Union Leaders Tasked to Define Values, Priorities

At the November 17 meeting of the Columbia Union Conference Executive Committee, the 53 committee members, as well as the union staff, took the first step in defining the organization’s values and priorities for the 2011-2016 quinquennium. This culminated the union’s year-end meetings held at the headquarters in Columbia, Md.

Attendees discussed integrity, equality, innovation, authenticity, transparency and servant leadership as some proposed values. Youth and young adults topped the list of suggested priorities. A subcommittee will collect all the suggestions and work to further define these ideas, which will be finalized and presented at a March 2012 meeting of the full committee.—Story by Taashi Rowe
Treasurers Meet for Training, Spiritual Enrichment

Pop quiz. When you think of how your school or church treasurer adds value to the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, what phrase comes to mind? (Pick one answer from below).

A. Accounting  
B. Providing timely information  
C. Being a spiritual leader  
D. Providing creative strategies  
E. All of the above

The correct answer is E—all of the above. Some 40 conference treasurers and school business managers came away from the November 13-15 treasury meetings at the union headquarters with the understanding that they add multifaceted value to their churches.—Story by Taashi Rowe

Chinese Pastor Shares Testimony

Hailing from southwest China, where she pastors a 400-church district, Rebekah Liu shared her testimony today with members of the Columbia Union Conference’s Executive Committee. Titling her presentation “He Dwells Among Us,” Liu compared writings from ancient Chinese text with the Bible. She noted that both sets of text include messianic prophecies. She also charted China’s once deeply spiritual history to its decline with the advent of Communism.

Some 30 years ago, Sichuan Province started to embrace the Seventh-day Adventist Church when Liu’s mother received a copy of Ellen G. White’s *Desire of Ages*. The book planted a seed in her mother’s heart who started keeping the Sabbath at home. Today that province is home to 10,000 Adventists. She notes that there are only five ordained pastors, four of whom are women. “This is not human work,” she clarified.
“All this work was done by God. We are only a footnote. He is the actor in China.”—Story by Taashi Rowe

Adventist HealthCare Explores Impact of Healthcare Reform on Vulnerable Populations

Nearly 300 people attended the Adventist HealthCare Center on Health Disparities’ fifth annual conference to hear national and regional health leaders and policymakers discuss why healthcare reform must continue to move forward in order to make a difference to those vulnerable populations that need it most.

Held November 2 in Adelphi, Md., the conference featured U.S. Sen. Benjamin L. Cardin (pictured fourth) and Joshua Sharfstein, MD, secretary of the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.

“We addressed the impact that healthcare reform [via the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act] has had on achieving health equity, especially as evidence continues to show that racial and ethnic minorities in the area are still disproportionately affected by poor health outcomes compared to non-minorities,” said Marcos Pesquera (pictured second), the center’s executive director.—Story by Cindy Glass

Chesapeake Spanish Group Celebrates First Anniversary

It was with much emotion that on October 29 the Chesapeake Conference’s Spanish-speaking group in Columbia, Md., celebrated their first anniversary in the gym of the Atholton Adventist Academy.
This special occasion included a celebratory benediction that established the first Hispanic Adventist group in Columbia. Members of the Baltimore Spanish church, the group’s mother church, and the Dundalk Spanish group also joined the celebration. While the group started out with just four members, there are now 17 members and two children who regularly attend Sabbath worship. Moreover, some 20 others are currently studying the Bible.

Orlando Rosales, who pastors the Baltimore district, says, “We trust that God will continue showing His favor to this wonderful new congregation that continues to grow as a result of preaching the gospel in this city where the Hispanic population is growing.”—Story by Chesapeake Conference Staff

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Grupo hispano de Columbia celebra su primer aniversario

Fue con mucha emoción que, el sábado 29 de Octubre 2011, el grupo hispano de Columbia del a Conferencia de Chesapeake, celebró su primer aniversario en el gimnasio de Atholton. La ocasión fue muy especial al festejar la linda bendición de establecer la primera congregación adventista hispana en Columbia. Se contó con la presencia de hermanos de la Iglesia de Baltimore, la iglesia madre de este grupo, y también de hermanos del grupo de Dundalk.

