Seeking God before We Do His Business

by Don Livesay, President of the Lake Union Conference

A few years ago I was inspired when our ministerial director reported seeing a group of church elders struggling with an issue, with open Bibles on their laps, seeking the Scriptures for direction. It seemed that approach was missing from our conference Executive Committee. To include Bible study time would be a departure from the way we do business — a relatively short devotional and a “word” of prayer before getting into the extensive agenda of the day. Several committee meetings came and went while I tried to get my head around this different form of doing “business as usual.”

A few months later, as our Executive Committee discussed the ins and outs of a challenging issue, it hit me. We, as a committee, were bringing good discussion and wise counsel, but it all tended to be the thoughts of men and women. Should we not seek God in a more focused way to gain His guidance?

At the next Executive Committee we divided into small groups of about six and prayed for the Holy Spirit to guide our study. We silently read an assigned portion of Scripture, and then shared what came to our hearts from the Word of God. The hour of study closed with a season of prayer that was guided more by God’s Word than by our own thoughts. It was wonderful! That day’s agenda was completed in a timely way. We were more spiritually in tune with God and more united with each other.

John 20:22, the last chapter of Luke and Acts 1-2 describe Jesus’
disciples after the resurrection and ascension. Jesus breathed the Holy Spirit on them in the upper room. From that point forward they showed greater evidence of understanding what Jesus had and continued to teach them. After the ascension they witnessed in the temple every day. They prepared for the dramatic outpouring of the Holy Spirit by gathering daily for prayer which united them into one accord. Their hearts were opened, the Holy Spirit poured into their lives, and the Day of Pentecost took place.

Some might call that *Revival and Reformation*. The preparation included: witnessing, seeking God in prayer, and unity. The result was hearts open to God’s strategic plan. What if every executive committee, every conference president search process, every church and school board, every nominating committee and elders’ board took time to really seek God in Scripture and focused prayer? We might learn and experience just what God desires to do with us individually and collectively.

"When you have a set of beliefs, stick to them." With God, anything is possible," said one of the members of *Committed*, the 2010 winners of *NBC's* "The Sing Off," which is an a cappella singing contest that garnered this six-man group (all graduates of *Oakwood University*) a recording contract with *Sony Music*. You can see the complete interview with Committed and hear their story on the Call on Faith App (sponsored by *Oddessy Networks*). Search “Call on Faith” in the App Store and look under the “Celebrity Stories of Faith” tab.

An agreement was reached on the issue of smokeless tobacco with Major League Baseball this past Monday, as announced by Matt Myers, president of the Campaign For Tobacco Free Kids. Faith United Against Tobacco played a critical role in this effort. The Seventh-day Adventist Church, represented by NAD Health Ministries Director Katia Reinert, joined with other faith organizations in signing the letter to the Major League Baseball Players' Association that resulted in the first (and only) response from them on the issue.

While the agreement does not result in a total ban of smokeless tobacco, it represents meaningful progress because players have agreed not to carry smokeless tobacco tins or packages in their back pockets during games and batting practice. They also have agreed not to use tobacco during pre-game and post-game TV interviews or at team functions, public meets and greets, autograph signings or other team-sponsored appearances. In addition, they have agreed to take a series of additional public education and cessation steps that all move in the right direction. MORE
The following are positive stories that appeared this week in the news about Seventh-day Adventists in the North American Division territory.

Adventists in the News

**Thanksgiving celebration takes a vegan twist**
*Temple News*
November 28

**Being ‘hands on’ has much meaning to Pastor Clarke**
*Bradenton Herald*
November 26

**Ephesus Seventh-day Adventist Church serves Thanksgiving meals to ...**
*The Saginaw News*
November 24

**Annual Christmas benefit supports Hospice of the Shenandoah**
*Staunton News Leader*
November 24

**Church to offer free food, sleeping bags to area homeless**
*Sierra Vista Herald*
November 23

**An all-night prayer vigil utilizing dial-in teleconference technology, will begin this coming Thursday night, December 1, led by Ruthie Jacobsen, director of NAD Prayer Ministries. It will begin at 10 p.m. EST and continue until 5 a.m. When you want to join the prayer vigil, dial 712-432-0031 and enter the access code: 435650, plus the # sign.**

We especially want to pray for the NAD Day of Prayer, January 7, and the NAD Prayer Summit, “Revolution on our Knees,” January 12-15, asking that God will do what He longs to do.

