Fourth Street Leadership Summit Addresses Inclusive Kingdom Building

For a period of three days, the church at the corner of Fourth and Q streets in northwest Washington, D.C., served as more than a house of worship, it was the home of the 2012 Strategic Leadership Summit. In addition to those who packed the church’s tiny sanctuary, attendees and participants also joined in via live stream from as far away as California and England. Multiple speakers addressed the theme “In the Spirit of Tomorrow: Engaging Race, Ethnicity, Sexuality and Its Impact on Relevant Kingdom Building” and focused on building a more inclusive church.

“The painful reality is that as a Christian community, we are engaged with more God talk than God walk,” said Andrew Harewood (pictured right), pastor of Allegheny East Conference’s Fourth-Street Friendship church explaining the reason behind the theme. “In fact I would dare say if we're not careful, our [Seventh-day] Adventism will cause us to lose our place in heaven. Our church is dying. We are not dealing with relevant issues, and to a large degree, most of our leaders are leading through the rear view mirror. I am sick and tired of seeing other organizations addressing relevant issues when we are more concerned about maintaining our comfort level than in fulfilling Jesus’ mandate to make disciples.”—Story by Taashi Rowe
Allegheny West Hispanics Encouraged by Cincinnati Outreach

Early this year, members of the Allegheny West Conference Cincinnati Hispanic district in Ohio came up with several goals they wanted to achieve in Cincinnati, one of which was to make the Seventh-day Adventist Church better known to the city’s residents. So, they started a radio program on the only Hispanic station in the city, La Mega 97.7 FM. The program, “Para Vivir Mejor, (For Better Living)” runs every Sunday at 10 a.m. and focuses mainly on family, health and the Bible.

“This allowed us to make many contacts, and several started to attend our churches in Cincinnati,” said Rafael Soto, pastor of the Cincinnati Central Hispanic and El Buen Pastor churches.

Then the Cincinnati Central church formed a “Jesús, la esperanza de vida (Jesus is the Hope of Life)” group, where 36 young people from that church spent two months reaching out to Hispanic families in the area with Bible studies, food delivery and special prayers. At the end of that project, 14 people (some pictured) surrendered their lives to Christ at an evangelism series.—Story by Allegheny West Conference Staff

Miembros de Allegheny West se reaniman con el proyecto Alcanza a Cincinnati

Los miembros de las iglesias hispanohablantes de Allegheny West Conference se regocijan después de ver cómo la mano de Dios está obrando al abrir las puertas para el evangelismo en esa ciudad.

Temprano este año, los miembros del distrito hispano de Cincinnati fijaron varios blancos que deseaban alcanzar
en Cincinnati. Uno era dar a conocer mejor la Iglesia Adventista del Séptimo-día a los ciudadanos de esa ciudad. Por lo tanto, iniciaron un programa de radio en la única estación radial hispana de esa ciudad, La Mega 97.7 FM. El programa "Para vivir mejor" se transmite cada domingo a las 10:00 a.m. con un enfoque sobre la familia, la salud, y la Biblia.

"Esto nos ha permitido hacer muchos contactos, y varios ya han comenzado a asistir a nuestras iglesias", dijo Rafael Soto, pastor de las iglesias Cincinnati Central Hispanic y El Pastor.—Historia por personal de Allegheny West Conference

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**Chesapeake Church Feeds Harford County Homeless**

Hastick, outreach coordinator. “We are not only focused on the spiritual aspect of someone’s life, but also care about their emotional and physical well-being.”

Once each quarter, the team visits the shelter and provides breakfast, a sack lunch and a hot supper for residents. Pictured are members of the Wilna outreach committee preparing dinner for local homeless persons.—Story and photo by Valerie Nozea

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**World Church Headquarters Holiday Outreach Celebrates Biblical Creation**

The auditorium darkened, lightening flashed across a projector screen, thunder roared over the loudspeaker.
Fourth Street Leadership Summit Addresses Inclusive Kingdom Building

and artificial rain fell on hundreds of school children one morning during a recreation of the biblical flood, eliciting laughter and screams from the students. The simulation was part of Celebration of Creation, a free community event held this week at the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s world headquarters in Silver Spring, Md.