Solo habían 4 hermanos bautizados y durante el transcurso de estos 12 meses, 8 nuevos miembros han sido bautizados y 3 se bautizarán el Sábado 26 de Noviembre en la caravana con el Pr. Bullón para alcanzar un crecimiento del 275%. Con la adición de una joven pareja que se han trasladado al grupo, ahora hay 17 miembros adultos y 2 niños activos en el grupo de Columbia para la gloria del Señor.—Historia por Chesapeake Conference Staff

LEA MAS
Lynchburg Church Jumpstarts Health Ministry

A special program held this past weekend signaled the official start of a new ministry at Potomac Conference’s Lynchburg (Va.) church—a Health Ministries outreach. For some time now, the Holy Spirit has been speaking to church members about the need to share the health message with the church family and community. Heeding the Holy Spirit’s prodding, church members like Deirdre Fredericks, Lee Berti and Mike Little organized two days of health talks and cooking demonstrations at the church to jumpstart this ministry.

The team invited Calvin and Erika Buck, members of Allegheny West Conference’s Smyrna church, also in Lynchburg, to serve as guest speakers. Both shared the Adventist-backed NEWSTART health philosophy and taught a healthy cooking class.—Story by Lynchburg Church Members

Ohio Conference Church Invests $5,600 in Mission

While some churches no longer participate in the Sabbath School Mission Investment offering, which is designed to fund mission programs worldwide, Ohio Conference’s Hamlet church has seen 100 percent participation. “The Tree of Life” was this year’s theme. For every $100 that came in for Investment, they added a leaf to the tree. Last year, the goal was $1,000, and they almost tripled that amount.

“This year we were hoping to put 15 leaves on our tree, or praying for at least $1,500,
and the Lord blessed us tremendously,” said Beverley Phipps (pictured), Investment leader. Those 11 faithful members of the adult Sabbath School class brought in $5,645.75. In addition to that, 930 labels from Morning Star Farms, Worthington and Loma Linda food products were turned in, resulting in another $46.50, bringing the grand total for mission to $5,692.25.

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Pisgah Celebrates Second Year in Food Ministry

Allegheny East Conference’s Pisgah church in Bryans Road, Md., recently celebrated a second year of sponsoring their Helping Hands pantry. The church opened the pantry on June 9, 2009, and their hours are the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month from 10 a.m.-1 p.m. They previously operated on an emergency basis. Now there are always at least 12-15 volunteers from the church and community on distribution days.

In addition to distributing food, church members help their clients determine if they are eligible for other economic assistance programs; encourage their clients to use a monthly budget; share information on healthy cooking, healthy supermarket shopping, nutrition and recipes; conduct blood pressure screenings; and distribute children’s clothing, books and literature.

“After much prayer, God is truly blessing this ministry,” says Gloria Simmons (pictured), community services leader. “We barely have enough room to receive all the donations.” —Story by Jade Johnson

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Pine Forge Academy Choir Places Second

A few weeks ago, we asked you to vote for the Pine Forge Academy (PFA) Choir so
they could qualify for the annual iSing Scholarship Challenge, a high school and collegiate choir scholarship competition sponsored by the Reid Temple African Methodist Episcopal Church in Glenn Dale, Md. Through Internet voting of newly recorded songs, this Pine Forge, Pa.-based choir made it into the finals! The competition took place the first weekend of November, and PFA took second place. “I feel that during our performance, we truly worshipped and angels sang with us,” said senior Dionne Hamilton, choir president. “Because of that, I know, in God’s eyes, we won.”—Niles Norman

Blue Mountain Academy Students Show Love With Art

On one fall morning, four excited students of Blue Mountain Academy (BMA) in Hamburg, Pa., loaded into a boxy, blue van headed to Reading. Their destination? The Children’s Home of Reading. Their mission? To paint murals to brighten the hallways of the home. The children eat, sleep, play and spend most of their time together in the three buildings that comprise the home.

