Committed Makes an Impact on Portland

Audiences throughout Portland, Ore., enjoyed a whirlwind visit from the a capella singing group, Committed, Nov. 18 and 19. Adventist Medical Center-Portland sponsored the group, second season winners of The Sing Off on NBC, for nearly 3,000 guests at the annual AMC Thanksgiving concert. The concert also reaped more than two tons of non-perishable food items for Portland Adventist Community Services. In addition, Committed performed and shared their message with nearly 900 students from Portland Adventist Academy and surrounding Adventist schools. The six-man a capella singing group later performed for approximately 3,200 students at David Douglas High School in Portland, the largest public high school in Oregon. Read more in the January issue of the GLEANER.

Blustery Barrage Cancels Bethlehem in Bellingham

Bellingham, Wash., residents are disappointed that the annual Walk Through Bethlehem event sponsored by the local Adventist Church will not be held this year. Gusty winds which whipped through the area recently flattened many of the structures in the 200-foot replica of a street in Bethlehem located at Baker View Christian School. Volunteer organizers felt they could not reconstruct the village in time for the scheduled event this coming weekend. They do hope to have everything back in place for the first weekend in December 2012.

Washington Conference Sponsors Online Media Training

Washington Conference will offer eight Technology in Worship webinars available via live stream and archived for on-demand playback for conference-wide pastors and media teams. The webinars will address the big picture of media ministry, audio, video projection, video capture, lighting, presentation resources, streaming/podcasting and websites. The first webinar will be Dec. 11, at 10 a.m. via a link on the conference website. Washington Conference pastors and media ministry teams are invited to participate.

Updates from Center for Youth Evangelism

Looking Ahead

December
9: WWU Christmas Concert
25: Christmas Day
31: New Year's Eve

January
1: New Year's Day
3: WWU winter quarter begins
3: Feb. Ad/Article Deadline
16: MLK Jr. Day
26: March Ad/Article Deadline

GLEANER Blogs

- Cheri Corder
- Cindy's Garden Blog
- Dear Counselor
- Let's Talk
- Mike Jones
- Monthly Archival Photo
- Tip Sheet
The One Project Conference will be held Feb. 13 and 14, at the Westin Seattle Hotel. This event, sponsored by the Center for Youth Evangelism, will include youth and young adult leaders from around North America. The first-ever Church of Refuge summit will follow the One Project event on Feb. 15 at the same location. Read more from the Center for Youth Evangelism website HERE. A short video HERE about why young adults leave the Christian church explains one important reason why the One Project Conference is long overdue within the Adventist Church.

First Winners Picked for GLEANER Christmas Drawing
The first three winners of our 2011 Christmas drawing have been selected and will be announced in next week’s GleanerNOW! e-newsletter. Each winner will receive a gift pack including two books from the Christmas in My Heart series by Joe Wheeler, two DVDs including 16 of these stories read in person by Wheeler, and a keepsake Christmas in My Heart ornament. A big thank-you goes to both Wheeler and the Pacific Press for providing these special gift packs. Three more winners will be selected on Dec. 8 and again on Dec. 15. A grand-prize winner will be chosen on Dec. 22 to receive one of these gift packs, PLUS a new Kindle Fire tablet. All who receive this weekly e-newsletter are automatically entered into each drawing.

Cindy's Garden Blog
"Delight yourself in the LORD and He will give you the desires of your heart." Psalm 37:4. See Cindy's Garden Blog for the latest story.
Velvet Elvis Encrusted Flea Markets

This story is written by Becky C. Smith.
Shortened by Cindy R. Chamberlin and used with written permission by the author.

"Delight yourself in the LORD and he will give you the desires of your heart." Psalm 37:4

Steve and I were paying our bills one night when we came upon an unexpected whopper of a bill. We had to work pretty hard to get all the figures to work out, but we managed to get that bill paid, in addition to writing our monthly tithe check which was due at the same time.

As I began to write that check to the church I thought to myself, “I know what the Bible says about tithing. I know what I’ve practiced all my life. I know what we’ve taught our children. However, it would sure be nice, just this once, to take that tithe money and put it on this big bill.” (We didn’t. And I knew we wouldn’t. But I just wanted to confess that I was surely and sorely tempted!)

Because of that large bill, when I headed out to the grocery store the following day, didn’t have a whole lot of extra money left to spend. I shopped very carefully with my main splurges being some extra fruit and a box of Little Debbie Snack Cakes.

