Weekly News From Around the Columbia Union Conference

November 13, 2013

Correction: Allegheny East Church Plans Fundraiser for Typhoon Victims

The Oxon Hill Filipino church's fundraiser for typhoon victims in the Philippines, planned for this Sabbath, was featured this week in the local Gazette newspaper. Emergency response officials estimate the death toll in the affected areas to top 10,000. "All of us are being moved or touched by seeing the pictures," said Ariel Matira, pastor of the Allegheny East Conference church. "Probably as of now, [the Filipino people] don't know if they have food to eat. We are all appealing to all human beings regardless of race and gender. Let us be united."

The fundraiser, featuring music, food and group prayers, will be held this Sabbath, from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the church's new location, 7412 Livingston Road in Oxon Hill, Md. Supporters are encouraged to bring canned food, clothing and money.

READ MORE IN THE GAZETTE
How is your church helping those affected?

Visit our facebook page and let us know.

**Correction:** In an earlier version of this story, we identified the church as a Potomac Conference Spanish church. We regret the error.

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**New Jersey's ‘Caravan’ Nets 138 Baptisms So Far**

"I'm so happy to let you know that the Caravan of Hope (Caravana de la Esperanza) is going way beyond all expectations!" wrote an excited Rubén Ramos, assistant to the Columbia Union Conference president for Multilingual Ministries, in an email sent this morning. "When the week of evangelism and harvest was planned with the leadership of New Jersey Conference, we set a goal of 100 souls for the whole week."

The Caravan of Hope is a mobile evangelism series featuring Alejandro Bullón, an evangelist from South America. The series began last Friday at the Luso-Brazilian church in Newark and made stops at Hispanic churches in Bridgeton, Robbinsville, Edison, Vineland, Rahway, Newark, Jersey City and Elizabeth. As of last night, there have been 138 baptisms. And, dozens more commit their lives to Christ each night. On Sunday night, 50 people (some pictured) were baptized at the Rahway church. The caravan continues through November 16, when there will be a festival of the laity in Andover and Tranquility.

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**Homeland Missions: 19 Projects Evangelize, Impact Community**
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Bondurant is speaking about the union’s annual homeland mission projects, a three-way partnership between the union, a conference and a local church to fund and encourage community outreach. Over the past five years, the union has given more than $1 million toward homeland missions. This year the union returned $212,000 to local churches to help fund 19 projects. The result?

“We have small groups across the city of [Allentown, Pa.], including over 70 guests each week; 25 Bible studies are being given in people’s homes; and each Wednesday during the school year, two missionaries (pictured) visit with students at the local high school and lead out in a Christian club,” reports Wes Via, who directs Pennsylvania Conference's Simplicity Urban Outreach project.—Story by Taashi Rowe

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At Pine Forge, Saving the Apple Trees is Paramount
Some time ago, Gary Banks, pastor of the Pine Forge (Pa.) church, made a sweet discovery. There were 75 acres of apple trees on the Allegheny East Conference property. Things turned sour when he went to pick some apples only to find many of the trees barren, overgrown or desperately in need of pruning.

According to Robert Booker, assistant to the president, the conference's Pine Forge Academy planted approximately 2,000 apple trees in the early 1970s. This endeavor provided jobs for students and yielded succulent fruit, applesauce, juice and pies.

Neither Banks nor Booker know why the operation ceased. However, with permission from the conference, Banks and a small group of volunteers are looking for members with the knowledge, skills and resources to help save the apple orchard. To help, contact Banks at drgbanks@gmail.com or (484) 599-1632.

—Story by Celeste Ryan Blyden

Book Release: Sacred Texts and Social Conflict
Olive Hemmings, PhD, who has taught New Testament studies at Washington Adventist University in Takoma Park, Md., for 11 years, recently published Sacred Texts and Social Conflict. The book discusses women’s ordination—a rather timely topic as the Seventh-day Adventist Church is currently grappling with the issue. Hemmings said the book came out of her doctoral studies on theology, ethics and culture at Claremont Graduate University in California. In it, she looks at the ongoing debate over women’s ordination, which now spans three centuries.

Q: Why is ordination important to you personally?

A: As a young teenager raised in a strong, Baptist family, I grew up hearing my mother preaching at the pulpit like St. Peter. When I arrived on the campus of West Indies College (an Adventist institution in Jamaica), I was shocked to realize that my choice of vocation was an anomaly. The religion chair was happy to have any willing females prepare for the ministry, but many of my fellow students were so offended. They had meetings with me trying to discourage me asking me, “What are you trying to prove?” and “Who is going to employ you?” It was then that I knew God had indeed called me to this church, not only to save me, but [also] to be an agent of change and that just remaining firm to my call is going to be my greatest testimony. After the 1995 [General Conference Session] discussion and vote about this topic, I knew I had to do some significant academic work on the subject.