Senior Alyssa Bianco and juniors Ezequiel Rodriguez, Avonelle Davis and Hannah Ashburn, painted different murals to give back to the kids who live there. “It was a great experience. The kids that live there have been through so much, and it was great to do something that I love, that will help cheer up their day,” Ashburn said. The day was filled with talking, laughing and genuine fun, which was an extra blessing for the BMA students.—Story by BMA Staff

Frederick Adventist School’s Book Sale Raises $2,700

Participants at Chesapeake Conference’s Frederick Adventist School’s annual One Book, Two Book, Read Book, New Book
Sale & Cake Auction raised $2,700 to help keep kids in this Frederick, Md., Adventist school. The 25 cakes submitted for the November 3-5 benefit included one from third-grader Nate Minty (pictured), which he made from Rice Krispies. Principal Robin Correia’s “Miche bag” cake looked so real many had a hard time believing it was made to eat!

Leftover children’s books, music CDs and videos from the book sale were donated to an orphanage in Nepal, home to 180 children rescued from human trafficking.—Story and photo by Teresa L. Kelchner

UPCOMING EVENTS

November 11-19: Capitol Hill Church’s Fall Week of Spiritual Emphasis is themed “Bread for Believers.” Guest speakers are Pastor Kenneth Manders, a pastor in Bermuda, and Melyvn Hayden, Jr., pastor of the Liberty church in Baltimore. Special events include the vespers seminar “21st Century Singles” and a dramatic presentation of “Catchin’ Fire” by 4Him Drama Ministries. Guest musicians include Stellar-nominated vocalist Terrell Hunt and saxophonist Todd Ledbetter along with Amanda Standard and Divine Dance Institute. Capitol Hill is located at 914 Massachusetts Avenue, NE, Washington, D.C. For more information, call (202) 543-1344, or email info@chcsda.org.

December 2: Metro Area Adventist Young Adults (MAAYA) invites all to attend First Fridays on December 2 at 7:30 p.m. for a multicultural praise and worship and testimony agape feast. This month’s First Friday will be held at the Community of Hope church located at 580 University Boulevard in Silver Spring, Md. For more information, contact Randy Preston at (240) 461-0109 or Trevor Fraser at (301) 384-4201.

December 3: Spencerville Adventist Academy’s Fourth Annual Messiah Sing-along will be held 4 p.m. at the Spencerville church located at 16325 New Hampshire Avenue in Silver Spring, Md. Participants must have their own music. For more details, contact Jane Lanning by email at jlanning@spencerville.org or call (301) 421-9101.

December 3: All are invited to enjoy Highland View Academy’s Annual Christmas Concert. The select choir, orchestra and bell choir will praise the Lord in song at the Highland View church in Hagerstown, Md., at 4:30 p.m. This year the freewill offering will go toward a trip to Russia for the young musicians to perform in Moscow and Kiev and to visit an orphanage in the Ukraine.
December 4: Sligo Adventist School presents their first Business and Craft Showcase at their Takoma Park, Md., campus. The hours are 11 a.m.-3 p.m. For more information, call (301) 434-1417 or visit www.sligoadventistschool.org/parentresources.html.

December 6: Frederick Adventist School’s Handbell Choir will be performing a Christmas concert for the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation’s Holiday Survivors Tree Lighting at the National Emergency Training Center located in Emmittsburg, Md. Following the performance, survivors can remember firefighters with an ornament on the National Fallen Firefighters Holiday Tree. For more information email Teresa Kelchner at teresakelchner@comcast.net.

December 16: Frederick Adventist School invites you to their “Luke's Story” Christmas pageant at 7 p.m. at the Frederick church. Come be part of when God sent His precious Son to become a tiny baby in a stable in Bethlehem, in poverty and simplicity. For more information, email teresakelchner@comcast.net or visit www.frederickadventistschool.org.

For more news and up-to-date information from the Columbia Union Conference, visit columbiaunion.org

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Treasurers Meet for Training, Spiritual Enrichment

Story by Taashi Rowe
Published 11/16/2011

Pop quiz. When you think of how your school or church treasurer adds value to the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, what phrase comes to mind? (Pick one answer from below).

