Adventists Respond to Oso Mudslide

Scores of people are still missing and feared dead in the aftermath of the March 22 mudslide that devastated the community of Oso, Wash. A team of Adventist Community Services Disaster Response (ACSDR) personnel met with community leaders on Wednesday, March 26 to advise and support the collection and distribution of donated goods. The team included Byron Dulan and Colette Newer (Washington Conference); Larry Mays and Donna Hutchcroft (North Pacific Union Conference); and Diane and Monte Ball, and David and Kathy Patrick (Arlington, Wash., ACS). Adventist members who wish to support relief efforts can send donations directly to ACS-Washington, 32229 Weyerhaeuser Way S., Federal Way, WA 98001 or donate online.
World Adventist University Presidents Meet

Presidents of the Adventist Church's 120 colleges and universities from around the world met this week for a summit at the General Conference office in Silver Spring, Md. Here, the presidents pose for a group photo in the auditorium on Tuesday, March 26.

Mission Trip Updates

It's spring break for Northwest students which means vacations, travel and a break from homework. And for hundreds of students it also means mission trips. Participants have traveled to Peru, India, Belize, Zambia, Latvia, and Moses Lake, Wash. In Tarapoto, Peru, 35 people have traveled from the North Pacific Union Conference to hold meetings at 26 different locations around the region. In spite of the rain, attendance has been good, with people coming each night to locations from brick church buildings, to mud-walled adobe-style buildings. One student from Portland Adventist Academy (PAA) is even preaching each night in an open field. The meetings in Peru have students from PAA, Upper Columbia Academy and SOULS Northwest. Closer to home, Pathfinders in Upper Columbia have joined the Teen Mission Adventure (TMA) that is focusing this year on Moses Lake, Wash. Their projects include painting at the school, helping clean, visiting a nursing home, and handing out fresh cookies. Read more about the TMA adventures at UCCsda.org.

Professor Decries Dysfunctional Attitude Toward Sex

John Nixon, Southern Adventist University professor of religion and spirituality, suggests Christians often lack a clear and positive position on sexuality. In devotionals presented last week at the Adventist Church's symposium on sexuality held in Cape Town, South Africa, Nixon said, "The spectrum of teaching about sex in the church is limited to extremes — love without sex (abstinence) and sex without love (promiscuity). The Bible rejects them both." Nixon observed that Adventist children are growing up in a world of alternate sexuality as the "new normal," where sexual expression is focused on self-gratification. Read more from the Adventist News Network.

KEEH FM 104.9 Top Station in Spokane

In recent statistics from Arbitron, a radio ratings agency, Positive Life Radio's network station KEEH FM 104.9 rated in the top three stations among women, ages 35–54 in the Spokane, Wash., and Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, area. The station is ranked high among the 40–50 stations in that same market.

Social Media and the Pastor

In a recent Ministry magazine blog, Marty Thurber writes to pastors and active church members on the potential use of social media for ministry outreach. He remarks, "As the Internet and social media continue to blend with our lives, we need to figure out how to make the most of the journey..."
as shepherds, for ourselves and our flock." Even if you're not a pastor, have you thought about how your social media posts on Facebook or Twitter could become part of your personal outreach? Read Thurber's post online.

Adventist Health News Notes

James Webb, of Adventist Health Medical Group in Portland, Ore., was selected as the best general physician by the 2014 Reader's Choice survey in the Gresham Outlook. Adventist Medical Center in Portland, Ore. (AMC–P), was recognized with the 2014 Distinguished Hospital Award for Clinical Excellence. This places AMC–P in the top five percent of hospitals nationwide for consistently demonstrating safe and effective clinical care. Northwest Regional Heart and Vascular provides a new free tool to help evaluate a patient’s risk for peripheral arterial disease (PAD). This tool serves Adventist Health patients in Portland, Tillamook, Ore., and Walla Walla, Wash. Learn more online.

Currently at gleanernow

- Students Blessed by Jesus-Centered Event
- Multimedia Class Multitasks at MSAS
- PAA Inaugurates Cultural Geography Fair
- Seth Pierce: How to Pick a Fight
- Chehalis Children Help Prepare for Mission

And More!