The family-friendly event ran from November 29 to December 2 and celebrated the biblical account of creation with a series of evening lectures from leading scientists for adults, and daytime workshops and presentations for kids.

Celebration of Creation is part of the Adventist Church’s renewed emphasis on promoting biblical creation. “All of us need to know where we came from,” said Williams Costa Jr., communication director for the Adventist world church. “God created us; we belong to Him.”

Pictured is eighth-grader Carolina Cruz petting an animatronic dinosaur.—Story by ANN staff

READ MORE at ADVENTIST NEWS NETWORK

$135,000 Raised for Cardiac Services at Washington Adventist Hospital Gala

More than $135,000 was raised to benefit cardiac services, including the purchase of a Philips Ultrasound System for Echocardiograms, at Washington Adventist Hospital’s recent Heart of Gold Gala in Bethesda, Md. The Takoma Park, Md.-based hospital’s nearly 500 guests, including physicians, elected officials, board members, community members and staff, gathered to celebrate 50 years of cardiac care.

Three people were honored for their contributions to the hospital. Keith Lindgren, MD, was presented with the Drs. Lauretta and Daniel Kress Spirit of Mission Award; David Kessler, MD, was awarded the Distinguished Physician Legacy Award; and Terry Burchick, rehabilitation
Fourth Street Leadership Summit Addresses Inclusive Kingdom Building

therapist, was honored with the William G. “Bill” Robertson Spirit of Service Award. The program also included a special recognition of the cardiac providers (pictured) at Washington Adventist Hospital who received small gifts to express gratitude for all they do for patients.

—Story by Laura V. Cook/Adventist HealthCare

West Philadelphia Church Welcomes Women in Jeans

Allegheny East Conference’s West Philadelphia church recently hosted an outreach program sponsored by The Church Down The Way, a Sunday church called, for the women of Mill Creek, a public housing development. “The goal of the program, themed, 200 Women in Jeans 2012, was to allow women who were not used to attending church to feel comfortable,” explains Donna Riley, the Adventist church’s inner city coordinator. “It is an extension of ‘come as you are.’ It dispels the assumption that church attendance demands a particular dress code.”

Attendees, dressed in jeans, ranged in age from under 30 to over 50. The different denominations sought to lift God up in the lives of the down trodden. They drew women from four Adventist churches in the Delaware Valley and local Sunday churches. The women learned, prayed, cried and laid their burdens at the foot of the cross were there was no difference between the GED and the PhD. The three-part sermon was designed to empower change in single women, seasoned women and women in general. "They left in a cluster of sisterhood armed with copies of Steps to Christ and renewed by the Holy Spirit," said Riley.

Read the December Visitor: Ministry in Motion
While traveling through the rustic, 9,000 square-foot replica village of ancient Bethlehem, with walls that rise 12 feet, there are plenty of stimuli to engage your senses. Pit fires burning along the route interrupt the cold night air, and tiki torches light the path against the night sky. There are contrasting scents of smoke, freshly baked pita bread and live cattle. You can also delight in sampling homemade lentil soup while observing street market professionals hard at work. There are even little boys who expertly weave through the crowd pretending to pick pockets.

When the bustling city scene concludes, a guide leads your group of travelers to a manger just outside the town’s walls.

