April 24: 13th Sabbath Offering Makes History

This Week: 13th Sabbath Offering Makes History; Peru Mission Report; and more!

Peru Mission Report

The North Pacific Union Conference (NPUC) sponsored a short-term mission trip during the last week of March to Tarapoto, Peru, the city of palms. More than 30 individuals, including students from Portland Adventist Academy, Upper Columbia Academy and SOULS Northwest, presented nightly meetings in 28 locations around the city. Mark Remboldt, NPUC treasurer, says the students on this trip were exceptional for their enthusiasm and mission spirit. This was the culmination of a series of reaping meetings in the Northeast Peru Mission which realized 520 new converts. The final Sabbath afternoon of the meetings included a special ordination service, a celebration of the baptisms and a rally in which each local church publicly announced their evangelism goals for the next series. Churches in North America can take a lesson! Read more about this and other 2014 spring mission trips in the July Gleaner.

13th Sabbath Offering Makes History

A long-time staple of Adventist giving, the quarterly Thirteenth Sabbath Offering reached a new milestone recently. Church leaders announced this month that the fourth quarter 2013 offering surpassed $1 million for the first time in the offering's history. This record-breaking offering will help fund innovative outreach throughout Europe, including projects in Greece and Macedonia. While mission offerings through North American churches fell by 2 percent last year, they grew more than 6 percent in other parts of the world. North American tithe payers contributed nearly $950 million (a 1.7 percent increase) to the church’s mission, compared with more than $1.4 billion (3.6 percent increase) from divisions outside North America. Read more from the Adventist News Network.
Pacific Press $1 Million Initiative

The board of directors for Pacific Press has approved a $1 million initiative to encourage new evangelistic resources for the Adventist Church. This Million Streams of Light initiative will be available as seed money for departmental, local church and supportive ministries. Dan Jackson, North American Division president, says, “The greatest need the church has is for an engaged membership. The Million Streams of Light initiative will provide an opportunity for our people to think creatively in terms of how they may use their God-given ingenuity to complete their God-given task in partnership with the publishing ministry.” Learn more about this initiative from the Pacific Press.

New Mexico City Backs Away from Church Registration Ordinance

In a turn about from earlier plans, Las Cruces, N.M., changed an city ordinance that required churches to register with the city and pay fees. The reversal comes six months after the Adventist Church filed suit against the city, accusing them of violating freedom of religious expression and unfairly targeting pastor-led faith groups. The ordinance required that all pastor-led faith groups register with the city, pay a fee, and pass a discretionary review before they could have services. Passed in 1997, the original ordinance was only only applied to a small percentage of more then 100 churches in the city, said the Adventist Church complaint, and the city was singling out Hispanic and Latino congregations. “Now that it’s overturned we can continue doing ministry instead of having to act as a business,” said Lee-Roy Chacon, Texico Conference president. Read more about this victory from Adventist News Network.

Oregon Video Training

Is your church interested in starting a video ministry but you are not sure where to start? Oregon Conference will be offering a camera operator certification class, with the first class starting Sunday, May 4. The all-day class will be taught by Juancarlos Munoz, Oregon Conference Media Center director, at the Holden Convention Center, in Gladstone, Ore. There will be three follow-up classes over the course of the next year to give the complete certification. Get more information and sign up for the class.

ASWWU Peru Fundraising

Each year, the Associated Students of Walla Walla University (ASWWU) chooses a project to support, and this year they have set out to raise $100,000 to build an orphanage in Peru. This project, “To Build a Home” will construct an orphanage located in Checacupe, Peru, and serve an area with many abandon children. More then just helping with the building, students plan to provide a sustainable support system. A project management class will be providing a five-year business plan and the university will be establishing a student missionary position at the facility. ASWWU has several events planned including concerts, fun runs and a food fair to raise money.
April 24: 13th Sabbath Offering Makes History

for the project. Local businesses are getting involved as well, with one pledging to donate $1 for each Facebook page "like" they get. To learn more about the project, watch a video about the need. To find the fundraising events, visit To Build a Home.