Looking Ahead

March

- 28: Oregon Prayer Conference
- 29: Seattle VegFest

April

- 04: CAA Homecoming
- 04: GSAA Homecoming
- 05: OAMC Concert
- 06: WA Conference Constituency
InPrint

April

One of the benchmarks of the Seventh-day Adventist name and mission is a focus on worshipping the Creator. God is the Creator of all things, and has revealed in Scripture the authentic account of His creative activity. This month, the Gleaner celebrates creation and the creativity of the Creator with a special issue feature.

Read the April issue online.
Teen Mission Adventure

by Kathy Marson

Photo by June Cross Teens shoveling in new bark along the main road near Crestline Christian School.

Photo by Peter Fenton Teens prepared and served food for the homeless in Moses Lake.

Photo by Peter Fenton Framing in the new bus garage for the Bright Beginnings Day Care Center.

Photo by Peter Fenton Daniel Grable pushes Miqueas Rivero on the way to their next job.

Photo by June Cross. Teen boys digging up damaged sidewalk parts so that it can be replaced with new cement.

Photo by June Cross A larger shot of the cement work being accomplished by teen boys.

Photo by June Cross Teens bagging apples at the local food bank will be given out to local residents later that afternoon.

Photo by June Cross Joshua Meharry, grandson of TMA coordinator Steve Meharry, helps “Grandpa Steve” drive the backhoe at work on the CCS site.

Photo: June Cross. Cleaning up the walking paths at the fairgrounds.

Moses Lake, Wash., March 26, 2014 - Much can be accomplished with volunteer labor. Just ask the teens who volunteered to join a local mission trip, called “Teen Pathfinder Mission Adventure.” This year their area for outreach is Moses Lake, Wash., and they began last Sunday at the beginning of their spring break.
On their plate is a long list of adventures such as:

- painting the Moses Lake Adventist School;
- helping a blind lady organize and clean her home;
- visiting the residents of a nursing home;
- baking cookies and delivering them to the people they meet during the week;
- and building a bus garage for Moses Lake Crestline Christian School Bright Beginnings Day Care.

With a list like this one would expect there is a well-oiled group planning all of these activities for the Pathfinders. You're right but there is more to the story. Last year the organizers were Frosty and June Cross along with Steve Meharry. Since last year’s event, June and Steve Meharry have both lost a very important part of their life. June’s husband, Frosty passed away and Steve Meharry lost one leg. In spite of this, the behind the scenes organization for this mission trip has still been accomplished.

Steve is the organizer and planner and June Cross is on board with her energy, writing and photo skills. When I asked how they could manage this big event this year, Steve said, “God is good to us and has provided us the energy and the strength that we need.”

While pathfinders worked on organizing and cleaning the inside and outside of a blind ladies house, Wayne Hicks called the city garbage office to find out how to get rid of the brush, garbage and unneeded household items. They were too late said the lady at the office. But miracles still happen and the truck came down the street. They were able to put all the trash in the truck and the perk was that there was no extra charge for all the extra bags and yard waste.

The bus barn is being framed in and walled in. Then the trusses installed and roofing will be put in place. The Teen Pathfinders work side by side with adult volunteers to make this much needed building possible. The Moses Lake Crestview Christian School (CCS) needed this for their van storage because of vandalism and siphoning of their gas on a regular basis.

The approx. completed value of the new garage for the Bright Beginnings DayCare vans - $29,000. The anticipated labor donation value of the Pathfinder Teen Mission Adventure members - $8,600.

Teen Mission Adventure (TMA) gives teens an opportunity to be a part of a mission trip for only $100. They stay within Upper Columbia Conference and have the satisfaction and camaraderie of working together just like those who go half way around the world, but the cost allows many to participate who otherwise could not.

As you look at the photos and all the hard work these teens are doing, we wanted you to know that they "enjoy" it.
Here are some of their comments about (TMA).

