As I am lying in my hammock listening to the snoring around me I am interested in the variations of sounds being made. Some are low and rumbling, some are high and wheezy, some light and airy, and some are very long and foghorn like. It is a full choir of snorers sending a triumphal chorus out into the peaceful night. Beatriz turns in her hammock and bumps my hammock, which, in turn, swings me into Nancy’s hammock, causing Ed on the other side of her to quit snoring. Someone commented to me a few days earlier saying, “I knew we would be sleeping close together, but I did not know it would be this close.” I again re-adjust myself in my hammock trying to get comfortable. The edge of my hammock rubs against my feet, making the fire-ant bites start to itch again. I re-adjust myself a few more times and then finally fall asleep.

Before long it is light outside once again. I open my eyes and think, “Wow, we are really here on a boat in the middle of the Amazon; this is really happening!” I get up and look out over the river; it is calm, smooth as glass. I pull out my camera to get a time lapse photo of the clouds moving across the sky. It is beautiful. Sounds of breakfast being made are coming from the bottom deck of the boat. I better go down to make sure everything is ready.

After eating a good breakfast we all gather around for worship. Every morning and evening we have worship as a group. Since we have some people that only speak Portuguese in our group, and some that only speak English, we translate everything we do. After worship I stand to give the announcements:

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“And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.’ Amen.” Matthew 28:18-20.

There is something about going on a mission trip that changes you. You cannot leave the comforts of home and spend a couple weeks experiencing the simplicity of how much of the world lives, and not have a deeper appreciation for how God has blessed us, and perhaps even a deeper desire to share more.

If you have never had the experience before, I challenge you to take a step of faith and do it. Find out what it is like to sleep in a hammock so close that you bump up against your neighbor when you turn; enjoy the taste of tropical fruit that has not been stored for a couple weeks before it gets to your supermarket. See the joy in the face of someone who has discovered what it means to have Jesus as their best friend as they are baptized, because you introduced them to Christ.

Mission service is not for the rich, it is for the committed. God has promised to provide if we will put Him to the test and step out in faith. Come on, put your foot in the water and watch it part.

Pastor Hayward

Continued from p. 1, Brazilian Mission Trip

“This morning we will have three groups. Our first group, the medical team, will be visiting a village about 30 minutes away by fast boat. They will leave right after announcements, and be back for lunch. The second group is the construction team; they will be here at base camp continuing the work on the septic systems. The third group will be the VBS team; they will get organized and start their activities at 9:00 a.m. at the church.”

“Any questions? OK, let's get to work.”

I will be working construction today. I take off my “boat shoes” and put on my work boots. I head up the muddy trail to the church. As I get closer to the church, I see barrels that are supposed to be in the ground floating in a pool of water above ground. This is not good. Erica volunteers to bail out the water while the rest of us work on putting in the barrels at the other sites.

The morning goes fast and soon it is lunchtime. Everyone heads back to the boat. It is decided that we will take the big boat and go up river where there is a small beach. Soon the medical team arrives. We eat lunch and then take a refreshing dip in the water to cool off.

Many of us have lots of dirty clothes so we decide to wash our clothes in the river as well. We make a clothes line on the beach to hang them out to dry. After only drying a short while the captain of the boat says we need to leave now because the waves are getting too big and the boat is being pushed too hard up against the shore. We grab our semi-dry clothes and get into the big boat.

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Continued from p. 2, Brazilian Mission Trip

The big boat tries to move, but it is stuck. The captain says, “Everyone to the front of the boat!” We all move to the front of the boat, and he tries again, but we’re still stuck. Then the captain’s first officer runs into the woods and pulls out a very long piece of wood. All the guys in the front of the boat push the big piece of wood to move the boat away from the shore. Surprisingly, it works, and now we are free and heading out to open water.

Back at base camp it is time for the evangelism meeting to start. We all get something to eat, change our clothes, and start heading up to the church for the meetings. Not many people from the village are at the church for the meeting but it still seems to be growing by one or two people every night. The children are also having nightly meetings at the school. The children’s program is very well attended.

After the meetings end we head back to the big boat to have worship and get ready for bed. At worship we gather around and start to share stories. The medical team tells us about a boy that was shot in the head several years ago. Now he is doing amazingly well and wants to know Jesus better and become a Seventh-day Adventist.

The VBS team tells us about the children and how they enjoy the Bible stories and actives. The construction team is encouraged when hearing that the locals are very pleased with the hard work being done. I enjoy these evening worships because it helps us keep focused and reminds us why we are really here. I love these times of sharing.

It is dark now and time to go to bed. I take a quick shower on the upper deck in a little make-shift shower. The water is a little cold but still feels good. I notice I have double the bug bites I had yesterday. I put on more cortisone cream and head to my hammock. Near the front of the boat I hear the first person starting to snore. I better get some rest tonight, because I’m sure there will be more adventure tomorrow.

