December 7, 2011

Potomac Pastors Minister in India, Thousands Baptized

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This is what Bill Miller, president of the Potomac Conference, reported after he helped baptize 3,943 people in India in one day. He, along with four other Potomac pastors and two lay members from Washington state, ministered in 50 villages near Vijayawada, India, this fall. Anywhere from 450 to 1,500 people attended the meetings each night.

“This has got to be a God thing,” Miller said. “I saw Pentecost happen again with my eyes. God has forever changed those places.”—Story by Taashi Rowe

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New Jersey Conference Celebrates Bookstore Opening

Last month more than 300 people attended New Jersey Conference’s grand opening of the Revive bookstore located at the conference office in Lawrenceville. Closed for the past 18 months, the conference partnered with the Review and Herald Publishing Association (R&H) in Hagerstown, Md., to reopen the bookstore. “This is not the inauguration of a store. This is the birth of a ministry in New Jersey ready to revive [and] to serve the community and to service the church,” said José H. Cortés, conference president, pictured right with Mark Thomas, R&H president (left), and Rob Vandeman (center), executive secretary of the Columbia Union.

Gwen Simon, a retired employee from New Jersey’s former Adventist book and health food store, said, “I am glad they have the bookstore open again. It is very nice and I like the layout.” The bookstore’s hours are Sundays, 10 a.m.–4 p.m.; Monday–Thursday, 10 a.m.–8 p.m., and Fridays, 10 a.m.–1 p.m.—Story by Jim Greene

READ MORE AND SEE MORE PICTURES

650 Attend Allegheny East Women’s Retreat

Minnie McNeil, the Allegheny East Conference (AEC) Women’s Ministries director, prayed that God would send women to the conference’s biennial retreat who desired a “well experience” and a closer walk with God. In response to her prayer, God sent some 650 women to this Spirit-filled weekend in Virginia Beach, Va.

“Women At The Well: Drinking From The Well of Blessing” was the weekend’s theme. The women started the weekend by ministering to shelter residents in the local Tidewater area. The divine worship hour included praise team
music and the soul-searching preaching of Paula Olivier, pastor of the First church of Montclair in New Jersey. Her message of hope and reassurance inspired the women to be led by the Holy Spirit in their “well experiences” and resulted in many women rededicating their lives to Christ and making commitments for baptism.—Story by Phyllis P. Edmonds

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New Jersey Prison Ministry Teams Sweep Allegheny East Awards

His mother was a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, but Thomas Henderson first met Jesus while he was incarcerated. While in prison, members of the Berean church in Newark, N.J., prayed for him. He returned to the church in 1988 and eventually became drug free. He now directs his energies at making sure that other young Adventists don’t repeat his mistakes. At AEC’s recent Prison Ministries Federation banquet, Henderson received the Christian Endurance award in recognition of his exceptional growth. This was one of five awards presented that night and the recipients all attend New Jersey-area churches.

“This is this is just the federation’s feeble attempt to thank the faithful workers that God gives us to go into prisons,” said Edith Tucker, AEC’s Prison Ministries Federation president. She is pictured with Henderson (right) and Morris Wilder, another award recipient.—Story by Taashi Rowe

Click here to read about the other awards presented that evening.

Washington Adventist Hospital Eliminates Ambulance Diversions

At a time when many Emergency Departments across the country are overcrowded, Washington Adventist Hospital’s (WAH) Emergency Department
in Takoma Park, Md., has eliminated yellow diversion of ambulance-transported patients for a full year. The department’s care approach, which involves a physician, nurse and medical technician in the patient’s care very early in their treatment, has also reduced wait times, increased patient satisfaction and put WAH ahead of national benchmarks in other key Emergency Department measures.

During “yellow diversion,” ambulances are re-routed to the nearest hospital because an emergency department cannot take any more patients by ambulance due to high volumes of patients already in the hospital.

“By not simply settling for minimizing diversion but rather eliminating it, Washington Adventist Hospital has established the standard for all emergency centers in Maryland to achieve,” said Robert Bass, MD, executive director of the Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems, which oversees and coordinates statewide emergency medical services.—Story by Diana McFadden

WAU Presents at Conference for Institutional Researchers

Janette Neufville, Washington Adventist University’s (WAU) associate vice president for Institutional Research and Effectiveness in Takoma Park, Md., is hailing her recent participation in the Maryland Association of Institutional Researchers (MdAIR) conference as a significant event for her office, and WAU overall. Held at Hood College in Frederick, Md., the conference commemorated MdAIR’s 25th anniversary.