“I look forward to TMA every year! I have so much fun working with my friends and serving Jesus! I’d recommend it to every Pathfinder teen!” --Zachary Wallace, Yakima Braves Pathfinder club (this is his second year at TMA)

“It’s a lot of fun, and you give to hang out with friends, and it makes you feel good when you help other people!” --Miqueas Rivero, Waiilatpu Pathfinder club (this is his second year at TMA)

“I get to serve other people, while making new friends and learning new skills” --Luke Torquato, Ponderosa (Hayden) Pathfinder club (this is his third year at TMA)

“Lots of people told me that TMA is lots of fun – they said you’ll really like it. The pictures I saw looked fun too! So I came!” --Olivia Smith, Waiilatpu Pathfinder club (this is her first year at TMA)

“This is a place where teens come to work their hearts out as Jesus taught them. Serving others to their fullest. Learning new trades and sharing God’s love with the local community. What a better way for the teen to spend their spring break!” --Carl Costoff, Counselor Kennewick Nighthawks Pathfinder club (this is his twelfth year at TMA)

“I love hanging out with a bunch of teens and watch them learn to do things they have never done before. I love watching friendships being made and God moments.” --Claudia Phillips, UCC Pathfinder Events Coordinator (this is her seventh year)

“TMA is a great time for our teens to get to know Jesus close up by serving others the way He taught us by His example.” --Steve Meharry, TPMA Coordinator/ Waiilatpu Club Director

“TMA really is an Adventure! You never know what you’re going to be doing or who you’ll meet. It’s an incredible opportunity to impact a community for Christ and make a significant difference in the world.” --Diana Pierce, Counselor Wheatland Coyotes Pathfinder Club (this is her first time attending)
Adventist professor’s devotional series urges appropriate conversation about sex

John Nixon, professor of Religion and Spirituality at Southern Adventist University, offers a morning devotional during the Adventist Church’s sexuality summit in Cape Town last week. The “In God’s Image: Scripture. Sexuality. Society.” summit explored the biblical response to human brokenness. [photo: Ansel Oliver]

Reclaim ‘spirituality of sexuality,’ Nixon says at Cape Town summit

March 25, 2014 | Cape Town, South Africa | Adventist Review/ANN staff

No other denomination today is “better positioned” to reclaim the “spirituality of sexuality” than the Seventh-day Adventist Church, a theology professor said at the church’s sexuality summit in Cape Town last week.

In a series of morning devotionals, John Nixon, professor of Religion and Spirituality at Southern Adventist University, said dysfunctional attitudes toward sex among Christians are the result of “alien influences” that “undermine and distort” the teachings of Jesus.

“We’ve been lax in teaching Christian sexuality in our churches, schools and homes. This is the root of the sexual crisis we are now facing. Even the word ‘sex’ spoken from the pulpit makes us uncomfortable,” Nixon said.

“The spectrum of teaching about sex in the church is limited to extremes—love without sex (abstinence) and sex without love (promiscuity). The Bible rejects them both,” he told delegates at the church’s “In God’s Image: Scripture. Sexuality. Society” summit at the Cape Town International Convention Centre in South Africa.

A brief historical overview helped explain how broken attitudes toward sex gained a foothold in the church. Hellenistic thought, Nixon said, pitted the spiritual world against the material world; thus a “good” soul was trapped in an “evil” body with sinful desires. Christian writings and practices of the second and third centuries A.D. reveal an obsession with asceticism, or severe physical debasement as a measure of spirituality. Saint Augustine (354-430 A.D.) argued that all sin was rooted in sexuality and advocated procreation only without recreation.

Asceticism glorified hardships and taught that because the body was evil, all physical enjoyment should be eschewed, including sex within marriage. This notion encouraged the practice of celibacy among Christians, Nixon said.

“The vestiges of this philosophy still exist in our church,” Nixon said. “For many of us, there is still something a little suspicious about sexual pleasure, even in marriage. Engage in it, we think, but don’t have too much fun.”

But God does not forbid or even “just tolerate” sex, Nixon said. “He celebrates it in the context of pure, genuine love between husband and wife.”
Indeed, the union of husband and wife within the “sacred institution of marriage” is a full expression of the plural image of God,” he said, citing Genesis 1:26 and 27. “We are relational creatures made to complement each other. Sex is not just an act; it is part of our beings,” Nixon said.

