Amon was a very quiet kid. He had lost his family at a very young age and lived in a children’s village for orphaned and abandoned children operated by International Children’s Care (ICC). He tried to cooperate with everything he was asked to do and did his best to fit in with the family. Mealtime was his favorite time of the day. He would sit at the table and anxiously wait for his housemother to serve the food. One day she noticed that Ramon saved some of the food she served him and took it to his room. His mother spoke with him about it and asked him to stop. However, as his mother was cleaning the children’s room one day, she discovered a variety of food items stored under Ramon’s mattress. She realized that he had not only continued to take food into his room, but had also gone into the kitchen pantry and taken food items from there as well.

I was administrator of the children’s village where Ramon lived at the time, and decided to talk with him about it. He didn’t try to deny or justify anything. He would only say that he was sorry. It was not until sometime later that I realized the reason Ramon was storing food under his mattress. I visited him in his room one day, and asked him to tell me a bit about life before coming to the ICC children’s village. At first he was reluctant, but slowly he began to open up. He told me how he had to learn to fend for himself at a very young age. He never had a mother to call him to dinner. He ate whatever he could find whenever it was available.

However, as his mother was cleaning the children’s room one day, she discovered a variety of food items stored under Ramon’s mattress. She realized that he had not only continued to take food into his room, but had also gone into the kitchen pantry and taken food items from there as well.

By Joel Reyes

Thank you Lord for the day, for the sun and for the bread...
April showers bring May flowers...as I think about this past month, not only am I reminded of the conclusion of that little rhyme but the song "Showers of Blessing" begins playing in my mind. And that describes not only the physical reality of April but also the blessings this month has brought.

April started with another opportunity to explore church with a group of our young adults. Monte Torkelsen, our youth director, led a discussion on what a young-adult-friendly church looked like. The comments were extremely interesting in both the ideas shared and even the items missing from the list. In short, the descriptors included these: welcoming, involving, innovating, mentoring, discipling, owning, accepting...But the strongest take away from that discussion was "vision." Our young adults are not looking for entertaining churches but rather churches that call for ownership, passion, and a direction. It is true, "without vision, the people perish."

Following that great beginning to the month’s blessings, our administrative team travelled to four different locations in our conference to meet with all of our pastors. I was blessed, not only by the signs of spring all over our conference, but also by the opportunity to hear how God is directing and blessing our pastors and the churches they serve. Each area reminded me that God is pouring out Holy Spirit rain in His churches.

This last week we had a joint meeting of the Conference Lay Advisory and the Executive Committee. Over sixty people were present as we discussed the overall Conference vision and direction to be taken at the constituency session this September. Different departments shared experiences and trends they were seeing throughout the conference. Time was also taken to think through the vision for the next four years. Our last four-year statement of vision has been "Pivoted to Serve...Members in Ministry." The consensus of the group was that we continue the emphasis on "Members in Ministry" and look additionally at the idea of the call the God has placed in each of our lives to serve.

David Freedman shared another blessing of the month. Conference-wide, tithe is up by close to 10 percent over last year, and expenses have come in under budget for the first three months of the year. We praise God for the faithfulness of each member in our conference.

The afternoon Executive Committee met to address additional items. Some of which included inviting Alexander Bolotnikov to join our conference as a part-time evangelist with an additional assignment to coordinate the Jewish outreach within the North American Division. We also recognized Dale Milam’s decision to transition back into the classroom from his position as Associate Superintendent of Education. Dale has served very well and will be missed in that role. In his place, the executive committee has asked Matthew Butte to serve as an Associate Superintendent of Education. Matthew currently serves with excellence as principal of Columbia Adventist Academy.

So April, a beautiful reminder of spring, also reminds us of the blessings of Holy Spirit rain which, in turn, direct our attention to Jesus’ soon return. What a joy that will be! And in the meantime, enjoy the rain, experience the blessings and watch for God’s flowers.
So there they were—five young adults spending a sunny, warm spring Sabbath afternoon indoors—learning how to be earliteen Sabbath school leaders. Amazing! Absolutely AMAZING!

“So how many of you have children in earliteen Sabbath school?” I knew the answer—but just had to hear it vocalized to my wondering ears. With puzzled looks to a “dumb question” they all shook their heads, “No, we don’t have kids.” “Why have you spent the last two hours at this junior-earliteen Sabbath school workshop?” Each of them had a similar answer—“We need help learning how to work with the age group. “We need ideas, and resources, and support, and…” I listened attentively as each of the five young adults explained their need in their own words. I didn’t want to miss a word or an expression or a nuance.

In amazement I listened as each one shared what they had learned from the afternoon of Sabbath School leader training. Their notepads were full of notes, sketches, and ideas—treasures they had grasped and gleaned throughout the presentations of the day. They shared their “take-away treasures”—what they would remember from the day’s experiences and conversations.