May Book Giveaway

Do you enjoy the GleanerWeekly? Each week we work to bring you a summary of the best news happening around the Northwest and beyond. While we are happy for each subscriber, we want the word to be spread even further. So during the month of May, we will be giving away two copies of Karl and Claire Haffner's book, Are You More Spiritual Than a 5th Grader? each week. To win a copy, all you have to do is be signed up for the email. If you enjoy reading the GleanerWeekly, don't keep it to yourself! Encourage your friends to sign up too!

Currently at gleanernow

- Mid-Columbia Students Travel to Washington D.C.
- SOULS Northwest: A Fresh Focus on Local Outreach
- Martin Weber: Sacred Ruts
- Snow Caves in Alaska
- Seth Pierce: A Festival of Inconsistency
- Tillamook Regional Medical Center Hosts Art Show to Raise Heart Awareness

And More!

Looking Ahead

April

- 24–27: WWU Alumni Homecoming

May

- 1–4: ASI Northwest
- 2–4: Oregon Men’s Retreat, Cottage Grove, OR
- 5–10: InTents Meetings, WWU

More Events

Want to advertise in GleanerWeekly?
May

While the Northwest has many Seventh-day Adventists, there are still millions of people who don't know the truth of Jesus' soon return. One method the North Pacific Union is using to train members to reach their neighbors is SOULS Northwest. This month, the Gleaner looks at what the school is doing, and profiles some of the students. Read the May issue online.
Adventist News Network®

13th Sabbath Offering exceeds US$1 million, makes history

Adventist Church Treasurer Robert E. Lemon delivers his report to Spring Meeting delegates. [photo: Viviene Martinelli]

Offering to fund innovative evangelism in Europe; other allocations will support Mission to the Cities, Adventist media expansion

April 18, 2014 | Silver Spring, Maryland, United States | Elizabeth Lechleitner/ANN

Spring Meeting delegates last week welcomed news that the Seventh-day Adventist Church reached a significant financial milestone last year.

Thirteenth Sabbath Offerings for the fourth quarter of 2013 exceeded US$1 million for the first time in the history of the offering. Thirteenth Sabbath Offering is collected on the last Saturday of every quarter in Adventist churches worldwide. The offering provides an opportunity for members to give to specific projects that grow the Adventist Church in tangible ways.

Last year’s record-breaking offering will establish new congregations and support innovative evangelism in Europe, including outreach centers in Greece and Macedonia, church finance officers said during the April 9 treasury report.

Tithes and offerings were another bright spot last year. Tithe returned in the North American Division for 2013 was up 1.7 percent from 2012 and totaled $949 million. Tithe from divisions outside North America increased 3.6 percent for a total of more than $1.4 billion.

Mission offerings from outside North America similarly grew, reaching approximately $64 million—a 6 percent increase from the previous year. Meanwhile, mission offerings returned in North America dipped just under 2 percent, totaling about $22 million.

“Despite the recession and slow economic recovery in the U.S., the economies of most of the countries around the world have remained stable,” said Adventist world church Treasurer Robert E. Lemon. That reality is reflected in the upward tick of tithes and offerings from outside North America, he added.

“We praise God for the increase in tithe worldwide and especially in world mission offerings that have helped cushion the reduction of tithe from North America,” Adventist world church President Ted N. C. Wilson said.

Wilson was referring to a plan currently in place to scale down the portion of tithe from North America that stays at Adventist world church headquarters—from 8 percent in 2012 to 6 percent in 2020.

Adventist world church Undertreasurer Juan Prestol said the church would likely feel the blunt of the reduction this year. “This is going to be the test year,” he said, “but assuming the faithfulness of our members … we anticipate that as this year moves along, we should be able to get over the hump.”
Meanwhile, Adventist world church headquarters continues to operate significantly below its cap on spending, which is set by the Executive Committee. The building was almost $7 million under budget last year.

