t make friends or maintain friendships and relationships. I didn’t want to because I couldn’t like myself, so I couldn’t imagine how other people would like me. Because of this negative self-perception, I was also afraid of being judged. I was highly self-critical, irritable and unable to focus at work. At home it was difficult to complete simple tasks. It took so much energy to get organized, and I was easily overwhelmed. Rather than deal with chores like paying the bills or doing laundry, I would crawl into bed or escape by watching TV—something that didn’t require energy or thought. In addition, I didn’t find pleasure in doing things that I usually enjoy. For example, I stopped being involved in my children’s Sabbath School class and at their school.

But you’re always doing VBS, Sabbath School or some other program.

Exactly! When I’m healthy, I’m very involved—going here and there—planning this and that. But I lost that desire.

Were you ever suicidal?

I’ve only had suicidal ideation, which means there’s a vague idea that I don’t want to be here or exist in my current capacity, and I don’t see a way out. So it’s hopeless. But to be fully suicidal is to have a plan. I never had a plan.

How did you overcome?

I found a clinical social worker by referral and saw her on a weekly basis for two years. She helped me see that what I was experiencing were symptoms of a disease. And she helped me understand that what was happening was happening to me; it wasn’t something I could change just by deciding to change it. Now I try to manage my stress, eat right, get enough rest and even take an antidepressant.

What’s the worse thing you can say to someone who is depressed?

Before we go there, I want to say that a lot of times the nature of depression affects not just the depressed person, but the perceptions of the people around them. For example, if you don’t know a person is depressed, you may think they’re just being a slacker or lazy, irritable all the time, just mean or even anti-social. The common tendency is to say: “Pull yourself up by your bootstraps. Just get it together. Snap out of it.” But that’s counterproductive. They can’t do those things on their own.

So, how can we be helpful instead of hurtful?

Treat everyone gently. That might sound simple, but you don’t always know why a person is acting the way they are, and you can do more harm than good by jumping to conclusions. Second, read about depression so you’ll understand that it’s real—it’s a curable disease and it impacts more people than we realize. It’s in our churches, our schools and our families. Lastly, don’t assume that because a person is depressed they don’t have a relationship with God, or they’re not spiritually astute.

* A pseudonym

We believe we should be happy and positive all the time, and if we’re not, there’s something we’re doing wrong in our lives or spiritually.
An Outlet for Grace

On any given Sabbath, people visiting the GoggleWorks Center for the Arts (opposite page) in Reading, Pa., hear music, come in and ask, “What’s going on in here?” Once inside the ballet studio that doubles as a sanctuary, many stay for the church service intentionally geared to help people experience Jesus Christ in a friendly, relaxed environment. Ballet students’ parents no longer read books and magazines as they wait. Artists and musicians are drawn to the contemporary environment. And even the security guard on duty sits in on the service. “I came in during their second week here, and I’ve been coming ever since,” says Octavio “Tito” Alvarado. This Pennsylvania Conference group, led by Pastor Kris Eckenroth, planted their congregation in Reading—dubbed “the outlet capital of the world”—and aptly named themselves Grace Outlet. And in just over a year, they’ve truly become an outlet for grace.

Connecting the Disconnected

It was the summer of 2008 when Eckenroth, the conference’s Youth and Young Adults Ministries director, spoke with education superintendent David Morgan about how literally hundreds of Seventh-day Adventists they grew up with are no longer with the church. They easily rattled off 500 names. “I speak to young adults all the time. For them, church is irrelevant,” Eckenroth recalls saying. “It doesn’t meet the needs of real life. We have to come up with something they can relate to and feel comfortable with; where they can come as they are. We’ve got to go after them. Let’s start something!”

Word spread about their desire to “connect the disconnected,” and by September their leadership team included seven people: Eckenroth and his wife, Kristie; Morgan; local physician Roland Newman and his wife, Amy, a nurse; Jeanne Hartwell, conference Family Ministries director; and Erich Mace, a musician and college student. Every week they prayed for God to guide them and reveal His plan. After several meetings, they were impressed to plant a church and hold their first service November 1.

Overcoming Challenges

Early on the fledgling group faced some obstacles, including where to worship. No local Adventist church was available, and Sunday churches did not want to rent. But a last-minute inquiry with GoggleWorks, an old eyeglass factory converted to a center for local artists, proved fruitful, and they got a long-term lease! Once they opened, attendance was disheartening. Out of 22 attendees, seven would be leading the church service. Then, just when they’d solidified their team, Mace moved away, leaving a huge hole in the group’s musical structure. To fill the gap, they used PowerPoint videos and MP3 files. The services went on and, in time, several musically gifted young people started attending and helping with the music. Although sometimes discouraged and unsure, the group continues to create exciting ways to connect with people, like the social events they host once a month. So far there’s been a luau and a 1980s roller-skating custom ball.

Grace Outlet also intentionally makes the worship service deeply spiritual. Worship time is strictly “being in the Word of God,” explains Eckenroth. “We want to make sure that those who come understand what it means to have a relationship with Christ. My sermons come directly from the book Steps to Christ.”

Reclaiming Former Members

Because their goal is to reclaim their young adult peers, the founders of Grace Outlet continually try to provide a welcoming, inclusive environment. Their Friday night Bible study session is conducted in a laid-back fashion, and attendees know it’s okay to have questions and not always agree. They serve breakfast each Sabbath and offer an interactive program for...
children. To foster growth, everyone is encouraged to get involved. For instance, former “disconnected” Adventists are routinely asked to participate in special evangelistic events and reach out to those who are still not connected. Many are now married, working professionals who bring their spouses, friends and co-workers to worship services and social events. “Our main vision is to reclaim those who have fallen by the wayside,” states Eckenroth. “By hitting our targets, they are now doing the next step of evangelism for us!” Attendees are also invited to use their talents and professional experience. So, health professionals are asked to help with health seminars, and the man who runs the sound system has experience in that field.

This intentional approach to outreach is paying off, and attendance at Grace Outlet (graceoutlet.net) now averages 45. “Last week we had 120 people!” enthuses Eckenroth. He’s now working with two other churches that want to start a plant, but adds, “There needs to be more places like this all across the Columbia Union.”

Faith Grows at a Maryland Storefront

Life is an adventure for David and Jeannie Ramos (below), lay leaders at the Faith Step Company in Hagerstown, Md. Whoever happens upon the Chesapeake Conference group is met with love and acceptance—or clothing and hot soup if needed. Their appearance doesn’t matter, even if they reek of alcohol. One recent visitor, fresh from jail, read a book by “Ellen G.” and decided to look for a Sabbath-keeping group. His search led him to Faith Step. “We never know who’s going to walk through the door,” Jeannie says.

The Ramoses started the group in 2001 with a home meeting. By March 2003, they were meeting in a converted pizza parlor, once a local hot spot for drug deals. Today Faith Step worships in a century-old storefront that was donated by three Adventist owners in 2009.

Faith Step is networked with believers of various denominations, including the local chapter of Celebrate Recovery, which runs a transitional home for women using an apartment in the Faith Step building. Another integral component of their outreach strategy is creating a safe place for members to share their deeply personal struggles.