“We do not teach a divided human nature—a soul trapped in a body. We teach a holistic nature. Sex, which is physical, also impacts the spirit and mind,” Nixon said.

Still, challenges persist in teaching biblical sexuality in homes, schools and churches—especially in a world that views any act between consenting adults as permissible, he said. On Adventist college campuses, Nixon said he has observed that students are increasingly concerned about gender identity and often view sexual choices through the lens of social justice.

All too often, he said, the Adventist Church has chosen silence rather than engaging in the conversation. “Our children learn about sex from the world. They grow up in a world of alternative sexuality as the ‘new normal.’ Sex [for them] is about self-gratification, about the happiness I am entitled to,” Nixon said.

He told the story of Joseph recorded in Genesis to illustrate that chastity and celibacy are indeed attainable goals. Joseph, he said, demonstrated integrity and faithfulness even in the face of major temptations.

“Sexual sin lends itself to secrecy where no one sees, but private moments are the ones that reveal true character,” Nixon said.

Adventist parents, teachers and pastors have the responsibility to pass on a healthy view of sex within the parameters of heterosexual marriage, he said.

“May God help us to fulfill that responsibility.”
Social Media and the Pastor

The social media landscape has varied shades. How do you find your voice and what does it sound like? What does social media do to your ministry and church?

Both voice and vocation are rooted in the Latin word vocare, “to call, or invoke.” Our voices are the things that are called out of us in the midst of our work. They are the underlying why of our passions.

By looking at what you are fervent about, you will find your voice. It is there in your passions, actions, and conversations. Great leaders are well aware of their voices and how to project them. Pastors learn how to use their words and voices well and seek listeners for their voices wherever they can. Social media offers a studio for your voice, producing and calling forth your creative efforts and enlarging your audience. Which pastors do not want to reach more people with their passion for Christ and His Word?

Social media amplifies your voice

with new and often surprising audiences. How do you find your voice in social media? What network should you be a part of—Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, YouTube, and so on? Why should you take the time and effort to use these forms of media?

The potential of social media is the opportunity to have your voice reach out and touch people farther away than you thought possible. People near or far will have a chance to hear you. The possibilities for expanding the range of your voice through social media are worth exploring for that reason alone.

A caution is in order: social media is no substitute for personal ministry in your local parish. How do you keep social media from diminishing your local ministry? Will you have to find a balance between social media ministry and personal ministry, or can the two ministries become united and work well together? Can it actually enhance your local ministry, making you more effective as a shepherd to those in your immediate care? The answer is Yes, it can. Let us talk about how that can happen.

Social media ministry

When the telephone first came on the scene, people did not know what to say when it rang or how to answer it. They would pick it up and wait for someone to talk. The shift from hearing someone that was very near to you to someone who could be many miles away was something of a miracle. It put you in touch as it were. The telephone became a tool of encouragement and collaboration, among others things. Yet, it still lacks some of the close personal connection that being in the same room offers. I remember a friend of mine buying an 800 phone number just so his daughter could call home for free from college. He was so grateful for the 800 number and the access it provided for his family, but it did not replace his daughter’s presence at home.

Social media today can share a voice and visual and is convenient. It is inviting, useful, and creative in our relationships, having the power to enhance our existing relationships and the encouragement to create new friends and new collaborators. In fact, it excels in this.

Radio and television became our primary delivery systems for all kinds of information, much of which was arguably
useless or momentary. Then computers set the stage for the Internet. Today, the Internet has created a portal into the lives of those we collaborate with and is just beginning to show its collective potential.

However, it is impersonal and distant. But the tool and gadget lovers of today often ignore that argument and plow right into using their smartphones and laptops in order to talk, laugh, illustrate, choreograph, and just simply live their lives. The Internet and, more specifically, social media are not one-dimensional voices over the airwaves. They truly are tools that aid in reaching out and touching others, hopefully for the better.

As the Internet and social media continue to blend with our lives, we need to figure out how to make the most of the journey as shepherds, for ourselves and our flock.