**Don’t forget! December 1 is the deadline to save $50 with the early-bird registration for the Adventist Ministries Convention, to be**
The Pastoral Evangelism Leadership Conference (PELC), "Pentecost II: Walking in the Rain," will be held December 4-6, at Oakwood University in Huntsville, Ala., and promises to be a confluence of powerful worship, incredible teaching, transformational experiences and ultimately, seeking a "soaking" in the "rain" of the Holy Spirit. Thus the theme. Featured Speakers will be Carlton Byrd and Henry M. Wright. Registration can be done onsite. MORE

The Seventh-day Adventist Church is a Bible-based church and December 3 is designated as "Bible Sabbath" in the NAD Calendar of Special Days. Of course, we don't want to limit Bible emphasis to just one Sabbath a year! But a special day provides us with an opportunity to emphasize it and to re-think how we do Bible study. It is not only about giving Bible studies, but also about studying it for ourselves. We can't have Revival and Reformation without it! Consider incorporating a season of Bible study with prayer before making decisions, as Elder Don Livesay writes about in this issue of NewsPoints.

The North American Division has a webpage listing Bible studies that are available. Consider listing these on your own church and institution websites for visitors to find. There also are resources and websites listed on the Calendar of Special Days web page. These are being continually updated, so check back. If you know of a resource or website that is not listed, let us know.

Christian Hospitality is the Focus of the Month of December, as designated on the NAD Calendar of Special Days, and it's an important aspect of Christian living and sharing and ministering to others in love. Let's remember, especially during the coming holiday season, all of the lonely people who would be greatly blessed by a caring and hospitable gesture.

"Revolution on Our Knees" NAD Prayer Summit, invites all to attend, and enjoy speakers such as Dan Jackson, Jose Rojas, Karen Martell, Marion Parson, and more. Ask God to take away any mediocrity and to take y ou to a deeper level of faith and blessing. You will be challenged and equipped to go deeper in His will. A great way to begin a new year! It will be held in Innisbrook, Fl, January 12-15, just prior to the Adventist Ministries Convention. Register

Help stop the spread of AIDS. The Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) will commemorate World AIDS Day on December 1, to show its support and involvement in the global effort to stop AIDS, one of the biggest challenges our world has ever faced. This year's theme is, "Getting to Zero. Zero New HIV Infections. Zero Discrimination and Zero AIDS Related Deaths." MORE

Learn more, and choose a way that you can help through ADRA. Download World AIDS Day posters, pulpit announcement, bulletin insert and event guide.

December Focus: Christian Hospitality

Special Days:
• December 3, Bible Sabbath

Helpful website(s):
• NAD Website List of Bible Studies
• BibleInfo.com

Related Resources Quick Links:
• AdventSource Related Resources
• Journey of Joy DVD Bible Studies
• Lifting Up Jesus Bible Studies
• "Hospitality" in Women's Ministries Certification, Level 3

Offerings:
• December 3, Local Church Budget
• December 10, Adventist Community Services
• December 13, Local Church Budget
• December 24, Local Conference Advance
• December 31, NAD Outreach Project

Union Magazines and Websites

Atlantic Union GLEANER
Canadian Adventist MESSENGER
Columbia Union VISITOR
Lake Union HERALD
Mid-America OUTLOOK
North Pacific Union GLEANER
Pacific Union RECORDER
Southern Union TIDINGS
Southwestern Union RECORD
Susan received a handbill in the mail for *Prophecies Decoded*. After attending the first several nights, she excitedly phoned her husband who was deployed in Afghanistan and told him that she wanted to quit her night job so she could attend all the meetings. A short while later the husband came home for a two week R&R and began attending the meetings with his wife. They found cherished beliefs toppled by the arsenal of Biblical truth and experienced Godly transformation. Susan and her husband were baptized together before he returned to Afghanistan.

When a church embraces evangelism as a lifestyle, people have a greater opportunity to discover God’s truths and come under the conviction of the Holy Spirit.