“That is something that just has to be done very, very intentionally for the people that we reach out to,” explains David. Along with a casual, nontraditional worship structure, an atmosphere of trust and confidentiality has helped make Faith Step a haven for those who may not feel comfortable with a more traditional liturgy.
I Went to Church Planting School

DAY 1: Ten participants from Kansas, Iowa, Washington state, Ohio, and Vancouver, British Columbia, gathered to hear presentations by Andrew Clark, director of Pennsylvania Conference’s Greater Pittsburgh Metro Ministry, and Peter Rosenfeldt, a church plant minister and pastor in Australia. We spent considerable time exploring what it looks like when a church epitomizes a community. Andrew and his wife, Mayda, gave us a tour of their three-story building, which serves as the headquarters for Adventist Community Services of Greater Pittsburgh and our home this week. Peter finished the evening by sharing stories of other creative church plants around the world, particularly in Europe, where “traditional” church attendance is in steady decline.

DAY 2: A warm camaraderie has already developed within our group. Peter got us off on the right foot at 8 a.m. by guiding us through conversational prayer, wherein we learned to talk with God and one another at the same time. It felt awkward at first, but by evening we had shared and laughed enough to feel comfortable praying more vulnerably. The bulk of the day was spent studying the book of Acts and the mission of Christ as reflected in both Matthew 28 and Luke 4. We also spent time crafting our church plant mission statements.

DAY 3: Three more pastors joined us from Pennsylvania, adding diversity to our discussions. In the morning, we spent time defining the core values of our various ministries while also reflecting on the practical implications of our theology as Seventh-day Adventists. In the afternoon, Monte Salhin, director of research and special projects for the Ohio Conference, helped us understand the dynamics of urban ministry. While Andrew taught us how to best identify appropriate target groups within our unique communities at home (i.e., building a chic youth ministry program to attract new generations may not make sense in a retirement neighborhood).

DAY 4: This afternoon Andrew equipped us each with a simple questionnaire before matching us with community leaders so that we could practice conducting community assessments. The first step toward identifying what ministries should be initiated by new church plants. I met with the pastoral assistant of a local Catholic Church who shared valuable insights about the needs of her town. When we later discussed our interviewing experiences as a group, I was astounded to realize how much we’d learned about the local community in only one hour.

DAY 5: Although we said goodbye to Steve Mirkovich, a young church planter from British Columbia, his ministry vision challenged and moved us during the afternoon small group brainstorming session. Lester R. Collins Jr. from Iowa also deepened our sense of mission with his dream to open a math and English tutoring center for at-risk children, an important project in light of Monte’s presentation on the church and social justice.

DAY 6: In our small groups, we synthesized what we’ve learned this week about church planting and discussed what a community really needs before it can be called a church. Buildings don’t make churches; hygiene and a preaching pastor don’t make a church. A church exists when the Spirit is active among people, growing their hearts and multiplying their fellowship. Special attention was given to the body lifecycle of Christ and how it is replicated in the life of effective church plants. Conception occurs by the power of the Holy Spirit, and the prenatal phase is a time of prayer, planning, and preparation. Next there is birth, growth, cruciformity, resurrection and finally, multiplication.

DAY 7: What a day of celebration! This morning we gathered for worship with Carnegie, Pa., community members who have discovered Jesus through the ministry of Andrew and Mayda and Conscious Cafe. Monte led us through a discussion of Matthew 24 and 25, highlighting the need to shape church plants that are models of compassion and champions of social justice. Deb Britenbaker and I, from the Toledo First church, are eager to start our own “Adventist fresh expression.” As we leave Pittsburgh, our toolbox is full and our courage is high.

The ACS headquarters building in Pittsburgh houses two small restaurants: the local community development office, Conscious Cafe, a community bookstore, and PULSE, a church plant.
But God

The Bible contains dozens of examples where those words—“But God”—introduce into the narrative (or the prophecy or poetry) the involvement of the Almighty in a surprising or redefining way. Throughout the scriptures, God is portrayed as an active participant. When His activity is different or definitive, the words “But God” are often the herald of His engagement in human circumstances.

One of my favorite uses of the term is in Psalm 73:26, where the Psalmist writes, “My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever” (NIV). The strength of my heart! What a glorious phrase—and what a wonderful affirmation of how God’s presence and power are known to us.

There are days when I feel discouraged, “but God is the strength of my heart.”
There are things that happen that leave me angry or confused, “but God is the strength of my heart.”
There are circumstances that are beyond my capacity to control, “but God is the strength of my heart.”
There are disappointments that leave me feeling shattered, “but God is the strength of my heart.”

Go ahead. Create your own Psalm. Say or write down one thing that perplexes you, that discourages you or threatens to overwhelm you. And then say or write the response, “but God is the strength of my heart.” You’ll be amazed at how well it works, and not just because you are being reminded of God’s enduring love or of your small part in the history God’s interaction with man—a history that includes all those people whose stories are told in the scriptures, and all of those who have called on God in their times of need across the centuries.

The reason it works is because it is true. God’s commitment to humanity is real, tangible, personal, and true. We have challenges, but God has a response. “But God is the strength of my heart,” the psalmist says, and he invites us to speak those words ourselves and to rest with confidence and gratitude in the care of the One whose strength is ours and whose love is never failing.

William G. “Bill” Robertson
President & CEO
Adventist HealthCare
Adventist Rehabilitation Hospital of Maryland Team Provides Therapy to Earthquake Victims

**Haitian native and Adventist employee lends a helping hand to medical volunteers**

by Kendra Hall

Matchelle Bristol, a native of Haiti, returned to her home country in March for the first time in eight years. However, this time the trip was not just to visit her family. Bristol, admissions supervisor at Adventist Rehabilitation Hospital of Maryland, was going to assist the medical volunteers in providing care and counseling to January’s earthquake survivors.

Bristol was one of eight volunteers from Adventist Rehabilitation, headquartered in Rockville, Md., who traveled to earthquake-ravaged Haiti to provide therapy and rehabilitative care to patients with amputations, spinal cord injuries and orthopedic injuries. The team arrived in Port-au-Prince on March 12 ready to provide care immediately for the next week at the capital’s MedShare Project 500-bed tent hospital just outside the airport.

“It’s really such a great experience, especially since it is my native country,” Bristol said. “I wanted to do something to help and this was the perfect opportunity to help my people. It was hard to see the devastation and, because I understand the language, I felt what they were feeling.”

Bristol helped to break cultural barriers with patients and medical volunteers through her ability to translate Creole and English.

Adventist Rehabilitation Hospital of Maryland is well-known for its specialty in treating amputations and spinal cord injuries. The hospital recently became the first in a five-state region to obtain accreditations from the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) International for care of hospitalized patients in four specialty areas — brain injury, spinal cord injury, stroke and amputation.

The team of medical volunteers from Adventist Rehabilitation Hospital of Maryland included: Bristol, Dr. Terrence Sheehan, team leader and chief medical officer; Sandy Sheehan, a physical therapist; Raymond Pharoh, an occupational therapist; Kathy Inglefield, a registered nurse; Andra Henning, an occupational therapist; Parveen Peter, a registered nurse; and her husband, Robin Peter, who works in the radiology department at Washington Adventist Hospital.

“It was such a blessing to travel to Haiti with the team members we had,” Dr. Sheehan said. “They didn’t need to be told what to do or where to go once they got there. They just found their own ways to do everything, and that was exactly what we had to work with. The outcome was superb. The bars were even adjustable, so that no matter what the patient’s size, they could use it for rehab. We were happy to leave our mark down there with this piece of necessary equipment. Without Ray, this wouldn’t have happened.”