The rules of engagement

Connect. Look for ways to connect with people, open new doors, share a message, and influence a group. Build people and institutions through your posts. On Facebook, this is done by finding people who will follow you. Twitter is a little different. You can follow anyone on Twitter, but they do not need to accept you as a friend. This makes Facebook more personal. You know more of your friends there face-to-face. That is why Facebook is more valuable at first for making connections. Whatever social media site you use, post positively and intentionally to improve and encourage others.

Remember the friendship between Jonathan and David? Their souls were knit together. Knitting yourself to others is the main value in social media. Your purpose is to build and strengthen kingdom relationships. Remember that, and you will prove to be a wise voice to your friends and readers.

Maintain confidence. Social media is revealing, sometimes shockingly so. We see people in new ways. You know when they are going to the hospital. You know when they are feeling blue, and when they are feeling great. Not everyone is on social media and not everyone who is on social media is so revealing, but many are. Sometimes they talk about a bar they go to and you are shocked, or they curse out a police officer for giving them a ticket. Sometimes you wonder if they are really members of your church.

After you calm down a bit, you begin to see another side to your members. It might not be pretty, but it is a chance to minister to them. Do not run over to their houses and tell them what you saw on Facebook, and do not use social media to judge them or correct them in public. The fact that they allowed you to be their online friend brings a certain judgment factor to the relationship. They know you are watching. How will you respond to what you see? A loving and patient response is needed, if a response is needed at all.

Remember that many folks are more transparent online than they are in person, so do not judge them or you will quickly lose your right to minister to them. Promote good living, Christlike living, and the message will get through eventually. Jesus is the way.

Do not be critical. Avoid complaining, grousing, sarcasm, hidden innuendo, critiquing, and other messages that could be misinterpreted as judgmental and critical. This is huge, and it is not natural. Many have found the Internet to be a place to air out their complaints and show how they really feel. Again, do not do it. It will harden your voice, branding you as critical, and you may never recover from that.

There are places for critiquing and challenging conversations, but your social media output is not the place. If you are a full-time blogger for a magazine or a world-class prophet, maybe you can and should be known as a voice calling others out of the wilderness. But chances are, you are not. You are leading people through the wilderness. Act like it in your social media usage, and you will have a much better influence in your flock and beyond.

Social media is not self-help media.
It is not there to fix people. People do not want to be fixed; they want to be discovered. Social media tempts you to correct others because others are so quick to share their opinions. It is far better to let people keep their opinions, even if they fly in the face of public opinion or scriptural guidance, than it is to correct them every time they come up with an unreasonable idea.

*Avoid politics, but share your faith.* Both can be controversial subjects, but only one is the responsibility of the pastor. You are certainly welcome to have an interest in politics, even to be engaged with the politics of your local community. But even a few political posts will overshadow your pastoral posts on faith. Allowing yourself to be thought of as a political leader will also cut you off from a certain online audience. In fact, having friends who post a lot of political material can cause you to be branded in the same way. You might want to turn off some of their posts if that is the case. You do not have to drop them as friends, but you can prevent their posts from showing up on your Facebook time line. Avoid political posting, and post like a pastor who loves people of all political persuasions.

Point others in the direction of helpful material; talk less about yourself and more about Jesus. Do not gush over Jesus; let Scripture speak for itself. Offer a good quote from Scripture or something you are reading.

*Learn to take criticism without giving it back.* In fact, be prepared for what you think is unreasonable criticism. Remember, we judge other people by their actions but wish others would judge us by our intentions. If you learn how to take virtual criticism well, others will learn from it and often become very supportive.

*Move from self-promoter to reporter, producer, and pastor.* Your posts are like cards, get-well wishes, care packages, and sometimes life rafts for someone who is about to go under. Take care with your posts and communications and make them about Christ and other people instead of yourself. You can talk about yourself and your family from time to time, but be sure to focus on others more.

The pastor can make use of these technological tools in order to carry out his or her work, which is to shepherd, feed, and heal the flock. A brief reminder of this is found in Psalm 23, where the shepherd cares about several things. The sheep have to know the shepherd’s voice and be close enough to hear him; he has to care about their meals, water supply, security, and health as well as their eternal futures. Combine these shepherding responsibilities with your social media, and you will discover the prescription for right living that a shepherd personifies and uses to lead his or her flock in new and exciting ways.

