Starting 2015 with Solid Scripture Basis

As the final days of the old year ended and 2015 began, members met nightly to sharpen their study of Scripture. Choristers led the group in praising God at the start of each evening. Elder Conrad Vine, president of Adventist Frontier Missions, instructed the group, presenting information and encouragement in Bible study.

The evening series started with a look at different Bible translations. Members were able to learn the difference between literal translations, dynamic/thought translations, and paraphrases. Some were surprised to learn that there have been multiple revisions of the King James Version. It was also mentioned that Ellen White made use of newer translations as they became available.

Pastor Vine encouraged listeners to read the preface in the front of the Bible to learn about that particular version. He suggested looking at various options available when purchasing a Bible, considering which features are most important to the reader.

Other topics included considering what the passage meant first to the intended audience before applying it to the reader, and learning to listen reflectively to the Spirit speaking.

Each night a portion of the William Tyndale story was shown. Tyndale’s translation of the Bible into the English language resulted in the Scriptures becoming widely available to the people. Pastor Vine displayed the text of Tyndale’s translation of John 3:16, and how closely it compares to our current English rendition.

Members divided into groups to read, study, share, and pray together. The evenings concluded with the traditional circle around the Family Center, singing the theme song, Are You Ready for Jesus to Come?
Heart to Heart: Fundamentals

Hanging on the wall of my oldest son’s apartment is a poster with a picture of someone whom many consider to be one of the world’s most successful coaches of all time. The large, toothy grin of a man with winning enthusiasm and a will of iron is a sight that many recognize. The words on the poster are inspirational because the life of the man was inspirational. I have chosen to let him speak for me in this column. Do you know who he is?

Gentlemen, we will chase perfection, and we will chase it relentlessly, knowing all the while we can never attain it. But along the way, we shall catch excellence.

The harder you work, the harder it is to surrender.

Individual commitment to a group effort -- that is what makes a team work, a company work, a society work, a civilization work.

The victory we are after in 2015 is about freedom from sin, unity in the faith, and bringing lost people to Jesus. It can be a year of winning, not losing, but in order for that to happen, certain fundamentals will have to be in place. There are rudimentary elements of our pilgrimage on earth that can’t be ignored or excluded except at great loss to God’s cause, our families, and our own spirituality. If this year is to be a year of excellence for the Village Church, it will be so because we excel at the basics.

I am inviting you to join me in three fundamentals.

#1. Absolute prioritization of God’s place in my daily schedule for devotional communion with Him. This means that I will order my entire life around meeting with God. It does not mean adding one more thing into an already packed schedule. It means letting go of something less valuable. It often means going to bed earlier so that I can wake up early without being rushed and tired.

It will also mean letting go of the entertainments that destroy my appetite for what is holy and eternal.

#2. Absolute prioritization of God’s place in my family’s schedule for family worship in the morning and the evening.

This family worship will involve everyone’s schedule and perhaps the re-calibration of mental and spiritual appetites. (Not an easy task.) It should be interesting, short, and age appropriate. Your child’s Sabbath School lesson studied at home would make Sabbath School far more engaging and dynamic.

#3. Absolute prioritization of midweek prayer and fellowship meetings.

There are some things we do for others and in the process of doing them, we receive the blessing. Coming to prayer meeting, a small group, or a social is not just for you. Our journey to higher ground will call us to abandon self-centered spirituality (oxymoron?) and make choices for the good of the larger family.

These are the fundamentals of our victory in Jesus. Each one points us to the Living Christ. Each one will draw us into a closer and deeper bond with our Savior. Let us make 2015 a year of excellence for our Lord Jesus.

Pastor Kelly

P.S. So why quote a secular coach in a spiritual newsletter -- Jesus answered that question in Luke 16:8: “... the sons of this world are more shrewd in their generation than the sons of light.” And one more quote -

“The man on top of the mountain didn’t fall there.”

See page 6 for identification of this famous coach.
AMAZON MISSION UPDATE

This last December, Village Church had a Christmas concert benefiting the Amazon Mission Project. From the money raised at this concert, we were able to meet our goal of sponsoring two Bible workers to this region of Brazil. This was a very important step, because now the Bible workers will be able to minister to this community three months before our group gets there and three months after we leave. Thank you, everyone who was a part of making this happen.