Delegates also agreed to several allocations recommended by the church’s Strategic Planning and Budgeting Committee:

- $1.6 million for health and education initiatives in the Middle East North Africa Union (MENA).
- $600,000 to the church’s Southern Asia-Pacific Division to cover the launch of Hope Channel Indonesia.
- $650,000 for theological education centers in the Northern Asia-Pacific Division.
- $8 million to Hope Channel to extend the official Adventist television network’s satellite and DirectTV contracts through 2020.
- $2.8 million to the church’s 13 world divisions and MENA.

The appropriation for Hope Channel comes from so-called “extraordinary tithe,” a one-time private donation of $102 million in tithe to the Adventist Church in 2007. Prestol said church financial officers anticipate that Hope Channel will absorb contract costs into its own budget by 2020.

More than $12 million of the extraordinary tithe is still being reserved to assist in the transition of projects that were launched under the extraordinary tithe as they are moved into operating budgets, Prestol said.

As for the $2.8 million allocation to the world divisions and MENA, Prestol said church regions are “encouraged” to spend the influx on Mission to the Cities projects, but that they can use the money “at their own discretion.”

Last week’s treasurer’s report also included an announcement on staff changes at Adventist world church headquarters. Verland Ernston, longtime controller for the Adventist world church, will retire in June. Current Associate Controller Eugene Korff was appointed to take the role, Lemon said. Meanwhile, investment portfolio manager Denise Greenough was appointed to the associate controller position and will start June 1. Also, the church has promoted Senior Accountant Raul Nestares into the role of associate treasurer, replacing Dean Rogers, who recently retired.

Wilson, making final remarks after the report, expressed deep appreciation for church financial officers and personnel.

“We owe a great deal of gratitude to treasury for their very careful stewardship of church funds,” he added.
“A MILLION STREAMS OF LIGHT”

pacificpress.com/
Thank you for your interest in Pacific Press’s “A Million Streams of Light” initiative. Today more than ever, if we are going to reach the world with the Adventist message, there is a need for innovative, new products and programs. It is too easy for the pressure of budgets and time to stifle creativity when it comes to evangelism. But Ellen White called for new plans and new methods:

*Let every worker in the Master’s vineyard, study, plan, devise methods, to reach the people where they are. We must do something out of the common course of things. We must arrest the attention. We must be deadly in earnest. We are on the very verge of times of trouble and perplexities that are scarcely dreamed of* (Letter 20, 1893).

*Means will be devised to reach hearts. Some of the methods used in this work will be different from the methods used in the work in the past; but let no one, because of this, block the way by criticism* (Review and Herald, Sept. 30, 1902).

To foster new and creative ideas for evangelism, Pacific Press has set aside $1,000,000 to partner with ministries within the church. If your ministry is interested in such a partnership, please read through the guidelines. If your project or idea fits the guidelines, please fill out and submit the Partnership Request form. You can email this form or print and mail it in to this address:

*Mail Forms to:*

| Pacific Press Publishing Association Million Streams of Light Program PO BOX 5353 |
| Nampa, ID 83653-5353 |

*Or Submit via eMail:*

*Right click on the links below to download the PDF files.*
- Guidelines
- Partnership Request
It worked—U.S. city reverses ordinance after Adventist Church’s complaint

The U.S. city of Las Cruces in the state of New Mexico reversed an ordinance that the Adventist Church claimed violated religious freedom. The ordinance was changed after the Adventist Church’s Texico Conference filed a complaint in court. The Texico Conference headquarters, shown here, is located in Corrales, New Mexico. [ANN file photo by Sue Hinkle]

Texico Conference last year filed suit on religious liberty grounds

April 22, 2014 | Silver Spring, Maryland, United States | Elizabeth Lechleitner and Ansel Oliver/ANN

Seventh-day Adventist Church legal counsel said they’re pleased by a United States city’s reversal of an ordinance they said violated religious expression and unfairly targeted pastor-led faith groups, especially Latino churches.

Las Cruces, New Mexico last month changed an ordinance that required churches to register with the city and pay fees, a move that came six months after the Adventist Church filed suit against the city.

A city spokesman last year said the ordinance aimed to provide information for the city’s obligation to provide citizens with fire and police protection. Adventist Church officials alleged that it violated the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

The city changed the ordinance on March 17 to no longer require non-profit organizations to pay registration fees, and the Adventist Church subsequently dismissed its lawsuit from the U.S. District Court of New Mexico.

“We’re very happy that the new ordinance addresses both the city’s legitimate fire and safety concerns and our concerns about governmental interference with churches,” said Todd McFarland, associate general counsel for the Adventist Church.

The original Las Cruces Ordinance No. 16-131, passed in 1997, defined a business as “any profession, trade or occupation and all and every kind of calling,” including the work of pastors, priests, rabbis, bishops, imams and other religious leaders.

The ordinance essentially required all pastor-led churches within city limits to register with the city, pay a registration fee and pass a discretionary review process before gaining approval to conduct worship services or provide pastoral care. Faith groups that are lay-led rather than clergy-led were not subject to the requirements, lawyers said.

Early last year, city officials threatened to take legal action against the Las Cruces Spanish Seventh-day Adventist Church if it failed to comply with the requirements of the business registration ordinance.
There are more than 100 churches within the Las Cruces city limits, but the ordinance, Adventist lawyers said, had been applied only to a small percentage of these churches and, according to the Adventist Church’s complaint, “disparately applied to single out Hispanic and Latino churches.”

In June, the city first notified the Spanish Seventh-day Adventist Church that it had seven days to comply with the requirements or face “court action,” according to a letter from the city’s Codes Enforcement Department. However, the Las Cruces Central Seventh-day Adventist Church, a majority non-Latino congregation, received no such notice, McFarland said.

The Adventist Church filed the lawsuit in September through its Texico Conference, headquartered in the Albuquerque suburb of Corrales.

“I think it was great that we did what we did in challenging it,” said Lee-Roy Chacon, president of the Texico Conference. “Now that it’s overturned we can continue doing ministry instead of having to act as a business.”

The Texico Conference oversees church operations in West Texas and New Mexico, where it maintains approximately 80 churches and supports a membership of 12,000.
Camera 101

Please fill out the form below to register for Camera 101 – Part 1 training.

This is one of four classes that will be provided throughout the year that will train you to become a Hope TV certified video camera operator. The classes are offered to you by Dr. Juancarlos Munoz – Director of the Oregon Conference Media Center.

Attend this new class series to become a certified church video camera operator! This will be the first class of the 4 unit session, with one class being offered each quarter. Learn the basics of video camera operation, lighting, how to use the tools of the trade, such as a light meter, and more. No experience is necessary to take this certification. The series will be taught in both English and Spanish.

DATE:
Sunday May 4, 2014, 9:00 am – 6:00 pm (with a break for lunch)

PLACE:
Holden Convention Center, 19500 Oatfield Road, Gladstone, Oregon 97027.

COST:
A nominal fee of $15 for materials for Part 1.

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**Name**  
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**Email**  

**Phone Number**  
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**Comments**  

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**Total**  
$15.00

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Camera 101  
$15.00

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https://campmeetingvolunteers.wufoo.com/forms/camera-101/?utm_source=camera_101_part_1
A special event takes place every year at Mid-Columbia Adventist Christian School (MCACS) in Hood River. Peter Hardy, MCACS principal, plans a field trip for his ninth- and 10th-graders to one of two locations, either San Diego, Calif., or Washington, D.C. This year they went to Washington D.C.

The trip was Jan. 9 to 16, during severe winter weather. But they felt very fortunate and blessed. Even though storms were quite severe this year, especially in the Northeast, there was enough of a break from the falling snow and ice to complete visits to the places planned without difficulty.

Geneses Quezada states that on their first day they went to Gettysburg, Penn., where the students "saw the fields where the Confederate and Union soldiers fought."

After that they went to Mount Vernon where George Washington lived, the Smithsonian, the Capitol building and the White House.

"It was very fun but educational as well," says Austin Chapman. "We got to learn about the wars ... at Williamsburg and Gettysburg." As a non-Adventist, he states how he also "especially enjoyed visiting the Seventh-day Adventist church there."

Expenses were minimized because the entire group was invited to stay at Hardy's brother's house.