Adventist HealthCare donated medical supplies such as vaccines, scrubs and bandages for the trip. The team also brought with them critiques, splints and catheters.

“The Adventist Rehabilitation Hospital’s team of volunteers demonstrated compassion and provided exemplary medical care to the earthquake survivors in Haiti,” said William G. “Bill” Robertson, President and CEO of Adventist HealthCare. “This team played an instrumental role in extending Adventist HealthCare’s mission through their clinical expertise and rehabilitative care for critically injured patients.”

Bristol helped to break cultural barriers with patients and medical volunteers through her ability to translate Creole and English.

“It was very rewarding,” said Bristol, who attends Havre de Grace Seventh-day Adventist Church in Rockville. “You felt like you were supporting them and showed them that you cared.”

Adventist Rehabilitation Hospital of Maryland’s team of volunteers demonstrated compassion and provided exemplary medical care to the earthquake survivors in Haiti. The team worked nonstop, from sunup to sundown. At night, the team worked on designing and building a set of parallel bars for future medical teams to teach Haiti’s amputees how to walk with prostheses.

“Ray Pharoh was truly our version of MacGyver!” said Dr. Sheehan, referring to the 1980s television show. “This guy can make anything out of nothing, and that was exactly what we needed to do. They didn’t need to be told what to do or where to go once they got there. They just found their own ways to do everything, and that was exactly what we had to work with. The outcome was superb. The bars were even adjustable, so that no matter what the patient’s size, they could use it for rehab. We were happy to leave our mark down there with this piece of necessary equipment. Without Ray, this wouldn’t have happened.”

Adventist Rehabilitation Hospital of Maryland’s team of volunteers stands outside the gates of the Haitian Palace, now destroyed by January’s devastating earthquake. (top) Parveen Peter, Dr. Terrence Sheehan, Andra Henning, Matchelle Bristol, Sandy Sheehan, Raymond Pharoh, Robin Peter. Not pictured: (Kathy Inglefield.)

Adventist Rehabilitation Hospital of Maryland, gives a patient a card of encouragement. Above left: Parveen Peter, RN at Adventist Rehabilitation Hospital of Maryland, holds a baby girl. Above: Dr. Terrence Sheehan, chief medical officer of Adventist Rehabilitation Hospital of Maryland, encourages a patient with other medical professionals looking on. Left: Dr. Terrence Sheehan and other volunteers from Adventist Rehabilitation Hospital of Maryland, look at the construction progress of the parallel bars the team helped to build.

To read diaries from our team members about their experiences in Haiti and to view the team’s photos from Haiti, go to www.adventisthealthcare.com/ARHM
El Equipo del Hospital Adventista de Rehabilitación de Maryland Presta Servicios de Terapia a Víctimas del Terremoto

Nativo haitiano y empleado Adventista da una mano a voluntarios médicos por Kenda Hall

Matchelle Bristol, oriundo de Haití, regresó a su país natal en marzo por primera vez en ocho años. Sin embargo, esta vez su viaje no era tan solo para visitar a sus familiares. Bristol, supervisora de admisiones en el Hospital Adventista de Rehabilitación de Maryland, iba para ayudar a los voluntarios médicos a prestar servicios de atención y terapia a los sobrevivientes del terremoto de enero.

Bristol fue uno de ocho voluntarios del Hospital Adventista de Rehabilitación, radicado en Rockville, Maryland, que viajaron a Haití, país arrasado por un terremoto, a fin de brindar servicios de terapia y rehabilitación a pacientes con miembros amputados, heridas en la médula espinal y lesiones ortopédicas. El equipo llegó a Puerto Príncipe el 12 de marzo, listo para proporcionar atención médica inmediatamente durante toda la semana siguiente en el hospital Adventista de Washington.

El Hospital Adventista de Rehabilitación de Maryland es bien conocido por su especialidad en tratar heridas de amputaciones y la médula espinal. Recientemente el hospital fue el primero dentro de una región de cinco estados en ser acreditado por la Comisión Internacional de Acreditación de Centros de Rehabilitación (CARF, por sus siglas en inglés) por la atención brindada en cuatro especialidades a pacientes hospitalizados: heridas del cerebro, médula espinal, derrame cerebral y amputación.

El equipo de voluntarios médicos del Hospital Adventista de Rehabilitación de Maryland estuvo integrado por: Bristol, el Dr. Terrence Sheehan, jefe del equipo y oficial médico jefe, Nandy Sheehan, terapeuta físico, Raymond Phanho, terapeuta ocupacional, Kathy Inglefield, enfermera registrada, Andra Hening, terapeuta ocupacional, Parveen Peter, enfermera registrada, y su esposa, Robin Peter, que trabaja en el departamento de radiología en el Hospital Adventista de Washington.

“Fue una gran bendición poder viajar a Haití con los miembros del equipo que tuvimos”, dijo el Dr. Sheehan. “No habíamos decidido lo que tenían que hacer a o dónde ir cuando llegamos. Esos encontraron por sí mismos lugares donde más los necesitaban y hicieron lo mejor que pudieron para esas personas. Me siento muy honrado y orgulloso de haber podido viajar con esta pieza de equipo tan necesario. Esto no habría sido posible sin Ray.”

Adventist HealthCare donó materiales médicos, tales como vacunas, batas y vendajes para el viaje. El equipo también trajo consigo muéstras, cabestrillos y calzadores.

“El equipo de voluntarios del Hospital Adventista de Rehabilitación demostró compasión y prestó una valiosa atención médica a los sobrevivientes del terremoto de Haití”, dijo Wil- liam G. “Bill” Robertson, Presidente y Ejecutivo Principal de Adventist HealthCare. “Este equipo jugó un papel vital en hacer llegar la misión de Adventist HealthCare a pacientes gravemente heridos, por medio de su experiencia clínica y atención rehabilitadora.”

Hágase un admirador de la página del Hospital Adventista de Rehabilitación de Maryland en Facebook (www.facebook.com/Adventist Rehab) para leer los diarios de los miembros de nuestro equipo sobre sus experiencias en Haití y ver las fotos que enviaron desde ese país. Para más información sobre el hospital, visite el sitio www.adventisthealthcare.com/ARHM
Southwest Church Recognizes Community Members

Many inner-city communities are in various stages of decay, and it may sometimes seem that no one in the neighborhood cares. Thankfully, this is not the case in the community where the Southwest church is located. Recently during Community Guest Day, the church recognized two members of the community for their tireless efforts to keep the neighborhood safe.

John Blackwell (pictured left with Jackson Doggette, interim pastor) was recognized for volunteering to cook for the church’s block party. Block captain Thomas Weeks (right) was honored for his vigilant efforts to keep the neighborhood safe. Both received beautiful plaques of appreciation. The church also presented the local police department with a plaque of appreciation.

After lunch Doggette moderated a panel to discuss solutions to community problems, including children’s lack of motivation and interest in school and issues affecting single parents. —Janice D. Jenkins

Beth-El Women Study the Bible by Phone

Why not use the telephone to evangelize and study God’s Word? This is what the Women’s Ministries team at Beth-El church in Jersey City, N.J., asked themselves. Seeing no reason not to, the ladies recently began meeting on a teleconferencing line on Sunday mornings—from the comfort and privacy of their homes—to engage in lively and Spirit-filled discussions of 14 Bible lessons titled “Women in the Bible and Me.”