There you join a crowd gathered in quiet awe to observe Mary cradle baby Jesus while Joseph hovers protectively nearby .... Want to read more? Click here to check out the December issue of the Visitor. It highlights a number of creative ways Columbia Union members are sharing their faith and ministering to others.—Story by Alexis A. Goring

Artículo especial de Visitor: Ministerio en movimiento

Tradicionalmente los cristianos han utilizado la actuación para transmitir mensajes de esperanza y del amor de Dios. Los jóvenes participantes de Manos para Jesús, han encontrado formas creativas y amenas de usar sus
“Lorena Rodríguez y yo pensamos que este era el nombre perfecto para el ministerio, porque enfatiza que la obra que hacemos es toda para la gloria de Dios”, dijo Jennifer Segovia, miembro de la iglesia Hispana de Langley de Potomac Conference en Takoma Park, Md., sede del grupo. Aproximadamente diez adultos jóvenes dan voluntariamente de su tiempo, pero también son bienvenidos los jóvenes de todas las edades. Entérese de las otras formas creativas en que la membresía de Columbia Union Conference están glorificando a Dios en inglés en la pág. 8.—Historia por Alexis A. Goring

End Quote: My Journey to the Weirton Church

“When I was 14, I was like any other rebellious teenager who was experimenting with smoking, drinking and drugs. In that year, I was fortunate enough again to be invited to evangelistic meetings at the East Liverpool (Ohio) church and after gaining a sense of God through those meetings, I decided to get baptized for my 15th birthday at the Wintersville (Ohio) church However, I saw hypocrisy in the church and left before I was 18.

I turned away from God and fell right into Satan’s lap. I started experimenting more with drugs and alcohol and got into witchcraft and Wicca. I spent many years learning the arts of witchcraft and convinced myself that I was doing nothing wrong. For approximately five years, I believed that God and Satan did not exist. It is so easy to do wrong things when you don't believe there is such a high price to pay.”—Angelina Dickson, a member of Mountain View Conference’s Weirton (W.Va.) church

READ MORE
UPCOMING EVENTS

Click here for a complete listing of upcoming events around the Columbia Union Conference.

MARYLAND

December 6: A Sacred Brass Christmas Concert featuring Brass of the Potomac, directed by Steven Bulla, happens Thursday, December 6, at the Spencerville Adventist Academy Fine Arts Center. The concert begins at 7:30 p.m. The school is located at 2502 Spencerville Road in Spencerville, Md. Tickets are available at www.spaac.net/tickets. Proceeds benefit the school’s band program.

December 7: Metro Area Adventist Young Adults (MAAYA) invites everyone to join them for “First (1st) Fridays” at 7:30 p.m. They will bring in the Sabbath with a year-end praise and worship testimony service and agape feast. First Fridays will be held at the Restoration Praise Center located at 10411 Greenbelt Road in Lanham, Md. Visit their Facebook page and follow them on Twitter @maayaministry.

December 8: The Frederick church presents “The Many Moods of Christmas,” featuring the music of the Frederick Church Choir (Francisco de Araujo, conductor), piano soloist Andy Luse and the New England Youth Ensemble of Washington Adventist University (Preston Hawes, DMA, director), at 7 p.m. A free-will offering will be collected. The church is located at 6437 Jefferson Pike in Frederick, Md. For more details, visit fredericksdachurch.org, or call (301) 662-5254.

December 8: The Emmanuel-Brinklow church presents Messiah Sing, an oratorio by G.F. Handel featuring the Jeremy Winston Chorale. Singers of all ranks are invited to to sing through the Christmas portion chorus of this famed oratorio with no prior rehearsal or just sit back, relax and enjoy. The program begins at 11 a.m. and the church is located at 18800 New Hampshire Avenue in Ashton, Md.

December 8: The Annual Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols takes place at the Spencerville church at 4 p.m. The Columbia Collegiate Chorale and Pro Musica of Washington Adventist University will once again join the Spencerville Sanctuary Choir, under the direction of James Bingham, DMA. The choirs will sing carols interspersed with readings to tell the story of the plan of salvation through the coming of Jesus to this Earth. A reception follows in the fellowship hall. The Spencerville church is located at 16325 New Hampshire Avenue in Silver Spring, Md. Questions? Call (301) 384-2920.