**Real ministry ideas using social media**

Start with Facebook. After you are comfortable with Facebook, check out YouTube, Twitter, Google+, and Pinterest. Facebook has the edge right now in terms of users. The various networks are like gold, silver, and diamond mines, each providing a different treasure to mine and refine.

Here are some brief descriptions of what I have seen happening while using social media.

- *Virtual prayer meeting.* Wherever you are, take the time to pray for your members in general and post the prayers to your church’s Facebook page. You can do this at the same time each week while praying over the past week’s prayer requests.
- *Private prayer requests.* Use Facebook messaging to pass prayer requests to your prayer team. Pray for the requests.
- *Counseling.* Short messages on Facebook lead to opportunities to offer counsel and encouragement.
- *Use the Facebook Like button as much as you can.* Liking is a form of online smiling, and we know how much a smile is worth.
- *Use Facebook and Twitter for good communication.* Each has built-in tools to enhance your personal and
church communication.

- **Use Facebook for discipleship.** Share Bible studies, doctrinal statements, and other documents related to growing in Christ.

- **Link to discipleship resources.** There are many good resources for growth in Christ. Be selective about them and learn to link to them.

- **Write your own discipleship resources, Bible studies, even a series of videos.** Share them on Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter.

- **Use photos and comments to strengthen your members’ relationships.** Videos and photos are very important in social media. Take advantage of your smartphone’s camera. It probably takes good photos and excellent videos.

- **Promote events.** Facebook has a built-in calendar for events. Use it with your church’s Facebook page and Web site.

- **Promote various resources.** Find resources on the Internet; link and promote them.

**Conclusion**

These ideas are already working in churches. They might take some getting used to for those of us who were born without smartphones in our hands, but they are more than flat-screen ideas. They bring a new dimension and context to spreading the voice of Jesus into homes and hearts that would not be possible otherwise. Jesus loved to see well-fed people and lots of them. Use social media well to feed those who hunger and thirst.
In the early days of February, snow continued to pack Interstate 90’s Snoqualmie Pass, Wash., as several cars with Walla Walla University (WWU) students journeyed from College Place, Wash., to Seattle to experience the One Project 2014 — a meeting of more than 700 believers to discuss together the supremacy of Jesus in the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Hosted in the Grand Ballroom of the 40-story Westin Hotel in downtown Seattle, WWU students joined other Adventist students, teachers, pastors, chaplains and church members to focus on this year’s theme, “Present Truth,” established to keep Jesus Christ as constant focus and foundation in personal lives and especially in the church. The second theme of the One Project centered on the concept of “My Dream for the Church.”

Originally founded as an independent ministry by a small group of pastors, the event is now an official ministry of Walla Walla and Andrews universities.

Brooke Spickelmier, a WWU theology student, feels blessed to have attended the One Project. “[It] was an astounding time for me and helped further me in understanding the Lord’s calling in my life to serve Him and others in chaplaincy,” she says. “Best of all, Jesus was glorified, and my heart rejoices when I reflect on the determination of Christ’s body being truly involved in hastening the Second Coming of Christ.”

The One Project is a 48-hour gathering, this year featuring 14 different authors, pastors and speakers who presented short messages called Reflections. Nearly 80 tables seating nine people each filled the Grand Ballroom. A 20-minute discussion period followed each Reflection. This was called Recalibration, beginning with a discussion question presented to the groups, sparking conversations at each table led by each table’s group facilitator. Another opportunity for sharing thoughts was the Response time, during which anyone could speak in front to share their dream for the church.

Faith Hoyt, a WWU student studying communication, appreciated the chance to connect with fellow believers. “The One Project was an inspiration to me,” she says. “The time I spent there was not only beneficial to my spiritual life, but it was also an excellent way to stay connected with my church.”

The gathering was also an empowering experience for theology student Stephen Farr, who says it will have a positive effect on his ministry. “It is important to attend events like this and take the time to listen to each other about our hurts, our hopes and our dreams,” he says.