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Potomac Members Share Refreshing Water, Message on Trail
If you are ever riding your bicycle down the 17-mile long Creeper Trail in Whitetop, Va., on the first Saturday of the month, you might hear someone shouting, “Free water!” One of those people would be Anita Huffman, a member of Potomac Conference’s Konnarock church in Damascus, Va.

“We started to pass out ice cold water to bicycle riders and hikers along the trail [this summer],” said Huffman, a member of the church’s Adventist Community Services team. One Saturday, “I gave a bottle of water to a young man who had come off the Appalachian Trail. He thanked me and asked if we were part of an organization. I told him we were members of a church and handed him a pamphlet, *Who Are Seventh-day Adventists?* [for which] he thanked me.”

Bike riders and hikers alike have welcomed the water as well as occasional first aid. When members of the Konnarock church hear, “Free water, all you have to do is take it!” they can’t help but also hear within the message that God’s love is free, all you have to do is accept it.—*Story by Crystal Stamper*

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**Student Says Attending BMA Transformed His Life**
Gianni Zanatta, who arrived at the Blue Mountain Academy (BMA) in Hamburg his sophomore year, says he has seen a positive change in himself, thanks to the school. Now a junior, he describes himself as a different person. “The atmosphere has transformed my life. I was a poor student in elementary school. Grades didn’t matter,” he said. “Here, you learn who you are, what type of person you want to be and learn to make your own decisions. … BMA is the place where I decided what I believe, not what my parents believe. [After] searching the Bible and learning it on my own, I know … what I stand for.”

Zanatta says he also learned a very important lesson while working in the school’s maintenance department. “Jesus was a servant. Now I believe when I go into the community … and teach them the love of God by serving, vocational skills just might come in handy for spreading the gospel,” he said.—Story by Caron Oswald

Join the Conversation

What do you think is the biggest religious liberty issue our church faces today? Weigh in on Facebook!

UPCOMING EVENTS

MARYLAND

November 14-17: The General Conference is hosting a series of family-friendly events from 6 to 8 p.m. each night featuring the new Creation movie, live orchestra and keynote speakers, including U.S. Senate Chaplain Barry Black and several university professors. Also, there will be a kids’ workshop with Guide magazine’s “Mud Guy,” Rich Aguilera. Click here for tickets and details.

November 16-17: The Reisterstown church is hosting the Love and Respect video conference on love, relationships and marriage presented by Christian best-selling author Dr. Emerson Eggerichs. According to Eggerichs, women need love, men need respect. It’s as simple and complicated as that! The two-day conference takes place Sabbath, November 16, 2-6 p.m. and Sunday, November 17, 8:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. Pre-registration is FREE (a $15 value) but required and seating is limited, so reserve your spot today! For more information or to register, visit ReisterstownSDA.org or call (410) 833-4634.

November 23: The Washington Area Ministerium Unity Day and Breath of Life Rally invites members of area Allegheny East churches to get “Connected.” The guest speaker for the 11 o’clock service is Carlton P. Byrd, speaker/director of Breath of Life Ministries. The Pine Forge Academy Creative arts team will present the Sabbath School program at 9:30 a.m. At 5 p.m., praise teams from the Metropolitan and Breath of Life churches and other area musicians will lead the congregation into worship followed by a concert featuring gospel recording artist Isaac Carree. The rally takes place at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Communications Center on the Bowie State University campus in Bowie, Md.. Members from all area churches are encouraged to attend. Come early—there is ample free parking, but limited seating.
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December 7: The “Songs for My Sisters” benefit concert will take place at 6 p.m., at the Capital Brazilian Temple located at 12420 Scaggsville Road in Highland, Md. The classical Christmas program is sponsored by the General Conference Women’s Ministries department and features instrumental, choral and vocal music. Proceeds will be used by the GC Women’s Scholarship Program to help talented and needy Adventist women obtain a college education. This scholarship fund has helped 2,104 women in 121 countries. To support this endeavor and learn more, visit AdventistWomensMinistries.org, or call (301) 680-6636.

O H I O

November 16: The Wooster church marks their 50th anniversary at their current location of 445 North Bever Street in Wooster. “Circle Up Around the Throne” is the theme for the anniversary celebration. A special worship and reflection service will be held at 11 a.m. A fellowship meal will follow the church service. The Echoliers and bell choir from Mount Vernon Academy will hold a concert at 2 p.m.

