Dear Lexie,

Identity Crisis

I have always been very proud of my culture and heritage. I take pride in the fact that I was born in India and raised there for several years. I also take pride in the fact that even after 20 some years in this country I am still fluent in my mother tongue, Telugu. People continually ask my American husband if he eats Indian food or try to identify various dishes to him. My heart always swells a bit when he responds, "I know what this is; all my wife cooks is Indian food; it's what I eat every day."

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Sligo Church Winter Haven Update

Our hypothermia center at Sligo Church has expanded beyond the 10 beds we initially offered to the county. Due to overwhelming need, we now offer up to 30 beds. In the six weeks since we started in January we have cared for 54 individuals, providing food, shelter,
This Sabbath:
February 21, 2015

Speaker:
Pastor Charles A. Tapp
"The Church on Trial, Part III: The Cost of the Kingdom"

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transportation and case management. We have placed 5 in permanent jobs, 1 in temporary employment and are working on 3 housing placements. We have served 29 adults, 4 of which were men, and 25 children ranging from 4 weeks to 17 years of age.

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The Story of Sligo Sanctuary Piano and a Tribute to Florence Tilkens

About 25 years ago, someone bequeathed the Steinway grand piano that is now in the sanctuary to Sligo Church. When it arrived, it was worn out and needed to be restored. There was no funding available to do the necessary work, so the piano was placed in the choir room and used for choir rehearsal. I was able to keep it functioning with toothpicks, glue and other tricks that I learned over the years. A colleague even donated the better part of a day to help me out with it. I knew the potential of what it could be, if it could only be restored.

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Praying for Takoma Academy

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school with prayer.

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I have always been very proud of my culture and heritage. I take pride in the fact that I was born in India and raised there for several years. I also take pride in the fact that even after 20 some years in this country I am still fluent in my mother tongue, Telugu. People continually ask my American husband if he eats Indian food or try to identify various dishes to him. My heart always swells a bit when he responds, “I know what this is; all my wife cooks is Indian food; it’s what I eat every day.”

I love going to the international market and surveying the various foods from all over the world. I enjoy introducing people to food, culture, and clothing from my home country, while learning and sharing in their customs, culture, and food. I love walking into Sligo Sabbath after Sabbath and see all the cultures represented. It is truly a beautiful sight.

However, there is an ugly side to cultural pride. Whenever we allow our culture to separate us from others, it becomes an ugly thing and we dishonor the God who is the Creator of us all. In Christ we are not uniformed, but we must be unified. When Christ is our highest pride and our first culture, we are then able to enjoy the best of where we come from, while leaving behind those parts of all of our cultures that are far from the principles of Christ. Wherever we come from, whatever language we speak, whatever foods we eat, whatever dress we wear, once we bear the name of Christ, it is the culture of Christ that must supersede all others. Christ becomes our first identity, anything short of this results in an identity crisis.

It is an age old problem. The early church faced it between the Jews and the Greeks. Wars have been waged because one culture thought itself superior. When I was contemplating marrying my husband, it was said to me by a distant observer, “It would be better for you to marry a Hindu Indian, than an African-American Adventist Pastor.” This was of course an extreme and unusual comment, however, it conveyed a common fear – we were too different, we wouldn’t be able to bring our cultures together, we wouldn’t be able to understand each other. It also conveyed a common feeling; our culture is better and richer than theirs. Whenever we cling to our individual cultures more than we cling to Christ, it becomes ugly, and we lose our identity.

In Christ we can understand each other, we can come together, we can worship together, and we can be unified with each other. Because, it is Christ that unifies us across cultures and across race, it is Christ that we have in common, whatever our land, our food, our language, our customs. It is the same Love that we share; it is the same Cross by which we are saved; it is the same Word that guides our way; it is the same heaven for which we wait. As it says, “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!” (2 Corinthians 5:17)

Tagged with → christ • Crisis • identity
Sligo Church Winter Haven Update

Scott Lawrence

Our hypothermia center at Sligo Church has expanded beyond the 10 beds we initially offered to the county. Due to overwhelming need, we now offer up to 30 beds. In the six weeks since we started in January we have cared for 54 individuals, providing food, shelter, transportation and case management. We have placed 5 in permanent jobs, 1 in temporary employment and are working on 3 housing placements. We have served 29 adults, 4 of which were men, and 25 children ranging from 4 weeks to 17 years of age. We receive referrals from the MC Crisis Center, county hospitals, Montgomery College, MC Emergency Services, County Shelters and PG County and WDC.