The benefits of meeting in this fashion have proven to be undeniable. Because of the phone’s wide reach, group members can gather almost any time that is convenient for all. Additionally, many of the women invite friends and family throughout the country to join in and talk about the Lord’s goodness and grace. Most importantly, the anonymity of this forum allows people to listen and be blessed without the pressure of active participation.—Lisa J. Todd

Twinsburg Church Reaches Community With Music

Well over 200 people, including visitors from the surrounding neighborhoods, recently attended a concert held at the Twinsburg (Ohio) church. Themed “Hope for These Times,” the concert featured Michael Trotter and the Orr sisters, who are members of the Bethel church in Cleveland.

During the concert, Trotter, who considers himself an “administrator of the gospel,” began to minister to the audience. He talked about praying for the children. As the Holy Spirit moved, people came down the aisle on behalf of their families. Host pastor Steven Valles prayed with them as they came to the altar.

“To God be the Glory!” Pastor Valles exclaims. “The presence of God was there in a marked way, as we had prayed for. All came to a closer walk and confidence in what God can and will do. We left the worship event with the overwhelming desire to ‘Keep Pressing,’ as the final song said, for Jesus. Praise His Holy Name”—Juanita Reynolds

The Orr sisters recently ministered through music at the Twinsburg (Ohio) church.

Hillcrest, Southeast Clinch Basketball Championship

Church-based basketball teams from around the Allegheny West Conference recently converged in Columbus, Ohio, for the season-ending, championship games. After a grueling season of competition and down-to-the-buzzer games, the division winners faced off in the championship.

The Southeast church in Cleveland defeated Cincinnati 107 to 88 and was named varsity champions; Hillcrest church’s junior varsity team defeated Ephesus church in Columbus by one point—52 to 51 and Hillcrest’s pee wee team defeated Columbus’ Hilltop church 30 to 25.

Paul Glenn II, basketball commissioner and a member of the Glenville church, says, “We began this league as a witnessing tool—to bring other young people to Christ. It’s wonderful to watch our young people at play!”

The Orr sisters recently ministered through music at the Twinsburg (Ohio) church.
Youth March, Minister at National Prayer Conference

Allegheny West Conference (AWC) youth were among the thousands who participated in the North American Division’s Just Claim It 2 youth prayer conference. Held in Columbus, Ohio, the conference gave youth opportunities for prayer, leadership training, community outreach and evangelism. Below are photos featuring AWC youth:

People don’t seem to know what to do with the beatitudes (see Matthew 5:3-12). Some have ignored them; others admire them. Some have used them as a yardstick to measure their own spirituality or that of others. The simplest thing to do with them, perhaps, is to let them stand you on your head so that you cannot see the world in the same way again. This is exactly what Jesus was doing. He was turning their known world upside down. He redefined the good life in nine short sentences and held them out for everyone to see: nine portraits of kingdom people.

While upside down, you begin to discover that the poor in spirit, the meek and those who mourn are not just people you can help, but people who can help you, and that their hunger and thirst for God are not voids to be filled—but appetites to be envied. While upside down, you begin to see that peacemakers are spiritual physicians prescribing God’s own tranquility. You also see that those who have been bruised for their faith are not the sad ones but the happy ones who, despite being bruised for that faith, have found worth in it.

Those who are merciful are just handing out what they have already received in abundance.

The world looks funny upside down, but maybe that is just how it looks when your feet are planted in heaven. Jesus did this all the time and seemed to think that we too could do it. So blessed are those who stand on their heads, for they shall see the world as God sees it. They shall find themselves in good company—turned upside down by the only One who really knows which way is up!

Blessed are the Upside Down

Pastor Cesar Gonzalez (below) and his Cambridge (MD) congregation are basking in the glow of a heady Sabbath celebration that drew about 120 participants—more than twice the number of their regular membership. Most of the visitors were neighbors who responded to a newspaper notice for a special service at the church.

The service featured the vocal trio Bella Voce (right) and local musicians Evelyn Perry and Curtis White in concert. Bella Voce members have performed in prestigious concert halls, including the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C., and Carnegie Hall in New York City.

“Many visitors expressed their joy in having such a quality Easter service in our small town,” said John White, one of the church’s 35 members.

After the sermon, Gonzalez announced that one of the ways the congregation desires to serve the community is through prayer. Instead of money, he invited visitors to place their prayer requests in the offering plates. Church members also distributed cards with the pastor’s contact information and their prayer request website (prayeasternshore.org).

“We are following up on the requests,” says Gonzalez. “We have scheduled a planning session to outline the next steps. This was a great first step—God really blessed us, and the church is on fire to do more.”
Educators Recognized for Excellence

Three Chesapeake Conference educators were recently recognized for excellence. Beth Bankes, who teaches grades 4 through 6 at Rocky Knoll Adventist School in Martinsburg, W.Va., and Marilynn Peeke, principal of Atholton Adventist Academy in Columbia, Md., were selected as winners of the 2009-10 Columbia Union Outstanding Educator and Outstanding Administrator awards, respectively. Paty Serrano, a science and health teacher at Spencerville Adventist Academy in Silver Spring, Md., was a runner-up.

Bankes, an educator for 25 years, regularly pursues professional growth through seminars and training opportunities. She assists the North American Division Office of Education in the development of multigrade management materials, and she pilots new materials. Peeke has utilized her administrative and leadership skills to expand the Atholton Adventist Academy program to include both pre-kindergarten curriculum and junior academy status. In her 10 years as principal, she has helped to more than double enrollment.

Serrano is known for embracing innovation. “She consistently delivers high quality education with well-prepared lectures, hands-on labs and interactive use of SMART Board experiences,” says Brian Hagerstown, Md., and Denison Sager, HVA vice principal, coordinated the trip with service and spiritual growth in mind.

Students Excited by Service in Galapagos

Exciting, inspiring, eye-opening, fulfilling, exciting and fun-filled were just some of the words Highland View Academy (HVA) students used to describe their recent mission trip to the Galapagos Islands off the coast of Ecuador. The group of 26 students and nine adult sponsors worked on a Seventh-day Adventist church built on San Cristobal, conducted a Vacation Bible School for local children and concentrated on individual spiritual development.

Senior Jennifer Calhoun commented, “One of the things this trip did for me was to open my eyes to the global nature of the Adventist Church.” Sergio Manante, pastor of the Highland View church in Hagerstown, Md., and Denison Sager, HVA vice principal, coordinated the trip with service and spiritual growth in mind.

Twenty-three youth and adults were baptized, and several more made plans to be baptized, at the second annual Generation Rain retreat held recently at Mount Aetna Camp and Retreat Center in Hagerstown, Md. Attendees were challenged to discover and use their spiritual gifts. Featured speaker Randy Preston, lead vocalist for the Christian band Jakob’s Night, shared how he was transformed when he allowed the Holy Spirit to work in his life. When Preston made an altar call, many young people accepted Christ as their personal Savior.