Rachel Wood

Walla Walla University relations writer
Lights! Camera! Action! These are three words the multimedia students at Milton-Stateline Adventist School (MSAS), in Milton-Freewater, Ore., are learning as a part of a new elective class being taken by 10 students in grades five through eight.

This elective class teaches students the basic skills of broadcasting in front of and behind the camera in addition to print media.

One of the activities the multimedia class will participate in is the 3ABN (Three Angels Broadcasting Network) local broadcast of sermons at the Stateline Church. Each student will be cross-trained in the different jobs and assigned to a role based on their skills and abilities.

Another project will be creating commercials that will be featured on 3ABN, local television and the school website. Other projects will include making brochures and exploring the field of multimedia.

Milton-Stateline Adventist School parents Mike and Misti Bruns volunteered to act as mentors and teachers to the students in the multimedia class, training them in the various jobs involved in a live broadcast. Students have worked two Sabbaths to date, doing live filming of the sermon at the Stateline Church.

The goal of the class is to give the students ownership in creating marketable materials for sharing their school as well as a skill set to serve them later on. No knows if a budding movie maker or director is already at MSAS.

Student enthusiasm is high in the class, which meets twice weekly. They also have to commit to one night a week in the evening and two Sabbaths a quarter to meet the extra training and filming commitments. Each student signs a letter of commitment, as do their parents because their support is necessary and appreciated. The students have really stepped up and are taking their responsibilities very seriously. They are doing a great job, and response from church members has been positive.

Look for MSAS online at www.miltonstateline.org.

Leslie Briggs

Milton-Stateline Adventist School principal
Students, parents, grandparents, friends and educators recently gathered at Portland Adventist Academy (PAA) for its inaugural Cultural Geography Fair.

More than 35 seventh- and eighth-grade students participated by studying topics ranging from the geography of the world to the historical significance and present-day influence of culture, commodities and trade routes. The students wrote reports on their subjects, created visual examples of what they learned, and then displayed their projects at the fair. Some even dressed in traditional clothing of the country they studied. Students presented their projects to a panel of five judges who awarded 10 prizes.

"I have received so much great feedback about our Cultural Geography Fair," says Dan Nicola, PAA principal. "We are committed to encouraging inquiry, research and scholarship on our Portland-area Adventist school campuses, so we are thrilled that our Geography Fair has gotten such a positive response."

"I was inspired by the diligence, enthusiasm and knowledge of our students," says Shirley Allen, pastor at neighboring Sunnyside Church and a judge at the fair. "They knew their subjects, they spoke with authority, and their displays were informative and well-documented."

Allen says she could tell the students learned more than just the facts. "They could see the challenges that people face all over the world, and they could relate to them," she says. "In some presentations strong spiritual lessons emerged."

"They shared applications of how we as Christians should really treat each other," adds Gale Crosby, Oregon Conference vice president for education and a second judge at the fair. "I was amazed at how many of the students made spiritual applications from their research. And for that every one of the students deserves a gold medal."

The Cultural Geography Fair not only demonstrated how much a student knows but also pointed to the strength of Adventist education. "It’s clear," says Crosby. "Our schools and teachers are following E.G. White’s vision to ‘inspire young minds to be thinkers, not mere reflectors of others thoughts.’"

**Liesl Vistaunet**

PAA Gleaner correspondent
There’s nothing like a good fight.

Growing up in a family with two other brothers, I had fights that were frequent, creative and quite painful. However what made a good fight was the underlying understanding that none of us were out to truly hurt each other.

Demonstrate dominance? Absolutely.

Practice a new move we saw on TV? For sure.

Experiment with avant-garde wrestling locations like trampolines, pools, ice rinks and bunk beds? Best times ever.

Fights become more sophisticated as we grow older. Physical violence is typically exchanged for more subversive techniques. We battle with wits, arguments, claims of authority and citations of experts. Particularly in church we find friendly debates … and not so friendly.

Church fights can be the stuff of legend and can cripple ministry for decades. Yet conflict comes to both biological and spiritual families — so the question isn’t how to avoid a fight but how to have a good one. The Bible tells us, “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God” (Matt. 5:9, ESV). A peacemaker is really someone who picks a fight — by jumping into it with the intention of creating peace and closeness.

