Washington Volunteers Wrap up Relief to New Orleans

Heidi Martella, Washington Conference communication director, reports that Adventist Community Services-Washington recently sponsored the third and final Katrina rebuilding mission trip to New Orleans, La. These trips in 2007, 2009 and 2011 were designed to work side by side with residents to give them hope of returning to their homes. In 2011, a total of 18 volunteers from Washington, Oregon and Upper Columbia conferences participated in the homeland mission trip. A rebuilding celebration was held Nov. 12 at Caffin Avenue Church in New Orleans, and volunteers had an opportunity to meet with several homeowners helped in the last five years by Adventists. See an online photo gallery of the work HERE.

Former WWU Administrator Heads to the Caribbean

Clinton A. Valley has been elected president of the University of the Southern Caribbean (USC), an Adventist-owned school in Maracas, St. Joseph, Trinidad. Valley, a Trinidadian, succeeds Trevor Gardner, who has accepted the position as president of the Northern Caribbean University in Mandeville, Jamaica. Valley recently served as Walla Walla University (WWU) associate academic vice president. He currently serves as La Sierra University School of Education dean in Riverside, Calif. Valley has worked in Trinidad, the United Kingdom, and the United States in various capacities, including church pastor, high school principal, university professor and administrator. Read more from the Adventist Review HERE.

Looking Ahead

December
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

February
2–4: WWU University Days
4: WWU "Total Praise: A Festival of Choirs"
11: Lents (Ore.) Church Centennial
23: April Ad/Article Deadline

March
11: SAGE (Wash.) St. Patrick’s Banquet
22: May Ad/Article Deadline

GLEANER Blogs

- Cheri Corder
- Cindy’s Garden Blog
- Dear Counselor
- Let's Talk
- Mike Jones
- Monthly Archival Photo
North Pacific Union Conference-area local conferences have each received a shipment this month of additional copies of the NKJV of *The Desire of Ages*. This paperback edition, published in 2006 by the NPUC through the Pacific Press, will be used by each conference for evangelistic opportunities. The books were provided and shipped at no charge by the NPUC.

**Church Deregistration Looms in Hungary**

Religious liberty leaders for the Adventist Church, including Dwayne Leslie, church legislative affairs director (pictured here), met the Hungarian ambassador to the United States in an effort to help officials from the country better understand the potential effects of a looming deregistration of churches. The Law of Churches, set for implementation on Jan. 1, 2012, would deregister all but 14 religious denominations in Hungary, including the Adventist Church. It could also potentially affect the church’s theological seminary. More than 300 groups are set to lose their registration, including Hungary's Methodists, Unitarians, a number of Islamic communities, and many smaller Protestant and evangelical churches. Read more from the Adventist News Network [HERE](#).

**What Would God’s Christmas Card Say to Tiger Woods or Casey Anthony?**

Seasonal specials will air this year via the Hope Channel. New this year is *God's Christmas Cards*, in seven programs, with NAD President Dan Jackson hosting two, and speaker/directors of *Breath of Life*, *Faith for Today*, *It Is Written*, *La Voz de la Esperanza*, and *Voice of Prophecy* hosting the others. They will discuss the possibilities of what God would say this year if He sent a Christmas card to Casey Anthony, Tiger Woods, Bernie Madoff, John Edwards, Jaycee Dugard or U.S. President Barack Obama. Check scheduled times for this special and more on the Hope Channel [HERE](#).

**Did You Know?**

While 70 percent of the British population in the greater London area is white, less than 200 of the 11,000 Adventist members in the area hail from that population majority. Church growth there, like in many other world regions, is mainly among immigrant communities.

**The Winnings Continue for the GLEANER**
Christmas Drawings

Congratulations to the Dec. 8 Christmas drawing winners: Alethea Skinner of Medford, Ore.; Lorraine Ferguson of College Place, Wash.; and Tami Edwards, Ridgefield, Wash. This week’s winners of the GleanerNOW 2011 Christmas drawing have been selected and will be announced in next week’s 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. 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

Enjoy a story of the season from the Christmas in My Heart series by Dr. Joe Wheeler on Cindy’s Garden Blog. Merry Christmas!
Katrina Rebuilding Mission Trip - washington's Photos

Katrina Rebuilding Mission Trip to New Orleans.
Photos by Colette Newer, Sam Pellecer, Debra Finley, and Gary Neff.

