NPUC Executive Committee Requests Alaska Mission Status

During their quarterly meeting on May 4, North Pacific Union Conference executive committee members voted to ask the North American Division to grant mission status to the sparsely populated but geographically vast Arctic and native village portion of Alaska. Maintaining a viable ministry in Alaska, of which 70 percent is accessible only by air, costs three times that of the rest of the U.S. Ken Crawford, Alaska Conference president, says the proposed change would, among other benefits, re-ignite the focus of mission work within the NAD and open doors for student missionaries to serve in Alaska. It would also mark the 219 villages throughout the Arctic as un-entered areas open for Global Mission designation. The more populated areas of Alaska near Anchorage and along the southeastern panhandle would remain as the Alaska Conference under the proposal. GLEANER readers will be informed if and when this request is dealt with by the NAD. Watch a short video of the Arctic Mission project HERE.

Adventists Give and Receive Help in the South

The Adventist News Network reports Adventist members and employees in the southern United States were not spared suffering during a day and night of violent tornadoes that swept through six states on April 27. The North American Division reported April 30 that two church members in northeastern Alabama, and one in Apison, Tenn., are confirmed as fatalities. Overall, at least 349 people have been reported as killed in the region. Along with much of Huntsville, Ala., Oakwood University lost electricity, and ended its semester early. Final exams were canceled and graduation postponed until the end of May. Adventist Community Services Disaster Response teams are assisting individuals, families and communities. The U.S. Federal Emergency Management Association (FEMA) has asked ACS/DR to manage a warehouse in the Tuscaloosa, Ala. area for at least the next six months, with the possibility of continuing the operation through April 2012. Read more from the Adventist News Network HERE. Want to know how you can help? Read how at the Adventist Community Services website HERE.

Inclement Weather Hampers UCC Building Progress

Looking Ahead

May
8: Mother’s Day
12–15: 35th Annual Regional Convocation
19: July Ad/Article Deadline
22: Idaho Constituency Session
30: Memorial Day

June
14–18: Idaho Camp Meeting
15–18: Mont. Camp Meeting
15–18: UCC Camp Meeting
16: Aug. Ad/Article Deadline
16–25: Wash. Camp Meeting
19: UCC Constituency Session
19: Father’s Day

July
4: Independence Day
12–16: Ore. Gladstone Camp Meeting
14: Sept. Ad/Article Deadline

GLEANER Blogs

- Cheri Corder
- Cindy’s Garden Blog
- Let’s Talk
- Mike Jones
- Monthly Archival Photo
- Tip Sheet
An unusually cold and wet spring has added challenges to the timetable for completing the new Upper Columbia Conference office. Soggy ground, late snow and other issues have delayed the paving process needed to allow occupancy. The weather, however, has not dampened the spirits of Bob Folkenberg, UCC president, who still believes conference personnel will be able to move in by the end of this month. To supervise the project from afar, check out the construction page and webcam HERE.

**Creation-Evolution Series Begins on Hope TV**

Who is right … creationists or evolutionists? Here’s a program to help you decide. *The Greatest Show on Earth: Making Sense of the Creation-Evolution Debate* began May 4 and continues through May 8 each evening at 7:30 p.m. Pacific time. Timothy Standish, genetic research scientist, and Ron Clouzet, theologian, are presenting evidence helpful to inquiring minds. Invite your family, friends, neighbors and co-workers. These science-based, biblically-sound, and professionally-informative sessions are designed as an opportunity to get acquainted with and serve the community in a relevant way. Find out more HERE.

**Webinar: Active Family Ministries = Church Growth**

Join AdventSource on May 10 at 8 p.m. Eastern time (or 5 p.m. Pacific time) for a free webinar with Claudio and Pamela Consuegra, NAD family ministries directors. Learn how to think outside the box as you work to nurture the families in your church and community. Learn about outreach opportunities you may be missing, how to attract and reach unchurched families, and more. Visit HERE to sign up.