Neufville’s presentation shared tools to support strategic planning, institutional assessment and student learning outcomes. “The presentation has made our office a resource to mentor similar offices at other schools through the strategic planning and effectiveness processes as well as raise the profile among peer institutions,” Neufville said. “Several institutions have reached out to us for this support, as many are not yet doing multi-year planning and/or do not have mature or consistent accountability processes in place.”
Parent-Teacher Group at Potomac School Earns National Nod

Parents and teachers at Potomac Conference’s John Nevins Andrews (JNA) Elementary School in Takoma Park, Md., have worked hard for 10 years to foster a collaboration that strengthens the educational experience of their children and students. That successful relationship recently earned JNA’s Parent-Teacher Partnership Program an honorable mention during an annual, nationwide search by PTO Today magazine and DIRECTV4Schools for a Parent Group of the Year. JNA was one of 300 entrants for the award.

“This affirms my call to work with parents as partners, and I thank God for the opportunity,” commented Edwina Neely, founder of JNA’s Parent-Teacher Partnership Program and kindergarten teacher. “I would like to extend this program and offer the seminars to all of the schools in Potomac. I truly believe parents and teachers are partners working together to provide eternal success for our children.”—Story by Beth Michaels

Bucks County Harvest Festival Attracts 300

More than 300 people from the surrounding communities attended the Pennsylvania Conference’s Bucks County church Second Annual Harvest Festival in Warminster. It was a day with activities for the whole family. More than 50 volunteers demonstrated Christian caring attitudes to guests. The event featured a concert, festive foods with tasty treats such as green smoothies, hayrides, face painting and a moon bounce for the children. Several people signed up for financial counseling, Bible studies and cooking classes.

Attendees donated 50 bags of groceries in support of Baskets of Love, a church mission project. During the
event, members gave away more than 100 donated gifts from local vendors. There were more than 20 local sponsors and donors. “The Bucks County church has a vision to be a bridge into the community and with the help of the Holy Spirit and a great team we are off the island,” shares Carol Lewis, event coordinator.

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Find a Christmas Concert Near You

Many churches across the Columbia Union’s eight-state region are offering holiday performances. Here is a sampling of holiday choral concerts taking place near you. Click on the links to find contact information and get more details.—Story by Beth Michaels

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UPCOMING EVENTS

December 10: A benefit concert at the Pikesville International church, located at 4619 Old Court Road in Pikesville, Md., is planned for Sabbath at 3 p.m. Proceeds go to the Sharon Marsden Memorial Scholarship Foundation. For more information, call (410) 521-7331, or email pikesvillecommunications@gmail.com.

December 10: Capital Brazilian Temple Presents “Angels Aware,” a Christmas musical featuring the children’s choir, Grow in Praise. The program starts at 7 p.m. and will be held at the church, which is located at 12430 Scaggsville Road, Highland, Md.

December 15: Dupont Park Adventist School Christmas Program will include drama, music and special presentations. This year’s musical, titled “Christmas Starr,” will be held at the Dupont Park church located at 3985 Massachusetts Avenue, S.E., in Washington, D.C., at 7 p.m. Tickets are $10 each.
December 15: G.E. Peters School’s Christmas musical production, “The Next Noel” will be held at 7 p.m. The play will take place in the Metropolitan church sanctuary, which is located at 6307 Riggs Road in Hyattsville, Md.

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.

December 16, 17: Shenandoah Valley Academy’s Annual Christmas Concert Weekend will feature the Shenandoans, handbell choir, orchestra and concert choir. The first performance will be the Christmas Candlelight Concert at New Market church on Friday, December 16, 7:30 p.m. The following evening, December 17, these same groups will perform a secular Christmas Concert at SVA’s gymnasium, 6:30 p.m. A freewill offering will be taken for the “Support the Arts” fund at SVA. All are invited to come and be blessed! For more information, visit shenandoahvalleyacademy.org.

December 17: Miracle Temple’s 17th Annual Christmas Cantata will be held during the divine worship service and will feature the sanctuary choir and symphony orchestra. For more information, visit miracletemple.net.