The final Adventists InStep for Life (AISFL) webinar of the year will be held Tuesday, December 13, at 8-9 p.m. EST. Join this division-wide webinar from the convenience of your own home or office and get updates about topics such as the total miles walked by churches, schools, hospitals in each union; total gardens, feeding sites, and PALA awards; and the Health Summit tracks and training in Orlando, January 2012. Learn about new Health Ministry resources coming in 2012, and how to register and participate in the 2012 Health Expo for the Orlando community. Register HERE, and then you will receive a confirmation email with instructions for joining the Webinar.

*Best Practices for Adventist Ministry* is a newsletter for ministers, with news, tips, ideas, resources, and more. Here are the archived editions. Subscribe here.
"What God Requires of You"

Jose Rojas, Director of the Office of Volunteer Ministries

Stay Socially Connected with NAD
Thanksgiving celebration takes a vegan twist

November 28, 2011 by Alexsia Brown
Filed under Arts & Entertainment, Food

Leave a Comment

Vegans met at Seventh Day Adventist Church for a meat-free Thanksgiving dinner organized by the Public Eye.

While some were feasting with their families on Thanksgiving Day, a select few decided to engage in a less meaty tradition. A group met at the Seventh Day Adventist Church in Chestnut Hill to begin its second annual vegan Thanksgiving.

“There are a lot of vegan Thanksgivings now,” said Lisa Levinson, event organizer and member of Public Eye. “It’s a trend that’s increasing because there are people who want to celebrate the holidays in a way that’s not objective to their beliefs.”

The dinner was held by Public Eye, a Philadelphia-area group that holds events featuring the arts and focuses on the interactions between human and nonhuman animals, and by the Vegan Spirituality Group, a group of people who get together to discuss the positives of veganism.

“It all started about three years ago,” Levinson said of the group. “We met once a month and began a potluck and discussion group. We decided on a retreat to focus on the question—what does vegan spirituality mean? And we had guided meditation and hiking and after the first retreat, one of the members decided on a dinner to see one another before the following year, so we decided to get together for Thanksgiving.”

The dinner has also garnered a lot of positive feedback and outcomes according to Levinson.

“Very, very positive feedback,” the seven-year vegan said. “Last year, a lot of people returned and even a family from Vermont visited.”

The dinner began at 4 p.m. and was held in a room in the church. After a few minutes of setting up the tables with tablecloths and adding a long one to showcase the food, the dinner began. A number of people, including couples and families, attended and each brought a dish.

“I initially became a vegan because there was just something in me that just made me hate meat,” Romelle Johnson, an 11-year vegan and member of the Vegan Spirituality Group, said.

“It was always conflicting to me that my mother fried chicken and fortunately she never made me eat it. One day I decided I’m just not gonna eat it anymore, so I didn’t.”

Johnson also addressed the health benefits of veganism.
“Since I have become a vegan, I haven’t had weight problems or problems with my gallbladder like I used to,” Johnson said. “Before I began being a vegan, I was on three or four heart medications and now I’m only on one or two.”

Sandi Herman, another member of the Vegan Spirituality group, also spoke about how she loved veganism and the physical and emotional benefits of it.

“I feel like this is the best thing I ever did and I just feel so much better in my heart and spirit,” Herman said, who has been vegan for 24 years.

“I ate more dairy when I became a vegetarian because I didn’t know what to do with myself,” Herman said. “I really learned a lot more about food when I became one [a vegan].”

Another member of the group, Andrea Dade, also cited health benefits as a reason she decided to become a vegan.

“I have been one since about ’06 and before that, I was doing seafood since ’02,” Andrea said. “I did it because of many health reasons and just to eat in a way that made sense and I wanted to know what I was eating. I wanted to make choices for myself.”

Each of these women prepared a dish for the meal. Johnson made roasted beets with Hawaiian sea salt and Dade made southern chinese fusion of collard greens, red onions and garlic.

Other dishes at the dinner included roasted brussels sprouts, mashed potatoes with yeast and peppers, Tofurky with vegan gravy, lemon tofu, sweet potatoes and vegan cornbread.