A. Accounting  
B. Providing timely information  
C. Being a spiritual leader  
D. Providing creative strategies  
E. All of the above

The correct answer is E—all of the above. Some 40 conference treasurers and school business managers came away from the November 13-15 treasury meetings at the Columbia Union Conference headquarters in Columbia, Md., with the understanding that they add multifaceted value to their churches.

"In these meetings we are very intentional about training and preparing the next generation of the church’s financial leaders," said Seth Bardu, Columbia Union treasurer/chief financial officer. "We offer technical skills training, policy updates, reinforce the church’s mission and inspire attendees on spiritual matters."

Regarding the latter, Bardu said being a church treasurer involves more than just balancing the books. "We all have spiritual lives and have a role to play in fulfilling the church’s mission," he said.
This annual meeting included sessions on “Impacting Mission,” “GAAP vs. International Accounting Standards,” “Legal Questions and Answers.” Attendees also received updates from Adventist Risk Management and the North American Division and training from the General Conference Auditing Services.

Lawrance Martin found information on international accounting standards relevant to his work as chief financial officer of the Allegheny East Conference. “It was good information to know,” he said. “Coming to these meetings reminds us of how we treasurers add value by making resources available for Christ’s ministry.”

“I come for the camaraderie and support,” said Debbie White, assistant business manager at Shenandoah Valley Academy in New Market, Va. “We are sharing experiences on what works to help us do our work better, and we are getting up to speed on changing policy. I also enjoy the wonderful worships and music. It really refreshes and renews me.”
Rebekah Liu tends 400 churches in Sichuan Province in Southwest China.

Chinese Pastor Shares Testimony, Tools for Church Growth
Story by Taashi Rowe
Published 11/17/11

Hailing from southwest China, where she pastors a 400-church district, Rebekah Liu shared her testimony today with members of the Columbia Union Conference’s Executive Committee in Columbia, Md. Titling her presentation “He Dwells Among Us,” Liu dispelled the myth of the atheistic Chinese by comparing writings from ancient Chinese text with the Bible. She noted that both sets of texts include Messianic prophecies. She also charted China’s once deeply spiritual history to its decline with the advent of Communism.

She then spoke of Sichuan Province’s return to traditional spiritual values, and particularly the Seventh-day Adventist Church, when her mother received a copy of Ellen G. White’s Desire of Ages. The book planted a seed in her mother’s heart and she started keeping the Sabbath at home. Today that province is home to 10,000 Seventh-day Adventists. She notes that there are only five ordained pastors in Sichuan Province, four of whom are women. “This is not human work,” Liu clarified. “All this work was done by God. We are only a footnote. He is the actor in China.”

She also shared what she believes to be contributing factors to the church’s rapid growth in her area:

1. A climate of persecution: “It takes courage to be a Christian in China,” Lieu said.
2. There is a lack of professional ministers. Instead they train lay members to do the work of the gospel.
3. Evangelism is a lifestyle practice, not an event. She shared the story of a monk who took eight years to decide that he wanted to become a full-time Christian.
4. Chinese members spend the entire Sabbath at church. “We spend the day worshiping, studying, socializing and training,” she says.
5. They are governed by the overarching principle of local, majority governance.

Even with a rapidly growing Adventist presence in China, Liu ended her presentation by pleading for help from fellow Adventists here in North America. “There is no seminary in China,” she said tearing up. “We need partners. Please come to China and help us train more workers for the gospel.”

There are now some 400,000 Adventists in China with 6.5 new churches and meeting points...
popping up throughout that country daily.

Dave Weigley, Columbia Union president, invited Liu to share her testimony, at the end of which he said, “I hope our hearts are stirred to question how we do ministry here in North America.”

Rebekah Liu accepts tokens of appreciation from Dave Weigley, Columbia Union president, and Weymouth Spence, president of Washington Adventist University in Takoma Park, Md.
Chesapeake Spanish Group Celebrates First Anniversary

Story by Chesapeake Conference Staff

Published 11/15/11

It was with much emotion that on October 29, the Chesapeake Conference’s Spanish-speaking group in Columbia, Md., celebrated their first anniversary in the gym of the Atholton Adventist Academy. This special occasion included a celebratory benediction that established the first Hispanic Seventh-day Adventist group in Columbia. Members of the Baltimore Spanish church, the group’s mother church, and the Dundalk Spanish group also joined the celebration.