All agreed with Halee Chapman that, if given the opportunity, they would absolutely love to go back to visit again.

Joyce Gallentine

Mid-Columbia Adventist Christian School communication leader
SOULS Northwest: A Fresh Focus on Local Outreach

Many of the thousands of people surrounding our churches will never hear the truth of Jesus’ soon return unless we share with them personally. These are the “all the world” that Jesus told us to baptize and disciple. But how do we start? How do we overcome our fears and doubts and lack of experience?

We can’t just hire someone to do the work for us — that’s expensive and only deepens our individual lack of involvement in gospel work. There are just too many people who need to hear about Christ for paid church workers to reach them — all of us need to be reaching out to share the gospel. But to be effective we need training, motivation, and someone to help organize and structure the work of outreach evangelism in our churches — we need outreach leaders.

Enter SOULS Northwest, the North Pacific Union’s outreach leadership school. The goal is to develop capable, experienced and visionary lay leadership for the local church. The model is a practical, two-year training experience with academically rigorous classes and more than 2,000 hours of mentored ministry experience. Students learn practical skills like how to teach, motivate and organize church volunteers. They gain a sound footing in Bible doctrines as well as how to study the Bible with others. SOULS provides training for all forms of personal evangelism such as Bible instruction, literature evangelism, health ministries and helping the poor, with the expectation that our graduates will assist churches in connecting already-thriving church programs like CHIP (Complete Health Improvement Program) and Adventist Community Services with an in-home ministry model.

SOULS Northwest is intentional about training its students in the context of real-world ministry — not just designing the “model” that our staff members think will work best. Since every church is unique, our students must learn principles that can be applied to different settings and church cultures and will work in any context. For this reason much of the field experience our students receive happens with groups of two students working in churches here in the Northwest.

Jason Worf, SOULS Northwest director

Next >

As Ellen White explains, “Christ’s method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Saviour mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, ‘Follow Me’” (Ministry of Healing, 143).

It’s this personal contact, the one-on-one mingling, sympathizing, ministering and calling to follow Jesus, that SOULS Northwest is training leaders to facilitate. Most students who graduate SOULS Northwest will enter the gospel ministry not as pastors or public evangelists but as Bible-worker trainers and outreach leaders hired by the local church.

SOULS Northwest is a self-funded ministry of the North Pacific Union that is totally funded by student tuition. Our goal is that students will be able to graduate debt-free. To enable this we use literature evangelism as both a training tool for personal work as well as a source of funding so students can pay their way as they go through school.

Read the stories of three young people currently at SOULS:
Sacred Ruts

During the good old days of the American pioneers, the Oregon Trail was the best route to the great Northwest. But not for long. Better roads and vehicles provided new ways and means of transportation, ultimately resulting in travel on Interstate 86 and Interstate 84.

The mission never changed: “Westward ho!” But methods of achieving it needed constant updating and upgrading. Last year when moving to North Pacific Union from Mid-America Union in Nebraska, Darlene and I didn’t rent a covered wagon. We cruised across the Cascades in our Camry.

History buffs identify places where the old wagon trail once existed. These ruts of our pioneers are profoundly special. But not sacred. Because what used to be the best way to go can become, over time, a hindrance rather than a passage.

When it comes to fulfilling God’s purpose for Adventists today, blindly following the methods of our pioneers causes the church to be stuck in ruts. And when we imagine those ruts to be sacred, we entrap ourselves ever deeper in them.

Stewardship Demands Progress

Our divine mission never changes, but methods of fulfilling it must continually be challenged and improved. Acknowledging this reality does not disrespect our pioneers. It’s just good sense and responsible stewardship. Paradoxically, to maintain the spirit of our pioneers we must continually transcend their methods by pioneering new ways of fulfilling God’s unwavering mission.

Consider the role of technology in the history of the church. Spirit-filled apostles of the first century traversed Mediterranea and beyond on roads constructed by Roman engineers, planting churches in places otherwise unreachable. Adventist pioneers likewise exploited the limits of technology in their day, publishing Present Truth. Whenever I visit Pacific Press, I wonder what James and Ellen White would say if they saw what God has wrought there. They would be proud of the press, I’m sure. I’m involved with this transition daily in my retirement ministry, seeking collaborative relationships with Pacific Press and other Adventist publishers to serve pastors, elders and churches with the latest mission-centered technology.