**Check Out the GLEANER Blogs**

Don’t forget to the latest blog postings from Cheri Corder, Mike Jones and of course, Cindy’s Garden Blog. They’re all available on the GLEANER website. Add your thoughts to these columns and others HERE.
Adventists are victims, helping others in southern U.S. tornadoes wake

Three church members confirmed dead; at least 349 killed as violent storms swept six states

29 Apr 2011, Silver Spring, Maryland, United States
Adventist Review news roundup

Members and employees of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the southern United States were not spared suffering during a day and night of violent tornadoes that swept through six states April 27. The North American Division reported late in the evening on April 30 that two church members in northeastern Alabama and one in Apison, Tennessee are confirmed as fatalities; overall, at least 349 people have been reported as killed in the region, 250 of these in Alabama alone, according to the latest media reports.

"Two members of the Ownbey Chapel Seventh-day Adventist Church, which is located in Ider, Alabama, approximately 33 miles southeast of Chattanooga, and one member of the Apison Seventh-day Adventist Church in southeastern Tennessee were killed during Wednesday's tornado outbreak," a North American Division statement indicated.

Also, one Seventh-day Adventist Church member in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, was hospitalized following the tornado's devastation in that city. At least five members of the South Central Conference lost their homes in Tuscaloosa; several more members' homes have been reported damaged there. The tornado, which swept from Tuscaloosa to Birmingham, had an 80-mile track, winds as high as 165 miles-per-hour and was designated an EF-4, the second-highest rating, a report at the Huntsville Times Website indicated.

Church officials in the affected area are working with local and state emergency officials to assess the situation in their local communities and determining where our assistance will be most needed, but are experiencing difficulties caused by numerous downed trees blocking roads, limited electricity, and unreliable phone service.

A tornado destroyed the Piedmont, Alabama, Seventh-day Adventist Church, 29 miles east of Gadsden, Alabama, the North American Division said. No injuries were reported, however.

In Huntsville, Alabama, church-owned Oakwood University lost electricity, along with much of the northern Alabama city, and ended its semester early. Final exams were canceled and the 2011 graduation is postponed until the end of May, school officials said. Several members' homes in the Huntsville area have been damaged or destroyed, reports indicate.

The Anderson Hills neighborhood home of Dr. Leslie Pollard, Oakwood's president, sustained major damage, OU spokeswoman Michele Solomon said in a telephone interview. A number of other Oakwood employees and retirees are also Anderson Hills residents, she said, and many of these suffered damage. So far, in the Huntsville area, the homes of five other church members have been reported as lost, with seven others reported as damaged, the NAD report said. Two members in neighboring Madison, Alabama, also lost their homes.

The South Central Conference of Seventh-day Adventists said April 29 they would postpone the April 30-May 1 Constituency Meeting, originally slated for the Oakwood campus. Conditions at Oakwood and in Huntsville have precluded having the session, expected to see 1,500 delegates, at the school, said South Central Conference president D. C. Edmond. A new date will be announced following the conference's next executive committee meeting, he said.

In Guntersville, Alabama, approximately 41 miles southeast of Huntsville, Pastor Jonathan Arroyo's home was damaged, but his family is safe.

At the same time, eight Southern Adventist University faculty and staff homes were either damaged or destroyed in the wake of the 20 tornadoes that swept through Southeastern Tennessee Wednesday, April 27. Among the SAU faculty whose homes were lost is Dr. Jud Lake, Professor of Preaching and Adventist Studies, whose 2010 book, "Ellen White Under Fire," seeks to answer current critics of the visionary who was a pioneering co-founder of the Church. Lake and his family are reported to be unharmed.

"We actually were very very lucky," said Trenton Schwarzer, SAU patrol officer at Campus Safety. "The worst [damage on campus] was one tree on Cafeteria Drive that took out one car, and miscellaneous trees on campus."

While students and staff are helping clear trees in nearby neighborhoods, Southern Adventist University is mobilizing to help displaced faculty and staff.