“Hearing the testimonies and seeing people get baptized made me realize how great is our God,” said Abbie Engles, a member of the Linthicum (Md.) church.—Michele Engles

23 Baptized at Retreat

Twenty-three youth and adults were baptized, and several more made plans to be baptized, at the second annual Generation Rain retreat held recently at Mount Aetna Camp and Retreat Center in Hagerstown, Md. Attendees were challenged to discover and use their spiritual gifts. Featured speaker Randy Preston, lead vocalist for the Christian band Jakob’s Night, shared how he was transformed when he allowed the Holy Spirit to work in his life. When Preston made an altar call, many young people accepted Christ as their personal Savior.

“Hearing the testimonies and seeing people get baptized made me realize how great is our God,” said Abbie Engles, a member of the Linthicum (Md.) church.—Michele Engles

Paty Serrano uses SMART Board technology to demonstrate a science lesson for high school freshman Joshua Smith.
Seniors Showcase Their Talent

HVA’s Class of 2010 recently presented Maces Order Brides for their annual senior play, under the direction of Nancy Manante, senior Bible teacher. Senior Kari Petrelis, who worked closely with Manante in producing the play, reports really enjoying the experience. “I loved working with Mrs. Manante on the play,” she said. “I learned a lot, got to be creative and had a blast doing it!”

The entire senior class was involved. Those not acting in the play were involved in costumeing, staging, lighting, refreshments, advertising and hosting a silent auction. “I loved the play,” said Mackenzie Hall, a freshman who attended the play. “It was hilarious, and the seniors did a great job.” Andrew Fishell, senior class president, reported that the class also did very well financially.

Students, Staff Show Their Spirit

Each spring the students and faculty of HVA enjoy Spirit Week. This Student Association-sponsored event is designed to provide an opportunity for students to show their school spirit and simply have fun. Each day has a different theme such as Crazy Hair and Clash, Around the World, Choose a Decade, Be a Teacher and the stand-by favorite—Pajama Day.

“Even though this is my fourth year at HVA, Spirit Week is still fun,” admitted Katy Yeary, Student Association president. “I like that it gives the students a chance to be creative, and it always raises school spirit.”

Teachers and students saw Spirit Week as a chance to embrace their silly sides.

Students Lead Week of Prayer

HVA students recently enjoyed a spiritual renewal led by their peers during their on-campus Week of Prayer. Special worship services were held each morning and evening, and each featured a student speaker. Topics included how to deal with jealousy, the problems created by procrastination and the importance of being vulnerable with each other and with God. Speakers included freshman Molly Gavin, sophomores Marcio Corea and Jazmin Pride, juniors Jill Rent and Bobby Kepson and seniors Jordan Corroes, Kenji Nomura, Jumi Olowofeyeku and Jonathan Richardson.

“Having our peers speak to us sometimes reaches us in a different way,” said Jill Rent, Student Association pastor. “I think when our friends are speaking, the information sinks in more.”

HVA students lead every facet of Week of Prayer, including the song service.

Let’s Go Fishing

“And He (Jesus) saith unto them, Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men” (Matt. 4:19).

“Jesus said unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men” (Mark 1:17).

Scripture is clear that Jesus invites all who follow Him to go fishing for souls. He not only invites us but also says He will help us become fishers of men. If our understanding of these short but powerful texts is correct, the truth of the matter is that followers of Jesus will be soul winners. And our churches should be full of members who are soul winners because we profess to be followers of Jesus. That being established, our churches should be full of members who are sitting next to new members on Sabbath morning. This Sabbath take a good look around and see who is sitting with you.

In one of her many passages on the importance of actively winning souls, Ellen White explains, “We can never be saved in indolence and inactivity. There is no such thing as a truly converted person living a helpless, useless life. It is not possible for us to drift into heaven. No sluggard can enter there. Those who refuse to co-operate with God on earth would not co-operate with Him in heaven. It would not be safe to take them to heaven” (Christ’s Object Lessons, p. 286).

Do you believe in the importance of sharing the good news of the gospel with others?

If so, let’s go fishing!

Couple Married, Baptized at Valley View Church

Sun reflecting off the terraces of the Valley View Church in Bluefield, W.Va., was mirrored in the glow on the faces of Heather Heath and John Pruett as they took their places under the bridal arch. This was a day they will always cherish—for more reasons than one. After the couple exchanged vows, friends and family gathered in the fellowship hall to celebrate the nuptials with festive fare. Following a short interval, everyone reconvened in the church, and Pastor Bradley Galambos, now in baptismal garb, led both Heath and John through the waters into a new life in Christ.

On a quiet afternoon last summer, the couple stopped by the Valley View church, seeking a Seventh-day Adventist church. Three years before, Heath was flipping through TV channels and Doug Batchelor caught her attention. She started recording Batchelor’s Amazing Facts programs, which she and John enjoyed watching together. With every new idea backed up by Scripture, they could only believe. After Heath had surgery to remove a 7-pound cyst—which fortunately was benign—she and John decided they owed it to God to start going to church.

“To say that our lives have changed for the better is an understatement,” Heath shares. “We are not only growing closer as a married couple, but also developing a closer relationship with our Creator. With Him in our lives, I know anything is possible.”—Alice Cronje
Wheeling Children Help Kids in Africa

Children at the Wheeling (W.Va.) church are helping save the lives of kids their own age in Africa. Worldwide, more than 26,000 children under the age of 5 die each day, mostly from contaminated water, malnutrition and diseases for which affordable vaccines are available. To help save lives, Wheeling children joined ADRA’s $1–$4 child survival matching program and raised $180.79 in three months! ADRA matched the amount donated with grant monies so that each dollar raised became four dollars. Because of their efforts, ADRA can deliver more than $3720 worth of medical supplies and vaccinations to countries such as Rwanda and Ethiopia.

When Avery McCauley, a Primary Sabbath School student, realized how much the group collected, she exclaimed, “Wow! We did that much! Maybe we can help kids in another country, like Haiti, who need help, and raise even more money.”

The Wheeling children also had a unique way of showing how much money they had collected. For each dollar donated, they colored a cupcake to represent another birthday celebrated by an African child. Sabbath School teacher Loraine Megale saw the excitement in her students’ eyes while working on this project. “The kids just loved it,” she said. “Each Sabbath they would come in and color more cupcakes until our mission bulletin board was filled and overflowing onto another wall.”

Helping to give another year of life to boys and girls on the other side of the world has blessed the children and reminded them how important every child is to God.—Amy Ganick

Elkins Church Goes Door to Door

Members of the Elkins (W.Va.) church are working hard to prepare for their fall evangelistic meetings. April Ibarra—a recent graduate of SOULS, a Bible worker training program in California—has pledged a year of service to the Highland Adventist School stu-
dents have also expressed interest in taking Bible studies with Ibarra.—Cheryl Jackie

Stefan Bramblett, Tiffany Jacoby, Chris Gallew and Robert Gallew are going door to door in the Elkins, W.Va., community to distribute surveys.

If Only...

Look forward to the day when I will no longer have to hear the sentence, “If only I had sent my child to a Seventh-Day Adventist school.” As an academy principal, that phrase leaves me feeling a deep sense of sadness. As a parent, I don’t want to have to ask the question “What if?” when it comes to my children’s salvation.

I look forward to the day when I do not have to hear the sentence, “I waited too long to send my child to an Adventist school.” Every year I get a new upperclassman who is as wild as a feral cat. Many students come to us never having been challenged to be anything more than slaves to their emotions. If we had been able to work with students like this, starting as freshmen, we may have been able to help. Sometimes it really is too late.