Pastor Eduardo Muñoz, the conference’s Hispanic Ministries coordinator, spoke with great power and motivation that Sabbath. As they reminisced, the group realized they had many reasons to celebrate and give thanks to God. A year ago, Pastor Kleyton Feitosa, the conference’s evangelism coordinator, joined them at their first meeting where they had four newly baptized members. Over the last 12 months, they have baptized eight new members and another three were baptized after they attended a series of evangelism meetings where evangelist Alejandro Bullón preached. There are now 17 members and two children who regularly attend Sabbath worship, which means the church has grown by 275 percent! Moreover, some 20 others are currently studying the Bible.

Orlando Rosales, who pastors the Baltimore district, says, “We trust that God will continue showing His favor to this wonderful new congregation that continues to grow as a result of preaching the gospel in this city where the Hispanic population is growing.”
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Grupo hispano de Columbia celebra su primer aniversario

Historia por Chesapeake Conference Staff

Publicado 11/14/11 1

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Las palabras del hno. Eduardo Muñoz, como coordinador de la obra hispana de Chesapeake fueron de gran aliento y motivación.

Una de las cosas que más causaron entusiasmo y gratitud a Dios fue recordar que un año atrás, el 30 de Octubre de 2010, en la primera reunión de Sábado celebrada con la compañía del Pr. Kleyton Feitosa, evangelista para ese entonces. Solo habían 4 hermanos bautizados y durante el transcurso de estos 12 meses, 8 nuevos miembros han sido bautizados y 3 se bautizarán el Sábado 26 de Noviembre en la caravana con el Pr. Bullón para alcanzar un crecimiento del 275%. Con la adición de una joven pareja que se han trasladado al grupo, ahora hay 17 miembros adultos y 2 niños activos en el grupo de Columbia para la gloria del Señor.

Es bueno resaltar que el número de amigos interesados que están estudiando la Biblia sobrepasan las 20 personas.

Orlando Rosales, pastor del distrito del Baltimore dice, “Confiamos que Dios seguirá obrando maravillas a favor de esta nueva congregación que está desafiada a seguir creciendo como resultado de predicar el evangelio en esta ciudad donde la población hispana está creciendo.”
Last Sunday some 30 people attended the Lynchburg (Va.) church’s healthy cooking class.

Lynchburg Church Jumpstarts Health Ministry
Story by Lynchburg Church Members
Published 11/17/11

A special program held this past weekend signaled the official start of a new ministry at Potomac Conference’s Lynchburg (Va.) church—a Health Ministries outreach. For some time now, the Holy Spirit had been speaking to a number of church members about the need to share the health message with the church family and community. Heeding the Holy Spirit’s prodding, church members like Deirdre Fredericks, Lee Berti and Mike Little organized two days of health talks and cooking demonstrations at the church to jumpstart this ministry.

The team invited Calvin and Erika Buck, members of the Allegheny West Conference’s Smyrna church also in Lynchburg, to serve as guest speakers over the two days. Both received training from the Wildwood College of Evangelism in Georgia.

During the worship service, Calvin introduced the NEWSTART program by sharing how God taught these principles to the children of Israel as He delivered them from slavery in Egypt into the promised land. On Sabbath afternoon, he spoke about cholesterol and heart disease in a simple, straightforward manner so participants could not only could easily apply this information to themselves, but also share with others. On Sunday the Bucks led a healthy cooking demonstration.

“As a church, we ask for prayer that the Holy Spirit will continue to be our guide as we move forward in taking God's health message, as well as the three angels messages’, to the people of Lynchburg and the surrounding counties,” Little says.

The church’s Health Ministries team is already planning classes on diabetes, how to stop smoking and healthy cooking.
Buck, guest speaker for the weekend, shares health literature.

Guest speaker Erika Buck leads a healthy cooking demonstration.

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