The day following the Christmas concert my wife and I boarded a plane to Brazil. Because my wife is from Brazil, our first reason for the trip was to visit family for the holidays, but as an added bonus we stopped in Manaus to have some face to face meetings with people we had only talked to on the phone or e-mailed. These meetings were very important and very productive.

Our first meeting was with “Life Savers,” an organization which coordinates many of the Bible workers for this region of Brazil. The leader was very happy to see us, and told us more about the two individuals assigned to our project. Our second meeting was with the Adventist travel agent who will be doing all our logistics for the trip. With him we took a look at the boat and bought some more supplies. Our third meeting was with the Minister of Health. Getting his approval for the medical work we will be doing was very important.

The last day in Manaus we met with Douglas, who will be our local guide. He will be in charge of informing us of the do’s and don’ts on the Amazon to keep us safe during our adventures in Brazil. He will also be coordinating our construction project, installing septic systems in the community. Even though we have not raised all the money needed to install all ten septic systems, we have stepped out in faith and purchased all the barrels needed for the project. Now we will still need to raise more money for the piping and other supplies.

God has been good, and it is always exciting to see God at work when you are willing to stretch beyond your comfort zone to do His will.

My final thought is a reminder of our stuffed animal drive for the kids of the Amazon. We will be collecting small stuffed animals to take with us to hand out at our Vacation Bible School. You can find your donation box at the welcome center in the connecting corridor.

Please continue to pray for this project, and pray for all the people joining us. Pray for our safety. It is a big responsibility taking 40 people to the Amazon rain forest, where the river is wide and the fish have teeth.

Thank you, church family, for your support.

Rob Ritzenthaler
The Maker of all human beings (GOD) is recalling all units manufactured, regardless of make or year, due to a serious defect in the primary and central component of the heart.

This is due to a malfunction in the original prototype units code named Adam and Eve, resulting in the reproduction of the same defect in all subsequent units. This defect has been identified as "Subsequential Internal Non-morality," more commonly known as S.I.N., as it is primarily expressed.

Some of the symptoms include:

1. Loss of direction
2. Foul vocal emissions
3. Amnesia of origin
4. Lack of peace and joy
5. Selfish or violent behavior
6. Depression or confusion
7. Fearfulness
8. Idolatry
9. Rebellion

The Manufacturer, who is neither liable nor at fault for this defect, is providing factory-authorized repair and service free of charge to correct this defect.

The Repair Technician, JESUS, has most generously offered to bear the entire burden of the staggering cost of these repairs. There is no additional fee required. The number to call for repair in all areas is: P-R-A-Y-E-R. Once connected, please upload your burden of SIN through the REPENTANCE procedure. Next, download ATONEMENT from the Repair Technician, Jesus, into the heart component.

No matter how big or small the SIN defect is, Jesus will replace it with:

1. Love
2. Joy
3. Peace
4. Patience
5. Kindness
6. Goodness
7. Faithfulness
8. Gentleness
9. Self control

Please see the operating manual, the B.I.B.L.E. (BEST Instructions Before Leaving Earth) for further details on the use of these fixes.

WARNING: Continuing to operate the human being unit without correction, voids any manufacturer warranties, exposing the unit to dangers and problems too numerous to list, and will result in the human unit being permanently impounded. For free emergency service, call on Jesus.

DANGER: The human being units not responding to this recall action will have to be scrapped in the furnace. The SIN defect will not be permitted to enter Heaven, so as to prevent contamination of that facility. Thank you for your attention!

- GOD

P.S. Please assist where possible by notifying others of this important recall notice, and you may contact the Father any time by “Knee mail!”

Because HE Lives!
SINGLE MOMS THANK JESUS AND CHURCH FAMILY!