January 29: The Pennsylvania Conference Youth and Young Adult Ministries Family Ski Trip will be held at Jack Frost Big Boulder in White Haven, Pa. The price is $48 for the snow pass, lesson and rental. The lessons are for ages 8 and over. Helmet rentals are $10 additional. Tickets must be purchased by January 16, 2012. Pre-paid ticket pick-up will be at the Jack Frost Lodge, 8 a.m.-12 noon. For more information, contact the conference’s Youth Ministries Department at (607) 374-8331, ext. 212 or at pa-youth@paconference.org.

February 17-19: The “Love for a Lifetime” Marriage Enrichment Retreat will be held at the Dunes Manor Hotel in Ocean City, Md. The registration fee of $299 per couple includes two nights at Dunes Manor Hotel, brunch, tea, dinner on Saturday and brunch on Sunday. For more information, e-mail MarriageEnrichment@comcast.net, or contact Mark and Peggy Lee at (301) 317-5428 or Jeff and Sandy Hartz at (443) 864-6328. The Triadelphia church and Maranatha Adventist Fellowship are among the churches sponsoring the retreat.
For more news and up-to-date information from the Columbia Union Conference, visit columbiaunion.org

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Potomac Pastors Minister in India, Thousands Baptized

Story by Taashi Rowe
Published 12/5/11

“One lady we baptized was 92 years old—about 4’6”—she couldn’t wait to get into the water to be baptized. Her 75-year-old son walked her into the water. The baptisms were held at the river, water buffalo below us being scrubbed, a dead one on the bank across from us, other interesting things floating by, but it didn’t bother the locals—they were eager to be baptized.”

This is what Bill Miller, president of the Potomac Conference, reported after he helped to baptize 3,943 people in India in one day. He, along with four other Potomac pastors and two lay members from Washington state, ministered in 50 villages near Vijayawada, India this fall.

The pastors included Paulasir Abraham of the Southern Asia church in Silver Spring, Md.; Vincent McIsaac of the Arlington and Fairfax (Va.) churches, Mike Hewitt of the Lynchburg and Appomattox (Va.) churches and Mark Sigue, newly appointed youth pastor at Chesapeake Conference’s Frederick (Md.) church.

Now retired but still passionate about the mission field in India, Ron Watts, former president of the Southern Asia Division, invited Potomac Conference pastors to embark on this mission trip to India. Other pastors and Bible workers went ahead of the Potomac pastors to study with the villagers. According to local customs, before entering a village, strangers must sleep outside of that village on the ground before the elders would grant them permission to preach.

The Potomac pastors visited with villagers during the days and preached at night. They were amazed to see anywhere from 450 to 1,500 people attend the meetings each night. Hungry for the gospel, people came on foot, on bikes and rickshaws. One local pastor, who has 60 congregations, said, “I’ve been studying the doctrines and I want to know what I can do to become a Seventh-day Adventist.”

At the end of their time in India, a total of 7,851 people had been baptized. Abraham, a native of India’s Tamil Nadu state, said he had never before seen such a tremendous response.

Upon reflecting on his own experience there, Miller said, “This has got to be a God thing. I saw Pentecost happen again with my eyes. God has forever changed those places.”

Though Potomac’s pastors have left India, their newly baptized brothers remain in their hearts and
prayers. They've left behind some 50 workers who will nourish the new members for the next five years. Maranatha Volunteers International is already working to build them churches.

Miller notes that with the massive need for ministers to preach the gospel in India, every church and conference in the United States could make a significant difference. In fact, he is encouraging other churches and conferences to go to India. Still he says after going to India, there is a renewed "urgency for us to be missionaries in our own culture."

Abraham agrees. "I feel that even Maryland is a mission field," he said. "There are people here who do not know Jesus. The responses may not be great but you can do the work here too. Going there has strengthened me to open more doors here."

Click here to read the testimonies of the new Seventh-day Adventists in India.
Mark Thomas, president of the Review and Herald Publishing Association; Rob Vandeman, executive secretary of the Columbia Union; and José H. Cortés, president of New Jersey Conference cut the ribbon for the grand opening of the new Revive bookstore.