Rob Ritzenthaler

Join us to hear more stories:

• April 4, Adult Sabbath School, Jennifer & Aubrey Ruedinger
• April 11, Adult Sabbath School, Kissinger Family
• April 18, Adult Sabbath School, Harry & Sharon Miller
• April 11, Sabbath evening special program--full group
Every Step of the Way

On Genevieve Goosey’s 85th birthday she shared her testimony with the church family. Since last June she has encountered many health challenges, including four hospitalizations, surgery, and three nursing home stays. Genevieve shared some reflections from her life:

One of my favorite verses is Psalm 23:1, “The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.”

As a young child I went to live with my grandparents. Shortly after I turned 15 I was baptized. In about three weeks my grandmother died. When my mother came to the funeral, she took my two brothers to live with her in Chicago. I was to stay with my grandfather.

When I was 18 I came to EMC. The Lord has been with me every step of the way. If I had gone to live with my mother, I would have been on the streets of Chicago. The Lord has been guiding me.

I never thought when I entered the hospital on June 2 of the long stay it would be to get where I am today.

Psalm 23:1 would come to me that the Lord was with me and taking care of my needs. With all the therapy I had in the nursing home I couldn’t stand or walk.

When I came home finally I had an Adventist therapist that encouraged me to stand and walk. I can stand and walk with the help of the Lord and the therapist.

I know the prayers you gave helped me. Please continue to pray for me. The Lord didn’t answer my prayers overnight, but I have a very close walk with Him. He has been there every step of the way.

Celebrating Spring in Kindergarten

Take a peek at our creature-kids as they prepare to sing If I Were a Butterfly.

For You gave me a heart and You gave me a smile, You gave me Jesus and You made me Your child, And I just thank You, Father, for making me, me.
Thursday, March 12, was an exciting day at Village Adventist Elementary School. Students in grades K-6 participated in the Jump Rope for Heart Event.

This event is planned and led by the 6th grade class. Students lead an assembly program weeks in advance to promote the event, and get the students enthusiastic about the project. Students raised money by getting pledges for jumping rope. On event day, the sixth grade class led out in organizing and encouraging students! Students also could shoot hoops to help support the cause. A little over $4,000 was raised for the American Heart Association through this event!

Thanks for the great planning and coordination to Mr. Swackhamer and his sixth grade students.

**Wax Museum News**

The sixth grade class had an impressive Wax Museum display in the school gym on Thursday afternoon, March 12. Students were dressed in costume as a famous person in history, and when prompted, they give an in-character speech. Students work hard to research and learn all they can about their famous character. Visiting students and family members could push a button, and the character would give their speech. The costumes were great and we learned new things about the lives of many significant individuals.

**Back Row:**
Betsy Ross
Lottie Moon
Corrie Ten Boom
Wright brother
Ulysses Grant
Harriet Tubman
Rosa Park
Amelia Earhart
Albert Einstein
Martin Luther King Jr.

**Middle Row:**
Christopher Columbus
Van Gogh
Jackie Robinson
William Tyndale
Sacajawea
Queen Isabel
Pocahontas
Joan of Arc

**Front Row:**
Muhammad Ali

Today concludes Pastor Kelly’s sermon series on the family. If you would like to share the messages, they are available at [www.villagesda.org](http://www.villagesda.org) and in CD format. Fill out a request sheet at the CD ministry booth in the connecting corridor to place an order.
Story 1:
After the collapse of the Soviet Union, I was converted and joined the Seventh-day Adventist church in 1992. During this time, freedom of religion was a new concept in the former Soviet republics, but gradually religious freedoms spread. Protestant churches did not need to meet underground anymore. Oversees evangelists became increasingly welcome and Christians experienced less hostility and rejection at work, in their families, and from the secret police.

When I joined the church, my immediate family was very supportive and encouraging. My parents were nominal Christians to start with, and seeing all the kindness and love among the members filled them with confidence that this was the right church for their daughter to be baptized into.

However, my parents very soon became hostile towards the church as they realized that my commitment was not nominal, but very real and serious. They were not prepared for their nearly 16-year-old daughter to be attending church services a couple of times each week, leading in kids and youth events, teaching the Sabbath School lessons, and keeping the Sabbath day holy.

For my parents, my constant round of church activities was too much to bear and too heretical to allow to continue. So, they decided to limit my exposure to the church events. They would not allow me to attend the mid-week events for the fear of me losing interest in academia and becoming fanatical. I assured them that my commitment was not fanatical and that my academic performance was not going to be neglected. Soon, they realized my academic excellence was not affected and my love for my church brothers and sisters wasn’t going to disappear. However, they still didn’t like the idea of their teenage daughter being so involved in church affairs.