*Galatians 6:2 “Bear one another’s burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ.”*

The Single Mom’s Sabbath School Class commenced on September 6, 2014 under the compassionate and committed leadership of Ardith Jarrard. With 12 single moms in attendance and a powerful prayer session, it proved to be the start of something wonderful. Meeting during Sabbath school time allows us to meet while our children are being nurtured in their classes. Together, we pray, fellowship and study “Hope and Help for the Single Mom: The 21 Principles of a Healthy Single Mom” by Lori Little. Following the 21 Scripture-based principles promises to bring a “life of purpose and meaning, focus and order, balance and harmony.”

In December the Single Moms Group got together to share some holiday joy. They enjoyed the outdoors on the track at Village School. The children also enjoyed a Bible scavenger hunt and a delicious baked potato meal with everyone contributing. The children received lots of goodies and each of the moms received a picture frame with the Proverbs 2:1-5 promise. Each mom placed a gift of thanksgiving in a gift basket, which we presented to a very surprised and grateful Ardith as a small token of our appreciation for all she has done for us.

Single Moms would like to extend our gratitude first and foremost to Jesus Christ. He has provided all that was needed to start the group, and is continuing to give the increase. We would also like to thank many others who have blessed our group through both encouragement and practical assistance. Ardith credits the success of this ministry to sharing the mind of Christ, and allowing the Holy Spirit to work and pour out God’s blessings.

We are a diverse group with different circumstances and ideas, yet centered in Christ. Our main objective is discipling our children to be servants of God, which is only possible with His partnership. As God empowers each of us to be strong, we hope to reach out to other single moms in our church and our community to share the renewed hope and promises that we have received.

“My son, if you receive my words, and treasure my commands within you, so that you incline your ear to wisdom, and apply your heart to understanding; yes, if you cry out for discernment, and lift up your voice for understanding, if you seek her as silver, and search for her as for hidden treasures; then you will understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God.” *Proverbs 2:1-5*

Anna Chiarenza

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**Statistics on Single Moms**

- Single moms are the fastest-growing population in the world.
- Single moms are the highest un-churched population in the world. 95% of single moms are un-churched.
- 37 million children live with a single mom.
- 53% of the births in 2011 are children of single moms under 30.
- The already small number of single moms in the church are leaving at a rapid pace. Single moms feel both judged, and that they do not fit in at church.

[http://www.hope4singlemoms.com](http://www.hope4singlemoms.com)
Personal Testimonies from Single Moms

“Carol was from Colombia. She came with low self-worth but left empowered having found the true value of who she is in Jesus’ eyes. She has just gone back home and hopes to start a single moms’ support group in her country!”

“I was invited to be part of the planning committee. Fearing the admittance of being a single mom and possibly over-committing myself, I hesitated. However, spending time with some very committed women and wanting to support Ardith has blessed me in ways I never anticipated. The material is excellent, the fellowship is sweet and the prayers are powerful! I praise and thank God for knowing what we need, helping us to embrace reality, and patiently pursuing us.”

“I’ve seen each woman spiritually inspired, blossom, grow in confidence and capability as single moms and finding the caring acceptance, encouragement, and friendship they need through the other moms and a mentor in Lori Little. I kept wishing that I had had such a support group and Lori’s wisdom and resources when I was a single mom. Thank you, Ardith, for all your efforts, from all of us!”

“This group has helped me to understand that Jesus can lead, direct and guide in whatever circumstances life presents. This class reminds me that He truly never leaves nor forsakes me.”

“Just at a time when I was going through a separation with everything coming apart including my church home, God had prepared a way in advance and had a whole new family to embrace me at Village. In addition to the loving cohesiveness of the group, the material is so biblical and comprehensive.”

Welcome to the Family!

Elder Bob and Cecelia Hess have chosen Berrien Springs for their retirement home. Married for 19 years, the Hess’s have eight children: five girls and one boy for Cecelia, and two boys for Bob. Knowing that four of their children are “Michiganders” helped the couple make their retirement location decision. Having half of their 28 grandchildren live in Michigan brings lots of life to their household! Two grandsons live them and attend Andrews University.

Elder Hess has served in pastoral ministry for 44 years. Originally from Oregon, he grew up in the Angwin, California area, around Pacific Union College. After graduating from PUC, he served in Iowa, California, and New York, sandwiching in his Masters of Divinity degree from Andrews University. Elder Hess loves to give in-home Bible studies. An avid gardener, his sermon ideas come while working outside. Coming in from sun and soil, he is able to sit down and write out his message.