New Jersey Conference Celebrates Bookstore Reopening

Story by Jim Greene

Published 12/7/2011

The New Jersey Conference (NJC) recently celebrated the grand opening of the new Revive bookstore located at the conference office in Lawrenceville. After being closed for the past 18 months, the conference partnered with the Review and Herald Publishing Association (R&H) in Hagerstown, Md., to reopen the bookstore. The R&H is operating the bookstore under their Home Health Education Service (HHES) division and will incorporate the traditional bookstore operations with their HHES Literature Evangelist program in New Jersey.

During the grand opening and dedication service conducted just prior to the opening of the doors, José H. Cortés, NJC president; Mark Thomas, R&H president; Doug Sayles, R&H director of sales; Luis Biazotto, HHES director; Haylin Lopes, NJC publishing director; and Cleber Machado, Revive bookstore manager, made special remarks. Rob Vandeman, executive secretary of the Columbia Union gave the Prayer of Dedication for the new bookstore.

“This is not the inauguration of a store,” Cortés said. “This is the birth of a ministry in New Jersey ready to revive [and] to serve the community and to service the church.”

During his remarks, Machado said, “We are here to serve your needs, and if there is something you want that we do not have in stock, please let me know and we will order it for you.”

More than 300 people were present for the event and many favorable comments were heard from the customers. “I am glad they have the bookstore open again. It is very nice and I like the layout,” said Gwen Simon, a retired employee from the conference’s former Adventist book and health food store.

The Revive bookstore hours are:
Sunday: 10 a.m.–4 p.m.
Monday–Thursday: 10 a.m.–8 p.m.
Friday: 10 a.m.–1 p.m.
Minnie McNeil, the Allegheny East Conference Women’s Ministries director, prayed that God would send women to the conference’s biennial retreat who desired a “well experience” and a closer walk with God. In response to her prayer, God sent so many women that additional provisions and hotels were needed to handle the unexpected numbers. The women came by car, bus, plane and ferry from the north, south, east and west. Not only did women come from the states in the Allegheny East Conference territory, they also came from other conferences—some even came from as far away as Georgia, North Carolina, Kentucky, Michigan and Indiana.

The theme for the weekend was “Women At The Well: Drinking From The Well of blessing.” Some 650 women came to this Spirit-filled weekend at the Founders Inn in Virginia Beach, Va., which also included special programs for teenage girls, led by Dolores Allen of the Bladensburg (Md.) church.

The women started the weekend by ministering to shelter residents in the local Tidewater area. They rolled up their sleeves and helped to organize closets and reminded the shelter residents of the marvelous healing and saving love of Christ. A second group attending the retreat used their melodious voices to speak and sing messages of praise and hope when they visited a local nursing home.

Each area Women’s Ministries leader was responsible for a segment of the weekend’s programming. The Virginia Area started the weekend worship with a skit titled “Extra Baggage” depicting women’s “well experiences” in life. Gina Brown, PhD, a member of the Dupont Park church in Washington, D.C., followed with a powerful motivational message.
On Sabbath and Sunday mornings, the women started their day with morning spiritual and physical exercise led by Faye Gregory from the Newtonville (N.J.) church. Brenda Chavis from the Voice of Truth Church in Newark, Del., and Helen Peace from Mullica Hill, N.J., shared morning manna while the women from the Bay Area led the worship on Sabbath morning and the ladies of South Jersey Area led the worship on Sunday morning.

The Baltimore Area Women’s Ministries provided midmorning Sabbath inspiration and motivation for Christian service by presenting the video; “Christ Method Alone.” This video was a reminder of the best way to reach hearts for Jesus is to use the method he used to win people for His kingdom. The divine worship hour included praise team music and the soul searching preaching of Paula Olivier, pastor of the First church of Montclair, N.J. Her message of hope and reassurance inspired the women to be led by the Holy Spirit in their “well experiences” and resulted in many women rededicating their lives and making commitments for baptism.

Sabbath afternoon was devoted to breakout groups where seminar presenters facilitated several discussions that included; “Power to Serve,” “Physiology of Submission,” “It’s Not You, Its Me—Reasons for Breakups,” and for women wanting to revitalize their marriages, “From Simmer to Sizzle.” To conclude the seminars, the presenters convened a panel where they responded to questions from their various presentitations.

