Weekly News From Around the Columbia Union Conference

June 03, 2014

The June Visitor Asks "Are Adventists Ready to Take on Film?"
Seventh-day Adventist Church founders and early pioneers frowned on theater attendance and, therefore, set a slow pace toward members’ acceptance of movie entertainment. However, the introduction of VCRs and movies on demand drastically began to alter that stance, and more creative members started to realize film’s influence in conveying messages of faith, hope and a risen Lord.

For the past few decades, Adventists who ventured into filmmaking have focused on creating documentaries, video series and shorts. Are we now ready for film? Read more in the June 2014 Visitor Feature: “The Reel Deal: Are Adventists Ready to Take on Film?”

Click here to check out our “Columbia Union Filmmakers to Watch.”

How can we Include Members That Need to Worship at Home?
Beverly and Gary Dunn regularly attend nursing homes to hug and pray with the residents.

Our aging population and the increased life expectancy will undoubtedly translate to an increasing number of members in the Adventist Church who can’t actively attend their local church, or who will need great assistance and support to do so. Are our congregations equipped to assist them and include them in church life? See what is being done to help in this month’s Underscore: "How do we Continue to Engage Members That Need to Worship at Home?"

Social Media Challenge

Be one of the first 10 to share your favorite Bible verse on facebook.com/columbiaunionvisitor and get a set of Hope Channel's Let's Pray bookmarks.

The Bulletin Board is now Online!

Did you know you can read "Bulletin Board," our classifieds section of the Visitor, online? The section includes job announcements, real estate listings, obituaries and local church and school events.

Check it out here: tinyurl.com/kj4uwva.

Want to read more? Visit columbiaunionvisitor.com for more articles.
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June 2, 2014 · by Michelle Bernard · in Allegheny East Conference, Allegheny West Conference, Chesapeake Conference, Potomac Conference, This Month's Issue

June 2014 Feature: The Reel Deal Are Adventists Ready to Take on Film?

Story by Beth Michaels and Tim Lale

The same day a huge earthquake struck Haiti in 2010, Pacific Union College (Calif.) film student Tim Wolfer wrote a message on Facebook: “Anyone want to help a poor, documentary filmmaker buy a ticket to Haiti?” Twelve hours later, Wolfer had a ticket, and he and a friend flew into the Dominican Republic with backpacks and a video camera.

The two students took a bus to the border and made their way into Haiti. Wolfer spent several days at the Maison Des Enfants de Dieu orphanage, filming a story about how a CNN crew had set up camp there and was reporting on children being flown to the United States and getting adopted out, even though their parents weren’t dead. Wolfer’s striking documentary, Adopting Haiti, is available on hulu.com. Wolfer now owns and runs a filmmaking business in Michigan.

Rejeev Sigamoney (pictured left) grew up in Potomac Conference’s Southern Asian church in Silver Spring, Md., which is where he was asked to write his first play. Then he took his newfound skills to Potomac’s Sligo church in Takoma Park where he started a young adult group. They began putting on comedic sketches, which he says caused him to fall in love with storytelling.

Sigamoney has now been the program coordinator and assistant professor of film at Pacific Union College (Calif.) for the past two years and has one film under his belt, Jesus People, a “mockumentary” that eventually saw a 10-theater release, with more in the works. “I give a lot of my church experience credit for my career choice,” he says.

Wolfer and Sigamoney are a small but growing number of young, creative filmmakers being nurtured by the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Does that mean the church is finally becoming a purveyor of messages through film?
**Columbia Union Filmmakers to Watch**

Anthony Hackett—actor, writer, director/producer

*Home Church:* New Hope in Fulton, Md.

*What He's Produced:* The Package, a short film for 2013 Allegheny East Conference Camp Meeting; 10 Minutes, a 2014 submission to SONscreen; SONset Friday Web series with more than 160,000 views on Youtube

*Coming Up:* The feature film Just a Prayer Away and a new SONset Friday Web series this summer

*His Motivation:* "God placed in me this desire and gift for film."

*Learn More:* anthonyhackett.com, youtube.com/anthonyjmhackett

Pierre Walters—actor, director/producer

*Home Church:* Takoma Park (Md.)

*What He’s Produced:* Short and feature films that speak to a larger audience, including Greener by the Day

*Coming Up:* A feature film about civil rights starts production this summer

*His Motivation:* “I enjoy making films and videos as well as building brands that seek to leave the world a little better than we found it.”

*Learn More:* blue-artists.com

Daniel Wahlen—writer, director

*Home Church:* Triadelphia in Clarksville, Md.

*What He’s Directed:* The 15-minute short The Hideout, which won in four categories, including Best in Fest, at this year’s SONscreen film festival

*Coming Up:* His first feature film

*His Motivation:* "We all have an inner desire to connect with each other, and I’m motivated by that. Film is expression; film is communication."
Learn More: thedanielwahlen.com, thehideoutfilm.com
Underscore: How do We Continue to Engage Members That Need to Worship at Home

May 30, 2014 · by Michelle Bernard · in Ohio Conference, Pennsylvania Conference, Potomac Conference, This Month’s Issue

By 2030, because of the aging baby boomers and increased life expectancy, about 72.1 million or more than one in five Americans will be aged 65 or above. As the population ages, many will become homebound and need home-based care,” reports the Administration on Aging.¹ How will this impact our members?

Story by Beth Michaels and Juan-Jose Garza

Those numbers undoubtedly translate to an increasing number of members in the Seventh-day Adventist Church who can’t actively attend their local church, or who will need great assistance and support to do so. Are our congregations equipped to assist them and include them in church life? According to Charlotte LV Thoms, EdD, coordinator of the North American Division’s (NAD) Commission for People With Disabilities, some are, but many aren’t. She and others are working to change that.

Involve Every Ministry

Long-term illness or more severe physical limitations are what keep some members from attending church, but it can also include those permanently living in institutional settings or in family members’ homes. It can even include the caretakers of those who have difficulty getting about.

Materials coming from the NAD, like the Disabilities Ministries Handbook, and from Thoms’ office help congregations become better equipped to include and minister to those who can’t make it to church. Among other services, she also makes recommendations to church boards regarding steps they can take to make church facilities more accessible for people who use mobile assistance devices (wheelchairs, crutches, etc.), and to find transportation solutions for those who need help getting to church.

Thoms says one way churches can be more inclusive is to “stop thinking of Disabilities Ministries as a singular ministry,” she says. Instead, it should be part of every ministry in the church. Congregations who strive to include everyone have efforts like telephone volunteers who call those who miss the church services. “They utilize the Internet to connect and reach those unable to attend Sabbath service,” she adds. “Instead of bringing them to the materials, [they] take materials to those at home. … People want to do what they can. Everyone can be involved.”

Pastor Ron Anderson of Ohio Conference’s Chillicothe church says that is the attitude his congregants adopted. “Our congregation is very understanding with members that have medical challenges, realizing that there may be times that they may not be able to fulfill the desire they have to share their gifts,” he says. “It does not take a great deal of effort to be flexible; it is a matter of the heart. When you remember that Jesus died for everyone and they have been given the ‘Great Commission’ as well, who are we to hinder them?”

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