December 9: The second annual Sligo Adventist School Craft Show and Small Business Showcase will run from 11 to 3 p.m. for vendors and shoppers alike. Vendor tables are $35 and shopper admission is $1 (you also receive a raffle ticket for fabulous giveaways!), with those proceeds going to the Worthy Student Fund. This is a fabulous opportunity to promote your craft/small business and to get some Christmas shopping checked off your list! Applications are available online at http://www.sligoadventistschool.org/ under Parent
Fourth Street Leadership Summit Addresses Inclusive Kingdom Building

Resources or call (301) 434-1417 for more information.

December 10: A Depression Recovery program, sponsored by the Annapolis church, begins with an information session at 7 p.m. Gain control over your thoughts and improve concentration and energy levels. The group will meet Monday evenings in January and February. The church is located at 1996 Generals Highway in Annapolis, Md. For more information, email melzetawilliams@yahoo.com, or call (410) 266-8887.

February 8-10, 2013: A Lifetime of LOVE Marriage Retreat is the fifth annual community marriage retreat weekend. It will be held at Dunes Manor Hotel in Ocean City, Md. Joan and Rich Liversidge will present the sessions, which run from Friday evening to Sunday morning. For more information, email MarriageEnrichment@comcast.net or contact Mark and Peggy Lee at (301) 801-2344, or Jeff and Sandy Hartz at (443) 864-6328. The early bird discount ends December 17.

NEW JERSEY

December 15: Proceeds from the Family Aid Fund’s special Christmas concert will benefit victims of Superstorm Sandy. The concert, which starts at 7 p.m., will feature soprano Karla Rivera Bucklew and pianist Ingrid Forss. It will be held at the Parkway South church, which is located at Roosevelt Boulevard and Route 9 in North Marmora, N.J. For more information, call (609) 675-4124 or visit Facebook.com/FamilyAidConcert. Admission is free but donations toward the Family Aid Fund are appreciated.

TELEVISION

December 15-25: NBC’s Holiday Special, “The Present,” was filmed live at the Atlanta Berean church and features musicians Take 6, Jaime Jorge and Jennifer LaMountain and presenter Carlton P. Byrd, speaker/director of the Breath of Life telecast. For a list of stations and air dates, go to breathoflife.tv or call (805) 955-7681.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

December 15: Holiday Party for Singles . Connexus Ministry invites you to their 2012 Holiday Party Saturday, December 15, from 7 p.m. until 12 a.m. It will be held in the Capitol Hill church’s fellowship hall located at 914 Massachusetts Avenue N.E. in Washington, D.C. Please bring a unisex gift ($20 or more) for the gift game. For more information, email connexusministry@yahoo.com.

December 15: Capitol Hill church’s Christmas Worship Service "From Presents to Presents: Living and Giving Like Jesus" will feature a brass ensemble, with spoken word by the Capitol Hill Outreach ministry leaders. The service of word and song will focus on Jesus’ purpose in coming, and the birthday gifts He truly desires. The service will begin 11 a.m. The church is located at 914 Massachusetts Ave, NE, in Washington, D.C. For more information, call (202) 543-1344, or visit chcsda.org.
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To send us a news story, email us at visitor@columbiaunion.net. The deadline for all submissions is 10 a.m. each Tuesday.

Stay Connected:

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Visitor News Bulletin is an electronic newsletter published by the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Columbia Union Conference. You are free to reprint any portion of the bulletin, however, please identify Visitor News Bulletin as the source.

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Panelists Sharon Pruitt, Alvin Kibble and Nathan Krause address inclusive kingdom-building.

For over a period of three days, the church at the corner of Fourth and Q streets in Washington, D.C., served as more than a house of worship, it was the home of the 2012 Strategic Leadership Summit. In addition to those who packed the church's tiny sanctuary, attendees and participants also joined in via live stream from as far away as California and England. Multiple speakers addressed the theme “In the Spirit of Tomorrow: Engaging Race, Ethnicity, Sexuality and Its Impact on Relevant Kingdom Building” and focused on building a more inclusive church.