The purpose of high tech is to facilitate high touch, sharing our digitized message on cutting-edge websites and via social media such as Facebook or Faithlife. Harnessing technology is a practical way to love God with all our minds. Clinging to past methods makes us faithful unto death — the death of our mission — secure (and smug) in our sacred ruts. Meanwhile, God says, “See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?” (Isaiah 43:19, NIV).

Long ago I graduated from a beautiful rural academy, since shuttered due to shifting demographics. They closed the school not to destroy Christian education but to preserve it. Other academies could better serve our young people — for whom educational institutions exist, to prepare them to take their place of ministry within local churches, here and abroad. This is the grand purpose for which our now-departed pioneers established Adventist Christian education.

Everything in this world has a shelf life: “To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven. A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck what is planted” (Eccl. 3:1–2, NKJ).

Past Anchors the Future

Yesteryear’s hot technology gathers dust in 2014. Even beloved saints come and go, and the church must move forward without them. “David, after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation, fell asleep and was laid
with his fathers” (Acts 13:36, ESV). His former subjects mourned their loss even as they laid their beloved king to rest. It was time for transition, preserving fond memories of the past as they fulfilled God’s purpose for the present. Only thus could they have a future.

The alternative is cowardly paralysis, blind sentimentalism stuck in the ruts of our past. Godly leaders put purpose above politics. They empathize with the inevitable suffering that comes with necessary change, but they cannot pander to the pain.

Sometimes you must lose your life to save it — personally and institutionally, not only in Adventist schools but in our churches. Some congregations with a century of history have shrunk to the place where their favorite Bible promise is “where two or three are gathered .... .” Amen, Jesus is there, but the challenge remains. Can trained local elders represent Him rather than a salaried pastor? Should conference executive committees assign professional pastors to lead mission-focused congregations?

Tough questions. No easy solutions, even when the answers are self-evident.

Remember the ruts of the old Oregon Trail. We respect their heritage while realizing that we cannot ride them into God’s kingdom.

+ Read more from Perspective
+ Read more from May 2014

**Martin Weber**

Adventist product manager at Logos Bible Software

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Martin Weber, DMin, served as pastor, editor, author, evangelist and police chaplain across North America and taught pastors on five continents with the General Conference Ministerial Association.
The Pathfinder/youth group in Tok and Delta, Alaska, put smiles and muscles into digging snow caves and testing the new accommodations overnight.
Several years ago I was at an International Fair hosted by the local community college where diverse groups manned booths in order to inform, convert, sell to or — in the case of the booth where I spent the most time — feed people. I had just finished an ice cream bar when I was asked to hand out flyers promoting upcoming revival meetings at our church to those running the booths.

As I made my way around the circle of booths on the college lawn reactions were mixed. Some gladly took the flyers and listened while others avoided them and sent me body language resembling a threatened porcupine. But the most interesting person I encountered was a stout gentleman with a long white beard who could have resembled Santa Claus had he not worn a scowl that would have frightened Medusa. Snatching the flyer he listened momentarily before speaking.

"I only believe in the Bible," he said — thinking he had warded me off making his way back around his booth.

"So do we," I replied. He turned and looked at me sharply.

"That's what they all say. You know I went to Catholic school for years — I am a bit of a theologian."

"I'm a seminary student."

This intrigued him, and what followed were theological arguments as easy to understand as upside-down algorithms in Acadian.

"Have you ever read the story of Jericho ... uh ... Jerca ... um ...?"

"Jericho?"

"Yeah, that one. You know Hitler only wanted Jews dead, but God wanted everyone destroyed — makes Hitler look good doesn't it?" Before I could respond he continued, "I'm an agnostic."

"And you believe in the Bible?"

"Ever heard of the Thomas Jefferson Bible? Well, he read the Old Testament and didn't like the God he found there — and neither do I. I only read the New Testament." Once again he saw I was going to comment and kept talking.