I look forward to the day when all of our Adventist youth are in our schools learning about a God who loves them and being prepared for eternity. I hear the excuses and rationalizations for why a child is not in an Adventist school. But between the lines, the lie ensnaring us for millennia can be seen: “It really doesn’t matter what I do.”

Have you ever wondered or doubted if Adventist education matters? Look out into this lost world, and you will see a lot of hopeless and lonely people. I look forward to the day when all of us will know the true answer to the question “If only...”

If Only...
11 Reasons Students Love MVA

The Mount Vernon Academy (MVA) program focuses on developing the mind, body and spirit of each student who joins our community. Our academic curriculum, which offers honors, Advanced Placement and college-credit courses, is designed to challenge students. However, our foremost goal is to help our students develop a spiritual relationship with their Creator. Our students recently provided feedback about how MVA has impacted their lives:

How has Mount Vernon Academy influenced your spiritual life?

My eyes have been opened to the influence your spiritual life?

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Church Leaders Recognized for Soul Winning

The recent Spanish and English Elders, Deacons and Deaconesses retreats at Tranquil Valley Retreat Center in Tranquility were the culmination of a season of training for church leaders in New Jersey. This year the traditional elders’ retreats were expanded to include the deacons and deaconesses for the first time. Frank Bondurant, vice president for Ministries Development for the Columbia Union, and Armando Juarez, Hispanic coordinator for the Nevada-Utah Conference, provided inspiring messages for the retreats.

The highlight of the retreats was the recognition of those leaders who brought someone to Christ and saw baptisms as a result of ministry in their local churches. The conference designed a new lapel pin that features a crown and a star. These soul winners received a pin during the special service. Each leader was also challenged to bring at least one person to Christ by the time of the 2011 retreat.

Below: Jose H. Cortés, president of the New Jersey Conference, presents Julia Krug of the Laurelhurst English church with her baptism pin.


Below: Pastor Frank Bondurant, vice president for Ministries Development for the Columbia Union, embraces Marie Jewels of the Wayne English church after she receives her pin.

Below: Hispanic leaders are rededicated through prayer.

Worship Festival Draws 500

Some 500 children plus parents recently participated in Ohio Conference’s first Children’s Worship Festival and Annual Elementary School Music Festival. The conference partnered with the North American Division (NAD) and presented both events during NAD’s Just Claim It 2 youth prayer congress held at the Columbus Convention Center.

“The three-hour [worship festival] program was especially designed to help meet the worship needs of children aged 5 through 13,” explained Cindy French-Puterbaugh (right), conference Child and Family Ministries director.

“The programming included praise time, music performances, storytellers, puppets, as well as an hour of experiential (hands-on) worship that centered around (connecting) to God, to each other, to ourselves and to our world.”

French-Puterbaugh, who also serves as Education associate superintendent, explained that the music festival gave students in grades 5 through 8 opportunities to experience a variety of creative expressions of worship, including art, drama, mime, stix, puppets and a mass choir. On Sabbath afternoon, the 150 students who participated in the music festival performed on the Just Claim It main stage.
Wintersville Women Craft Outreach Ministries

For the past two years, several women of the Wintersville church have met for fellowship and a creative outreach ministry. Group members have made colorful cloth bags for disadvantaged children filled with items such as blankets, coloring books, crayons, cups, dolls or teddy bears. Church member Gladys Jean Francis taught the group how to make silk floral arrangements, and they have given away 18 vases to local nursing home residents. Francis also led the women in creating colorful, knotted-fleece throwaways, which were given to children in need. Missy Yunker demonstrated how to make greeting cards, which were included in a care package sent to a local service woman serving in Afghanistan. Cards and Bible markers have been given to friends and nursing home residents. The women feel that it is such a blessing to have helping hands in the church, fellowshipping together, inviting friends to join in and sharing the gift of love through helping others—Sonja Whiteman.

Ohio Women’s Retreat Returns to Deer Creek

The Ohio Conference Women’s Retreat will be held September 17-19 at Deer Creek Lodge and Conference Center in Mount Sterling. This year’s theme is “My God Is Great,” and will feature Elizabeth Talbot (left), who is the co-host for the Voice of Prophecy daily broadcast. Talbot is passionate about the good news of Jesus Christ. “It’s like fire in my bones,” she says.

The retreat will also include a morning prayer walk, several seminar options and a bell choir concert. For the early bird discount, register by July 15 and August 15 for the regular rate. For details, go to the “Annual Events” link at ohioadventist.org, or call Ruth Ann Van Nostrand at (740) 397-4665, ext. 111.

Pastors Gain Insights From Holy Land Tour

Approximately 35 Ohio Conference pastors and their spouses recently enjoyed a self-funded, one week tour of Israel. They were thrilled with the opportunity to see for themselves many places crucial to the Christian faith and authenticity of the Bible. Highlights included a boat ride on the Sea of Galilee; swimming in the Dead Sea; seeing the caves where the Dead Sea Scrolls were found; visiting Masada (Herod’s palace/fortress), Nazareth, Bethlehem, Jerusalem, the Garden of Gethsemane, the Mount of Olives, Galgotha and the Garden Tomb. Many in the group gained new insights regarding biblical passages that they would not have realized without having been to these sites. The Ohio Conference is organizing another eight-day tour leaving January 24, 2011, with possible extension to one or two in attendance. Members were willing to give the conference line a try. Each night at 9 p.m., more than a dozen people call the line. “We chose 9 p.m. because most cell phone plans have free minutes after 9,” Morales explains.

During the half-hour meetings, participants share requests, pray, enjoy a short devotional or testimony and then pray again. They recently met from 8 p.m. until midnight for a time of prayer and fasting with 20 people. The group has seen many answers to prayers and miracles. “We prayed for a baby who doctors said would be handicapped. Her spine was damaged, and they believed she would never be able to move her head or walk straight,” shares Morales. “Today she is a healthy 3-month-old who is growing fine.”

Pocono Grace Members Pray Together Nightly

Isie Morales couldn’t focus on the church business meeting. Because members of the Pocono Grace church live so far apart, they were using a free conference line to hold their meeting, allowing members to call from their homes and still “meet together.” Morales thought, “Why couldn’t we hold prayer meetings this way?”

Like most churches, attendance was low at the weekly prayer meeting with only one or two in attendance. Members were willing to give the conference line a try. Each night at 9 p.m., more than a dozen people call the line. “We chose 9 p.m. because most cell phone plans have free minutes after 9,” Morales explains.

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Pocono Grace is a bilingual church with all services in both Spanish and English, so their prayer meetings offer both languages as well. An English-speaking prayer meeting is held on Friday night, while the rest of the nights are held in Spanish. They invite others to join them by calling (218) 936-7979 and entering participant code 844114.
Conference to Commit Two Pastors for Ministry

Family, friends, church members and others will gather for the ordination of Pastor Robert Fisher and the commissioning of Pastor Tara VinCross as the Pennsylvania Conference commits both to ministry, Sabbath, June 19, during camp meeting.