"We are working at finding housing for them for tonight. Where there are transportation issues--cars damaged to the point where they cannot be driven -- we’re working on providing transportation for them. If they need to move things that are not damaged out of a damaged home...we’re going to provide warehouse space on campus," said Bob Young, senior vice president of Academic Administration at Southern.

"Our prayers and condolences are with all those in the Southern Union who have been affected by these storms," said Pastor Gordon Retzer, president of the Southern Union Conference territory. "In this time of turmoil, we can be comforted by God’s grace and mercies."

"In response to tornadoes, severe weather, floods and wild fires throughout the United States, Adventist Community Services Disaster Response (ACS DR) teams are assisting individuals, families and communities," said Sung Kwon, ACS national executive director. "ACS DR, in partnership with other voluntary agencies and Federal and state governments, meets the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of those affected by providing food, blankets, clothing and other much needed relief supplies."
Adventists are victims, helping others in southern U.S. tornadoes wake — http://news.adventist.org/2011/04/adventists-are-victims.html

On April 30, the North American Division reported the following assistance efforts:

* The Samaritan Center in Ooltewah, TN has partnered with Adventist Community Services Disaster Response in Ooltewah to distribute cardboard boxes, gloves, trash bags, and flashlights;
* Volunteers from Ooltewah Seventh-day Adventist Church made about 100 sack lunches. They worked with The Salvation Army in Bradley County to distribute the food;
* Apison Seventh-day Adventist Church members are providing food to residents of the Apison area, which is three miles from the Southern Adventist University campus;
* A volunteer group from Johnson City, TN came with chainsaws to the Collegedale area and helped Adventists and other community members;
* The First Seventh-day Adventist Church of Huntsville Alabama fed members of their church and community on Saturday, April 30;
* McDonald Road Pathfinders fed emergency workers at Apison Elementary School. This was the staging location for clean-up and recovery efforts there;
* Atlanta Adventist Academy sent a group of students to the Apison area to help with clean-up;
* Southern Adventist University has offered the Hamilton County Emergency Management Agency the use of dorm rooms for temporary housing beginning Sunday, May 1;
* The Georgia-Cumberland Conference is working with emergency management officials to establish warehouse operations in Georgia and Tennessee. And, the South Central Conference is working with emergency management officials to establish warehouse operations in Alabama. Locations for both warehouses will be announced when confirmed, officials said.

Church members and friends are encouraged to visit the Adventist Community Services website, for more information about how ACS ministries are making a difference, or to make a donation.

--Rainey Park of Southern Adventist University and the North American Division contributed news reporting for this article.
The Greatest Show on Earth: Making Sense of the Creation-Evolution Debate

Apr 25, 2011 22:41

The Greatest Show on Earth: Making Sense of the Creation-Evolution Debate

Who is right...creationists or evolutionists? Hope Channel will help solve the debate May 4 to 8 at 7:30 p.m. ET/PT by airing The Greatest Show on Earth: Making Sense of the Creation-Evolution Debate live from Nashville, Tennessee.

This series, with renowned genetic research scientist Timothy Standish, Ph.D., and theologian Ron Clouzet, D.Min, will present astounding evidence that will strengthen your faith! Invite your family, friends, neighbors, and coworkers. Help them weigh the evidence and decide for themselves. You won't be disappointed.

The five evening sessions are designed as an opportunity to get acquainted with and serve the community in a relevant way. The seminar will be science-based, biblically sound, and professionally informative.

“The Bible is very clear,” says Standish, “Nature did not create itself.”

“People are interested in creation for a reason. Not only is it at the core of our beliefs and a major factor in deciding how we will live our lives, but it is also intrinsically amazing and fun,” adds Standish. “We will have some spectacular fossils, reveal incredible things about how our bodies work, and examine profound questions that people have struggled with throughout time.”

Wednesday, May 4: The Way We Were: A Look at Deep Time
Thursday, May 5: The Life of Creatures: Wonder and Trouble in Paradise
Thursday, May 6: Genes and Genies: What We Know and What We Don’t
Friday, May 7: The Flood and the Fossil: Radiometric Dating and Hard Questions
Saturday, May 8: Father God or Mother Earth: History, Presuppositions, the Problem of Evil and a Loving God
“Expect great things from God; attempt great things for God.” (William Carey, missionary to India.)