Then something interesting happened. One of our neighbors, who kept suing one neighbor after another, had some charges against my parents. My parents got really upset and worried about the whole process of going to court and the potential financial cost, despite knowing all the while that they were absolutely innocent. So, they started asking questions like, “Where is your God, and why is He allowing such injustices to take place?”

I told them that I did not know the answers to their questions; however, I did trust the One who knows and who is able to help in time of need. My parents said that they would really appreciate it if I would pray for the situation, adding that God seems to always answer my prayers!

So, I prayed in a very earnest way, and to make a long story short, on the morning of the court hearing, the unfriendly neighbor who was pressing charges against my parents had a heart attack and passed away. We were so happy! The charges were automatically dropped and my parents also dropped all their accusations and charges against me and never again stopped me from attending the local Adventist church as often as I wanted to. And, perhaps more importantly, they began attending the church for themselves.

Story 2:
The second story happened to me a couple of years later when I was a student at the state university. In this ex-communist nation, Saturday remained a working day. Only Jews were thought to keep the Sabbath, and most of the Jews had long since emigrated. I shared my faith openly with the most of my professors, and although they did not embrace my beliefs, some of them seemed to be neutral and accommodating towards my Sabbath-keeping practices of not working or studying on Sabbath.

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Just Imagine . . .

Millions of Seventh-day Adventists . . .
a round the world . . .
all praying . . .
for 100 days . . .
for the same thing

Praying for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on our church and the decisions made during the General Conference Session in July of 2015, San Antonio, Texas!

PLEASE REGISTER at 100daysofprayer.org to be a part of this prayer initiative. A daily prayer focus and inspirational blog is being e-mailed out during the 100 days to all those who register. Let’s pray:

First, for a deeper outpouring of the Holy Spirit in our own lives!
Second, for the Holy Spirit to be poured out in our local churches as we press together.
Third, many difficult decisions need to be made at the upcoming G.C. Session, and we are encouraged to pray for the power of the Holy Spirit to be fully manifested in all members and attendees during and after the session.
The 100 days will culminate onsite at the GC session where session attendees will be encouraged to continue to pray together both in the sessions and in the prayer meeting room at the dome.

"Just as long as the church is satisfied with small things, it is disqualified to receive the great things of God." Home Missionary, November 1, 1893 par. 25

God's Dramatic Answers, continued from p. 6:

However, one of my professors, an atheist, was genuinely baffled by my request. She said that she would turn a blind eye towards me missing the classes during the semester, but there was no way she could allow me to miss the final exam. If I didn't take the exam, it would reflect badly on her own professional reputation and standing within the university. And so I went on praying and letting God work through the impossibilities. On the day of the year-end exam, which was a Sabbath, I went to church praying all the way for God to soften my professor's heart. God gave me total peace in my heart.

On the following Monday, I went to the university to see my professor, wondering what she would say to me. Would she make me retake the whole school year because I had refused to sit for the year-end exam? Would she recommend that I be expelled from the university for my willful disregard for university regulations? What would I tell my parents?

But, to my deep surprise, she was very happy to see me. She told me that my paper was amazing and very insightful, and that I was the only student who had gotten an A. But, I reminded her, I had been in church on Saturday. I hadn't actually taken the exam. However, she seemed to be unaware of anything I was trying to say. At that moment, I had to wink to my guardian angel and thank Jesus for working a miracle in my case.

I treasure these precious experiences with Jesus as they are reminders of what Jesus can do when our wisdom and power and strength fail, and when all we can do is to step out in faith and claim His promises.

Luda Vine

These experiences happened in Azerbaijan where Luda met Jesus. Her parents were later baptized as Seventh-
Our last Sabbath to meet in the sanctuary will be April 11. While work progresses in the sanctuary, we will worship together in the Family Center. Fellowship meals will be hosted downstairs.

Need a Garden Plot? Andrews University will be assigning garden plots on April 19 from 8 - 11 a.m. Plants will also be available for purchase at that time. Contact Student Gardens at info@augardens.com.

The 2nd annual VAES Run for the Fund is scheduled for April 19 at 9 a.m. This run benefits the Worthy Student Fund. All registrants will receive a T-shirt on race day. Register at VAES.org.

What’s Up in Fort Peck?

• Record high temps lead to ice jam on Poplar River.
• 15-year old trapped in truck drowns in Missouri River.
• Arson destroys Poplar phone and utilities office.
• $29 million loan approved for Buffalo Rivers Casino.
• Land purchased for Community Center/SDA Church in Poplar.
• Pastor Kelly and Bill Keith make arrangements for 2015 Montana Mission Trip.

Thursday, July 30 to Monday, August 10 are the dates for the upcoming Montana Mission Trip. Outreach plans include ministry at the Juvenile Detention Center, and both the women’s section and men’s section of the new jail in Poplar. Various painting and cleanup projects around town, land preparation for the Community Center/SDA Church, and an international vegetarian food fair at Fort Peck’s Community College are also in the works.