The next morning, I happened to hear two families in our church were in need of meals due to some medical challenges... Providing those meals turned out to be an enlightening experience for me because as I started packing up my homemade chicken pot pie and deciding which side dishes to send along, I felt an unexpected but unmistakable twinge of selfishness shoot through my soul.

The Chocolate Ones
I knew it would be nice for the families to have some sort of dessert to go with their meals but the only “dessert-y type” things I had in the house were my newly purchased (and highly coveted) Little Debbie cakes.

Sarah loved those green grapes I had just bought. Did I really want to send out the door the groceries I had just selected and purchased with such frugality? Did I really want to give away my Little Debbie Snack Cakes, the chocolate ones?

“Okay. I will give this stuff away and I will be happy about it and I will believe that as we are faithful to be generous with what we have, then God will be faithful to supply our needs...”

Two weeks from then, Sarah (along with three other girls) was taking part in an Honor Stars Crowning Ceremony, which is the culmination of a whole lot of work done in conjunction with her girls’ group at church. Each girl was to have a white dress for this ceremony. I wanted Sarah to have something lovely. However, I knew I couldn’t just sashay into Jewel’s Formal Wear downtown and fork over $100 for one of their lovely dresses.
Well, last Friday on our day off, Steve and I decided to continue our ongoing quest for a gently used couch for his church office. We hadn’t been walking through that flea market for more than five minutes when I glanced up and saw a truly wondrous and incredible sight. I saw . . . (wait for it!) . . . a white, junior bridesmaid dress.

As soon as I saw the dress, I screeched to a halt, veered off my course and charged across the aisle leaving my bewildered husband wandering in my wake. I wanted to take a closer look at the dress to make sure it wasn’t just an apparition that my overwrought imagination had conjured up.

The Price
I looked at the size; it was Sarah’s size. I looked at the price; it was only $15! I sternly laid aside the temptation to do a happy jig in the middle of the aisle and merely asked the man behind the counter if he would hold the dress till the next day.

Later that day when I told Sarah I had found a dress possibility she said, “It sounds pretty. What store is it at?”

I said, “Well . . . (long pause) . . . it’s at a flea market.”

Poor child, she had never even heard of a flea market! She said, “Mom, you want to buy my special white dress for my crowning ceremony at a place called a flea market?”

But Sarah is a chip off the old block and is very open minded in her shopping philosophies. As long as she understood that the dress from the flea market was not going to be infested with fleas, she was all for going to take a look at it.

As we pulled up to the weather beaten warehouse, I had a moment’s misgiving. I looked at the place through the eyes of a twelve year old, aware of fashions, brands and style and I thought, “Oh dear. She is going to think this is the worst place ever and she is going to be utterly appalled about the fact her mom is even thinking about buying her special dress in a place that sells rusty tools and velvet pictures of Elvis.”

But to her credit, she flung her little purse across her shoulder, beamed at me brightly and happily accompanied me through the doors. When she saw the dress, she liked it. She tried it on. It fit.

As we were getting ready to pay the vendor’s wife walked over and said, “I thought you might like to know that this dress was worn just one time. Also, you might be interested to know it came from Jewel’s Formal Wear downtown.” (This was the very place I knew we couldn’t afford to shop.)

I stood there for a moment in stunned, quiet thankfulness as I was reminded so beautifully that God had seen my challenges throughout the week – my struggles with writing the tithe check and my even bigger struggles with giving away the food (especially the chocolate).

The coincidence of finding a dress like that in a place like an old flea market was not lost on me. I mean, what were the chances of it being the right color, the right size, the right style and coming from the very store I had wanted to shop in?

The joy on Sarah’s face at finding such a lovely bargain made me smile as I completed the transaction, being extra careful to keep the lovely white frock from coming into contact with the old dirty wrenches and pliers that were flung across the table near the cash register.

I felt like God was saying, “You wrote your tithe check and gave away your chicken, your green grapes and your chocolate Little Debbie snack cakes and in return; I had a white dress waiting for you in the most unlikely of places. Is that a good trade-off, or what?”

What’s the bottom line? Don’t ever tell me God isn’t everywhere, or that He doesn’t see everything! He even shows up in dusty, musty, velvet Elvis encrusted Flea Markets.
Sources:
1 Smith, Becky C. “Velvet Elvis Encrusted Flea Markets.” Smithellaneous. Web. 20
http://www.smithellaneous.com/

This entry was posted on Wednesday, November 30th, 2011 at 2:18 pm and is filed under Cindy's Garden Blog. You can follow any responses to this entry through the RSS 2.0 feed. You can skip to the end and leave a response. Pinging is currently not allowed.

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