Finally I couldn’t keep the burning question inside me any longer. It came out with pure honesty—and I had to know the answer. “So why are you here? How is it that in a church that has an active young adult Sabbath School group, you are spending your time and energy with earliteens?” The answer came back in unison as they all looked at each other with sparkling eyes, “It’s Pastor Shirley! She’s the one that has invited us to do this. She has helped us see and believe that we can offer these kids connection and encouragement since we are closer to their ages than their parents—and besides, we remember what it was like to be that age. We know that we can have a powerfully positive influence on them.”

“Wow!” “Amen!” “Right On!” I couldn’t keep the perma-grin off my face. Now Pastor Shirley couldn’t keep silent any longer. She had been watching and listening in the background. And here she came walking toward us with a big grin and eyes watering. As she hugged these young adults, with a glistening tear on her cheek, she admitted that they were an inspiration to her.

As I was packing up to leave the church, I heard the five young adults, along with Pastor Shirley, in their earliteen room making great plans and brainstorming together their next steps in ministry! So my question is, “Where will I be next Sabbath? What will you be doing? What difference will we be making?”
**NOTE WORTHY...**

**The King's Heralds Heading to the Smithsonian**
After 87 years of singing, the Adventist gospel quartet The King's Heralds will be featured in an exhibit in the Smithsonian. The museum contacted the Heralds to request permission to include a recording of their song "Dry Bones" in an exhibit they are developing about the human body and narrated by talk show host Conan O'Brien. The Kings Heralds are the oldest active Gospel music group.

**AdventSource Celebrates Grand Opening**
AdventSource celebrated the grand opening of their new headquarters on April 17, in Lincoln, Neb. AdventSource is the main resource center for the North American Division. It is close to Union College, and that proximity is beneficial to both: AdventSource is provided with a ready source of employees, and college students are provided with needed employment. Read more from Outlook magazine at [http://bit.ly/157Fklp](http://bit.ly/157Fklp).

**Portland Physician Honored For Lifetime of Missions Work**
Dr. Richard Westermeyer, an anesthesiologist who practices at Adventist Medical Center in Portland, Ore., has been awarded the inaugural international service honorée in the Mission:MD MedicalMissions.org Physician of the Year awards by LocumTenens.com. Westermeyer, who was selected from 115 entries, has spent the past 30 years volunteering in medical mission and humanitarian work. From working with Ethiopian refugees to working in Haiti after the earthquake, his dedication to helping others is clear. The award of $10,000 will go to Africa Orphan Care, a non-profit founded by Westermeyer's family and friends that supports several orphans in Zimbabwe. Read more about Dr. Westermeyer at [http://bit.ly/10DOeqL](http://bit.ly/10DOeqL).

**Auburn Academy Announces New Principal**
On April 4 at Auburn Adventist Academy, Edward T. Decker Jr., announced to the school in a Skype call that he will become the new principal by early August. Decker, who is currently working on a Ph.D. in leadership from Andrews University, is a respected and well-known leader in the Northwest. Decker will be joined by his wife, Gladys, who used to teach English at Auburn. Their son, Trei, graduated from Auburn in 2012, and daughter, Alexi, is currently a student there.

**Adventists Respond To Texas Explosion**
Following the fertilizer plant explosion in West, Texas, the Texas Adventist Community Services Disaster Response (ACS DR) team was on the scene to assist Hill County Emergency Management. The team helped run a receiving center for disaster supplies and distributed clothing, personal care kits, and blankets to assist the survivors and families affected by the explosion. The explosion, which happened on April 17 when a fire broke out at a fertilizer plant, left 15 people dead and 200 injured. Additionally, 150 buildings were either damaged or destroyed in the blast, including a 50-unit apartment building. The regular ACS DR staff were joined by students from Southwestern Adventist University who volunteered to assist. Read more at [http://bit.ly/12QC17j](http://bit.ly/12QC17j).

**Portland Adventist Academy (PAA) Announces New Principal**
Dan Nicola has officially accepted Portland Adventist Academy's (PAA) invitation to be the new principal starting this coming school year. Dan is a life long educator who has a wonderful vision for school leadership. He comes from his current position at Escondido Adventist Academy. Dan and his wife Jane have two daughters in college (one at Walla Walla University and one at Loma Linda University).

**WASHINGTON PASTOR MOVES TO PUC CHURCH**
Mark Witas, senior pastor at the North Cascade Church in Burlington, Wash., announced he has accepted a call from the Northern California Conference to become Pacific Union College (PUC) Church's senior pastor. Witas, along with his wife Wendy and their son Cole, have been working in Washington state for the past 12 years, beginning in the Wenatchee area for eight years as principal and pastor, and the past four years pastoring in the Washington Conference. In addition to being a teacher and pastor, he is a published author of two books, *Born Chosen*, an autobiography, and *Live Out Loud*, a teen devotional. Witas will begin his new position at PUC Church in June.