After Levinson went to the microphone at the top of the room and introduced the dinner, people wasted no time grabbing plates and circulating the table to get their food. As people grabbed their food, members handed out papers featuring the Vegan Serenity Prayer and song that would be sung later in the dinner.

Johnson spoke about her work at the John Heins Refuge for Animals and the safety of the uneaten turkeys.

“They’re fat, happy, juicy and protected,” Johnson said.

*Alexsia Brown can be reached at alexsia.brown@temple.edu.*

Tags: 11-29-11, Lisa Levinson, Seventh Day Adventist Church, the Public Eye, vegan thanksgiving
Being ‘hands on’ has much meaning to Pastor Clarke - Faith | Bradenton.com

By VIN MANNIX
vmannix@bradenton.com

BRADENTON -- Being ‘hands on’ has multiple meanings for Pastor Everis H. Clarke when it comes to his mission at Mount Gilead Seventh-day Adventist Church.

"I see my role as being attending to the needs of the community, to be a facilitator for their needs," said the 51-year-old Jamaican native.

"If someone needs a job, I help them search.

"If someone needs money, we supply some.

"If someone is having an emergency, I go out and tend to them."

If there’s a dish to be contributed to the congregation repast?

Clarke’s on it, too.

Take last weekend’s Thanksgiving Dinner, which the church traditionally hosts for the homeless the Sunday before the holiday's traditional date.

It was spearheaded by congregant Claudia Henry.

"I was asked to prepare two trays of macaroni and cheese," Clarke said. "That's the extent of my culinary skills. That and what we call 'fried dumplings' in the West Indies -- you call them biscuits here.

"They've sampled them, as well, and were very complimentary."

No doubt Clarke's kitchen skills are among those he inherited from his parents.

It is from them he found his calling to the ministry.

Born in Hanover, a parish on the northwest tip of Jamaica, Clarke was inspired by his mother and father.

"My parents were very instrumental because of the life they lived. They were very good Christians," said the married father of two children.

"Even though my father wasn’t a pastor, he was one of the leaders in the church and I grew up admiring his leadership skills.

"And as a young boy I was able to witness some good pastors who came through my church."

That Clarke heard the calling was reinforced by the encouragement of people outside his family.

"I was involved in youth leadership in the church and during my young years, a number of individuals approached me and said, 'You have this ability.' They said, 'Go into this.' "

Clarke has been at Mount Gilead for four years and one of his followers is First Elder James Hamilton, a congregant for seven years.

"Our pastor is a go-getter, he likes to get things done and his concerns go beyond the church walls," said the marriage and family counselor.

In fact, Clarke’s goals dovetail with the vision of the church.

"Our desire is to do more for the community in years to come, be better able to reach out," Hamilton said. "We put our heads together, find the best idea to make things work and he helps make those things happen."
Like the church’s early Thanksgiving feast.

“It is something we do for the homeless, specifically, but we extend it to the neighborhood, whoever needs it,” Clarke said. “We sent letters out to businesses for donations either in money or in food, and the response from the community was very good.”

By his count, nearly 300 people were fed.

“We also have a food distribution once a month for the needy in the neighborhood,” Clarke said. “All they have to do is give us a call and we supply it.”

Vin Mannix, local columnist, can be reached at 745-7055.

IF YOU GO

What: Mount Gilead Seventh-day Adventist Church When: Saturday - 9:15 a.m. Sabbath School, 11 a.m. Worship Service, 5 p.m, Youth Ministry Where: 1803 13th St. W., Bradenton Call: 941-744-9087
WITH VIDEO: Ephesus Seventh-day Adventist Church serves Thanksgiving meals to nearly 200

Published: Thursday, November 24, 2011, 1:33 PM     Updated: Thursday, November 24, 2011, 1:34 PM

By

Maria Amante | The Saginaw News

Ephesus Seventh-day Adventist Church
Behind-the-scenes of Ephesus Seventh-day Adventist Church’s Thanksgiving dinner.

SAGINAW-- Evangelist Collin and her son, Jacob would not celebrate Thanksgiving if it weren't for the Ephesus Seventh-day Adventist Church's dinner.

The family wouldn't go hungry, she explained, but they would not have a Thanksgiving feast.

"I'm so grateful," Evangelist said.