This story is written by Martin Kim and is currently in a condensed form as edited by Cindy R. Chamberlin.

There was a young man long ago in England who asked his board if the Church had done all it could for the heathen. He received this answer: “Young man, sit down. When God pleases to convert the heathen world, He will do it without your help or mine.” The man was William Carey who eventually sailed for India where he served as a missionary for 40 years (1793-1833). “Expect great things from God; attempt great things for God,” was the mantra of this man, now considered the father of modern missions.

In December of 2005, our church began giving all the loose offering we collected every third Sabbath to foreign missions. We began doing this for two main reasons. First, we wanted to be more actively involved in fulfilling the Great Commission. Secondly, we wanted to highlight the importance of foreign missions in the minds of young people …

We felt God led us to choose Adventist Southeast Asia Projects as the mission organization to send our funds through. ASAP appealed to us because they were serving some of the poorest of the poor in the world, and we knew that the small amount of loose offering we collected every third Sabbath (averaging $200) would go a long way toward helping the physically and spiritually malnourished.

After our second collection in January, I listened to a message on tape by David Gates, missionary pilot. I was inspired as he shared story after story about how God provided. And then I was really challenged when he said, (in paraphrase) “We will never have enough money to finish the work. How much will be enough, a million, ten million, a hundred million? We need to go forward in faith and do the work God has called us to do and trust the God of infinite resources to provide.” I found myself agreeing with what I heard… Afterward I found myself praying, “Lord, I want to step forward in faith. I want to see you do the kinds of things David Gates is talking about.”

I prayed, “Lord, what do you want us to do?” And then I began thinking about our special offering for ASAP. I wanted to challenge our church to pray for a $500 offering, but decided $500 didn’t require much faith at all. Then I considered a $700 offering. That required a little bit of faith. I finally concluded it definitely required a LOT of faith to ask for a $1,000 offering. Since our last offering collected in January had gone to provide rice for the people of Vietnam, our group decided to provide Bibles for the Vietnamese in February. I showed up the next Sabbath and put this challenge to our members, asking them to pray for an offering of $1,000 so we could provide 200 Bibles to the people of Vietnam. Every Sabbath and through the weekly church announcements, via email, our members were reminded to pray for this special gift. I reminded them when we pray God moves and does that which only He can do. And we encouraged our members with the mantra: “Expect great things from God; attempt great things for God.”

We prayed for a whole month. God blessed us in February with an offering of $4,382. It was amazing! We had one visitor who came to our church one week before the offering was collected. He heard we were praying for a $1000 offering. He left a check for $1,500. On the Sabbath the offering was being collected, we had another visitor from California. He gave us a check for $500. And the rest of our members also gave generously. We were able to provide 876 Bibles.

Well, what do you do after you witness the power of prayer and you see God move in a mighty way? We decided to pray for the same amount would show no faith. We decided to round up the last amount we received and pray God would bless us with a $4,500 offering in March.

We prayed that with $4500 we would be able to provide many churches for Cambodia. It costs $550 to provide a bamboo and thatch church. With $4500 we could provide at least 8 churches. God blessed us with an offering of $6,684. Once again we witnessed God’s power and grace. Many of our members who gave generously in February gave twice as much. On top of that, it so happened on this same Sabbath, the leaders of New Life went to the Korean-speaking Sabbath School program where one of our leaders shared about our special monthly mission offering. At the end of her talk she made an appeal inviting people to join us in giving this special offering. One member gave $2,000. The total given to us by the members of the Korean Church was $2,740. This was nothing less than “the Lord’s doing and it is marvelous in our eyes,” (Mk 12:11).
We prayed our April offering would exceed $7,000. We praise the Lord $8,470 came in to support the persecuted pastors in Vietnam. As we saw the various ways in which the money flowed in, we knew God was providing us with a special answer to prayer. We knew this was not the result of luck or having generous members. This was “the Lord’s doing.” As we thought about the vast needs in Southeast Asia, we decided it was time to “launch out into the deep,” (Luke 5:4). We began praying God would bless us in May with $15,000 to support the Cambodian- and Vietnamese-radio ministries and to provide radios. The Lord blessed us abundantly with an offering of $22,734. We realized truly “Our heavenly Father has a thousand ways to provide for us of which we know nothing,” (MH 481).