That seems wrong, but it’s because we often confuse peacemaking with peacekeeping.

Peacekeepers are those who run away from conflict, just want everyone to be happy and bury hard feelings instead of confronting them. They usually do more to make things worse rather than better. So how do we effectively engage with opposing forces without making things worse? Here are a few suggestions:

**Pretend You Don’t Know Everything**

This is especially hard for those of us who do know everything. Yet nothing diffuses a situation more than a sincere, self-deprecating comment. Instead of blustering into a conversation with a machine gun full of quotes, qualifications and anecdotes from our personal histories, offer phrases like:

“I probably overlooked something … ,” or “I’m new to this discussion … ,” or even “I haven’t heard your perspective before …. .”

They go a lot further than condescending statements such as:

“Well if you just read the Bible … ,” or “If you were a real Christian … ,” or “When you have a few more years’ experience … .”

It also never hurts to ask clarifying questions like, “When you said … did you mean … ?” A lot of fights have turned ugly because people ended up talking past each other, defining the other side’s arguments in ways they never intended.

The wisdom of Proverbs still stands when it says, “A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger” (Prov. 15:1). This becomes especially true in online debates where we become bolder in our words because, for whatever reason, we feel less awkward saying things we wouldn’t say in person.

**Ask for Help**
You can actually make someone win the argument for you when this is used correctly. When I taught a semester of Christian Beliefs at Union College in Lincoln, Neb., I frequently came across viewpoints that differed from mine. One particular day, when a student questioned the presentation of the state of the dead, I employed this technique. After affirming the student's obvious personal research, I asked him to help me. I said I would love to embrace his viewpoint and that I have several friends with similar ideas, but I haven't found a way over a few obstacles. I gently shared a few observations from Hebrew thought and church history and then asked for him to help me climb over those intellectual hurdles.

He couldn't.

He actually acknowledged he had never considered those points before and toward the end of the semester came closer to the Adventist perspective. It's a way to affirm people's intelligence, disagree and persuade at the same time. Of course this also means you must be open to receive help in the chance they have thought things through better than you.

Which brings us to the final point.

**Affirm Good Questions as Opportunities for Further Study**

Occasionally our arguments will break down due to someone's well-placed question. As in healthy team sports, we need to affirm the opposing side for making a good play. A good question is a chance for us to deepen our understanding — or perhaps shed false ideas. We all have skewed viewpoints from time to time, and we should welcome opportunities to tighten our worldviews.

Ellen White was open to asking good questions and dialogue: "The fact that certain doctrines have been held as truth for many years by our people is not a proof that our ideas are infallible. Age will not make error into truth, and truth can afford to be fair. No true doctrine will lose anything by close investigation" (*Counsels to Writers and Editors*, p. 35). It's our heritage to ask and seek after truth.

Approaching investigation, dialogues or conflicts in a spirit of fear or anger won't help the cause of Christ. May you not be afraid of good fights, and may you fight fair, and may your willingness to make peace create closeness in the body of Christ.
Chehalis Children Help Prepare for Mission

It was something like playing musical chairs, except the junior-age children were going around a big table instead of chairs, and no one got eliminated.

The 10- to 12-year-olds at Chehalis Church packed plastic baggies with small personal items for the church’s Maranatha mission group, which is heading this year to Panama.

Each of the past 23 years Chehalis Church members have participated in a Maranatha mission trip. No matter the age, the Chehalis Church community works together to prepare for this trip. This year children filled the practical gift bags with wash cloths, shampoo, tooth brushes, tooth paste, fingernail clippers, combs, razors and other small items. They added hair bands for girls and toy cars for boys.

One child, Alex, has a personal interest in these small gift bags because he will help distribute them in Santa Marta De Boquron. He isn’t quite sure how he will fit into the big scheme of things, but he and his family are looking forward to building a small church and maybe even painting a school.

As each bag was completed, the kids dropped it into one of many large suitcases to be distributed among the 26 people who will be traveling. In all, the junior-age children completed 86 gift bags and helped keep the Maranatha tradition alive in Chehalis.

Earlene Wohlers

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