**GEORGE BEVERLY SHEA PASSES AWAY AT 104**
George Beverly Shea, longtime soloist with the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (BGEA), passed away in April at 104 years of age after suffering a stroke. Shea first sang with Graham in 1943 on a Chicago radio program and has since continued singing in nearly every crusade with the BGEA. He is the winner of multiple Grammy awards including the Lifetime Achievement Award in 2011. Learn more about his life and dedication to the Lord, at [http://bit.ly/ZtiXSR6](http://bit.ly/ZtiXSR6).

**BRYAN DEPARTING WALLA WALLA UNIVERSITY**
Alex Bryan, senior pastor at the Walla Walla University (WWU) Church in College Place, Wash., has been named president of Kettering College, in Kettering, Ohio, effective June 1. Bryan, who has served WWU for the past four years, will be the sixth president of the college, replacing Charles Scriven, who is retiring. In addition to teaching for the WWU School of Business and School of Theology, Bryan also served on the president’s cabinet as an advisor on vision and strategy. Read the full story at [http://bit.ly/157HHOP](http://bit.ly/157HHOP).

**Sunset Lake Camp Welcomes New Staff**
Sunset Lake Camp introduced a new camp manager on Facebook at the beginning of April. Kirk Betz is an engineering graduate from Walla Walla University with experience working with his family’s construction business. His wife, Christine, will be the camp’s reservations and marketing coordinator.

**Adventist Retention Study**
The Adventist church in North America is losing young adults at an alarming rate. Recognizing that, the General Conference has commissioned Southern Adventist University's (SAU) Robert H. Pierson Institute of Evangelism and World Missions to conduct a study on the reasons that young people are leaving and what the church can do to make a difference. The first phase of the study involved focus groups of recent SAU and Oakwood University graduates. The second phase, an online survey, has recently been released and researchers are looking for young people willing to fill out a 20-minute survey. To learn more about the study, visit their Facebook page [http://on.fb.me/15XCM2e](http://on.fb.me/15XCM2e).

**WWU Installs Satellite System to Track Student Flights**
In an effort to increase the safety of students in flight training, Walla Walla University (WWU) has implemented a new system to monitor student flights by satellite. After experiencing the system in use while working in Alaska last summer, Anthony Remboldt, director of training for WWU's aviation program, returned to the school determined to deploy a similar system. With a small device in the aircraft, the dispatch office can see exactly where each plane is and instructors can analyze flight paths as the students practice. "Students depend on a safe and comfortable atmosphere in which to learn," says Remboldt. "The satellite tracking is one more asset to continue our strong safety record in aviation."

For additional news visit [http://www.oregonconference.org/news_entries](http://www.oregonconference.org/news_entries)
CARL PARKER & FRIENDS BENEFIT CONCERT
When: May 11, 4:00 pm
Location: Tabernacle Adventist Church
Join us for a special benefit concert by Carl Parker & Friends on Sabbath afternoon, May 11, at 4:00 pm to benefit the Lonnie Stephens family. The concert will be held at the Tabernacle Adventist Church. Light refreshments will follow.

SIMPLY COOKING CLASS
When: May 30, 6:30 pm
Location: Castle Rock Adventist Church
“Simply Cooking” is a free, monthly, vegan class led by Ronni Reinecke at the Castle Rock Adventist Church. We invite anyone interested in plant-based eating to attend on May 30 at 6:30 pm. We are having a delightful time getting to know people from our community. Reserve your place with a call to Wanda at 360-967-2165 or Jeanne at 360-274-6709

SALEM YOUNG ADULT VESPERS
When: May 3 & May 17, 7:00 pm
Location: East Salem Adventist Church
Attention all young adults! East Salem will start to hold a young adult vespers the first and third Friday of every month. They will have good food, music, and discussions. The more young adults the better. This event is free and all you need to bring is you! If you have any questions feel free to contact Kaelyn Nelson at 971-209-0609.

DINNER WITH A DOCTOR
When: June 25, 6:30 pm
Location: Castle Rock Adventist Church
Dinner with a Doctor was a real success in March! The Castle Rock Adventist Church is delighted to have as the June guest speaker, Joyce Choe, M.D., M.P.H. Joyce is a cataract surgeon and glaucoma specialist with the Pacific Cataract & Laser Institute. She loves sharing her insights on healthy living. Join us on June 25 at 6:30 pm at the Castle Rock Adventist Church. A light supper will be served. Reserve your place by calling Wanda at 360-967-2165 or Jeanne at 360-274-6709.