The women from First Monday at Sligo Church and the Pathfinders have served meals to the residents and some have returned on their own to provide meals and to serve the residents. A few church members have volunteered and/or assisted with transportation. We are also in partnership with Adventist Community Services, which helps supply us with food. Those church members who actually see the service we are providing are telling others about it, which encourages others to help out. Finally, we have some residents who attend church on Sabbath and they learn of the Sabbath as we strive to keep its observance when the shelter is open on Friday nights.

I would like to meet to extend the shelter through March, in order to accommodate the overflow that other shelters and hotels cannot accommodate at this time. It is likely that some of the families with us will have a place to go by February 28th. We want to continue to be a part of the solution and do not want to add to the problem by putting families out on the street with no place to go, like the mother with three children one of which is 3 months of age.

(by Dr. Donna Robinson, Ministry Leader/Director of House of Divine Guidance)
The Story of Sligo Sanctuary Piano and a Tribute to Florence Tilkens

Scott Lawrence

About 25 years ago, someone bequeathed the Steinway grand piano that is now in the sanctuary to Sligo Church. When it arrived, it was worn out and needed to be restored. There was no funding available to do the necessary work, so the piano was placed in the choir room and used for choir rehearsal. I was able to keep it functioning with toothpicks, glue and other tricks that I learned over the years. A colleague even donated the better part of a day to help me out with it. I knew the potential of what it could be, if it could only be restored.

When the sanctuary restoration project started, it took a while for anyone to talk about a piano for the restored space. A piano fund had been started by a couple (anonymously) some years before but, I ended up being the guy to try to get the 1905 Steinway restored. After the church board approved of plans to have it restored by Steinway and Sons, money had to be raised. I had never done anything like this before, so I started talking to different people about the project, hoping someone had some good ideas. I tuned pianos for a few Sligo members and asked them to donate to the piano fund. It quickly became obvious that this wasn't going to make a dent in what we needed any time soon. I figured that we needed someone who knew a lot of people who appreciated music and I mentioned to Florence Tilkens what I was trying to do and asked her to talk with friends who might like to help out. Next thing I knew Florence told me she had donated $10,000 to the fund. I was stunned and delighted; I didn't expect this from her. I hoped that this would impress others to add their donations. I don't know if it did or not – I wasn't asking for details from the treasurer. Some time went by and Florence asked how the project was going and I let her know we still needed much more funding.

Several weeks went by and the treasurer informed me that we had enough money to start the process to have Steinway take the piano. Florence had donated the rest of the money that was needed to restore the piano! I was shocked and spoke to Florence about what she had done and asked if she was sure it was ok. She assured me that everything was fine with the money.

We could never have had such a fine instrument in the sanctuary if it weren't for the generosity that Florence Tilkens practiced. I'm sure there are similar stories from others who knew her and her husband, Neil over the years. The entire extended Tilkens family share in the generosity of the gift of the piano restoration that has blessed the Sligo congregation for these 7 years. Florence spent some of their inheritance!

If there are Sligo members who would like to help with the pianos at Sligo Church, I assure you there is more need. The piano fund still exists. The Steinway grand piano in the choir room is in desperate need of restoration. It barely functions as an instrument and has great potential for restoration. Someday, I hope enough people will make the piano fund sufficient for that project.

(by David Lamoreaux)

Tagged with → piano • sanctuary
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First, she shared the school’s mission:
Mission: Takoma Academy is a Seventh – day Adventist high school welcoming all races, cultures, and religions; leading young people to Jesus Christ, providing excellence in academics and a commitment to service.

In short, academic rigor, community service, and heavenly attainment are Takoma Academy principal goals.

Vision: Empowering learners for everlasting excellence.

The current student body is 221. The freshman class is however the smallest at 45.

One of the treasures of Takoma Academy is its staff commitment level.
Staff is extremely committed to TA and there is a good number that have been amongst the faculty for 20+ years. Faculty and staff are found on the campus 7 days each week as they sponsor out of class activities and attend off campus events to support the student body.

The specific prayer needs cover:
Baptismal Class

Health and Safety of our students, their families, faculty and staff

Continued growth in enrollment

Financial Sustainability

Capital Improvements
  - Track and Field
  - Media Center
  - Science Labs

A few weeks back, our worship experience was given celestial flight when the academy’s Camerata group performed several pieces.

Let us combine our head and hearts to lift up and support Takoma Academy as our investment in Christian education has an eternal legacy.

(by Chris Daley & Dawn Reynolds)

Tagged with → Prayer • Takoma Academy