Pastor Robert Fisher grew up a Seventh-day Adventist and always felt called to ministry. However, he took a roundabout way of getting there. After receiving a bachelor’s degree in Business Administration/Healthcare Management from Concordia University in Oregon, he worked in the healthcare field for a few years. He and Leena were married in 2001. Fisher continued to work in the healthcare field for a few more years, while Leena finished her nursing degree. It wasn’t long before the two felt God had other plans for them.

After being involved in his local church, Fisher preached at an evangelistic series in Romania. When he returned, he applied to the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary (Mich.) and completed a Master of Divinity. They were called to serve the Indiana and Johnstown district. Their district grew to three churches with the addition of the Distant church, while their family grew with the additions of Melody and Hannah.

“I am privileged and humbled to work with God’s people and feel that He has called me to be part of this great Advent movement, to help warn the lost and [prepare] His people to be ready for the closing events of this Earth’s history,” Fisher shares.

Pastor Tara VinCross. Tara J. Vinyard grew up in Seattle, Wash., and accepted Jesus Christ at age 13 while attending church with a friend. Later God led her to Auburn Adventist Academy and through joining the literature evangelism team, Youth Challenge, she was introduced to the Adventist Church and received her lifetime calling to ministry. During that summer of 1995, even before understanding Adventism herself, she co-taught a Revelation seminar and saw God use her to lead two others to baptism.

She met Caleb Cross at Southwestern Adventist University (Texas) while they were studying theology. They married in October 2003, and the couple took the name VinCross.

Pastor VinCross also holds a Masters of Divinity with an emphasis in Youth Ministries from the Adventist Theological Seminary. She began pastoral ministry in the Washington Conference where she served as associate pastor on Orcas Island for a year and assistant Youth and Young Adult Ministries director for three years. She now leads the Chestnut Hill church in Philadelphia. She firmly believes in the power of the Holy Spirit to work through all of God’s church (see Gal. 3:29, Eph. 2:14, 18) and bring transformation in people’s lives by beholding Jesus (see 2 Cor. 3:18). Her greatest joys are seeing someone come to Christ and helping people find their purpose and place in ministry.

Youth Ministries: It’s Double Good

There are two things that are true with regard to most kids: they like to be around other kids and if the weather is good, they want to be doing something outdoors. In ministry if we figure out ways to plan youth events that include those two elements, it becomes a “double good” situation. This might explain the positive outcomes we have been witnessing within the Youth Ministries department.

First of all, the Potomac Conference Pathfinder program is continuing to grow at an unbelievable rate. No doubt, much of it is due to the endless hours and energy our volunteers put into creating a first-class program, both on the local church level and on the conference level. I can’t help but think that when we combine a Christian discipleship program with outdoor activities and social interaction, kids come out of the woodwork for it.

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Potomac People

Denny Grady Youth Ministries Director

A second event, which is seeing a lot of enthusiasm among our kids, is the summer camp program at Camp Blue Ridge in Montebello, Va. Once again, a major reason this camp is so popular is for the simple reason that kids get to spend a significant amount of time outdoors with their peers. What a blessing it is for us to have a place like Camp Blue Ridge! It is a safe, Christ-centered environment in nature where our kids can enjoy the great outdoors while learning to love Jesus. That’s just double good!

To find out more about enrolling your child in the Potomac Pathfinder program or at Camp Blue Ridge, email me at dennyg@pcsda.org, or call the offices of the Potomac Conference at (540) 886-0771.
Hispanic Churches Hold 63 Campaigns in One Week

For more than a week, the Holy Spirit worked through student evangelists standing at 63 different pulpits across the Potomac Conference. These students from the School of Theology for Disciples led the events for the 63 simultaneous evangelistic campaigns held in Hispanic churches throughout the conference. In addition to a manual that evangelists standing at 63 different locations used to guide them through the different campaigns each night bringing the overall attendance to 1,540. In addition to the eight baptism s that have been reported, there will be a total of 600 baptized—transforming this weekendlong evangelistic series into an historic and unprecedented occasion in the conference. To view video of this event, visit pcsda.org and click on Latest News.

Seabrook Member Celebrates 100th Birthday

Indiana Wright, who attends the Seabrook church in Lanham, Md., recently celebrated her 100th birthday. She has been an ardent Seventh-day Adventist for most of her adult life. She has served as a deaconess, choir member, Sabbath School teacher and as an organizer and coordinator of youth activities at the Williamsfield church in Jamaica.

Wright is the mother of six children, five of whom gained an Adventist education at West Indies College, now Northern Caribbean University. After the death of her husband, she migrated to the United States to live with her daughter, Yvonne Wright-Wallace, in the Washington, D.C., area and continues to do well.

Desmond T. Doss Students Wear Purple for Epilepsy

Every student at Desmond T. Doss Jr. Academy in Lynchburg, Va., recently showed up to school wearing purple—and no, this wasn’t because they were all Vikings fans. Students and staff were showing support for those living with epilepsy, which causes life-threatening seizures. Statistics show that approximately one in every 100 persons suffer from epilepsy—but very few people talk about it, or are even aware of it.

Laurie Kelly, a kindergarten teacher at the school, became involved in the cause when her daughter, Shannon, now a freshman, was diagnosed with the condition. “God took this horrible situation that really hurt our family and strengthened our faith,” Kelly said. “We also found it very empowering that our school supported Shannon.”

Shannon was among several children with epilepsy who recently traveled to Washington, D.C., to speak with their congressmen about how they could help. Back at Desmond T. Doss, students even signed a petition asking President Barack Obama to increase money for research to find a cure for this dreaded disease. For more information about epilepsy, visit efaf.org.
More than 100 eighth-graders from area elementary schools put on their comfortable clothing and sneakers and headed for TA’s campus to compete in TA’s fifth annual Amazing Race. This field day, patterned after the popular television show, is designed to teach teamwork and cooperation in a competitive environment. The day began when the visitors joined TA’s student body for a special worship program featuring the Music Department of South Lancaster Academy (Mass.).

The students came from Beltsville, Crossroads Elementary, Duport Park, Forcye Christian, G.E. Peters, John N evins Andrews, Olney Preparatory, Sligo Elementary, Spencerville and Tappahannock schools. Each team included students from the different schools allowing them to make new friends. Thirty-three TA students served as team leaders and guides for the day, which gave them the opportunity to hone their leadership skills.

The actual race included several types of activities with a timer keeper recording the time it took each team to complete an activity, which ranged from climbing a rock wall to running through an obstacle course to safely carrying an egg across the gym. After enjoying lunch together, the three teams with the overall shortest times received prizes. The group in third place won a TA ball cap; the second place team won TA windbreaker jackets and the first place winners walked away with a ball cap, jacket and $500 TA scholarship.

New Scholarships Make Christian Education Affordable

When parents are making the important choice between sending their child to a Christian or public school, one of the key differences is often related to cost. Takoma Academy has several financial aid opportunities that will alleviate those concerns. The financial assistance program at TA has been greatly expanded to include new scholarships, not only for academic achievement and leadership skills, but also for talent. Ability scholarships are available to students who are athletes (basket-ball, flag football, soccer, volleyball, track and field); are musically gifted (voice or instrument) or involved with drama/acting. Additionally, opportunities to work on campus provide a much-needed source of income for some families.

Auditions for ability scholarships will be held throughout this month. Visit ta.edu to see the schedule for specific audition dates. With awards ranging from $250-$1,000, auditioning is well worth the time. Many other options for student aid are also available. For more information, contact the business office at (301) 434-4700, ext. 714.