“The painful reality is that as a Christian community, we are engaged with more God talk than God walk,” said Andrew Harewood, pastor of Fourth-Street Friendship church explaining the reason behind the theme. “In fact I would dare say if we’re not careful our [Seventh-day] Adventism will cause us to lose our place in heaven. Our church is dying. We are not dealing with relevant issues and to a large degree most of our leaders are leading through the rear view mirror. I am sick and tired of seeing other organizations addressing relevant issues when we are more concerned about maintaining our comfort level than in fulfilling Jesus’ mandate to make disciples.”

Those may sound like fighting words, but several church and community leaders agreed with Harwood. In his Sabbath morning sermon, Barry Black, U.S. Senate chaplain, laid out five principles for making disciples: break down the barriers of prejudice, take the initiative, meet needs, help people clearly see who they actually are and empower people to break down barriers.

Panelists then went on to tackle the rarely addressed issues of churches divided by race and people who feel unwelcomed in church because of their sexuality. On Sabbath afternoon, people could Skype, tweet, Facebook or text their questions to the multiple panelists. One of those panels discussed the topic “How Tolerant Are we of Differences?” Alvin Kibble, a North American Division vice president, responded, “We must learn to appreciate differences. There is something about the new that is challenging and frightening to some people.”

Nathan Krause, pastor of Potomac Conference’s Olney (Md.) church, said, “We really need to deal with issues that divide us or they will continue to divide us. That is where the Holy Spirit comes in. If you foster the love of Christ then a judgmental spirit would not be there.”
Sharon Pruitt, a newly baptized Fourth Street member, said inclusiveness of leadership should be paramount in the church. “I just hope we can get to a place when we stop identifying people by race,” she said.

Another panel discussed the generational and cultural shift. “Our greatest resource is young people,” said Henry Fordham, newly elected Allegheny East Conference president. “They are not the church of tomorrow, they are the neglected church of today. We need to stop being hypocritical and be real to young people. Love breaks down barriers.” He also promised to form a task force of young people where they will share their ideas of where they want to see their church go. “I hope we will have the courage to listen,” he said.

“One of the challenges for those in leadership is giving up their power,” observed Brian Bakee, vice president for the Mustard Seed Foundation, a community organization. “I think this is what is hindering multiculturalism in the church. If a church tells me they are multicultural, I ask to see a photo of the leadership team.”

When the subject of sexuality came up, Phyllis Edmonds, assistant solicitor at the Baltimore City Law Department, said, “I want the church to look at all sexual sins. We tend to focus on homosexuality, but it does less damage to the family than adultery. We need to be consistent when we talk about all sexual sins.”

Though the discussions were not always eloquently handled and no one claimed to have all the answers, Sylvia Danley-Smith, a member of Capitol Hill church, said, “I was blessed. We are all part of the human race and we really need to examine how we treat each other. We are one church and there is no need for distinctions.”

Dwain Esmond, a vice president at the Review and Herald Publishing Association in Hagerstown, Md., said, “I liked that we got to learn about practical tools for reaching and into the community. Enough with the talking.”

At the end of the program, Harewood encouraged all attendees to take the ideas learned over the three days and put them into action.

COMMENTS POLICY: The Columbia Union Conference Visitor encourages quality conversation and welcomes your thoughtful comments. All comments are subject to approval but will not be edited. Please limit your comments to 500 words or less. Only one comment per person will be published.

There are no comments.
Fourteen people prepare for baptism following an outreach led by young people at the Cincinnati Central Hispanic church.

Members of Allegheny West Conference Spanish-speaking churches in Cincinnati, Ohio, are rejoicing after seeing how the hand of God is working to open the doors for evangelism in that city.