Cecelia considers herself a mostly a mom, but has also worked outside the home through the years, including working for different conference offices. She loves to cook and bake, sew and quilt, play the piano and accordion, and especially tell children’s stories about her children! She currently babysits three of her grandchildren, ranging in age from eight weeks to three years old.

The couple has enjoyed some foreign travel, experiencing Russia, Korea, Jamaica, and the Reformation tour in Germany.

We may not see much of the Hess’s for several months as they fulfill an interim pastorate in Big Rapids where Elder Hess is working half-time with their congregation.

We look forward to your return to Village. Welcome to the family!

Answer to page 4: Vince Lombardi

I believe in love at first sight because... I loved my mom since I opened my eyes!
Cook Nuclear Plant Supports VAES Technology Program

Mr. Aaron Koleda, Village Adventist Elementary School Technology Director, has a vision for computer science education. His passion is evident as he works with students to generate excitement and motivation to learn science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM subjects). Mr. Koleda recently set up an Adopt-A-Classroom website to reach out to the community for support of Computer Science Education Week, which was Dec. 8-12. His dream was to participate in the national effort for students to learn basic programming skills.

Danielle Burgoyne and Irene Weaver, employees at Cook Nuclear Plant, were searching for a community outreach program, and came across Mr. Koleda’s website. These ladies are part of the group Women in Nuclear (WIN), and have been selling candy at the plant to raise funds, which would promote STEM subjects. Danielle and Irene presented to the Village School fifth to eighth grade students five Sphero robots, which are programmable balls created by Orbotix. The student response was amazing as they cheered and shouted!

Mr. Koleda used these robots to teach programming to students in grades K-8 the week of Dec. 8, as they participated in the Hour of Code event that took place nationwide. During that week, across over 150 countries, millions of people and students try out computer programming for the first time. Anyone can learn to code! The goal is for millions of students to give it a try.

Danielle and Irene also announced that Cook Nuclear has purchased a 3D printer for the technology program. The new printer will arrive in February.

On behalf of the Village School technology program and our students, thank you, Danielle and Irene, WIN, and Cook Nuclear Plant.

Thanks to everyone who helped make the annual Christmas Brunch so delightful!
Keeping Connected

Let's warmly welcome Pastor Joe and Ruthie Reeves as they officially join us today. Pastor Reeves will serve as our new associate/youth pastor.

Some Enchanted Evening Plan to spend the evening of February 21 with your church family. The special event will also include an opportunity for members to contribute to Sanctuary Renewal.

You can give in two ways. Bring an item or service certificate, such as homemade bread, a houseplant, woodworking item, coupon for haircutting, snow removal, lawn care, etc. That evening you will also be able to make a donation to acquire an item or a service that you would otherwise utilize. Doors will open at 6:45 and the variety program will begin at 7:30.

Teen Bible Camp for 8th-10th graders is February 26-March 1 at Camp AuSable.

Adventist Heritage Ministry now has a Children’s Tour available at the Historic Adventist Village in Battle Creek. In addition to touring the buildings, such as James and Ellen White’s home, children may participate in hands-on activities. Learn how to churn butter, beat rugs, and gather eggs. Call 269-965-3000 for more information.

Dedicate a week to preparing Camp AuSable for the season. Both skilled laborers and general workers are invited to Work Week in the beautiful north woods from May 3-7.

Kayleigh Lynn Offenback arrived Christmas Eve, December 24, 2014, at 4:57 p.m. She weighed 8 lbs. 2.5 oz. and measured 20 inches in length. Congratulations, Brenton and Rachelle!

Lilly Hajimihalis smilingly displays her manger scene, created in Sabbath School. Thank you, Sabbath School leaders, for going the extra mile to show our younger members our wonderful Jesus.

The fourth and final Sanctuary Renovation Walk Thru will be tomorrow, Sunday, January 18, at 11 a.m. in the Family Center. Bring all your questions and observations to discuss. The church business meeting is scheduled for Sunday, January 25 at 11 a.m.

Please send all newsletter submissions to collene@skynet.com.