Alumni Weekend Packed With Celebration

The 2010 Alumni Weekend at Washington Adventist University (WAU) was filled with celebration. I was energized by the support of our wider community at the groundbreaking of our new music building and inspired by the spiritual guidance of guest speakers José Cortés Jr., Youth Ministries director for the Greater New York Conference, and Ted N.C. Wilson, vice president of the worldwide Seventh-day Adventist Church. I was humbled by the affirmation and charge of the Board of Trustees during the dedication service held on Sabbath; enthralled by the powerful gifts of each individual who performed in the reunion choir and orchestra for the afternoon concert; and fully entertained on Sunday at our annual WAU Family Fun Festival.

Woven into each of these key events were moments of reunion and engagement with alumni, supporters and community leaders, as we celebrated over delicious food and fellowship. I cannot begin to communicate the fullness of my heart as we experience how the spirit is growing at Washington Adventist University—these few photos are just an introduction. Thank you for your support of our mission. Without your prayers, we would not be experiencing these blessings of God.

Calendar

June
1-3 Final Exams
4 Consecration, 7 a.m., Sligo Church
5 Baccalaureate, 11 a.m., Sligo Church
6 Commencement, 10 a.m., J.R. Laurence Auditorium
13, 15 Ability Scholarship Auditions
July
5 Offices Closed—Independence Day Observed
12-30 Summer Enrichment Experience

With the Board of Trustees looking on, ceremonial shovels pierce the ground on the Takoma Park (Md.) campus for the first time in more than four decades. It signaled the commitment of church and university leaders to continue to build on the vision of the founders, who saw the opportunities offered by a location on the doorstep to the nation’s capital, to equip students for ministry and service to the world.

Weymouth Spence, WAU president, announces his initiative to name the new music building for Virginia-Gene Rittenhouse, DMA, director of the university’s New England Youth Ensemble. Clinging memories of Rittenhouse performances he attended as a boy, Spence noted her legendary reputation in Adventist classical music and called on supporters to donate to the music building campaign in her name.

President Spence and his wife, Rebecca, fellowship with alumni during the Friday evening Alumni Banquet.

Presidents Daniels and Daniels — Editor, Linda McLoughlin

Women Adventists United (WAU) — President, Linda McLoughlin

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OBITUARIES
CORNOR, Marjorie Ruth Herndon. Born May 3, 1924, in Erba, Pa.; died February 7, 2020, in Monrovia, C.R.C. She was the daughter of George Harry and Margaret Ruth Hayder Herndon Cornor. Marjorie came to Washington, D.C., after academia in Mt. Vernon, Ohio, to take nursing at the Washington Sanitarium and Hospital today, Washington Adventist Hospital, where she married Dale Cornor in 1944. Marjorie worked at the hospital, in adult education, then as assistant nursing director and nursing administrator after obtaining master’s degrees from Maryland University and Loma Linda University ( Calif. ) They later moved to Williamsport, Md., where Margie became the administrator of Williamsport Nursing Home. Over the years, she had her church membership at several churches: St. Luke’s Takoma Park, Md.; Silver Spring (Md.); Capital Memorial (Wash., D.C.); and the Williamsport and Frederick (Md.) churches. She was an elder and also shared Gospel words with others. They moved to Monrovia Cornor, C.R.C., in 2005, where she moved to Monrovia Cornor Church. She is survived by her husband, Dale, of Monrovia Cornor; her daughter, Deanna Riegel, of Monrovia Cornor; her son, Davin and Lauryn Bolinski of Columbia, Md.; and great-grandchildren. JENNINGS, Jackson T. Jr., born January 31, 1940, in San Juan, P.R.; died January 19, 2021, in Summerfield, Fla.; he was a member of the Summerville, S.C., church. He was a member of Summerville, S.C., church. He is survived by his wife, Wita; his brother, Leslie T. Jr., of Summerville, S.C.; and two grandchildren, Taylor and Jordan. SHAW, Frank E., born April 23, 1920, in Ohio; died January 8, 2021, in Saltsom, Mo. Educated in Ohio, he served as police physician in the U.S. Navy during World War I. Dr. Shaw later became a general practitioner in a 1,000-bed hospital in Ohio. He held numerous positions in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, as a teacher, speaker and board member. He also contributed time, energy and funds toward the education of young students. Following retirement, he was the member of the Prince-Frederick (Md.) church. He was preceded in death by his wife, by Dale Cornor. J. Neville Harcombe

OBITUARY SUBMISSION
For information on placing an Obituary in the Visitor:

• Call toll-free (866) 484-7486 or email jnorton@columbiaunion.org

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OBITUARY SUBMISSION

On this page for our readers.

SLIGO BY THE SEA

July 3

Terri Johnson

July 7

Peter Bath

July 10

Steve Chavez

July 14

William Johnson

July 17

William Johnson

July 24

Larry Evans

August 11

August 14

Ben Carson

Ron Halveson

August 28

Fred Keynes

September 4

William Lovelace

September 11

Willie Hunk

September 18

William Johnson

September 23

Nik Sarlettel

Visitors hold at St. Peter’s Lutheran Church 16091 Easterly Dr., Ocean City, Md. 302-524-7474

Sabbath School to 12 noon. Wellness Service: u.a.m. Casual dress is appropriate.

Lilly Tryon, MSN, RN, serves as wellness coordinator at Adventist WholeHealth Network (awhn.org) in Wyoming, Pa.

How CAN you HELP?

Break the silence about depression. Educate yourself and your church family about it. Share this Visitor issue, include bits of information in your church newsletter, coordinate a Sabbath School class to explore Bible characters who experienced depression, invite a health professional to speak on the topic or offer the Depression Recovery Seminar in your community. Help others understand that depression is common. Admitting that you might be depressed is not crazy! There’s no stigma associated with diabetes or high blood pressure, so why should there be with depression? It’s also a real illness with specific causes that can be addressed—and it’s treatable.

If you have a friend who you think might be suffering from depression, gently suggest the possibility and encourage them to seek professional help. Offer support by listening, asking if there’s anything you can do to make their life easier, shar- ing Bible promises, praying with them and communicating that “We'll ride this out together.”

As we break the silence and support each other, we reflect God’s desire that our church be a place of healing.

In spite of the fact that about 9.5 percent of the United States population is 18 and older, and suffers with some form of depression, we don’t talk much about it in the church or admit it. But for every nine people in our pews, chances are good that one struggles with this disease. And the statistics are even higher for children and adolescents (10-15%).

Although widespread, depression is a very misunderstood illness. Research shows that 54 percent of people believe it is a personal weakness, and 41 percent of depressed women are too embarrassed to seek help. We struggle, feel alone and question our ability to go on, but we don’t have to do it alone. We think: I’m just not myself. I’m feeling a bit down today, but I’m still functioning. There’s a lot of pressure in my life right now. I’ll snap out of it if I just pray more, think positively and focus on others.

There’s also a common misconception that depression is a spiritual problem, which is another big factor in our unwillingness to talk about it in church. And so we talk about the weather, without anything—even the elephant in the church.

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Make it Meatless
Enjoy delicious options from Worthington & Loma Linda

In 2010, Kellogg’s will donate $0.01 for every can purchased, up to $50,000, to the Adventist Community Services in support of Community Services and Disaster Response.