Early this year, members of the church's Cincinnati Hispanic district came up with several goals that they wanted to achieve in Cincinnati, one of which was to make the Seventh-day Adventist Church better known to the city's residents. So, they started a radio program on the only Hispanic station in the city, La Mega 97.7 FM. The program, “Para Vivir Mejor,” (For Better Living) runs every Sunday at 10 a.m. and focuses mainly on the family. There are also segments on health and biblical reflection.

“This allowed us to make many contacts and several started to attend our churches in Cincinnati," said Rafael Soto, pastor of the Cincinnati Central Hispanic and El Buen Pastor churches.

The Cincinnati Central church formed a “Jesús, la esperanza de vida” (Jesus is the Hope of Life) group where 36 young people from the Cincinnati Central Hispanic church spent two months reaching out to Hispanic families in the area with Bible studies, food delivery and special prayers. At the end of that project, 14 people surrendered their lives to Christ at an evangelism series featuring Rubén Ramos, assistant to the Columbia Union Conference president for Multilingual Ministries, and Winston Simpson, pastor for the Hispanic district in Philadelphia. This was in addition to the 42 people who made a decision for Christ earlier that year.

“We owe these wonderful results to the efforts of our members who dedicated their time and committed themselves to evangelism,” Soto said. “As a district, we glorify God for His guidance through the Holy Spirit and for the way He has opened the doors for the preaching of the gospel in Cincinnati!”

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There are no comments.

Anonymous

Name:

Email:
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"Esto nos ha permitido hacer muchos contactos, y varios ya han comenzado a asistir a nuestras iglesias", dijo Rafael Soto, pastor de las iglesias Cincinnati Central Hispanic y El Pastor.

Luego, un grupo de treinta y seis jóvenes de la iglesia Cincinnati Central Hispanic formaron el grupo "Jesús, la esperanza de vida" dedicando dos meses a alcanzar a las familias hispanas del área con estudios bíblicos, la entrega de alimentos, y oraciones especiales. Al final del proyecto, catorce almas (algunas en la foto) entregaron sus vidas a Cristo después de participar en una serie de reuniones de evangelismo presentada por los pastores Rubén Ramos, asistente al presidente para los ministerios multilingües de Columbia Union Conference, y Winston Simpson, pastor en el distrito hispano de Philadelphia. Estas además de las cuarenta y dos personas que tomaron su decisión por Cristo a principio del año.

"Estos resultados maravillosos se deben a nuestros miembros que dedicaron su tiempo y se comprometieron al evangelismo", dijo Soto. "Como distrito, ¡glorificamos a Dios por guiarnos a..."
través del Espíritu Santo y la manera en que Él ha abierto puertas para predicar el evangelio en Cincinnati!".

NORMAS Y POLÍTICA PARA LOS COMENTARIOS: Columbia Union Visitor fomenta la conversación de calidad e invita sus comentarios. Todos los comentarios están sujetos a aprobación. Por favor limite sus comentarios a quinientas palabras o menos.

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Adventist HQ holiday outreach celebrates belief in biblical creation

Nov. 30, 2012 Silver Spring, Maryland, United States

ANN staff

The auditorium darkened, lightening flashed across a projector screen, thunder roared over the loudspeaker and artificial rain fell on hundreds of school children this morning during a recreation of the biblical flood, eliciting laughter and screams from the students.

The simulation was part of Celebration of Creation, a free community event held this week at Seventh-day Adventist world church headquarters in Silver Spring, Maryland, United States.

The family-friendly event runs November 29 to December 2 and celebrates the biblical account of creation with a series of evening lectures from leading scientists for adults, and daytime workshops and presentations for kids.

Celebration of Creation is part of the Adventist Church’s renewed emphasis on promoting biblical creation. At a church business meeting in 2010, Adventist world church leaders voted to reaffirm the Adventist fundamental belief in a “literal, recent, six-day creation” they say is recorded in the Old Testament book of Genesis. Leaders are also currently in the process of clarifying the church’s doctrinal statement on creation.

But beyond doctrine, church leaders say the study of origins resonates with the human need for belonging.