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Group photo. Not pictured: Debra Finley, Colette Newer and Debbie Fogelquist.
Clinton Valley to Head University of the Southern Caribbean

Was education school dean at La Sierra University

BY DEL PHILLIPS, Inter-American Division

Clinton A. Valley is the new president of the University of the Southern Caribbean (USC), a Seventh-day Adventist Church-owned school in Maracas, St. Joseph, Trinidad. Valley, a Trinidadian, succeeds Trevor Gardner, who has recently accepted the position of president of Northern Caribbean University in Mandeville, Jamaica.

The announcement came from Kern Tobias, president of the church in the Caribbean Union and chair of the institution, during a special dinner reception held November 8, 2011.

"Dr. Valley's appointment heralds a new day for USC, and the university is delighted to welcome a 'son of the soil' to lead the institution as it charts a new way forward," said Tobias. The new appointment is effective January 1, 2012, Tobias added.

Valley currently serves as dean of the School of Education at La Sierra University in Riverside, California, United States. Prior to this he had worked in Trinidad, the United Kingdom, and the United States in various capacities: as a church pastor, high school principal, university professor, and associate academic vice president of Walla Walla University in Washington State.

Valley is a graduate of the University of the Southern Caribbean, and holds an M.A. from Andrews University and an Ed.D. from Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo. He is married to Martha Jueanville Valley, who is a special education teacher. The Valleys have two adult children—Clintelle and Clinson, who are each married and reside in the United States.

Established in 1927, the University of the Southern Caribbean is a Seventh-day Adventist Christian institution located in Maracas, St. Joseph, Trinidad, and offers bachelor’s and master’s degrees in various disciplines. The government of Trinidad and Tobago recognizes USC as a tertiary-level institution through its accreditation body, the Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago.
Special Programming for the Holidays Exclusively on Hope Channel
At Lowest Ebb

Author Unknown. Editor Dr. Joe Wheeler, from Christmas in My Heart Series.

Used with permission.

It was a bleak Christmas that year for the young pioneer minister and his wife. The money was gone, and even the well had given out. God, it appeared, had completely forgotten them.

But someone had forgotten to tell this to little Ruth.

I remember a day one winter that stands out like a boulder in my life. The weather was unusually cold, our salary had not been regularly paid, and it did not meet our needs when it was.

My husband was away much of the time, traveling from one district to another. Our boys were well, but my little Ruth was ailing, and at best none of us were decently clothed. I patched and repatched, with spirits sinking to the lowest ebb. The water gave out in the well, and the wind blew through cracks in the floor.

Each Family Was Struggling

The people in this frontier parish were kind, and generous too, but the settlement was new, and each family was struggling for itself. Little by little, at the time I needed it most, my faith began to waver.

Early in life I was taught to take God at His word, and I thought my lesson was well learned. I had lived upon the promises in dark times until I knew, as David did, “who was my fortress and deliverer.” Now a daily prayer for forgiveness was all that I could offer.

My husband’s overcoat was hardly thick enough for October, and he was often obliged to ride miles to attend some meeting or funeral. Many times our breakfast was Indian cake and a cup of tea without sugar.

Christmas was coming; the children always expected their presents. I remember the ice was thick and smooth, and the boys were each craving a pair of skates. Ruth, in some unaccountable way, had taken a fancy that the dolls I had made were no longer suitable. She wanted a nice large one and insisted on praying for it.

I knew it was impossible but, oh, how I wanted to give each child a present. It seemed as if God had deserted us, but I did not tell my husband this. He worked so earnestly and heartily I supposed him to be as hopeful as ever. I kept the sitting room cheerful with an open fire, and I tried to serve our scanty meals as invitingly as I could.

The morning before Christmas James was called to see a sick man. I put up a piece of bread for his lunch (it was the best I could do), wrapped my plaid shawl around his neck, and then tried to whisper a promise as I often had, but the words died away upon my lips. I let him go without it.

That was a dark, hopeless day. I coaxed the children to bed early, for I could not bear their talk. When Ruth went, I listened to her prayer. She asked for the last time most explicitly for her doll and for skates for her brothers. Her bright face looked so lovely when she whispered to me, “You know, I think they’ll be here early tomorrow morning, Mama,” that I thought I’d be willing to move heaven and earth to save her from disappointment. I sat down alone and gave way to the most bitter tears.

Before long James returned, chilled and exhausted. As he drew off his boots the thin stockings slipped off with them, and his feet were red with cold.

“I wouldn’t treat a dog that way, let alone a faithful servant, I said. Then, as I glanced up and saw the hard lines in his face and the look of despair, it flashed across me: James had let go too.

I brought him a cup of tea, feeling sick and dizzy at the very thought. He took my hand, and we sat for an hour without a word. I wanted to die and meet God and tell Him His promise wasn’t true. My soul was so full of rebellious despair.