As we set our next goal of $25,000 we began asking Adventist Southeast Asia Projects where the need was the greatest as we desired to make the greatest difference for the poor in South East Asia. To make a long story short, we saw over $120,000 come through our church in 2006 as we continued setting higher and higher goals. This experience taught us to persevere in prayer. It has strengthened our faith and helped us learn to wait upon the Lord through the longer periods of time required to reach higher monetary goals.

You can listen to the entire story “Expect Great Things from God” at www.audioverse.org.
To receive a free copy of the ASAP newsletter call 269-471-3026.

Recently I came across two pieces of information about Seventh-day Adventists that left me surprised and chagrined.

The first was a story in USA Today in March stating that our church is the fastest-growing Christian denomination in North America. (Some of us have wondered if the church was shrinking here, so that was unexpected). The second was a statement attributed to Pastor Lee Venden that, on average, 70% of Adventists in churches where he’s conducted revival meetings in recent years admit to having little or no daily devotional life.

Wow! These aren’t the inactives he’s talking about. These are the folks who turn up in church most every Sabbath. You and me. The regulars.

How does one synthesize these two disparate pieces of information? I mean, how much more growth might our church have achieved if, say, 50% of us had a daily devotional life powerful enough to impact our Christian witness? Or 75%?

But maybe numerical growth isn’t all that important! Spiritual growth—becoming more like Jesus—is what matters most, wouldn’t you agree?

So how are you doing in that department?

In that context, let me share with you an amazing little tool that has been helping me bigtime in my devotional life. It’s called a checklist. I have one and use it relentlessly every day. Let me tell you what got me started.

In his book, The Checklist Manifesto: How To Get Things Right, Atul Gawande, a surgeon, writes how a simple checklist is enabling mankind to be more successful in a variety of fields. He describes a typical checklist as five to seven points on a 3” by 5” card that cover the essentials of how to do something. Like performing a successful surgery. Building a skyscraper. Or flying an airplane. Here’s a case in point.

On Oct. 30, 1935, the U.S. Army Air Corps held a flight competition for airplane manufacturers seeking the contract to build the military’s next generation of long-range bombers.

It wasn’t supposed to be much of a competition. Boeing’s bomber had trounced the designs of Martin & Douglas with a plane that could carry five times as many bombs and fly faster and twice as far as previous bombers.

But when the Boeing plane roared down the runway and took off, it climbed sharply to 300 feet, stalled, turned on one wing, and crashed in a fiery explosion killing two of the five crew members, including the test pilot.

What had gone wrong? Pilot error! This plane was substantially more complex than previous aircraft. Amid all the procedures, the pilot had forgotten to release a new locking mechanism on the elevator and rudder controls before taking off. “Too much airplane for one man to fly,” said the experts. Douglas’ smaller design was declared the winner. Boeing nearly went bankrupt.

Afterward, however, a group of test pilots got together and reflected on the problem. They did not come up with the idea of better pilot training. Instead they came up with an ingeniously simple solution: they created a pilot checklist. Perhaps one of the first checklists ever. They made it simple, brief, and short enough to fit on an index card.

The checklist contained the kind of basic steps all pilots know. Dumb stuff, Dr. Gawande writes. But with the checklist in hand, pilots went on to fly this airplane 1.8 million miles without one accident. The army ultimately ordered almost 13,000 of the aircraft which you and I know as the famous B-17, the plane that gave the military a decisive air advantage during the Second World War and helped defeat the Nazis.