SOUTHERN OREGON CHRISTIAN WOMEN’S RETREAT
When: June 7-9, 2013
Location: Milo Academy
June 7-9 at Milo Academy...Simple Moments Great Discoveries. Speaker Sue Patzer. Concert by the “Willig Hearts”. Breakouts by Tawny Sportsman, Connie Allred and Rise Rafferty. For more information contact Pat Young at 541-601-8694 or hpyoung@gmail.com.

2013 LIGHT BEARERS/ARISE CROSSTRAINING PROGRAM
When: June 14-22, 2013
Location: Jasper, Ore.
Light Bearers/ARISE present a 9-day intensive discipleship training program where you will learn how to share Christ-centered Bible studies with others. Visit www.lightbearers.org, email arise@lightbearers.org, or call 541-988-3333. Space is limited. Download a printable poster/ flyer at http://bit.ly/12hnKg.

NORTHWEST ASI CONVENTION
When: May 2-5, 2013
Location: Seaside Convention Center, Seaside, Ore.
Are you a business owner, professional, or a ministry leader? Come learn to use business relationships to share Christ, learn skills to better manage God’s resources, and be inspired by stories of other laypersons who are sharing Christ in their marketplace! Learn more at asiw.netasi.org. Featured speakers include Randy Maxwell and Will Roche There will also be music by the Oregon Adventist Men’s Chorus. ASI membership is not required to attend. Friday and Sabbath meetings/concert are free.

SIGNS OF THE TIMES BOXES
When: Available Now
Location: Molalla, Ore.
The church in Molalla has two Signs of the Times boxes that are looking for a happy new home. If you, or someone you know, might be interested, please contact Helen Shreve at jnhshreve@bctonline.com. These boxes are free to anyone who wants them.

SOUTHERN ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY WIND SYMPHONY IN CONCERT
When: May 11, 5:00 pm
Location: Sunnyside Adventist Church
The Southern Adventist University Wind Symphony, conducted by Ken Parsons, will present a concert at Sunnyside Adventist Church on Sabbath, May 11 at 5:00 pm. Titled “My Father’s World,” the concert features music evocative of the glories of God’s creative powers. Come — and invite your friends!

OREGON CONFERENCE PATHFINDER FAIR
When: May 19, 2013
Location: Linn County Fairgrounds, Albany, Ore.
The Oregon Conference Pathfinder Fair is an annual end-of-the-Pathfinder-year event! We will celebrate Pathfinder ministry, affirm leadership, enjoy fellowship, and have a chance to see what other clubs have done throughout the year. Parents and guests get a taste of Oregon Pathfinder ministry within our Conference. All are invited to attend — Pathfinders and staff pay a participation fee, but others attend for free. Opening ceremony starts at 10:00 am beginning with a parade and followed by a day filled with activities, exhibits, demonstrations, and good food. Closing prayer concludes the day around 5:00 pm. The fair will be held at the Willamette Events Center at the Linn County Fair & Expo Grounds in Albany, Ore. Watch live online at www.OregonPathfinders.org.

2013 MEN’S MINISTRY RETREAT
When: May 3-5, 2013
Location: Grove Christian Camp
Leadership Lessons for Men. Join us for the 2013 Men’s Ministry Retreat, May 3-5 at Grove Christian Camp. The focus of this weekend will be on training for men’s ministry leaders, but anyone is welcome to come and attend. This weekend will be a mix of training, worship, fellowship, and men’s ministry business—with a bit of fun thrown in. The registration fee includes two nights of lodging and all meals. For more info and to register go to http://bit.ly/12Su8AS, or call Chuck Burken at 503-850-3559.
**Transitions**

Alice Ray – has resigned her position as receiver/cashier for the Gladstone ABC.

Brenda Dobson – has joined the ABC as receiver/cashier at the Gladstone ABC.

Brent Plubell – has joined the Oregon Conference as a church and school auditor.

Jeremy Barber (Krissy) – has resigned his positions in the Oregon Conference IT and Grounds departments.

Simona Cardwell (Dale) – will be joining the Oregon Conference from Livingstone Adventist Academy to take the position of Administrative Assistant for Risk Management.

Thomas Bentley (Julie) – will be joining the Oregon Conference from the Michigan Conference to fill the position of pastor for the Roseburg congregation.

Brent Brusett (Stephanie) – will be joining the Oregon Conference from the Northern California Conference to fill the position of pastor for the Bend and Christmas Valley congregations.

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**SUNSET CALENDAR**

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A publication of the Oregon Conference Communication Department • Gary McLain, director • Krissy Barber, administrative assistant

To submit stories, announcements, or to get in touch with us please email us at krissy.barber@oc.npuc.org or call 503.850.3500

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