“All of us need to know where we came from,” said Williams Costa Jr., Communication director for the Adventist world church. “God created us; we belong to Him.”

Celebration of Creation includes a screening of a 20-minute nature film, “The Creation,” shot during filmmaker Henry Strober’s four-year journey around the globe. Scenes of nature accompany music and a narration of the Genesis creation story during the film.

Daytime workshops at the event are geared toward elementary-aged children. Kids enjoy posing with an animatronic Stegosaurus dinosaur before finding their seats in the auditorium at world church headquarters.

Singer and dinosaur sculptor Buddy Davis from the Creation Museum in Petersburg, Kentucky, shares stories and songs about God’s creative power. Christian cartoonist Dan Lietha leads children in a dinosaur-drawing workshop, and Guide magazine nature columnist Rich Aguilera brings the biblical flood story to life.
Aguilera also uses changes within breeds of dogs to demonstrate a lack of evidence for so-called "transitional" species. As dozens of dog breeds multiply on screen, he asks, "Does anybody see a hippo up here? Does anybody see a tomato? No. All we see is variety. God created variety. Do you guys all look the same?"

"Let's see if we can pet him," Aguilera says of a boxer-bull, one of the newest breeds of dog. As he reaches toward the screen, the dog barks unexpectedly and jumps toward the audience. "Well, I guess we shouldn't pet the dog -- at least not that one," Aguilera says amid laughter.

The evening lectures feature four nationally recognized speakers, including pediatric neurosurgery Dr. Ben Carson, author of the book, "Gifted Hands," and recipient of the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest civilian honor in the United States.

Dr. Ben Carson speaks at the Celebration of Creation outreach event at the Adventist Church world headquarters on Sunday, December 2. In his opening remarks, the author of the book "Gifted Hands" pointed out the fallacies of politically correct speech and encouraged honest dialogue about issues, including origins. [photo: Ansel Oliver]

very fortunate to have had so many experiences with God in my life that I have no doubt of His existence and influence," Carson said. "He is the source of all wisdom and is available to anyone who seeks Him. It's hard to imagine my life as a neurosurgeon without the guidance of The Almighty."

Other keynote speakers are Milton Brown of the Georgetown University Center for Drug Discovery, Dr. E. Albert Reece, dean of the University of Maryland School of Medicine, and Tim Standish -- who holds a doctorate in environmental biology and public policy -- from the Adventist Church's Geoscience Research Institute.

Standish said a close study of nature reveals that organisms thrive through mutual cooperation, not competition, as proffered by evolution. Standish said Charles Darwin's belief in "survival of the fittest" has had a "profound impact" throughout history, driving Marxism, Fascism and genocides such as the Holocaust.

"Contrast this mindset with the Biblical view of humanity," Standish said, citing texts indicating that humans are created in the image of God and are equal in His eyes.

Guide magazine's nature columnist Rich Aguilera amazes onlookers with a dinosaur claw during his presentation at the Celebration of Creation event on Saturday night, December 1. He informed attendees about interpretations of both evolution and creation. [photo: Amber Sarno]
“Life would not exist without fundamental cooperation. Everything is a team job,” Standish said during his November 29 keynote. “It’s only when we see the system broken in some way that we see struggle and competition.”

Reece said the natural world reflects the power and vision of an ultimate Creator.

“The enormity, complexity and precision of creation is one of pure amazement, and affirms the work of an awesome God,” he said.
Personal Testimony: From Witchcraft to the Weirton Church

Story by Angelina Dickson
Published 11/29/2012

As a young child, we were not permitted to have a Bible in our house. But, my mother had one hidden under the kitchen sink where she knew my dad would never find it, and when he would leave, (he was a truck driver) she would take it out and read it. Aunt Carol, my mom’s sister, was a Seventh-day Adventist, and I remember her talking to us about God and teaching us Bible stories and Christian songs.