"You know those words in red? The words of Jesus?"

"Yeah."

"Well, those are the only words I live by." He smiled, proud of himself, and allowed me time to respond. I thought carefully.

First he claimed the Bible — a book demonstrating God is active and knowable through Jesus Christ. Then he claimed agnosticism — a belief stating it's impossible to know God. Finally, he claimed the words of Jesus and denied half the Bible. And it is in the words of Jesus that I confronted his inconsistencies.

"What happens when the words in red quote the Old Testament?"

His face contorted with anger. "To heck with the Old Testament!" And he stormed off — a man whose claims were destroyed by his inconsistency. He was no theologian. And while it would have felt good to do a victory dance full of self-righteous spinning and pirouettes of piety, I wondered if people who profess Christianity fall into the same trap.

We tell each other "I'll pray for you," but how many of us actually do? We claim to follow a loving God, and yet how do
we respond to those around us — including telemarketers, Republicans, Democrats and anyone else with whom we might disagree? We bask in the forgiveness that Christ promises, but do we extend that same forgiveness to those who cut us off, flip us off, tick us off and write us off?

Jesus says (quoting the Old Testament nonetheless) that people who were professing faith while He was on Earth "honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me" (Matt. 15:8, NIV). There was no consistency, resulting in the professed spiritual leaders destroying their ability to reveal the love of God.

One text that offers help in eliminating our inconsistencies says, "Study to show thyself approved unto God ..." (2 Tim. 3:16, KJV). This study needs to happen in two ways. First make a list of all the claims you make in life and study them to see if they match your behavior. Second, study your claims. If someone were to ask about your beliefs, could you defend them? When you do find discrepancies, and you will, remember, God loves you and has promised forgiveness (1 John 1:9). Trust in Him, study what you claim — and by His grace you'll be a consistent light in a dark world.

+ Read more from Perspective
+ Read more from May 2014
Approximately 60 people gathered on a blustery winter day in the historic North County Recreation District art gallery in Nehalem, Ore., and enjoyed good conversation, the company of fellow art lovers and art based upon the theme of the heart. The original art show was sponsored by Tillamook Regional Medical Center (TRMC) to spread heart health awareness.

The artwork itself was as diverse as the citizens of Tillamook County. There were beautiful watercolor florals and bold oil paintings, detailed illustrations of the human heart, and charming art by children. There were smiles and a lot of toe-tapping to the music of Tico Marimba, a talented group of local musicians who made their own marimbas.

The collective artwork, called Art for the Heart, was on display for a month. An open call went out to artists and creative people from Tillamook County, and results were gratifying. The event featured beautiful painted valentines by children, while professional artists exhibited oil paintings, photography and blown glass. Developing artists contributed textile art, mosaics, paintings, drawings and kiln-glass. Attendees voted on their favorite artwork, and the most popular artwork received awards. Ten pieces of art were sold.

The event, called Community Celebration of the Heart, was well-received by the community. “It was a beautiful show drawing attention to cardiovascular health in Tillamook County and engaging the community in a new and creative way,” said Mary Faith Bell, creator of the event and TRMC communications and marketing director.

“Heart health is of high concern in Tillamook County, where 32.2 percent of adults have high blood pressure,” says Bell, “8.3 percent have diabetes, 4.8 percent have had heart attacks, and 3.9 percent have angina — all higher than the state average. That is why it is was important for TRMC to help promote heart health awareness.”

In addition to the art and the music, the event featured plant-based healthy foods such as vegan cookies and hummus. “Everyone was delighted by the music, the food and the general environment,” Bell says. “It was great to see children dancing and adults smiling.”

Attendees of the event were encouraged to take a free online screening for vascular health sponsored by Northwest Regional Heart and Vascular and were given literature about heart health.

Bell anticipates that this will become an annual event for Tillamook Regional Medical Center and the communities it serves.

Divya Joseph, Adventist Health Gleaner correspondent, with Mary Faith Bell, TRMC communications and marketing director

Divya Joseph

Adventist Health Gleaner correspondent