W A S H I N G T O N, D.C.

November 16: The New Covenant Experience will present their annual concert at the Capitol Hill church at 6 p.m. Under the direction of Zina Johnson, the group will share songs and praise. The evening’s theme is “God is in Control” and will feature special guests, such as recording artist Duawne Starling and gospel singer Duane Nelson. The church is located at 914 Massachusetts Avenue Northeast.

W E S T V I R G I N I A

November 19: The Berkeley Springs church will feature healthy holiday foods at its monthly, free-to-the-community Supper Club at 6 p.m. in the church fellowship hall. Pastor Jason and Nicole Disch will also present “Moove Over, Milk Part II,” followed by a door prize drawing. The church is located at 3606 Valley Road in Berkeley Springs. For more information, contact Lisa Shingleton at (304) 258-2739.

Click here for a full calendar of upcoming events around the Columbia Union.
CORRECTION: Find Out How This Church is Helping Typhoon Victims Overseas

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manage your preferences | opt out using TrueRemove®.

Got this as a forward? Sign up to receive our future emails.
Some 37 people ready for baptism at the Rahway church in New Jersey.

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Update: When the caravan ended on November 16, 2013 some 220 people were baptized, bringing the New Jersey Conference membership to 15,006.
Jose H. Cortés, president of the New Jersey Conference, speaks with baptismal candidates.

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Homeland Missions: 19 Projects Evangelize, Impact Community

Story by Taashi Rowe Published 11/13/13

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A Sample of the 2013 Homeland Missions Projects

- An Allegheny West Conference second-generation Hispanic church plant in Cincinnati, Ohio
- A storefront youth ministry started by Ohio Conference’s Sandusky church
- Three church plants in the New Jersey Conference

A Simplicity member chats with local high school students after a meeting of their Christian club.
Members of AEC’s CROP mentoring program visit Washington Adventist University in Takoma Park, Md.

Frank Bondurant, Columbia Union Conference vice president for Ministries Development, reports that the union returned $212,000 to churches for homeland mission projects this year.

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Columbia Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

Just like an after church fellowship lunch, Potluck is where members of the Columbia Union Conference can share what they've cooked up in terms of spiritually-based music, literature and arts. Have a book, recording or project to share? Email us at visitor@columbiaunion.net.

Book Release: Sacred Texts and Social Conflict

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Olive Hemmings, PhD, who has taught New Testament studies at Washington Adventist University in Takoma Park, Md., for 11 years, recently published Sacred Texts and Social Conflict. The book discusses women’s ordination—a rather timely topic as the Seventh-day Adventist Church is currently grappling with the issue. Hemmings said the book came out of her doctoral studies on theology, ethics and culture at Claremont Graduate University in California. In it, she looks at the ongoing debate over women’s ordination, which now spans three centuries.

Q: Why is ordination important to you personally?
A: As a young teenager raised in a strong, Baptist family, I grew up hearing my mother preaching at the pulpit like St. Peter. When I arrived on the campus of West Indies College (an Adventist institution in Jamaica), I was shocked, to realize that my choice of vocation was an anomaly. The religion chair was happy to have any willing female prepare for the ministry, but many of my fellow students were so
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**Q: What did you discover as you researched this topic?**

A: The resistance to women’s ordination is really symbolic of a deeper fear—the fear of liberal religion and the interpretive methodology associated with it—namely higher criticism. Strict application of the tools of higher criticism poses significant difficulties for [Adventist] fundamental doctrines. Yet none of the major arguments for or against women’s ordination used this methodology. The issue … found itself caught in the biblical theological controversies of the 1980s (and onwards), and took on symbolic weight as the enemy of the denomination. Also, I discovered that the same leaders who steered the church toward women’s ordination in the 1970s led the resistance to ordain women in the 1980s using the same interpretive methodology but different biblical texts.

**Q: Why do you think ordination has become such a divisive issue for the Adventist Church?**

A: First, some believe this poses a threat to our belief that we are the one true church. And while women’s ordination poses no real threat to this stance, anything that may be associated with radical social change becomes associated with this threat. Secondly, communities often blur the lines between religious (even spiritual) ideals and the cultural norms. Various constituencies in the world church have different cultural norms. … As long as we hold onto the cultural norms of the Bible instead of its timeless principles of love and righteousness, the issue will remain divisive.

**Q: Who is the book written for?**

A: I wrote this book for my family of 17.2 million people that comprise the [Adventist] world church. Mostly, I have written it for those who genuinely have little or no idea as to the real reason for the opposition to women’s ordination.

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