When I was 14, I was like any other rebellious teenager who was experimenting with smoking, drinking and drugs. In that year, I was fortunate enough again to be invited to evangelistic meetings at the East Liverpool Seventh-day Adventist Church (Ohio) and after gaining a sense of God through those meetings, I decided to get baptized for my 15th birthday at the Wintersville (Ohio) church. However, I saw hypocrisy in the church and left before I was 18.

I turned away from God and fell right into Satan’s lap. I started experimenting more with drugs and alcohol and got into witchcraft and Wicca. I spent many years learning the arts of witchcraft and convinced myself that I was doing nothing wrong. For approximately five years, I believed that God and Satan did not exist. It is so easy to do wrong things when you don’t believe there is such a high price to pay.

I found myself eventually working at a newspaper where I was instructed to cover an event at the local Catholic Church. I was very uncomfortable with the idea of being in a church and I was deeply offended when people even prayed. The event was supposed to be a one-man-show to depict the life and lessons of Paul in honor of the year of St. Paul. During that time, the local Catholic Church was in the process of putting together a play called, “I, Paul.” I found out a good friend of mine was directing the play and so I decided to get involved. They prayed before every practice. I didn’t pray with them. Then it got to the point that when they prayed to God, I prayed to my own gods. Eventually, I thought to myself, “When in Rome ...” and soon I began to pray with them.

While performing in the play, I slowly felt God’s transforming power come into my life. At first, I attended classes at the Catholic Church because I was already a pagan and felt at home with their practices. I thought I could have my cake and eat it too. I soon fell away from that as well and for months I debated and argued with Linda Jones, a member of the Mountain View Conference’s Weirton (W.Va.) church. I began having Bible study with my uncle again, and through Jones’ encouragement and the will of the Holy Spirit, I started attending the Weirton church.

It was not an easy road for me to walk. I was in and out of church—testing God and myself. It was not an easy year for me. I tried for a year on my own to do all the things I thought I should be doing and struggled back and forth between the pieces of the Bible my uncle was teaching and all of the Bible’s teachings. I still continue to pray and study so I can pass along the truth of God’s Word.

It was not an easy road for me to walk. I was in and out of church—testing God and myself. I tried for a year on my own to do all the things I thought I should be doing and struggled. In December 2011, I went back to the Weirton church, and last January began Bible studies with Pastor Doc Michael and his wife, Yonnie. They were loving and understanding when I had questions and ...
struggles. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, they were able to get through to me, and I was baptized at the Weirton church last June.

The past year has not been easy but it has been rewarding. The choices I have made for Christ have put me in situations where I had to say goodbye to a job I loved, a significant other, friends and even family, but praise the Lord, He gave me a new family, new friends and a new job.

The journey has not been an easy one. It took me a long time to realize that being a Christian is hard work that can be done only through Christ’s strength. I thank God for His mercy and grace and for sending His Son to die for me. I pray He will allow me, and all His children, to be witnesses for Him and help finish the Great Commission.

Angelina Dickson discovered that by surrendering to Christ, she could have a whole, new joyful life in Him.

COMMENTS POLICY: The Columbia Union Conference Visitor encourages quality conversation and welcomes your thoughtful comments. All comments are subject to approval but will not be edited. Please limit your comments to 500 words or less. Only one comment per person will be published.

Shari Turner
Reply
4 days ago

What an awesome testimony. It was through the Weirton church that my husband and I came into Adventism, through a Revelation seminar which was initially held back in 1985 at the Holiday Inn. I was baptized in that same pool by then Pastor Glen Farinola. It is so good to know that Weirton SDA is still working and leading souls to Christ. We no longer live in the area, and I imagine that many or most of the ones that we knew are now peacefully sleeping and awaiting the resurrection. I can honestly say that the Weirton church was one of the warmest, most friendly SDA churches that I have ever attended, and I have nothing but fond memories and lots of love for it and its members. It has been several years since we have been back in that area, but if we ever make it back there again, and it's a Sabbath, we will definitely try to attend service.