It was a Wonderful Box
There came a sound of bells, a quick stop, and a loud knock at the door. James sprang up to open it. There stood Deacon White. "A box came by express just before dark. I brought it around as soon as I could get away. Reckoned it might be for Christmas. 'At any rate,' I said to myself, 'they shall have it tonight.' There is a turkey my wife asked me to fetch along, and these other things I believe belong to you."

There was a basket of potatoes and a bag of flour. Talking all the time, he carried in the box, and then with a hearty goodnight he rode away.

Still without speaking, James found a chisel and opened the box. He drew out first a thick red blanket, and we saw that beneath was full of clothing. It seemed at that moment as if Christ fastened upon me a look of reproach. James sat down and covered his face with his hands. "I can't touch them!" he exclaimed. "I haven't been true, just when God was trying me to see if I could hold out. Do you think I could not see how you were suffering? And I had no word of comfort to offer. I know now how to preach the awfulness of turning away from God."

"James," I said, clinging to him, "don't take it to heart like this. I am to blame; I ought to have helped you. We will ask Him together to forgive us."

"Wait a moment, dear, I cannot talk now," he said. Then he went into another room.

I knelt down, and my heart broke. In an instant all the darkness, all the stubbornness, rolled away. Jesus came again and stood before me, but with the loving word "Daughter!"

Sweet promises of tenderness and joy flooded my soul. I was so lost in praise and gratitude that I forgot everything else. I don't know how long it was before James came back, but I knew he too had found peace.

"Now, my dear wife," he said, "let us thank God together." And he then poured out the words of praise—Bible words, for nothing else could express our thanksgiving.

It was 11:00, the fire was low, and there was the great box, and nothing touched but the warm blanket we needed. We piled on some fresh logs, lighted two candles and began to examine our treasures.

We drew out an overcoat. I made James try it on—just the right size. And I danced around him, for all my lightheartedness had returned. Then there was a cloak, and he insisted in seeing me in it. My spirits always infected him, and we both laughed like foolish children.

There was a warm suit of clothes and three pairs of woolen hose. There was a dress for me and yards of flannel, a pair of Arctic overshoes for each of us. In mine was a slip of paper. I have it now and mean to hand it down to my children. On it was written Jacob's blessing to Asher: "Thy shoes shall be iron and brass, and as thy days so shall thy strength be." In the gloves (evidently for James) the same dear hand had written: "I, the Lord thy God, will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee: Fear not, I will help thee."

**Dreading Nothing so Much as to Doubt**

It was a wonderful box and had been packed with thoughtful care. There was a suit of clothes for each of the boys and a little red gown for Ruth. There were mittens, scarves and hoods. Down in the center was a box. We opened it—and there was a great wax doll. I burst into tears again. James wept with me for joy. It was too much. And then we both exclaimed again, for close behind it came two pairs of skates. There were books for us to read (some of them I had yearned for), stories for the children to read, aprons and underclothing, knots of ribbon, a gay little tidy, a lovely photograph, needles, buttons, and thread, and a muff, and an envelope containing a $10 gold piece.

At last we cried over everything we took up. It was past midnight, and we were faint and exhausted with happiness. I made a cup of tea, cut a fresh loaf of bread, and James boiled some eggs. We drew up the table before the fire, and how we enjoyed our supper! And then we sat, talking over our life, and how sure a help God had always proved.

You should have seen the next morning! The boys raised a shout at the sight of their skates. Ruth caught up her doll and hugged it tightly without a word. Then she went into her room and knelt by her bed.

When she came back, she whispered to me, "I knew it would be here, Mama, but I wanted to thank God just the same, you know."

My husband then said, "Look here, wife, see the difference?"

We went to the window, and there were the boys out of the house already, skating on the ice with all their might.

My husband and I both tried to return thanks to the church in the East that had sent us the box and have tried to return thanks unto God every day since. Hard times have come again and again, but we have trusted in Him, dreading nothing so much as to doubt His protecting care. Again and again, we have proved that "they that seek the Lord shall not want for any good thing."

This entry was posted on Thursday, December 15th, 2011 at 1:44 pm and is filed under [Cindy's Garden Blog](http://gleanerblog.mcmds.com/gleaner-garden-blog/2011/12/at-lowest-ebb). You can follow any responses to this entry through the [RSS 2.0](http://gleanerblog.mcmds.com/gleaner-garden-blog/2011/12/at-lowest-ebb) feed. You can skip to the end and leave a response. Pinging is currently not allowed.