

mission
Teen

**North American Division
Second Quarter 2005**



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Mission Teen

On the cover: Eric Wagner enjoys helping his dad produce their church's junior Sabbath School PowerPoint programs and Web site.

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making missions meaningful

Leader's Planner

North American Division

No other region of the world contains such a diverse population. One million new immigrants arrive each year.

The Challenges

North America is the birthplace of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, but like Europe and Australia, it has become a largely secular society. People's focus on science, technology, and personal wealth has almost drowned out the voice of the Holy Spirit. People find little time or inclination to seek God through Bible study and prayer. One of the greatest challenges is to reach this largely secular population that is not responsive to traditional religious outreach.

One group that has been too-long overlooked is the Jewish population. But Jewish worship centers have begun to spring up around the country and are being used by God to reach Jews who are searching for their Messiah.

The Opportunities

Radio and television remain powerful influences on people's minds and thoughts. People are open to hearing new ideas as they go about their daily tasks while listening to the radio. Likewise, television has proven its effectiveness in reaching into homes that are closed to personal visits.

This quarter part of the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will provide funds to complete the establishment of a Jewish center in Florida, inaugurate two new radio stations, increase the output of a television station in New York City, and provide a television studio in Texas.

The North American Division is made up of two of the world's largest and most powerful countries, Canada and the United States, plus the island nation of Bermuda.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church was born and nurtured in the cradle of North America. Supported by the prayers and sacrificial gifts of believers "back home," Adventist missionaries fanned out across Africa, the Americas, Asia, Australia, Europe, and Scandinavia; the church took root and grew where it was planted. Today the church ministers in at least 204 countries around the world.

But the growth in members in North America slowed, and today five of the 13 world divisions have surpassed North America in membership. While the church rightly focuses attention on such growing ministry areas as the 10/40 window, millions living in cities and towns across North America have never heard the Adventist message. These people are a distinct Global Mission field.

This quarter the division that cradled Adventism will use the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering to promote media evangelism and meet the distinct needs of the Jewish people.

The Adventist Church has been focused on evangelism for more than 160 years. Beginning with tent meetings and culminating today with huge satellite evangelism series, millions have come to hear the message of

the last days. But most of those who come have some religious orientation already.

Then the Adventist Church entered the new and risky world of media to reach people who might never consider entering a church. H.M.S. Richards pioneered radio evangelism with *The Voice of Prophecy*, which continues today to be an effective means of reaching people with the gospel. In 1950 *Faith for Today* broke into the then new media of television. Other media evangelistic efforts have proved effective in reaching their specific markets. *It Is Written*, *Breath of Life*, and others continue to draw people to God and to the Adventist Church.

This quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help increase the effectiveness of media by building two radio stations, equipping a small television studio in New York City for greater effectiveness, and providing a satellite media center in Texas to facilitate broadcasts of quality Adventist worship services.

The Jewish population has long been the heart focus of many Adventist believers. But little has been done to seriously reach this segment of North America's population. However, recently several Jewish-Adventist congregations have begun to sprout, particularly among the large Jewish population in Florida.

The church has begun building a Jewish center in Miami, Florida, to train people how to reach the





Jewish people effectively with the message that the Messiah has come.

Although it is not yet complete, the center already has had significant success in its attempts to reach Jewish people for the Lord. It is working in cooperation with the Israel Field, and Global Mission's World Jewish Friendship Center, which also is experiencing rapid growth. The facility includes a house of prayer that conducts worship services in the context of the Jewish culture.

The center also will be used to pilot new methods for relating well with Jewish people. All of these methods will be made

available to the entire world field.

Future Thirteenth Sabbath Projects

Third quarter 2005 will feature the Northern Asia-Pacific Division. Specific projects include Internet evangelism in Japan; a church/evangelistic center on Ulreung Island, Korea; and Global Mission pioneer teams to plant five churches in unentered areas of Taiwan.

Resources

For more information on the cultures and history of the cities of North America, check the travel and children's sections of the local library.

The Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 2005). Contains names and addresses of virtually all Seventh-day Adventist institutions and workers around the world. Available through local Adventist Book Centers.

GraceLink Connection:

Mission reports relating to the four Sabbath School GraceLink dynamics can be found on the following pages:

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Report to Stockholders

How does one measure the success of a mission project, the value of the money spent? If the funds help build a school dormitory in an emerging nation, perhaps the success can be measured in the number of students who come to the school, live in the dormitory, and, we hope, are influenced to accept Christ as their Lord. If the funds help build a hospital in a third world country success can be measured in the number of patients who are treated, the number of lives saved, or the number healed. But how does one measure the success of a *ministry*?

Three years ago the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering in North America helped launch a new evangelistic outreach called *The Evidence*. Produced by *Faith for Today*, the program was designed to appeal to a secular audience, to raise questions in people's minds regarding the existence of God and His claim on their lives.

The Evidence premiered in

September 2001, a difficult time in North America's history. Its appearance on select television stations across the country was eclipsed by the terrorist attacks on Washington and New York. By human standards, the program should have floundered. But it has proven to be a godsend to many who, in the weeks and months following that dark period, are asking the very questions the program's producers were raising. And people are responding by mail and e-mail, and to the program's Web site.

In April 2004 the program was selected to air on the largest religious broadcasting network, with coverage around the world, and the response was immediate. E-mails and letters poured into the office. Then five months later the same station asked Dwight Nelson, the program host, to host a live, two-hour special of *The Evidence* in the station's most popular program slot. The station promised to televise the program

over its worldwide network at least twice.

Following airing of the program the program's Web site received three times the number of hits as it normally receives, and hundreds requested the book that was offered.

Here's a sample of a couple e-mails in response to *The Evidence*:

"I . . . drove home from church one day . . . sad that God was portrayed as being arbitrary, unforgiving, vengeful, exacting, and severe. . . . I wanted desperately to hear someone [tell] the truth about my heavenly Father! . . . Then I happened to see *The Evidence*. Dwight Nelson pointed to God and God's true character. . . . Thanks from the bottom of my heart for speaking the truth about God and His character."

"By 'chance' I turned on [a major religious television network] and watched your program this morning. It was wonderful. I told my friends about it and told them

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GraceLink Connection: Community.

“When I told them I was on drugs, I half expected them to turn and walk away. But they didn’t. They listened, and they cared.”

Friends Make a Difference

as told to Charlotte Ishkanian

When Ted and Dick’s family moved to California from a small town in Michigan, the boys were excited. The small town where they grew up was boring; they knew everyone, and everyone knew them. The boys were good kids and went to church with their parents, but neither felt strongly committed to religion. Their dad promised Ted, 15, and Dick, 13, lots of new friends and new adventures in the larger academies they would attend.

Ted tried to make new friends at the new academy, but the close-knit groups of friends did not seem to have room for a newcomer. It seemed that the only kids who wanted to be his friends were the outsiders. Frustrated and lonely, Ted joined in their games and secrets, and soon was sharing in their drinking.

Dick, a student at the junior academy, looked up to his brother. So when Ted offered Dick

some alcohol one day, Dick tried it. Ted began bringing alcohol home regularly. He told Dick he had drugs, too, but Dick wasn’t going to mess with drugs. The boys shared many secret drinks in the months to come. And occasionally Ted would offer his brother some marijuana. But it frightened Dick. What would their parents say if they found out?

Ted soon developed a reputation at the academy. He knew where to find alcohol, drugs, and a good time. And Dick followed in his brother’s footsteps. He hung around with wild friends, and enjoyed breaking the law and trying to get away with it. His experience with Christ faded in importance, until it became just a veneer, something that looked good but had no meaning.

Dick’s Academy Days

When Dick arrived at academy, he wanted to fit in with the good kids on campus, but his reputation as a wild kid made it hard to find

friends among the good kids. He began to live up to the reputation his brother had set. He started using drugs, then began selling drugs to kids in the dorms and in the nearby high school.

Dick watched drugs ruin several people’s lives. Kids skipped school assignments; others skipped school entirely. Some became deeply addicted and began stealing to pay for their drugs. This frightened him. He was determined not to take hard drugs. So when his brother, Ted, bought some LSD and invited Dick to “get high” with him, Dick refused to join in. He watched as his brother took the entire dose himself. Soon Ted began acting strangely, staring at his hands, speaking nonsense, laughing and crying in quick succession. Again and again Ted cried, “I’m messing up my life!”

Dick was scared, and stayed with Ted until he had to go to work. After work Dick hurried back to see if Ted was OK. Dick knew he needed to change his life





or he would end up like Ted. He wanted out of the drug scene, but he couldn't unless he could get away from his druggie friends. He saw a poster advertising a Youth to Youth campout. Dick didn't know what Youth to Youth was, but he saw a chance to get away from his old friends for a few days. He knew some of the students who were going were good kids with high standards. Dick signed up to go, and returned to school with some new friends and a new outlook. But another boy had gone on the campout to get away from drugs, and the two boys naturally attracted each other, and they started drinking together! They were back where they had started!

Last Chance

Dick was desperate to escape the bonds that held him. He heard of a five-state Youth to Youth conference, and applied to go. What he found there changed his life. Even though Youth to Youth is an anti-drug program, and does not emphasize religious

activities, Dick met Jesus Christ face-to-face through the young people at the conference. The conference focused on building friendships to counteract drugs. Dick joined a "family group," a circle of close friends. Through trust-developing activities during the weekend, Dick came to feel he could trust these new friends, so he told them he was on drugs. He half expected them to turn away from him, but they listened to him, accepted him, cared about him, and cried and prayed with him. "This group was the key to the program and to my new life," he said.

"Though the program was not religiously oriented, the kids made Christ a living person to me," Dick said. "I accepted Christ as my Best Friend and Savior, and was rebaptized."

Changed Life

The unconditional support and love Dick received from his new friends at Youth to Youth was the turning point in his life. "They understood me, accepted me,"

he said. Dick became popular with the kids with whom he had sought popularity earlier but who had turned away because of the lifestyle he was leading.

Dick wants to share the message of Youth to Youth and a drug-free lifestyle with other young people. He hopes to work with youth, to help them avoid the mistakes he made, and to help kids already in trouble find their way to Christ, as he did.

And His Brother?

And what about Dick's brother, Ted? Did he find the way out of drugs as well? Dick sat quietly for a moment, then said, "Ted did not see the need to seek help. I invited him to go to Youth to Youth, but he was not interested. After I found Christ and Youth to Youth, I began to change a lot. We no longer had much in common, and eventually we went our separate ways. Ted is still out of the church. He's been busted for drugs several times."

Dick prays for Ted and hopes one day his brother will turn his life over to Christ and start anew.

Dick is a pseudonym for a student at an Adventist college. He wishes to remain anonymous, because "even my parents don't know the whole story." He hopes to become a youth pastor and help troubled youth. Charlotte Ishkanian is editor of Mission.

Let's talk

- ? What factors did you note in this story that led Dick and his brother to drugs? *[Lack of a strong commitment to Christ; failure to make friends with good kids in the new schools.]*
- ? What could Ted and Dick have done to prevent their fall into drugs? What could others in the schools and church have done to help the boys? *[Accept new young people; encourage them to attend positive activities such as Sabbath School, youth socials, and service functions. Staying busy in good activities keeps many young people from falling by the way.]*
- ? Does anyone in your Sabbath School class know someone who finds it hard to make friends, who may feel lonely and unaccepted?
 - What particular dangers do your young people see in leaving another teen outside a circle of friends? What can the class do to draw that person inside its friendship circle and protect him or her from harmful influences?

PRAY pray **PRAY**

Pray for the youth in your area who are in danger of being seduced by drugs or alcohol. Pray that God will show you what to do to help them before it is too late.





GraceLink Connection: Community.
The question of which summer camp to attend was resolved in an unexpected way for one adventurous teen.



Ashley

Summer Camp Adventure

Ashley Howell

Ashley Howell wanted to go to summer camp, but she was not sure which camp to attend. Her friend urged Ashley to go to teen camp, but Ashley wondered whether she would fit in. She had heard that the teen camp had a banquet, and someone said it was a dating event. She was not sure about this dating thing.

Then one Sabbath Jim Dickerson, a family friend who represents Christian Record Services, the Adventist Church's organization dedicated to helping the blind, made a presentation in church about blind camp. His presentation gave Ashley's mom an idea.

"Ashley," Mom said later that day, "would you be interested in going to blind camp as a sighted volunteer?" Mom explained that a sighted volunteer helps the blind campers experience the joys of summer camp.

Ashley talked to Jim about blind camp and what a sighted volunteer does. Then she decided to apply. Ashley was accepted

as a sighted volunteer. But as the date for camp drew closer, she grew more nervous about her first camping experience. When she learned that the campers would include some adults as well as children and teens, Ashley wondered, *What have I gotten myself into?*

Off to Camp

On the day that camp started, the blind children met the volunteers in town, and they drove to the camp in vans. Ashley's mom drove a carload of campers to the camp too. This gave Ashley a chance to become acquainted with some of them before her real work began.

Ashley was assigned to a cabin with campers from age 10 to 18, so some campers were younger than she was, and some were older.

"Camp was a blast!" Ashley said. She loved making friends with the campers, and helping them do things. "I had met only one blind person in my life, and I wasn't sure what to expect,"

Ashley added. "Most of the blind kids had been to camp before, so they knew the way to the bathroom and the showers, and we did not have to guide them everywhere they went.

"I discovered some neat things about blind kids," Ashley says. "They have a really great sense of humor. They can laugh at themselves. I loved when they would say, 'I saw Jim down at the lake,' as if they could really see Jim. The girls really liked the guys. The two 14-year-old girls chose their favorite guys based on the sound of their voice. They kept quite busy!"

"Most of the campers are not Adventists, though about half of the campers were from Christian homes. The campers who were not from religious backgrounds were very respectful about the spiritual activities at camp.

"Not all of the campers were kids. In fact, more than half the campers were adults. Only a few were kids my own age.

"It was our job to be sure that the campers were never in any





danger or likely to walk into a door or a tree. If we saw them wandering somewhere, we would ask them where they wanted to go, and we'd take them there.

Conrad

"Conrad was one of the boys who rode to camp with us. He is not totally blind; he can read large print if he holds it close to his eyes. He was a chatterbox and was funny. He had a good sense of humor. When he learned that this was my first time at camp, he told me how great it was and assured me that I would love it! Soon I was relaxed about being a camp volunteer.

"Conrad decided that he liked my sister, Danielle. He talked to her the whole way to camp.

"During the week at camp I saw Conrad often, especially in the cafeteria and at recreation. He talked easily, and he liked everyone.

"When camp ended, I was not sure I would see him again. But I learned that he lived only a few miles from us. I decided to invite him to church. "If you come, you can see Danielle," I teased him. And he came!

"Conrad loved church! His family doesn't go to church, and a woman in our church who lived near him offered to bring him to church. He came nearly every week.

"After church Conrad always wanted to come to our house for the afternoon. Then we would take him home later. After a few weeks he just started bringing a change of clothes with him. So we knew he planned to stay the afternoon with us. He even learned the names of Mom's Sabbath dinner entrées.

"One day Conrad brought his older sister and younger brother and sister to church. His younger brother and sister came often after that. Then one day Conrad asked the pastor if he could take Bible studies and be baptized. Mom gave him a book to study.

"Conrad lives in another town in the opposite direction from the church, so another woman brought them to church. Then when this woman could not bring them anymore, Conrad and his brother and sister were without a ride for several weeks.

The Difference Camp Made

"I never dreamed that one week at camp could bring a whole year of good times. I never would have met Conrad or his family if I had not gone to camp. And who knows, Conrad might never have come to our church if we had not met at camp!"

What are Ashley's plans for this coming summer? "I definitely want to go back to camp. Volunteering was more fun than attending camp, I'm sure. Mom says that it took me three months to stop talking about summer camp!"

"And it was not all work. We went swimming a few times that week; we took the kids bumper tubing and did that, too. Bumper tubing is having the kids ride in an inner tube behind a boat. It's a great bumpy ride.

"I think that being a counselor helped me gain confidence in what I could do. It helped me see areas I need to work on. I can't wait to go back!"

Ashley Howell is 15 years old and in the ninth grade. She would like to be a missionary doctor. She enjoys riding horses and reading.

let's **talk**

- ? Would you choose to be a volunteer at camp instead of going as a regular camper? Why do you think Ashley chose to volunteer?
- Why do you think she wants to go again?
- ? What were some things Ashley discovered about blind people while at camp? Did these things surprise you?
-



Trying something you have never done before and are not sure you can do is called leaving your comfort zone. Have you ever left your comfort zone to share your faith or to help someone in need? Find a way you can leave your comfort zone to help someone this week. Come next week prepared to share your experience and how you felt about it.

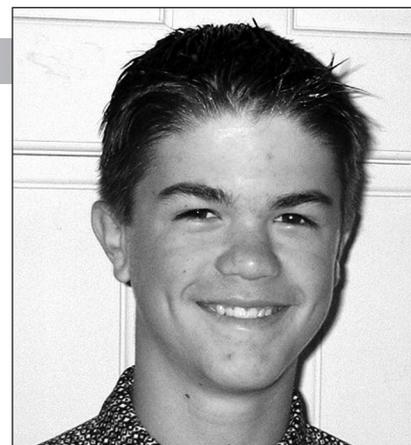
PRAY pray **PRAY**

Ashley asks that you pray for the blind camp ministry and that Conrad finds a consistent ride to church on Sabbath.





GraceLink Connection: Community.



Eric

New Power in Sabbath School

Ed Wagner and Heather May

Eric and Chris sat in the back-seat of the car on the way home from church.

“Did you enjoy your junior Sabbath School class today?” their dad asked.

Eric and Chris were not sure what to say. They did not want to tell their dad that they thought the lesson was boring. “It was OK, Dad,” Eric said. Dad did not say anything, and the brothers knew he was thinking about something. They knew he had been asked to lead the junior Sabbath School. Dad always had new ideas; maybe he would try something new to make their Sabbath School class more exciting.

A Super Sabbath School

The next Sabbath Eric and Chris were eager to find out what their dad had planned for Sabbath School. Finally Chris asked, “Dad, do you have a surprise for us in Sabbath School today?”

“You’ll see,” Dad said, still smiling.

Dad parked the car in the parking lot and reached into

the car to pull out his briefcase. The boys followed Dad into the Sabbath School room, where Dad set up a screen and connected his laptop computer to a projector. Eric and Chris knew something special was going to happen. They had to wait with the other class members to learn what Dad had in store for them.

When Dad switched on the computer and the projector, the juniors saw a bright-blue background with pictures of people praying. They knew their dad liked to use PowerPoint, a computer program that makes presentations more interesting. But they had never seen it used in Sabbath School before. They watched and listened carefully while Dad explained the various pictures and words on the screen as he went through the lesson. Everyone forgot to be bored; Sabbath School was truly plugged in!

In the car on the way home, Eric and Chris were still excited. “That was great, Dad,” Eric said. “It was so interesting.”

“I bet there are not many other

Sabbath School teachers who use a laser pointer,” Chris said. “Will you do it again next week?” Dad just smiled.

The following Sabbath most of the juniors arrived at Sabbath School early. They asked Eric and Chris, “Is your dad going to bring his computer again?” Eric and Chris had seen him carry his computer bag to the car, so they told the others that they thought he would show them another PowerPoint lesson. The other juniors grinned.

Sabbath School was fun now! When one of the class members missed a Sabbath, they often came to church early the next week and asked Eric’s dad if he could show them the lesson they missed.

Kids Keep the Ball Rolling

Sometimes Dad would ask Eric and Chris for help when he was making the PowerPoint lessons. They liked to help him think up new ideas to keep the lessons interesting.

One day Dad told the boys that





he had sent one of his PowerPoint programs to the editor of their Sabbath School lessons. The editor liked it so much she asked if the lessons could be prepared earlier so they could be posted on the Web site. That way juniors around the world could use the programs.

“Wow!” Chris said. “The whole world wants to use your PowerPoint lessons!”

Mr. Wagner added other information as well. He wanted to include mission stories in the program, but he needed pictures. So he wrote to the editor of *Mission* and asked for some pictures that could spice up the stories. The next day he received a whole mailboxful of color pictures to insert into the presentations. Soon the entire Sabbath School program was on PowerPoint.

But the job of preparing the lessons in PowerPoint became too much for Mr. Wagner to do alone. He needed help. He talked with the computer teacher at the local school, and soon the ninth and tenth graders took on the project of adding information to the PowerPoint presentations. They enjoyed learning how to

make new special effects and finding new information about countries all over the world to use in the mission presentations. The assistant Sabbath School leader started helping in the creation of the programs. Other adults helped too. Some wrote, others edited, and others helped with ideas.

The students who worked on the lessons could hardly believe it when people from the earliteens, youth, and even the adult Sabbath School members started dropping by to see the junior Sabbath School presentations.

Not only were their own church members interested, but the PowerPoint team began receiving e-mails from Sabbath School teachers all over the world, thanking them for the programs. They received messages from Brazil, Australia, England, and many places in the United States.

Eric Gets Involved

As interest in the PowerPoint lessons grew, the team decided they needed their own Web site where teachers could download the programs and find information on the team behind the presentations. The computer teacher at the school agreed to be

the Webmaster for the new site. He asked Eric to be his backup. Eric was already learning to create Web sites at home, so he created a second PowerPoint Web site just to help him figure out the details. When Eric showed the computer teacher his Web site, the computer teacher was surprised and impressed by Eric’s work.

“Eric has more time to work on the Web site than I do,” the computer teacher told Mr. Wagner, Eric’s father. “He is doing a great job. He should be the primary Webmaster.”

When his dad told Eric the news, Eric was amazed. “You mean they would let a 12-year-old be the Webmaster?” Eric asked, smiling. “I can hardly believe it. This will be so much fun!”

What had started as an effort to bring greater interest to one small Sabbath School has become a team effort that includes people of all ages and abilities. It has expanded to include a Web site that is produced by a youth and has Sabbath School teachers around the world checking out the bright and colorful program. The youth are helping to make their own Sabbath School lessons more meaningful by creating lessons for others to use as well. About 1,000 people are logging on to the Web site each month.

It started with an idea, and it has grown far larger than anyone ever expected, thanks to PowerPoint and the power of God.

To see junior Sabbath School lesson PowerPoint presentations, log on to: <http://www.adventistmission.org>.

Ed Wagner is a business owner. He lives in Rogue River, Oregon. **Heather May** is an English literature major at Andrews University.

Let's talk

? The PowerPoint lessons started with one person’s idea. As the ideas grew, the team grew. Today it is available to anyone who

- can access the Internet. How is this like the way God works in people’s lives? *[Sometimes God gives one person a vision, and as that vision grows, it empowers many others to join hands and work for a common goal, to honor God.]*

? How did Mr. Wagner, Chris and Eric’s dad, make the young people a part of his PowerPoint presentations? *[He asked for help*

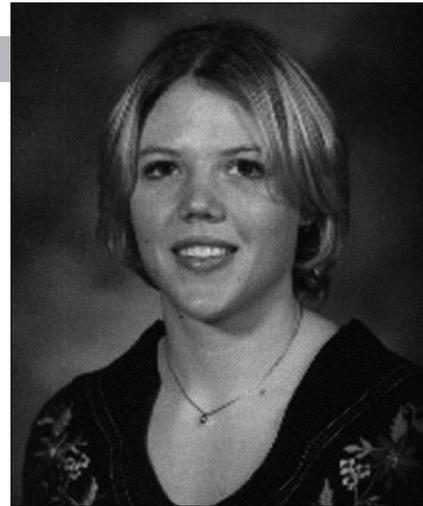
- *from the youth of the school and the church. This helped the young people feel as if they owned the program and could make suggestions.]*





GraceLink Connection: Community.

This teen has made friends with people in an unlikely place.



Angel

Street Angel

Charlotte Ishkanian

While many teenagers spend their Sundays sleeping in or shopping at the mall, Angel Woods, of Portland, Oregon, is out the door early to visit her friends. Angel's friends don't live in apartments or nice houses; they live on the streets. Angel's friends are homeless.

Angel's family is not worried about her street friends. In fact, her mother got her interested in going with other church members to prepare breakfast for the homeless every Sunday. Now her younger brothers often go with her as well. Angel loves working with people, especially people who live on the streets and people with mental health problems. Often after serving meals in the park on Sunday morning, she stays to chat.

"These people are my friends," the petite teenager says. "I want to do more for them than just hand them a bowl of soup and a sandwich and tell them, 'God bless you.' I want to make a difference in their lives, to let them know that I care for them and God cares for them."

When Angel's church group began holding informal worships

and putting on skits in the park, Angel noticed that some of her friends paid close attention. "Gadget, one of the young people in the park, says he is against Christianity," Angel said. "But he is very attentive to our skits and programs." Angel has invited most of her friends to attend church with her, and several have come.

One Sunday Angel noticed a group of teens standing to the side of the feeding line. Angel walked over and asked them, "Are you hungry? Do you want something to eat?" She thought that they might be from a nearby youth shelter.

"Yeah, we're hungry," one boy said. "But we'll wait until the line gets shorter."

"I volunteer here," Angel said. "I can hook you up with some food." She slipped back to the feeding line and prepared plates of food for the teens. Then she sat and chatted with them as they ate. She learned that none of the youth attended school. Some had run away from home; others had left home because of abuse, or their parents had told them to leave because they were taking drugs or getting into trouble with the

police. When the teens finished eating, they thanked her and quickly disappeared among the crowds of people.

Angel often goes downtown during the week to visit her street friends. "I am interested in them, where they stay, what they think, and what concerns them. We just sit and talk," she says.

Snow Party

One day Angel shared an idea with her mother. "Some of these guys have never—*never*—been outside the city," Angel told her mother. "They've never been on a hike in the country, never been to the mountain. I want to take them to the mountain!" The mountain Angel was referring to is Mount Hood, an imposing snowcapped peak just outside of Portland. Mount Hood is visible from the city, but none of the homeless she knew had ever been there. Angel wanted to take them to the snow fields just for fun.

Angel's mother shared her enthusiasm, but some others were skeptical. Soon, however, Angel's enthusiasm caught on, and plans came together. They arranged transportation and





meals, borrowed sleds and inner tubes, and found warm coats, mittens, and hats that their friends would need for an outing to the mountain.

Several drivers volunteered their vans to take the church's young people and their city friends to the mountain. When a church located close to the mountain learned about Angel's plans, they volunteered to prepare a hot meal for the group after their outing. Everything was ready; Angel invited her street friends.

Some did not know what to think, but others were excited. "I've never been sledding," one boy commented. "Sure, I'll go!" Fifteen street people accompanied the same number of church members to the mountain.

As the group drove out of the city and into the lush countryside, one of the youth exclaimed, "I didn't know Oregon was so green!" They arrived at the mountain, and everyone tumbled out of the vans. One woman climbed the snowy hill and slid down the mountain on an inner tube. When she reached the bottom, she hugged Angel's mom, smiled broadly, and said, "I just wanted to go sledding one time! I'll be happy about this for the rest of my life!"

Most of the group could not be

pulled off the mountain. They had snowball fights and repeatedly climbed the slope and slid back down. They were obviously having a lot of fun. By the end of the day everyone was cold, wet, and tired. When it was time to leave, the teens and their guests climbed into the vans, turned up the heat, and drove to the nearby church to change into dry clothes, warm up, and enjoy a spaghetti dinner. After dinner they played table games and watched a movie while a church member took the wet clothes home and washed and dried them.

"There were no problems during the outing," Angel said. "Everyone just had a great time! I want to do it again."

Special Friends

Angel talks about her friends who go by the names Monkey and Gadget. "My friend Monkey went to camp meeting with me last summer," Angel said. "He loved it! It was so amazing to watch him respond to God there. On Friday night we went to the youth meeting, then we joined the other youth to sing and pray. Monkey was singing along with the kids. Afterward he told me, 'That was so much fun!' Then he said that he had never heard those songs before, but the words just came to

him, and he had sung along! That was so amazing!"

Monkey asked Angel if he could attend camp meeting on Sabbath, but he was not at the meeting place when Angel came to pick him up. She could not wait for him, because she had a part in the program and had to be on time. Later she saw Monkey looking for her. After her talk, she slipped out and found him. "I am sorry," he apologized. "I overslept. So I found someone to bring me here." Monkey talks about going to camp meeting again this year, and Angel has promised to take him.

"I love these guys," she says. "And I want them to get to know and love Jesus as I do."

Angel Woods works as a receptionist in a mental health office and attends school near her home in Portland, Oregon.



Name some ways your youth group can reach out to people in your community who are somehow "different." Pray for the people you have targeted, then plan at least one service project you can do for an individual, a family, or a community. Talk to Community Services center leaders or the coordinator of the feeding program for the homeless if you need help or ideas.

After the project is completed, talk about what you learned, and what you can do to follow up and make the project more meaningful or helpful to those you met. Plan a follow-up activity.

Let's talk

- ? Sometimes we feel uncomfortable around people who are different from us. How has Angel learned to enjoy her friends
- who live on the streets of a large city? What has she discovered about her street friends?





GraceLink Connection: Worship.

Sometimes it seems there is no good reason that we do something. Then suddenly it all makes sense.



Kevan

No Good Reason

Kevan Lim

Jesse, Novently, and I are good friends. We live a long way from one another, and it is difficult to get together. We wanted to see one another during our holiday break, so we decided to meet one evening at a shopping center near Jesse's home.

The stores in the shopping center closed early, so we went to a restaurant to eat. There was no good reason that we chose the place we did. And there was no good reason that we sat down at a table next to a large window that looked out on a busy street. The padded seats in the booths nearby would have been much more comfortable than the hard chairs next to the window.

I had driven an hour to meet my friends, and Jesse had driven three hours to his parents' home in town. Novently had worked all day on his parents' car. There really was no good reason that we should have gotten together that day. In fact, it was not a good day for any of us. All of us had other things to do that evening. But we were glad to be together, even for a short time.

Change of Plans

The evening was cold and rainy. The food we ordered tasted stale. I reasoned it was because the restaurant would close soon. As we ate, we chatted about basketball, cars, and spiritual gifts. Once in a while we would look out the big window onto the glistening street.

We paid our bill and sat and talked some more. Then we glanced out of the window and saw an elderly woman, hunched over her walker, step down into the street. She pointed and waved at passing cars, but no one stopped. The traffic swished past her, threatening to soak her. She looked so fragile that it seemed as though the rush of air from the passing cars would knock her down.

Suddenly, as if we were of one mind, we jumped up and rushed out of the restaurant. We surrounded the old woman, trying to protect her from the traffic while we got her off the street. "May we help you?" we asked.

"I am trying to get a ride," she croaked. Her voice sounded desperate and worried. "I live four or five blocks from here, but

I do not think I can make it. The weather was nice when I left home, but now it has turned so rainy and cold, and my knees hurt a lot."

She must have left home hours earlier, when the sun still shone. Now it was 9:00, raining, and the temperature was dropping.

"Don't worry, ma'am," we told her. "We will take you home." I hurried to my car and drove to where the woman waited with my friends. We helped the woman into the passenger seat, then Jesse and Novently followed me in their car.

Tara

She told me that her name was Tara. Tara's directions to her home were somewhat confusing, and several times she said, "Go left—no, go straight." She did not mind the sudden turns and swerves that her directions caused, but I was sure that my friends, who were following me, were getting a laugh out of my erratic driving.

I tried to ask Tara questions about herself, but she seemed confused. When I asked about her work before she retired, she talked about a trolley car accident. When





I asked her how she got hurt, she described some of her friends. Perhaps she did not hear me well, or perhaps age had taken its toll on her mind. But she enjoyed talking, and I decided that perhaps she lived alone and did not see many people.

Tara lived farther than four or five blocks. It must have been two miles to her home. As we traveled along busy streets and crossed large intersections, I wondered how she had made it to the restaurant where we found her. It must have taken her hours to shuffle that far with her walker.

Finally we arrived at her home, a nice-looking apartment building. Jesse and Novently helped her out of the car and set up her walker for her. Tara thanked us and invited us to a party she was planning. We thanked her and declined her invitation, explaining that we lived far from her apartment.

"Well, thank you for helping me," she said as she turned toward her door. "Drop by anytime."

A Very Good Reason

We watched her shuffle toward her building, then Jesse said,

"Well, I need to get back home to take care of some things for work tomorrow."

"Yeah, Mom called me while we were riding here. She needs me to give her a ride to work," Novently added.

I had to get back home too.

We said our goodbyes and went our separate ways. As I drove home I thought about what had happened that evening.

Why had we decided to get together, even though each of us had other things to do? And why had we met at the shopping center when the stores would be closed? Why had we chosen the restaurant we did, and why had we sat at the table by the window? I could think of no good reason.

Then I remembered Tara, and a Bible verse came to my mind. "Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father" (Matthew 10:29, NIV).

We did not know why we had met that day, but God knew. He who can see the sparrow sees things we do not see. For every sparrow that falls from its nest, God knows someone who can help

it get back to its nest. God had brought us to that place at that time to give us the opportunity to help one of His fragile sparrows.

I saw the fragile old woman, hunched over her walker, trying desperately to get a ride home on a cold, wet night. Then I saw God lead us to where she would be. Did He know we would see the need and help her? I like to think so.

I had thought that our meeting was for no good reason. But there was a good reason for us to be where we were that day. We just did not know what it was, until now.

Kevan Lim is a junior business major at the University of Puget Sound in Washington state. His story originally appeared in *Insight* magazine. Adapted with permission.

ido it!

Pray that God will lead you to someone who needs help. Then keep your eyes open for His leading. Report back next week on the results.

let's talk

? Have you ever been somewhere at just the right time to help someone in need? What did you do about it? Do you think God sent you to that place just then? How did you feel afterward? Did you feel blessed by this opportunity? If you did not respond to the need, why didn't you? Have you learned something from today's story about looking for God's leadings?

PRAY pray PRAY

Pray every day that you will be an instrument to spread God's love to others through actions and through words.





GraceLink Connection: Worship.

Christina thought God had ruined her family's vacation, but later she realized He had protected the family from danger.



Christina

The Shortest Vacation Ever

Christina Dotson

One chilly morning in March I helped my parents hitch up our camping trailer to the back of our van. I couldn't wait to get going; this was going to be the best vacation ever. After several trips from the house to the van with luggage, we were finally ready to go.

"Let's check the trailer lights," Dad announced.

Checking the lights was our favorite part of getting ready to go camping. One of us would stand behind the trailer and make sure the brake lights and turn signals worked properly. After we checked the lights, we got into the van, prayed for God's protection, and backed out of the driveway.

On Our Way

We drove for several hours before we stopped for gas. Mom said that she and Dad were going to check the lights again. I did not think much about it, since my parents checked the lights and the trailer hitch every time we

stopped, just to be safe. I wanted to see if Mom would do her crazy hand signals in public, so I leaned out the window to watch.

Dad turned on the left turn signal, but Mom did nothing. He turned on the right turn signal; still Mom just stood there. Dad pressed the brake pedal, to make the brake lights go on, but Mom did not move.

"Aw, she's not going to do it," my brother Timothy sighed when he saw Mom just standing still behind the trailer. My other brother, Matthew, and I exchanged concerned looks. We knew something was wrong.

Dad got out of the van and checked the wires connecting the van to the trailer. He and Mom tried the lights several more times. Still nothing. With an uneasy feeling in the pit of my stomach I watched my parents talking.

Finally Mom and Dad got back into the van. They turned around to face us.

Going Home

"We need to talk," Mom said.

"The lights on the camper aren't working. No one behind us can tell when we are turning or stopping. It is not legal to drive like this, and it is not safe."

"So what are we going to do?" I asked.

Our parents hesitated. "We are going home," Dad said. "We cannot drive without lights. We will have to cancel our vacation."

Nobody said a word. We were all in shock. We had been looking forward to this vacation for almost a year! We had made reservations and bought tickets. We had driven four hours already, and now we had to go home.

Silently Dad turned the van around, and we headed back toward home. My little brothers began to cry quietly, and I had to struggle to keep from joining them. *How can this be happening?* I wondered silently. *Our whole vacation ruined because the trailer lights won't work. Why? They worked perfectly four hours ago.*

We drove without a word for half an hour; the only sounds





were the tires along the pavement and a strange rumbling noise coming from the engine.

“Did You Pray?”

It was Matthew who finally broke the silence in the van. “Did you pray about the lights?” he asked.

Mom turned around. “Yes, we did,” she said. “We prayed very hard.”

“Maybe we should try again,” Timothy suggested.

“Oh, please,” I muttered. “If God cared about the lights, He would have fixed them when we stopped before.”

Mom gave me a fierce look as Dad pulled into a rest stop. Apparently we were going to try one more time.

I had my doubts, but I also had a tiny ray of hope. I remembered all the stories I had heard as a child, all those tales of little kids who prayed over little things like a broken bike or a lost nickel and who had their prayers miraculously answered. Maybe, just maybe, God would do that for us.

We stood behind the camper, praying with all our hearts. *Please, God, I begged silently. I know it is not a big thing, but it is important to us. Please make the trailer lights work. Please.*

We waited and waited, but

nothing happened. No brake lights. No running lights. No turn signals. Nothing.

“Told you,” I snapped at my brother as I stormed back to the van. “God did not answer our dumb prayers.”

My brothers were horrified at my remark. “God does too answer prayers!” Timothy exclaimed. “He just does not always say yes.”

God’s Reason

“Yeah,” Matthew agreed. “I bet God has a reason for not fixing the lights. We just do not know what it is.”

The next day our entire family was miserable and grouchy. We were supposed to be camping, but instead we were sitting around the house moping over the shortest vacation ever. Dad had driven the van and camper to the repair shop to have the lights and the rumbling noise in the engine checked.

It was several days before we heard anything from the mechanic, but when he called I knew it was bad news. My dad kept frowning and nodding and asking when it could be fixed.

“So what was it?” I asked as soon as Dad hung up the phone. “What was wrong with the lights?”

“Huh?” Dad looked confused

at first. “Oh, that was not about the camper. That was about the van. The mechanic says the van is pretty messed up. He was surprised it ran long enough for us to get it to the shop.”

At this point Dad turned and looked me straight in the eye. I could tell his next words were going to be important.

God’s Good Answer

“We never would have made it to Florida, Chrissy,” he said. “If the lights had not gone out on the camper and made us turn back, we would have kept on driving and broken down long before we got there. The mechanic says it could take weeks to get the parts and fix the van. That means that wherever we broke down, we would still be stuck there right now.”

Dad walked away, leaving me to absorb this information.

The reality of the situation hit me. I had been angry with God for not answering our prayers. I had laughed at my brother’s suggestion that God had a reason for not fixing the lights. But he had been right all along.

I bowed my head and apologized. *I’m sorry, God. I did not have faith. I should have believed that You knew what was best for us. But I believe now, and I promise I will remember next time.*

Christina Dotson lives in Ohio, where she is a junior at Ashland University. This story originally appeared in *Insight* magazine. Adapted with permission.

let's talk

- ? Has there ever been a time in your life when it seemed as though God had not heard your prayers? Discuss.
- ? How should a growing Christian respond when they have a prayer that is not answered in the way they want? [They should
 - thank God for answering their prayer in the way He knows is best, even though they may not understand it at the time.]

PRAY pray

Praise God for the lesson that Chrissy learned and for His love and protection for her and her family. Pray that He will continue to bless and protect them and each one of us.



GraceLink Connection: Worship.

When young people hear God speaking to them, great things can happen.



Shawn

Getting Extreme for God

Shawn Brace

A common saying in one area of the northeastern United States is, "You can't get there from here." But recently six teens learned that the power of prayer can get you anywhere. They called themselves the Extreme Teens, and their purpose was to influence people for Christ through prayer.

"God has given me a passion for young people in our church," said Kelly Veilleux (VAY-oooh), the leader. "It is wonderful to see how God uses youth in such a powerful way to reach other youth." The idea to form the group came to Kelly and two other youth during camp meeting.

Since their beginning three years ago, the teens have traveled across the country praying for people, praying for programs, praying for needs. "We provide 'prayer cover,'" says Gordon, a team member. "Prayer cover means that we pray that the Holy Spirit will take control of a specific program while the program is happening."

The group meets three or four times a year for a weekend of training and intense Bible study and prayer time. "The Lord blesses our time as He prepares

all of us in His work," Kelly explains.

Praying Satan Away

The team was invited to visit an Adventist academy in the western United States to work with teens there. The students at the academy became so excited about serving God through prayer that they formed a group called Team Prayer. Five months later the two groups spoke to an enthusiastic gathering of youth attending a prayer conference in California. Once more the young people became excited about sharing their love for God with others. They formed a group called Teens on Fire for Christ.

As the youth shared their blessings and their faith with others at the conference, everyone was blessed. During the service the leader invited those who wanted to recommit their lives to God to stand. More than 60 youth and adults responded.

Then in the midst of the joy, Satan stepped in to spoil it. An adult leader was gripped with a severe pain in her stomach. She was rushed to the hospital. Those remaining at the conference were determined that Satan would not

overshadow their praise for God. They formed small groups and prayed for the leader. Then they sang and praised God for being stronger than Satan. A few hours later they received word that the leader's pain had subsided. Doctors never did know what had caused the pain, and she remained symptom free the rest of the conference. "It was awesome to see the youth pull together in a crisis and become the leaders that God wants them to be," Kelly rejoices. "God is good!"

The Extreme Teens and the groups they helped spawn ministered outside the prayer conference walls as well. On Sabbath afternoon some teens went to a park to give out literature and pray with people. "It went very well," Erik says. "Some people will shut you out, but others will pray with you."

Prayer 24/7

In April 2003 the Extreme Teens, along with several members from Team Prayer and Teens on Fire for Christ, attended a youth congress in New York. The congress welcomed more than 400 delegates from the northeastern United States and





attracted more than 1,000 on Sabbath. The Extreme Teens presented prayer seminars and staffed the prayer room from 6:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. each day for anyone who wanted to pray with them. The Teens prayed with each speaker before their presentation and prayed for the Holy Spirit's influence during each meeting.

But the most visible part of the team's ministry occurred as the team members walked around the halls praying with and for those they met. Jeremy, one of the Extreme Teens staff, recalls that "at the beginning of the week it didn't seem like people were open to us praying for them. But as the week progressed, they started coming and asking us for prayer."

One of the youth leaders overseeing the Extreme Teens' ministry says, "The prayer team held the congress together as they prayed with young people. They were a great example of the power of prayer." Another leader of the congress commented that the youth were eager to lead people in prayer, and they were not shy about doing it. Often the Extreme Teens team arrived at the meeting place earlier than the speakers so they would be waiting to pray with them when the leaders arrived.

Praying Satan Away

Gordon shares a miracle they witnessed at the congress: "As the speaker prayed, some girls in the back were not worshipping the same God we were," he said. "I could see them chanting, but nobody heard them." Because the Extreme Teens sat in the front, they were the only ones who could see the girls in the back with their mouths moving, trying to disrupt the service.

After the meeting, the Extreme Teens rushed to the prayer chapel to pray about what they had seen. "I passed my room on the way," Gordon recalls, "and saw a huge pile of rocks neatly stacked, like people do when they want to put a curse on some spot or person." The group fell to their knees and prayed outside the room.

The next morning Gordon prayed during his early shift at the prayer chapel. "Some of the people who had been worshipping the devil came down and repented. Although only a few of those kids came to repent," says Gordon, "I believe that God rejoices over one person who repents."

Experiences like this continue to bless the Extreme Teens, who have seen God work in miraculous ways. Stretching their faith has been a growing

experience that has encouraged their walk with God.

"I enjoy being used by the Lord to reach other youth," Jeremy says. "It gives me a chance to grow spiritually," Kelly agrees. "God really is listening and answering our prayers!"

The Extreme Teens team is doing a good job helping young and old alike become aware of the importance of prayer in every aspect of our lives. But their special target are young Christians who are lukewarm. "We need to heat them up for Christ," Kelly said.

For more on Extreme Teens' prayer ministry, check out their Web site at www.youthprayerministries.com.

Shawn Brace is a theology major at Andrews University. This story originally appeared in Insight magazine. Adapted with permission.



Survey your class and find out what ministry or ministries would interest class members. (Ministry of prayer, ministry of service, ministry of giving, etc.) Form one or more groups of people who feel called to a specific ministry. Find a way to carry out that ministry this week. (For instance, a group interested in prayer ministry could break up into twos and walk around the church's neighborhood praying for the people who live and work there.) Prepare to report back to the group next week.

What would you like to do for other young people as part of such a group?

let's talk

? God lists prayer as one of His spiritual gifts (see 1 Corinthians 12:8-10; Romans 12:6-8; Ephesians 4:11-13). What gifts do you see in your church? Why did God give these gifts to His church? (1 Peter 4:10.)

? Many young people have formed prayer groups similar to the Extreme Teen group. What is the benefit of forming a group to carry out a ministry? [Properly used, a team can strengthen its members to do more than any one person could do alone.]





GraceLink Connection: Worship.

Two girls on a mountaintop learn that their extremity truly is God's opportunity.



Melanie

Miracle on the Mountain

Melanie Lane

It was a Sabbath afternoon and a gorgeous day for some outdoor fun. My best friend Jess and I had both been staying together at my house while our parents were out of town. We had been having lots of fun and had decided to go for a hike on the nearby Appalachian trail. It was fall, and the leaves were slowly turning and falling to the ground. Even though it was sort of cold, we decided that it might be the last good day of the year for a hike. So we headed out not knowing the dilemma we would soon face.

Hiking Adventure

We arrived at the base of the trail around 3:00 p.m. Grabbing my camera and keys from the car, we started our great journey. Though we had been up there often, there was always something unique and special about this hike. The three-mile hike up the mountain would be

worth it once we reached the top and could enjoy the gorgeous view of the surrounding area. Eagerly we started out.

Before we had gone even half way up the mountain our feet began to throb, and we found ourselves stopping at every turn to take a break. Finally, after what seemed like forever, we reached our destination and crawled onto the edge of the rocks to admire the view. I lay back against the sun-warmed rock, wishing I could stay there forever. I scanned the tiny details of nature—the trees swaying in the breeze, the birds gliding peacefully on the wind, and the tiny squirrels scurrying about.

“We better get going!” Jess’s voice jolted me from my thoughts.

“It’s almost dark, and we are the only ones up here,” she stated in a serious tone. Looking around, I suddenly noticed that our other trail companions had gone.

“Yeah, OK . . . just a few more minutes,” I said casually. But, then I remembered that not too long ago they had found a body not far from where we stood. I remembered other horror stories I had heard about the mountain. I jumped up and started down the trail almost in a state of panic.

Daylight was slipping away fast, and darkness closed in as we left the top of the mountain and started down the trail. We had no flashlight to guide us as we retreated down the narrow mountain trail.

We were making good time, and before I knew it we had reached the halfway point to the car. We stopped for a quick breather, and I poked my hand into my pocket.

Where Are the Keys?

“Where are my keys?” I screamed in a state of panic. I searched every pocket, then looked to Jess for an answer.





"Come on, Mel; this is not a joke," Jess flatly stated as she started down the trail. I raced after her and grabbed her arm.

"I'm not kidding, Jess. Do you have my keys?"

"No, they're your keys. Why would I have them? This is not funny, OK? We have to get down to the car. Look how dark it is," Jess said with irritation edging her voice.

"But I don't have the keys," I stammered.

Jess stopped and stared at me, her eyes wide. "You're not kidding, are you?" she asked.

"No, I'm not kidding. Where could they be? Hurry, we have to find them!" I yelled. Frantic, I ran back up the trail, trying to remember every place we had stopped. We searched the trail like crazed fools, but as the darkness fell on us, I knew it was useless. It was like finding a grain of sand in a rock pile. There was no sense in killing ourselves searching for something we could not find.

The darkness moved closer, smothering out all light. The trees, blowing in the wind, looked like giant arms trying to grab us. Strange noises crept up on us from every direction. As we stumbled along the path, we called out to each other to keep from getting separated. The rocky trail sent us sprawling to the ground more than once. I knew it was no use to keep searching;

we would never find them now. But what other options did we have left? The car was locked; even if we could make it to the car, we would just have to sit by it until morning. But the thought of sleeping on the mountain frightened me.

Deep Trouble

Jess's voice broke into my thoughts. "I can't go any farther. We have to stop, Melanie. It's no use. Her ragged voice begged for rest. We stood in the dark, frightened and trembling from the cold—hungry, thirsty, lost, and alone.

"We are in deep trouble," I said trying to hold back my tears. "What can we do? How can we get home?" I could barely make out shiny tears that trickled down her face.

"We better pray," Jess murmured. We knelt on the cold earth and cried out to God. Our prayers were simple, but we knew that Someone somewhere billions of miles away had heard us and was sending help.

"Let's go to the car," I said as I struggled to my feet. "Who knows, maybe our angels will put the keys there." I joked, but I wished it were true.

We continued down the mountainside with a sense of assurance that we were not alone and feeling relieved that we had placed our problem in God's hands. Slowly we made our way down

the dark, narrow, rock-strewn path, stumbling and nearly falling with each step. Silence filled the air except for the occasional night sounds of the forest and the sounds of our feet stumbling on the rocks. At last we came to a clearing; starlight provided a dim light as we made our way to the parking lot where we had left the car.

As we approached the car, I noticed that the window was down. I held my breath as I raced toward the car. I reached inside and picked up a piece of paper that was lying on the seat. "We found your keys on the mountain. God bless you," it read.

Jess read the note over my shoulder, and we burst into tears of joy. We had received a tiny miracle that night. I don't know how the keys got back into my car, but I do know that I prayed and God made it happen.

Maybe someday in heaven I will hear the rest of the story. When I started the car to head home, the CD player crooned one of my favorite songs. But the words held a special meaning now, a promise realized: "I've got you covered . . . you don't have to worry at all. . . . If you fall, I will catch you/ you know I won't let you feel like you're there all alone." We rode home in silence, awed by God's promises proven true.

Melanie Lane recently graduated from Columbia Union College. She enjoys backpacking, hiking, and camping. This story originally appeared in *Insight* magazine. Adapted with permission.

let's talk

? Have you ever been in a situation similar to Melanie's? Have you searched frantically for something you lost? Did you think to pray

- about it before you had exhausted your own resources? What lesson can you take from this story that will help you when trials come your way?

PRAY pray PRAY

Pray that you will be willing to listen when God whispers, "You don't have to worry, I've got you covered." Pray for the faith to trust Him.





GraceLink Connection: Grace.

She struggled to free herself from her underwater prison. Then a warm hand pulled her to the surface.



Cindy

Miraculous Rescue

Cindy Trushel

I desperately needed air, but I knew that if I opened my mouth I would breathe in water. The river's strong current rushed against our capsized canoe, keeping my legs tangled in the oak tree's wiry mess of branches. A gloomy darkness rushed over me, and gloomy thoughts flooded my mind: *Will this be the end of my life? Will I drown? I have so many unfulfilled dreams. God, please help me. Show me the way out.*

River Outing

Earlier that day Chris and I had set off on our spring floating trip. We had pushed our canoe into the water from a gravel bar. The men who rented us the canoe told us that they had cleared the river of trees and limbs just that morning. Chris and I were experienced canoe floaters, and felt no need to worry.

Floating peacefully down river, we enjoyed the natural beauty of the river. Wind blew gently in our faces, and the sun's rays warmed our backs. Trees exploding with spring blooms, and golden wild-

flowers greeted us. The sweet smell of honeysuckle tickled my nose. Big rock bluffs jutted overhead. Higher still, elegant puffy clouds danced in the blue sky. Lush green grass flowed down to the river's edge, and yellow songbirds sang cheery melodies. It was a perfect day.

But the trip proved more challenging than Chris or I had thought. The heavy spring rains caused the river to flow steady and strong. The river, usually as clear as crystal, looked murky as it carried debris from recent storms. Logs and tree limbs lodged in the riverbank at every bend of the river, turning our leisurely journey into a watery obstacle course. We had to paddle our way around debris and brush. We joked to each other that if this was what the river looked like after the canoe rental men had cleared it, what must it have looked like before.

Usually our trip down the river would last between six and seven hours. But with the river running so rapidly today, we already had reached the halfway point in less

than an hour and a half.

We stopped on our favorite sandbar to relax in the sun. The spring breeze perfumed with wildflowers, and the warmth from the sun and sand made it a spectacular place to rest. We ate our lunch and still had time to rest before pushing off on the final leg of our journey.

Capsized and Drowning!

We paddled into the current and maneuvered around a sharp bend in the river. Suddenly we saw a gigantic oak tree lying across the river directly in front of us. Branches jutted into the air everywhere. The water rushing over the huge tree trunk sounded like a powerful train roaring down its tracks.

There was no time to act. Within seconds the swift current threw us on top of the oak tree. My heart raced as our canoe leaned to the side. Then the canoe tipped over and took on water. We were going to sink!

Chris leaped out of the canoe and over the oak tree into the river on the far side. A second





later the canoe flipped over, dumping me into the river.

I tried to get my bearings, but everything looked murky and dark. Then I realized I was trapped underneath the canoe.

"God, please help me! Show me the way out," I prayed. I gasped for breath, but only water filled my mouth. Every second seemed like an eternity. "God, please help me," I kept saying. The swift river current pinned me underwater, and I could not break free.

Thoughts flashed through my mind—Suzie, my beagle puppy; my grandma's warm chocolate chip cookies; my sixteenth birthday party; the camping trip to the lake with my best friend.

Part of me fought to live, to breathe, and the other part wanted to give in to what could be a quick death. I felt God's presence, and my fear turned to faith. I thought about the things that brought joy to my life: God, nature, my family. An inner peace swept over me, and I relaxed.

The Warm Hand

Then I felt a warm hand gently take hold of my left hand. It pulled me down deeper into the river, away from the rushing current. The powerful oak tree loosened its grip and set me free.

Then I was pulled upward. I saw a white glow and could make out the form of an arm pulling me. I could not see beyond the arm, and I wondered how Chris could manage to pull me from the current.

Following the white glow, I shot to the surface of the water. I gasped for air and spit water from my lungs. I looked for the gentle hand that had pulled me from the tangle of tree branches and brought me to safety, but I could see no one around.

Then I heard Chris yelling my name. I saw her standing on the gravel bar along the shore with a small group of people who had gathered there.

If Chris is on shore, I reasoned, then who pulled me from the water? Who just saved my life?

I managed to swim to shore. As I sat on the gravel bar trying to catch my breath, my thoughts raced back to the river. Although it felt as if I had struggled in the water for a long time, in reality it was only two or three minutes. I remembered how, when there seemed no way to break free from the tree's branches, I called out to God. *God, I thought, it was God who rescued me from the river. God sent an angel to pull me to safety.* I could still feel that warm, gentle hand pulling me toward the surface of the water.

Chris and I sat on the gravel bar and talked about what had just happened. I will never forget the angel whose hand guided me to safety and to life. The touch of that hand will always be with me to call me back to trust in God no matter what happens.

Cindy Trushel lives in San Diego, California, where she wants to remind everyone that God is always there for us. All we have to do is ask for His help. This story originally appeared in *Insight* magazine. Adapted with permission.

let's talk

PRAY pray PRAY

? Chris and Cindy had left home that morning planning to have a leisurely floating trip down a river. Suddenly they were fighting for their lives in the swift current. Knowing that we are never assured of tomorrow, how should we live each day? *[When we place our lives in God's hands day by day, hour by hour, we can trust Him to do what is best for us. We should live every day as if it might be our last, but plan for the future to serve God until Jesus comes.]*

? Why do you think God allowed Chris and Cindy to be thrown into the water, trapping Cindy in the tangle of tree branches, and putting her life at risk? *[While God does not cause bad things to happen, He uses such crises to display His power and His love.]*

Pray that young people around the world will experience for themselves the constant presence of Jesus in their lives. Pray that they will learn to trust God in all things.





GraceLink Connection: Grace.

"You don't need to talk to me," I told her.

"You need to talk to God."

1-900-L-I-A-R

Galina Pembroke

"You have a choice to make," my boss challenged. "It's God or your tarot cards."

I had never lost a job before in my life, but I was not willing to continue telling lies to keep the present job. My desire to have a relationship with God finally replaced the lure of easy money.

Tarot Cards

I discovered tarot cards when I was 15. While browsing at a bookstore I found a colorful deck of cards. I bought the cards and a book describing how to interpret them. I locked myself in my room and pored over the cards. I learned what each card meant and began using them for guidance in my own life. I ignored the opinions of friends, teachers, and my parents. Two months after I bought the cards, I stopped going to church. I no longer felt that I needed God.

It may sound as if consulting tarot cards for advice is random and harmless, but it is dangerous. The tarot cards are right just enough of the time to persuade people to trust them. How? Each

card has a number of different meanings, and people usually choose the meaning that applies most closely to their situation.

For example, the Chariot card may mean travel, buying a new car, a need to know your "higher" self, or the desire to continue an important quest. It is likely that one of these meanings will apply to the person seeking advice. Many people want to believe them so much that it takes only one shred of truth to convince them that the card's meaning applies to them.

There is a great danger in letting tarot cards, or any other superstition, control our lives.

1-900-Trouble

In North America late-night television programs often advertise tarot card readings. The advertisement presents testimonials from people who have called a 900-telephone number and were impressed with the advice they received. The ads never show the thousands who are disappointed or devastated by the "advice" they received.

The ads portray psychic readers summing up people's lives in a matter of minutes and giving them good news for the future. I know, because I was one of those readers.

Real life has its ups and downs, but the psychic readers were told to keep our predictions positive and keep callers on the telephone for at least 20 minutes, which was not always easy. Callers pay \$4 a minute for our "services," and they want us to get to the point. But getting to the point would reduce my call time, so I lied.

I told gamblers that they would win lots of money, and adulterers that they should not feel guilty. Often people would ask me which person they should marry, or which job to take. After talking with them for a while, I could tell enough about them to tell people what they wanted to hear.

Often callers would call me back and tell me they had followed my advice. I was relieved when they thanked me for helping them make the right decision. But I felt terrible when things turned out badly.





This usually involved a broken relationship or the loss of money while gambling. My response then required more lies. I would try to convince the caller that their strong will had influenced the outcome of the cards or that they needed another reading to clear up the “misunderstanding.”

Liar, Liar

I left home at age 17, and by the time I was 19 I had been a telephone tarot reader for two years. Then one day I got a disturbing call from a woman who had lost her life savings gambling. I felt as much to blame for her loss as she did. I had told her the numbers to use. I had told her to “trust the tarot.”

She took turns sobbing and yelling into the telephone. I hung up before the 20-minute minimum had passed, but not before I burst out, “You do not need to talk to me. You need to talk to God!”

I could not believe what I had said. In an attempt to forget about the caller, I went to the bar for a drink. The next day I woke up disgusted. I started crying—something I had not done in

a long time. I could not stop thinking about the woman who had called and what I had said to her: “You don’t need to talk to me. You need to talk to God.” I knew the advice I had given her applied to me as well.

The End—and the Beginning

With tears streaming down my face, I went to a church I had attended as a child. I bent down behind a pew and prayed, “Lord, I have sinned against You and against other human beings. Please forgive me. Help me to be the person I once was.”

As I sat on the pew, I felt a hand on my shoulder. A caring voice filled me with warmth. It was the pastor. I was so glad to see him. I wept as I confessed why I had not been attending church and how I had told lie after lie while reading tarot cards.

He listened patiently. When I finished, he said softly, “Our God is the God of forgiveness.”

I have learned my lesson. To stay in the business, tarot card readers must deceive people. But Proverbs 12:22 says, “The Lord detests lying lips” (NIV). God does not give His wisdom to liars.

Like astrology, tarot cards lead us away from God. God warns Babylon, “Let your astrologers come forward, those stargazers who make predictions. . . . Surely they are like stubble; the fire will burn them up” (Isaiah 47:13, 14 NIV).

It makes God angry when we put our faith in fortune-tellers rather than in Him. He has warned us that “it is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in man” (Psalm 118:8 NIV). Tarot cards invite people to put their confidence in liars who work for greedy companies like the one for which I worked.

I struggled a long time to make amends with people I hurt while reading tarot cards. But the hardest part has been forgiving myself. Now I enjoy going to church, and I will never again look at a deck of tarot cards.

When former clients from my private practice call me, I tell them I would be happy to talk with them, but only to discuss the importance of a relationship with the Lord. I tell them, “Real, truthful answers come from only one source—God.”

Galina Pembroke is a free-lance writer living in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. This story originally appeared in Insight magazine. Adapted with permission.

let's talk

- ? Why are tarot cards dangerous? What other “games” or “hobbies” are equally dangerous to unsuspecting people? [Ouija boards, astrology, horoscopes, and fortune-tellers may begin as a game, but the power behind them is Satan; they are dangerous.]
- ? After hearing this story, what would you tell a friend who wants you to play with a Ouija board or tarot cards?

PRAY pray PRAY

Pray that young people who have been enticed by the supernatural will realize the danger they are in and seek God, the only true and safe source of wisdom.





GraceLink Connection: Grace.

*“If I rise on the wings of the dawn, . . . your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast”
(Ps. 139:9, 10, NIV).*



Pamala

Born to Fly

Pamela Love

Pamela Love was born to fly. Her father is a pilot, and she grew up around airports. She loved being with her father as he worked on planes. Her first word was “airplane.”

When Pamela was 6, her parents took her to an air show at which the Thunderbirds, the Air Force’s precision flying team, performed. She watched, fascinated, as the F-16 jets flew in spectacular formation overhead. She told her parents, “I want to fly one of those planes!” And nothing could change her mind.

Pamela went to so many Thunderbirds performances that some of the pilots knew her name. When she was 12 years old, she told them, “I want to become a pilot, and someday I want to fly with the Thunderbirds!” She became an unofficial mascot of the Air Force pilots.

Trouble at 4,000 Feet

Flying is reasonably safe, but engine problems can spell disaster unless the pilot keeps a clear head. When she was 14, Pamela’s brother Ken took her with him to Atlanta, Georgia,

in his small plane. On the way home at night, the plane’s alternator failed. The lights and radio faded out. They flew through the darkness, unable to warn other planes of their presence.

With her brother’s small flashlight, Pamela read their maps and kept her brother on course while watching for other planes. It seemed like an eternity before they saw the landing lights at the small airport. But they were not home safe yet. Without lights Ken had to guess how far he was from the ground. Working together, the two landed safely.

Solo Flight

Pamela’s close brush with danger did not deter her from wanting her pilot’s license. While friends prepared to drive, Pamela enrolled in flying classes. One of the tests she had to pass for her license was a solo flight. The flight required that she take off and land at three different airports. She filed a flight plan that would take her from her hometown in Alabama to her final destination, Nashville,

Tennessee’s international airport.

The morning dawned bright as Pamela inspected her plane before taking off. She took off from her first airport and landed at her second stop. But as she taxied for takeoff from the second airport, the engine sounded rough. She aborted her takeoff and returned to the hangar.

Mechanics working in the hangar had heard the engine’s noise and offered to check the plane for her. They replaced a spark plug that was not firing and tested the engine again. It sounded fine.

The engine trouble had delayed her flight by three hours, and Pamela was eager to complete her journey before a weather front moved into the area. She thanked the men and prepared to take off. She still had time to fly to Nashville before the weather turned bad.

She ascended to 3,000 feet, keeping an eye on the plane’s gauges and listening to the sound of the engine for signs of trouble. But she took time to enjoy the glorious fall colors on the mountains below her.





Emergency!

Then Pamela sensed that the plane was losing speed. She detected a subtle change in the engine's sound, though she did not feel a difference in the plane's handling. She watched the needles on the gauges creep toward the red "caution" area. Something was wrong!

She mentally recited the emergency procedures she had learned.

As she neared Nashville she radioed the control tower for landing instructions. "Nashville approach, this is Cessna 001*." She clicked the button to listen and waited for a response. Nothing. Several minutes passed without a response, and she repeated her call. Again she received no response. She called a third time. This time a controller responded. "Cessna calling Nashville. You are broken and unreadable." Was the radio not working? Were the mountains causing interference?

The needles on the oil pressure gauge pointed to the red zone. She was losing oil! The engine began coughing. If oil leaked onto the spark plugs, they would misfire, and she would lose power. Without sufficient power, she could not control the plane.

Pamela tried to call the airport again, but again received no response. She did not dare to enter the air space of the busy international airport without radio contact. She searched for a place to land. Between the mountains and trees below her, she saw a field flat enough to land on.

Danger at 12:00

Suddenly she saw another plane coming straight toward her. She turned her plane to the right to avoid the plane. But her engine was not producing enough power to climb. To her surprise, the other plane turned in the same direction as she had, and was again coming straight at her! Instead of trying to avoid her, the pilot flew less than 500 feet from her wing, totally unaware that she was having serious engine problems!

Pamela struggled to keep the emergency landing field in sight while avoiding the other plane. If only her radio worked! Suddenly the radio crackled, and a woman's voice called, "Cessna 001, this is Nashville. Approach."

Pamela clicked the radio to "transmit" and responded, "Nashville, this is Cessna 001. I am at 3,000 feet, inbound for landing at Nashville. I am a student pilot and am having

engine trouble."

The air traffic controller's voice remained calm. "Cessna 001, what is your situation?"

Pamela reported her engine problems and gauge readings. She requested permission to make an emergency landing. The traffic controller replied, "We have you on radar and will remain in constant contact. We will reroute other traffic."

Pamela focused on the plane. The engine sounds grew worse, then cleared somewhat, then became rough again. She prayed that she would make it to the runway.

Carefully she calculated her approach, remaining higher than normal in case she lost power. As she came in to land, she cut the power and settled gently onto the runway. She taxied to a stop and climbed out of the plane. A mechanic hurried toward the plane when he heard the engine's warning noises. "Were you in that plane?" the mechanic asked? "It sounds terrible!"

Safe in God's Hands

Pamela's faith has grown a lot as she has seen how God has protected her. She has shared her story with others, and readily agrees when people tell her that God was watching over her that day.

** Every airplane has a call number to identify it. The number used in this story is fictitious.*

Pamela Love still loves to fly. She would like to become a flight instructor.

Let's talk

- ? Pamela exhibits certain characteristics that make her a safe pilot. She is able to focus on her task and not panic or be
 - distracted when unexpected events interrupt her. How can these characteristics help Christian teens live and grow in their faith?
- ? Pamela's dream was to join the Air Force's precision flying team, the Thunderbirds. But she is not tall enough to enter the Air Force
 - Academy's flight program. Although disappointed, she has focused on other ways she can attain her goals in life. How would you react to such a disappointment? Would you blame God? How does your response to disappointment reflect your faith?

PRAY pray

Pray that each member of the class will choose to focus their energies on doing their best in school, in their personal life, and in the career they have chosen.





Muriel

GraceLink Connection: Grace.

A teenager finds that a mission trip not only helps others but herself as well.

Muriel's Missionary Experience

Muriel Mercaral

I grew up in the Philippines, but I moved to the United States when I was 13 to be with my mother, who had been working here, trying to earn money for the family to come and join her. At first I was scared to come to a strange country, but I was also excited to see my mom again.

I enrolled in a public school and began adjusting to my new life. At first I did not mind the public school, but then I began to realize that I was being influenced by those around me. I was getting used to seeing other kids drink and use drugs. While I did not get involved with those things, I began to feel comfortable around people who were using them. I had to get away. I was not an Adventist at the time, but I did not want to get involved in things that would drag me down.

New School

My aunt suggested that I attend an Adventist boarding school with my cousin. I agreed, and we decided to be roommates at

the school. We settled into our routine and enjoyed our studies. My grades improved, and I began to learn about the Adventist faith, lifestyle, and dedication to God.

Shortly after school started, my aunt told us about a mission trip to Thailand that some of the teens in her church were planning to go on. It would be held over the Christmas break, so we would not miss school. I knew that Thailand was very hot, and working in the heat did not excite me, but I really wanted to travel. I knew that over Christmas break my friends from my former school would come around, and I did not want to get too involved again. I had to get away. So I eagerly agreed to go.

But as days passed, I began to lose interest in the trip. It began to sound more like work than fun. Besides, it would cost way more money than my mother could afford. My mother must have seen my lack of interest, because she asked me if I really wanted to go. I hesitated, but something made

me say yes.

But there was a big problem—I did not have the money to pay for my airfare. I told my aunt, and she suggested I ask people to help pay for the trip. Donations started coming in, and soon I realized that I would get to go on the trip. Suddenly I could hardly wait for Christmas break.

Off to Thailand

At last it was time to go. Thirty of us met at the airport, eager to board our flight. I knew only five of them and our sponsors, but that was OK. They accepted me and made me feel welcome.

The flight to Thailand took more than a day, and we were all tired when we arrived. But as we rode from the airport to the central meeting place, I stared in amazement at all the new and exciting things to see, smell, taste.

We received our work assignment and piled into the bus that would take us there. Suddenly I did not mind working in the heat; this was going to be





fun! My cousin explained that thousands of Adventist youth had come from all over the world to work and worship in Thailand.

We arrived at our work site and learned that our assignment was to build two dams out of rocks. We had to put the rocks and gravel into rice bags and place them in the dam site; then we reinforced them with logs. When all of the rocks and gravel and logs were in place, we then covered it all with mud. It took a lot of hard work, but with all of us working together we got done really quickly. After we finished building the dams we moved to another location to dig trenches. This was hard work too.

After three days of digging, building, and sweating, we traveled back to a central location for the meetings that were being held. There was preaching and a lot of singing and time for all of us young people to get to know one another.

I made friends with one of the

girls in my group to whom I had never spoken much. It felt good to know that I would go home with a new friend from this trip.

One night a young Thai boy asked me if I was an Adventist. I had to think about that for a little bit. I was not really sure whether to say yes or no. I was not baptized as an Adventist, but I was with an Adventist group, and I felt as if I were an Adventist. So I told him, "Yes, I am." It felt good to be able to say that. It made me feel proud. I kept talking with the boy, and he had a lot of questions about the Bible and about Adventists. I did not know all of the answers, since I had been attending an Adventist school for just three months, so I told him that one of the Adventist pastors could answer his questions better than I could. I later saw him at one of the meetings. Seeing him made me think about the answer I had given him. *I'm not really an Adventist, I thought. Maybe it's time to do something about that.*

Forever Changed

Too soon it was time to return home. I knew I would never be the same. It was not the hard work or the great fun times we had on this trip that had changed me; it was realizing that I wanted Jesus to be my Savior and my Friend.

When I arrived home, I asked the church pastor to baptize me. Several weeks later, after I completed Bible studies, I was baptized into the Adventist Church.

My life is a lot more peaceful than it was before, because I believe in Jesus and am building a stronger relationship with Him. I know that He is with me, no matter what. I can walk forward in life with confidence, because I know that God is there for me, walking beside me. I am not alone.

Muriel Mercaral was a senior at Highland View Academy at the time of this story. She hopes to study communications or accounting, perhaps in her homeland of the Philippines.

let's talk

- ? Mission trips are a popular activity for Adventist young people. What good do they serve? *[Youth are able to experience a new culture, see the needs there, and learn to share their possessions and their love with others. The receiving community gets much-needed help, and the young workers make friends for a lifetime.]*
- ? How did Muriel's mission trip change her? *[She was already learning about God, but had not yet made a commitment to follow Him. The mission trip was an opportunity to make that commitment.]*
- ? We don't have to go on a mission trip to be a missionary. How can we be missionaries in our own communities? *[Record responses on a board. Encourage class members to choose a ministry they are impressed by God to do.]*

PRAY pray **PRAY**

Pray that Muriel will allow God to use her to share Jesus with those she meets, wherever she is.



Program

Reaching the Masses, One at a Time

Advance Preparation: Prepare a recording of someone turning the dial of a radio. Stop for a few seconds on a news broadcast, some music, an advertisement, and general radio noise. Intersperse some television clips from a drama, a comedy, etc. Make sure each clip is long enough to allow people to identify that they are listening to an advertisement, news, etc., but short enough that listeners will not be distracted by the contents of the recording. Total length should be about a minute.

Prepare a second recording featuring a minute or two of a well-known Adventist radio or television program, such as *Faith for Today*, *The Evidence*, *Voice of Prophecy*, or *It Is Written*.

Prepare a third short recording of Christian music and a gentle voice-over saying, "This is radio station SDA, filling your day with heavenly music and uplifting programs to draw you closer to God." Soft Christian music continues to play as it fades to silence.

Locate a shofar (a Jewish ram's horn used to call people to worship), or ask a local Jewish synagogue for permission to record the shofar being blown. Play the recording to introduce the third major project. If possible, borrow or make a Jewish prayer shawl and yarmulke (Jewish skullcap) for a man to wear, symbolizing the Jewish priesthood. If you locate the shofar, ask the man to practice holding it [see page 5 of adult *Mission*] and blowing it. If no shofar is available, create a "horn" from a rolled piece of paper, and pretend to blow as the recording plays.

Participants: Narrator, man and woman watching television, youth listening to a radio.

Opening Song "Christ for the World"
The SDA Hymnal, No. 370

Scripture Responsive Reading, *The SDA Hymnal*, No. 768

Prayer

Program "Reaching the Masses, One at a Time"

Offering Ask the primary/ kindergarten children to sing or sign special music for the offertory.

Closing Song "Working, O Christ, With Thee"
The SDA Hymnal, No. 582

Setting: Play the prepared recording while a man sits in front of a television with the remote control in his hand and a youth walks across the stage "listening" to his/her portable radio, stopping to change channels several times. [Note: radio should be large enough so that it is obvious to the viewer what he/she is doing.]

Wife: Is there anything interesting on tonight, dear?

Husband: Naw. Just the same old thing—murders, politics, weather followed by game shows and murder shows...sometimes I wonder why I bother to watch. [Sighs.]

Wife: Mary told me about a station she watches that she really likes. It is a Christian station, and it has no violence, no news, no weather, just good Christian programs. I believe it is operated by Seventh-day Adventists. Wait! I wrote down the channel number [reaches into her pocket for a



piece of paper]. Here it is. Try this.

[Husband locates channel on television and sits back to listen as second recording is played. Smiles contentedly as he watches the program. Wife sits down beside husband to watch as program voices/music slowly fade to silence.]

Narrator: In New York City and most other populated regions of North America, viewers have hundreds of television channels to watch. But few offer, life-changing, Christ-honoring programming throughout the day.

The Adventist Church in New York operates a small television station that reaches some parts of the city. If it had more power and a better production studio, it could increase its viewing audience by millions. Think of the possibilities! People would have an alternative to mind-numbing violence, endless sports events, and meaningless comedy. They could hear the gospel of Jesus preached, discussed, and lived out in the Christian programming of this station.

People who watch the station's programs will recognize the name Seventh-day Adventist, and when evangelistic meetings or special events are announced, they will know who Adventists are. Often during the day they will have opportunities to contact the various media centers in response to programs they have seen. The potential to reach the millions of people living and working in New York City is there. We just need to use it. Part of today's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help reach the people of New York City with broadcast evangelism.

[Husband and wife may

quietly exit platform or remain motionless as scene changes. Youth carrying a portable radio walks onto stage. He pretends to change stations, listens for a moment, then changes channels again. Facial expressions show his dissatisfaction over what he is hearing on the radio; body language suggests when he is listening to music. He dials once more, stops and listens, then smiles, nodding.]

Youth: Ah, at last some decent music. H'mmm. I wonder what station this is. I don't remember hearing it before. *[Looks at dial on radio and sees the setting while third recording is played identifying the station as Adventist.]*

Adventist? Who are Seventh-day Adventists? I've never heard of them before. Oh well, the music is good. I'll have to remember where to find this station so I can listen while I'm working. *[While still listening to the radio, he/she slowly walks off the stage or steps back and stands still.]*

Narrator: When television emerged in the 1950s, many predicted that radio would soon become obsolete. But radio has never lost its influence or its power. In fact, more people listen to radio today than ever. While driving to work, walking to school, at work and at play, millions find radio to be a constant companion.

The Adventist Church in North America operates a number of radio stations, some of which are associated with our colleges and universities. Others are privately owned stations that broadcast in local areas only. But each one seeks to uplift Jesus and draw people to the Savior.

Two areas of North America, northern Minnesota and the

Portland, Oregon, metropolitan area, are seeking to begin operating radio stations powerful enough to reach 1 million listeners. Part of today's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help make these plans a reality, so that thousands more can hear that Jesus is coming again.

[Man wearing yarmulke and prayer shawl steps onto platform, turns to one side, and blows the shofar.]

Jewish man: "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one" (Deuteronomy 6:4, NIV).

We Jews still believe that we are God's chosen people. Some of us still wait for the Messiah to come. Many of us search the Scriptures for signs of His coming.

You Adventists know that the Messiah has come. You know that Jesus died for you and me. But it is difficult to tell a Jew that Jesus is the Messiah, especially when the way you worship is different from our traditional way of worship.

[Smiling] Ah, but I have heard that there are now Jewish Adventist worship centers in a few cities in North America. They are reaching out to my people, the Jews. They provide a place to worship in the Jewish context, not in the traditional Christian way. That is more comfortable, more welcoming for us Jews.

Recently I saw that there is a new center in the state of Florida dedicated to teaching people about Jesus. This is good. The center will be used to train people how to speak with Jews, how to relate to Jews, how to share with Jews.

One day my people will hear that the Messiah has come. Please, hurry, finish the Jewish center in Florida, so that many of my people will hear that the





Messiah has come before it is too late.

Narrator: The Jewish people must be reached with the gospel of Christ, for they are part of the “all peoples and tongues and nations” that must hear the message before Jesus can return.

We have a lot to do today to help North America reach its one third billion people with the message that Jesus loves them, Jesus wants to take them home when He comes, and He is coming soon.

What will you do today to help take the gospel to North America?

[Offering]

Offering Goal Device

Create a goal device that will help your Sabbath School members remember missions from week to week.

Determine your division goal for Sabbath School offerings, and divide the quarter's goal into 12 equal parts. Let your Sabbath School members know what the goal is so that

each class can work toward a common goal.

Since the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will go toward funding three broadcast projects, create a transmission tower (see drawing below) and divide the tower's supports into 12 sections. Each time one twelfth of the total goal for the quarter is reached, color in a section of the tower. When the total goal is reached, replace the black “broadcast circles” with red or gold circles to indicate victory.



Report to Stockholders (continued from page 4)

to tune in to the two-hour special. It was . . . refreshing to hear the gospel and the . . . amazing love of God . . . presented in such intellectual and scientific terms. The program is fantastic.”

“Recently I happened onto your show. . . . Fabulous! What a fresh, interesting, and thought-provoking way to tell people’s testimonies. I enjoy that the interviews are from individuals in vastly different venues of life. . . . And even the extremely talented artists and how their faith is integrated into their work. Your show has a different vibe to it, and I am now a faithful viewer.”

This television network was so

thrilled with the response from airing *The Evidence* that they have invited the Faith for Today team back for another two-hour special, this time focusing on health. The program will be aired around the world.

So from the producers of *The Evidence*, from the North American Division, and from those who have been blessed by this broadcast, a hearty “Thank you.”

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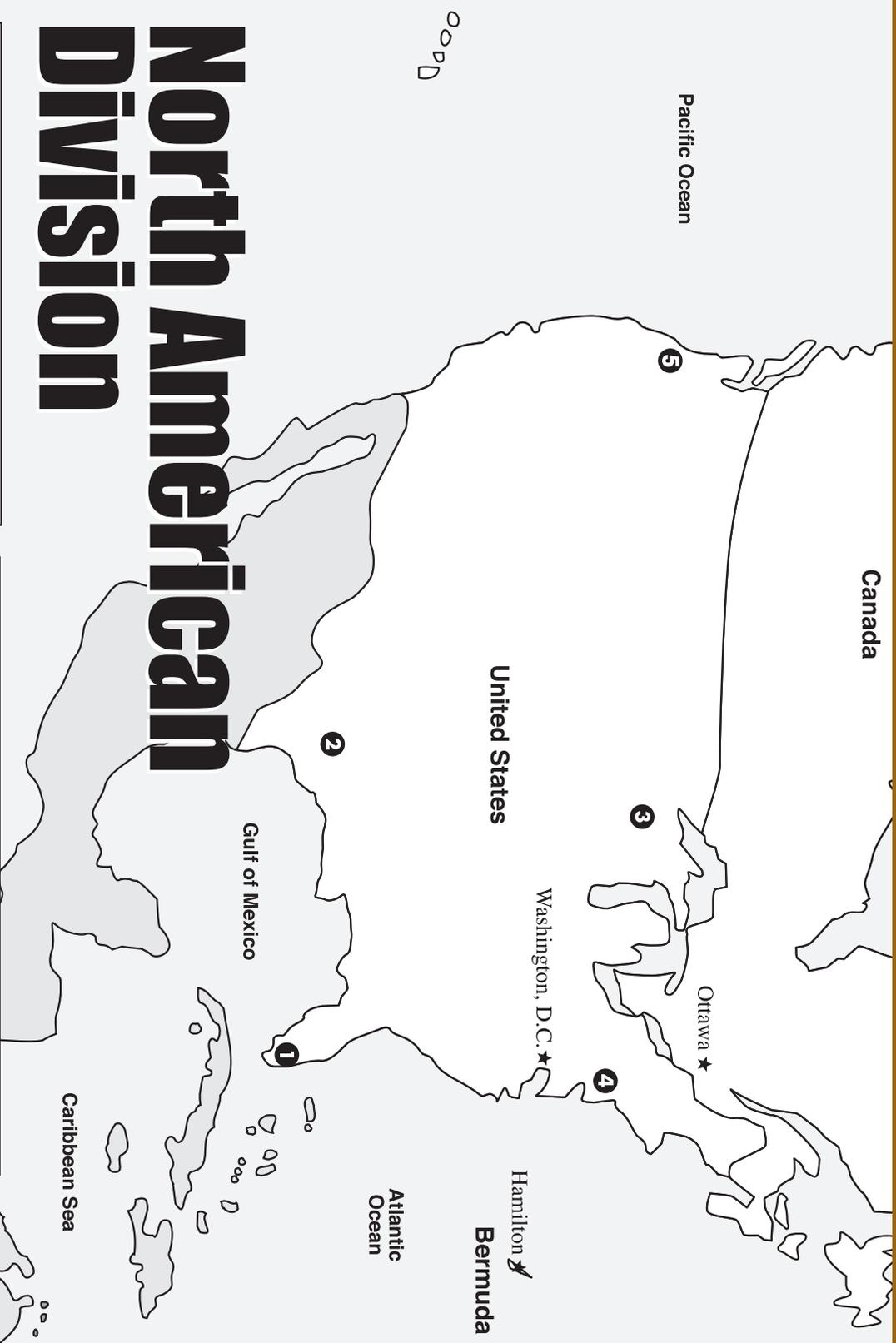
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Where legally possible, offerings will go to these projects, otherwise special arrangements will be made with the General Conference for distribution of funds based on the laws of the countries where these offerings are collected.



North American Division

Union	Churches	Companies	Membership	Population
Atlantic	501	73	95,563	33,879,392
Canada	330	80	52,955	31,657,000
Columbia	612	68	115,175	48,974,016
Lake	500	46	77,418	34,806,533
Mid-America	469	46	58,546	24,628,907
North Pacific	414	66	88,361	12,622,470
Pacific	658	87	208,918	46,763,382
Southern	989	91	213,956	55,445,582
Southwestern	546	56	81,154	34,456,718
Total	5,019	613	992,046	323,214,000

- Project**
- 1 Shalom Learning Center, Florida
 - 2 Extension television studios in Texas for Adventist media production
 - 3 Radio station in Minnesota to cover the area
 - 4 Improve the outreach of existing television station in New York City
 - 5 Develop a radio station in the metropolitan area of Portland, Oregon

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