Her son Jacob said without the church's dinner, "I don't know what I'd do."

"It was so delicious. I loved it," Jacob said.

The church served 100 in-house meals on Thanksgiving, and delivered more than 70 to people around the community.

It is a three-year tradition, Rosalind Tillman, community service leader for the church said, bolstered by 25 volunteers and donors.

"Praise the lord for them," Tillman said. "It's been a blessing. The city of Saginaw is hurting right now, and we want to do our part to give back and let them know we care."

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Waynesboro Seventh-Day Adventist Church will be hosting its third annual Christmas benefit concert to support Augusta Health Hospice of the Shenandoah at 7 p.m. Dec. 1.

This free-will donation event is open to the public and will be an evening filled with festive talent while raising funds for Hospice of the Shenandoah.

"Contributions give Hospice of the Shenandoah staff the ability to care for others needs in many different ways," said Kristen Printy, marketing coordinator for Augusta Health Community Services.

Several services not covered by insurance are possible with support from donors including the ability to grant financial assistance to individuals who can no longer manage at home and decide to receive end-of-life care at the Shenandoah House. "We are delighted Waynesboro Seventh-Day Adventist Church chose Hospice of the Shenandoah to support by donating contributions from this event," said Printy.

Hospice of the Shenandoah staff and volunteers are committed to providing safe and loving end-of-life care to those in the community regardless of their ability to pay. Hospice of the Shenandoah serves as the local, community based not-for-profit hospice and is grateful for the community's support including financial contributions and volunteers.

**IF YOU GO!**
- **what:** Christmas benefit concert
- **when:** 7 p.m. Dec. 1
- **where:** Waynesboro Seventh-Day Adventist Church
- **performing:** Harpist Jennifer Hall; vocalist Steve Lalk; vocalist Keenan Peterson; guitarist and vocalist Buddy Thomas and The Ovation Singers
- **information:** Augusta Health Hospice of the Shenandoah, 932-4909
New Policy in Michigan
[2011]: Drivers with no DUIs are eligible to receive up to 50% off car insurance...
TheFinanceAuthority.com

Who Needs A Job?
Unemployed Man Makes Thousands Per Month From Penny Stocks!
HoleInOneStocks.net
The GW Medical Faculty Associates and Adventist Medical Group Launch Joint Venture

WASHINGTON, Nov. 28, 2011 /PRNewswire via COMTEX/ -- Adventist HealthCare, Montgomery County's first and largest health system, and The GW Medical Faculty Associates (MFA), the largest independent physician group in metropolitan Washington, announced a joint venture today that will further their missions of improving the health of the communities they serve.

The new venture, which combines the strengths of The MFA and Adventist Medical Group, enables the organizations to more effectively and efficiently grow the number of Adventist's employed physicians.

"Adventist HealthCare's five-year strategic plan focuses on physician integration and population-based health care," said Gaurov Dayal, M.D. senior vice president & chief medical officer. "This collaboration with an experienced organization like MFA accelerates our ability to fulfill this plan."

"Federal mandates for implementation of electronic patient health records, along with healthcare reform, are prompting consolidation in the health industry," said MFA CEO Stephen L. Badger. "This joint venture strengthens both organizations financially and geographically and prepares us to deliver better quality healthcare to the rapidly growing population around the D.C. area."

The MFA will be primarily responsible for the business functions and contracting with physicians for the joint venture. Under this agreement, all current and future Adventist Medical Group physicians and their staff will be employees of the new venture.

Adventist HealthCare, an integrated healthcare delivery organization based in Rockville, Maryland, cares for close to 450,000 patients annually. The mission of Adventist HealthCare is
to demonstrate God's care by improving the health of people and communities through a ministry of physical, mental and spiritual healing. Adventist HealthCare includes Shady Grove Adventist Hospital, Washington Adventist Hospital, Adventist Behavioral Health, Adventist Rehabilitation Hospital of Maryland, Hackettstown Regional Medical Center in New Jersey, Adventist Home Care Services, Adventist Medical Group and the Reginald S. Lourie Center for Infants and Young Children.