Saturday night recreation consisted of a fashion show presented by the Pennsylvania Area women. In addition, there were video entertainment, zumba instruction and swimming. Fellowship was seen throughout the weekend with old friends reuniting and new friendships being formed. Prayer was a main focus of the weekend with prayer groups bursting forth throughout the hotel. The opportunity for private prayer was available in the “Prayer Room.”

The final worship experience on Sunday morning culminated the weekend with a mountain top experience as women were reminded and motivated to learn of Him who met the woman at the well. Donnette Blake, a pastor at the Kingsboro church (N.Y.) prepared the women to descend from the “well experience” of the weekend knowing that nothing is too hard for God to handle in their lives.

The women also collected $3,700 to benefit the Women’s Center on the Campus of Valley View University in Accra, Ghana.
Edith Tucker, Allegheny East Conference Prison Ministries Federation president, presents Thomas Henderson with the Christian Endurance Award. Morris Wilder, vice president of the organization and an award recipient, looks on.

New Jersey Prison Ministry Teams Sweep Allegheny East Awards

Story by Taashi Rowe
Published 12/6/11

Thomas Henderson received a scholarship to Rutgers University in New Jersey for electrical engineering but only went to class for about 18 months because he began to focus on gang activities. His mother was a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, but Henderson first met Jesus while he was incarcerated. While in prison, members of the Berean church in Newark prayed for Henderson. Bertha Freeman in particular said she recognized something good in him and continued to pray for him and invite him to church. He returned to the church in 1988 and eventually became drug free. He now directs his energies at making sure that other young Adventists don't repeat his mistakes. At the recent Allegheny East Conference (AEC) Prison Ministries Federation banquet, Henderson received the Christian Endurance award in recognition of his exceptional growth.

Henderson's award was one of five presented at the 31st anniversary of this banquet. The federation also recognized Morris Wilder and Gloria Davis of the Revival of Hope group in Neptune, N.J., for serving in Prison Ministries for 30 years or more. Carl Bannister, a chaplain at the Hackettstown Adventist Hospital, received the Good Neighbor Award for his work volunteering with the Hillcrest church and at the Correctional Institution for Women in Clinton, N.J.
The Chaplain of the Year Award went to Larry Akins, who is chaplain at the East Jersey State Prison. Akins is not a Seventh-day Adventist; however, he was recognized for instituting GED classes, starting discipleship groups, starting a music ministry and, most recently, for hosting a two-day gospel fest at the prison. The federation also named Orlando Moncrieffe Pastor of the Year. Moncrieffe, who pastors the First church of Teaneck in New Jersey, volunteers at the Northern New Jersey State Prison where he gives Bible study, preaches at worship studies, prepares the residents for baptism and conducts communion. In the past year alone, he has baptized 50 people. Harvey George received the Community Humanitarian Award for founding Friends of Lifers, a support organization that helps families and inmates serving lifetime sentences in the Jersey City area.

"We cannot afford to give everyone awards for things they do," said Edith Tucker, AEC’s Prison Ministries Federation president. "And we know the awards will pass away, but this is just the federation’s feeble attempt to thank the faithful workers that God gives us to go into prisons to help the prisoners. Through them we make sure that nobody can ever say they didn’t have an invitation to join Jesus at the banquet."
Columbia Union Choirs Offer Christmas Choral Concerts
Story by Beth Michaels
Published 12/1/11

Many churches across the Columbia Union's eight-state region are offering holiday performances. Here is a sampling of holiday choral concerts taking place near you. Click on the links to find contact information and get more details.

DECEMBER 10
• Spencerville Church's Annual Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols—Silver Spring, Md., 4 p.m.

DECEMBER 16
• Kettering Church's Annual Christmas Candlelight Concert—Kettering, Ohio, 7 p.m.

DECEMBER 17
• Restoration Choir, Ephesus Church—Columbus, Ohio
• Sonshine Singers Singing Christmas Tree, Triadephia Church—Columbia, Md., 6 p.m.

DECEMBER 24
• Central New Jersey Korean Church Choir—Rahway, N.J.
• Capitol Hill Church's Annual Handel's Messiah Performance—Washington, D.C.
• Richmond Brazilian Community Church Choir—Richmond, Va.
• Washington Brazilian Youth Choir (Coral Jovem de Washington)—College Park, Md.