This anecdote appears in Gawande’s book where he eloquently makes the case for the lowly checklist to become a tool to help all of us be more successful in a world where increasing complexity and TMI (Too Much Information) causes increasing mistakes and failure.

I was intrigued at the possibility that a checklist could help me be more successful in my Christian journey. I present mine here as just one example. Whatever its limitations, it helps me stay on course and not meander, especially in my early morning prayer time before I’m fully coherent. My checklist has helped me so much in so many ways that I’d like to encourage you to create one of your own.

A checklist, experts say, should contain no more than 5 to 7 points and should fit on a 3” by 5” index card. It need not encompass your entire prayer life, but should cover the essentials. For whatever it’s worth, here’s what mine looks like:

My Daily Checklist

Return to Mike Jones.
Mike Jones … My Daily Checklist « GleanerOnline Blogs
http://gleanerblog.mcmds.com/mike-jones/2011/04/mike-jones-my-daily-...
Rich DuBose says:
April 21, 2011 at 5:32 pm

Interesting piece Mike. I realize that checklists are important, but I’ve never thought to put it on a list to “spend time” with Linda. For me a checklist usually contains the nitty gritty stuff like, fix the toilet, get a haircut, etc.

When I wake up and realize I’m still breathing, saying good morning to God is one of the first things I want to do. Your point is well taken, we need to follow through with our best intentions and not let the day grab them away.

Brooks K Potter says:
April 24, 2011 at 8:55 am

My question is: Did Jesus or John the Baptist have a checklist? I’m not saying it is a useful thing in this hyper distracted time we are living in, but that the real reason a high percentage of our church members don’t know Jesus and the Scriptures intimately, is because of worldliness and lukewarmness that pervades our churches in the NAD. I might add that warm and fuzzy “Revival” meetings that don’t point out sin will not change worldly sin loving SDA members.

Why do I say that? Because the Prophets of old were compelled to give very pointed messages to backsliding Israel of old, not watered down messages that make the pew warming members feel good telling “Jesus loves you” with no biblical requirements needed other than accepting Jesus. Jesus said to sinners who accepted him as Lord, to go and “sin no more” that is the missing link in our SDA preaching these days. No definitive pointing out of sin, because it is not politically correct! Political correct SDA preaching doesn’t change lukewarm SDAs into on fire for God SDA.

Inorth says:
April 26, 2011 at 8:30 am

I would like to follow your blog on Twitter. Can you set up a Twitter account and tweet your posts? It is much easier than coming to the Gleaner site. Thanks so much!

Lloydene Griffitts says:
April 28, 2011 at 4:43 pm

The year of my birth was the same year the Boeing plane crashed for lack of a pilot’s check list. Much has changed since then, but not enough.

For some reason I pulled a book off the shelf my husband and I hadn’t read for years. It’s called “Life Sketches of Ellen White”. The more we read the more convinced I became that we need video games for our children just as much as the early church needed to print pamphlets and get them out to the people. They sacrificed greatly to accomplish that. Many of our children are being taken down by satan’s games. We need to counteract him!!!!!! It should have been done yesterday. I know nothing about what it takes to do this but I believe God will perform miracles to save our children. Who would like to join in this project? Mike Jones, you are a man of intellect- do you know if our denomination has such games already or do you know people who can get the ball rolling. I have ideas. The games must be exciting, have levels of accomplishment and certainly be worth playing, according to our young people. How about it? My e-mail is blfun@msn.com My plan is to perfect the games, give them to our denomination- Seventh-day Adventists- to be marketed through ABC and even sold door to door by our own young people. Am I giving away my chance to be a part of this??? I hope not.

This doesn’t have a lot to do with your subject, Mike, but God has given me such a burden to get this done that I will try every avenue I can find.

Mark O'fill says:
May 4, 2011 at 9:31 am
Thanks for the thought provoking insights. As a dedicated follower of Jesus Christ and a 6-generation Adventist, I still know that having the “dumb stuff” of a checklist provides necessary accountability. The spiritual life is complex (though not complicated) in these distractable times.

Thanks!

Leave a Reply

Name (required)

Mail (will not be published) (required)

Website

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Entries (RSS) and Comments (RSS).
Loving thy neighbor is one thing, but loving the saints?

She didn’t like my story! I was amazed to hear this, because I have been telling that story all around the Northwest for years, and everyone else had liked it. Now this woman was sitting in my office, expressly for the purpose of questioning the whole point of my story and wondering just how she could possibly apply it in her church.

The gist of my story was this: One week, a visitor played a piano solo for special music in our church. She hadn’t played perfectly, but she had played with her whole heart and soul. When she sat back down directly in front of me, I fumbled around through my bulletin, found an insert that was blank on the back, and wrote her a note. It simply said: “Thank you for your beautiful music! I heard your heart, and was blessed.” I folded it up, handed it forward, and watched.

She read the note… then burst into tears and went running out of the church!

I sat there feeling pretty badly, remembering with a new perspective my mother’s insistence that I not write notes in church…

Later, I learned how the pianist’s husband had related to her piano playing. “I get so tired of hearing you practice!” he told her, agitated. “And you make so many mistakes when you play in church – It embarrasses me!” He told her those kinds of things so often that she had given up the piano for a full decade. Not long before her performance in our church, she had secretly taken it up again, and this was her first time back playing in public. He was not there, so she had braved it.

Once I learned this, I understood why she had such a profound reaction to my very simple little note. My point to my audiences was about loving one another through encouraging, affirming words. We don’t want people to give up the development of their spiritual gifts, do we? No, we want them to continue playing the piano, writing, teaching, preparing potlucks…

“The problem is,” the woman in my office was saying, “We have a soloist that we DO wish would stop singing! His singing isn’t just embarrassing — it gives us all a headache! When we see him after the service, he expects a compliment, and sometimes I can spit out some sort of thank you, but it’s just not sincere. Most of us have stopped asking him, but he always finds a way. If there is a special program, he goes to the program planner and let’s them know that he has prepared a special number for it, and gives them the information. Nobody has the nerve or the heart to tell him he’s a terrible singer and that we don’t want him to sing anymore. We know it would break his heart, and he’d probably leave the church over it, so we try to bear with it, but I don’t think we can stand it much longer. What should we do?”

Well… What should they do? When Jesus implores us to “love one another”, what would that look like in this case? Is it more important to “love” and bear with this one saint’s “joyful noise” or to “love” the rest of the saints by quieting his voice? What about the feelings of his family? What about planning a quality worship service we can invite people to? What about “speaking the truth in love”?

I would love to hear your wisdom.

(And so would the woman who was sitting in my office!)
5 Responses to “Cheri Corder … Christianity at Church”

1. Carolyn Karlstrom says:
   April 21, 2011 at 9:06 pm
   
   Count me among those who love your story, Cheri. You did the right thing; the pianist needed to hear what you had to say. And she needed to be allowed to play. The woman who has a problem singer in her church is in a slightly different, and much more difficult, situation. If the guy really, truly can’t sing (your pianist apparently COULD play the piano) and it’s honestly an ongoing, every–Sabbath–and–every–special-occasion kind of thing AND it ruins the program (Is this woman absolutely certain that everyone else feels as she does?), someone needs to say something to him. Carefully. Gently. Lovingly. The pastor? A good friend? His wife? Can he be offered something to take its place? Could he be a greeter? Work in one of the children’s departments? Be involved with the AV team? Do something that occupies him and has him being useful and feeling needed so that he isn’t focused on something he’s not suited to? I do feel for this woman and her church if the situation really is as described. I feel also for the man who sings. I hope this is a praying group.

2. Linda Barnes says:
   April 22, 2011 at 7:42 am
   
   When God gives one a desire to sing for Him, let him sing. Perhaps the more he “practices” the better he’ll sound. Has a friend who is musically inclined offered assistance in rehearsal? Have we as the listeners prayed for a blessing? BTW: You did the God-thing in writing the note. I’ve needed one like that many times!

3. Shirley Davis says:
   April 24, 2011 at 7:12 pm
   
   Most songs last only 3 to 4 minutes. If he sings every week that still seems like a very short time to endure something you don’t like, especially when compared to Our Lord Jesus Christ who hung on a cross for hours (which I’m sure He didn’t like either), to save us. Surely somewhere in your heart you could find the grace to listen to the words instead of the voice and appreciate this man rather than risk his soul so you wouldn’t be annoyed for a few minutes. You might even find a blessing in it for your own soul. When I encounter such situations I silently pray for the person performing that the Lord will increase their talent. I pray God’s blessing upon you also.

4. Linda Hamerly says:
   April 24, 2011 at 8:34 pm
   
   I don’t know the answer but I do know God who loves each of us and is longsuffering with each of us. God loves to hear our prayers even about ways to praise Him and those in there own way praising Him. God bless you as you pray for wisdom on how to deal Godly with this saint.

   As for sharing a note of encouragement- we need alot more of them both in our churches and our neighborhood.

5. Christine Smith says:
   April 26, 2011 at 6:39 am
   
   Appears to me the complaining saint has misssed the point. What would Jesus do? Judging snowballs: Today distaste for ability. Tomorrow the style of music, apparrrell, length of the number. Special music is worship, right? Church is supposed to be a safe place. “Be ye kind” covers it for me. Notes and verbal words of encouragement are in short supply in this too busy world. Affirmation and acceptance preaches a sermon no evangelist can. If we are wanting the receiving person to grow and glow the performance is not the issue. Willingness, worship and recognizing vulnerability is.
Return to Let’s Talk.
« Wake Up

The Wall

As a lad and the youngest of three boys, I eagerly accepted the role of chief underdog and pest. Having three guys in one bedroom was interesting enough, but placing me in the backseat of an automobile with two older brothers was a formula destined for disharmony. Trips longer than 30 minutes in the faithful old ’49 Plymouth crossed some sort of invisible barrier beyond which decibels rose and turf wars raged.

“If you don’t settle down RIGHT … THIS … MINUTE, I’ll …” Dire words such as these from the front would inspire a tenuous truce. Elbows would be withdrawn from seatmates’ ribs, and a thin veneer of civility would form for a fragile few minutes — but only for a few.

And thus was born my mother’s invention, a fabric contraption to hang over the front seat. In it, each of us boys in the back had our own pouch for books, games, toys and such. The effect was miraculous — almost as if a wall had been created between us. With better things at hand than fomenting strife, we three sons would arrive at the distant destination — fingers, toes, noses and ears all accounted for — still friends.

In spite of all the rhetoric we hear in America today about walls of division, perhaps some walls are best left standing. Perhaps they protect what would otherwise be forever damaged or destroyed.

Human relationships flounder when force is applied; they flourish when freedom is fostered. But liberty, and with it all the freedoms we cherish, is fragile. Like three bouncing boys in a back seat, it needs boundaries to survive.

So, I worry when I hear voices rising in our country, calling us to tear down the wall that guard the distinctly different roles of church and state, religion and politics. I worry when I hear Adventists joining others who berate the core values of religious liberty for what they imagine is the greater good — a “Christian nation.”

Such was the climate that led some Adventists of an earlier generation to align themselves with a charismatic leader promising pure motives, a return to solid values and a bright future. Their hopes died along with the ashes of a million and more Jews. Must we countenance another Hitler, another Holocaust, before we wake up and smell the Postum?

Sound-bite opinions travel with lightning speed through the Internet and social media connections like Twitter. Personal perspectives are formed with little contemplation, providing fertile ground for a populist movement with no critical evaluation of history or principle. It’s not hard to imagine a prophetic timetable accelerating to a place unthinkable just a few years ago.

There has seldom been a more important time for Adventists to place the message of religious liberty front and center. The wall of separation we champion is not just a good idea for three rambunctious boys on a journey to Grandma’s house. It’s on behalf of all of us in this dying world and the message we’ve been asked to share, as the celestial clock ticks off the final minutes.

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