The GW Medical Faculty Associates is largest, independent physician group in metropolitan Washington. It is comprised of 700 physicians who deliver care through 48 medical and surgical specialties, which are supported by academic medicine and clinical research. The MFA maintains offices in Annapolis, Bethesda, Rockville, Downtown DC, the West End, Upper Northwest Washington, Reston and Mount Vernon. MFA doctors maintain privileges at GW, Howard, Mount Vernon, Reston, Shady Grove, Sibley, Suburban and Washington Adventist Hospitals. The MFA is national leader in implementation of the Electronic Medical Record and manages more than one million patient visits each year. The GW Medical Faculty Associates is a 501 (c) 3 with a mission of patient care, clinical research and education.

SOURCE GW Medical Faculty Associates

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STAUNTON — C.F. Richards Junior Academy has won accreditation from the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, the association's commission on elementary schools.

C.F. Richards, a Seventh-day Adventist elementary school, teaches students from preschool to eighth grade.

Its accreditation means the school meets the Middle States Association's standards for a quality school, and the move means the school will make regular reports to the group and receive regular visits from its experts to ensure that it continues to meet those standards.

"Middle States accreditation is a recognition of both prior achievements and a commitment to greater future accomplishments," said Henry G. Cram, Jr., president of the association's elementary and secondary schools commissions.

The 12-month-long accreditation included an evaluation by independent educators and creation of a strategic plan for school improvement.

"Middle States accreditation allows for C.F. Richards Junior Academy to have a proven reason to be proud of our school," said Grant Wolters, the school's principal.

"C.F. Richards Junior Academy has worked hard to meet the expectations and standards of Middle States. We are pleased with these achievements, but we are not content. We must continue to press forward, expanding our academic resources, and preparing and training our students to reach their God-desired potential."

The Middle States Association is the second-oldest regional accreditation agency in the United States. Its accreditation makes it easier for people to evaluate students when they transfer and can help parents decide on what school is right for their children.

C.F. Richards is also accredited by the National Council for Private School Accreditation, the Virginia Council for Private Education, the Accrediting Association of Seventh-day Adventists Schools and the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists Board of Education.
New Policy in Michigan
[2011]: Drivers with no DWIs are eligible to receive up to 50% off car insurance...
TheFinanceAuthority.com

Who Needs A Job?
Unemployed Man Makes Thousands Per Month From Penny Stocks!
HoleInOneStocks.net
HUNTSVILLE, Alabama -- U.S. Senate Chaplain Barry Black and Grammy Award winning musician, Oakwood graduate and Seventh-day Adventist Pastor Wintley Phipps will open the 2011 Pastoral Evangelism and Leadership Conference to be held at Oakwood University Dec. 4-6, 2011.

The conference opens Dec. 4, 6 p.m., with a concert that will feature the nationally respected Aeolians. More than 1,000 Adventist ministers and leaders from around the world are expected for the conference that offers inspiration as well as practical workshops for ministry.

Dr. Carlton "Buddy" Byrd, currently senior pastor for a church of more than 4,000 in Atlanta and incoming pastor of the Oakwood campus church, will speak on "Changing the Culture of Your Church" during the Monday morning seminars, 10:30 to noon. Other seminars include managing difficult churches and people and a Christ-centered approach to Revelation.

Seminars for ministers to Hispanic congregations will be conducted in Spanish both days, and include sessions on a pastor's finances, working with second and third-generation Hispanics, and music in church.

The conference, centered at the Oakwood campus church on Adventist Boulevard, is open to the public. The conference fee, $29, is due by Tuesday. Information, schedule and registration at PELC.cc.

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SIERRA VISTA — The Seventh Day Adventist Church will offer 30, free sleeping bags and tents as well as a hot meal to the city's homeless from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday, November 26.

John Rose, spokesman for the church, said the congregation decided to help the homeless by providing cold weather gear. He explained that the homeless cannot carry winter gear through the spring and summer and if they try to hide it somewhere someone inevitably finds it. With nights growing colder as winter approaches, they want to help those who are unable to help themselves.

The church is located at 777 Highway 92 across from the Golden Corral.

For details on ways to help the effort, call 378-7178.
If you find a correction for this story, please contact our editorial department [1]

Source URL: http://www.svherald.com/content/news/2011/11/23/235491

Links: