VISITOR

CONNECTING COLUMBIA UNION SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

JANUARY 2014 ▪ VOLUME 119 ▪ ISSUE 1

Like Prayer?

Why you should do it more.

Contents

Pray Without Ceasing

4 | Newsline

6 | Noticias

8 | Underscore

10 | Feature

Like Prayer?

Tamyra Horst

Like prayer, but find it hard to make the time? You're not alone, but Tamyra Horst, author of *Praying Like Crazy* and other books, shares why we should do it more—and often.

15 | Newsletters

44 | Bulletin Board

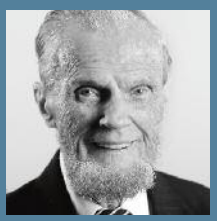
EDITOR'S CORNER

HOW DID WE DO?

Following the theme "Going Deeper in 2013," we brainstormed and worked to publish thoughtful, objective features that delved into topics we believe you are talking, thinking and asking questions about, such as New Year's resolutions for the church, the realities of single adult Adventists, Ben Carson's future, the "Nones" and other trending newsmakers. We even inquired about where our church stands on current issues. How did we do? What topics would you like to see us tackle in 2014? Send your feedback to visitor@columbiaunion.net.

DID YOU GET YOUR CALENDAR?

The 2014 *Visitor Calendar* is in the mail and features words of wisdom and favorite Bible texts of some of our senior members. January features Robert Toms (pictured) of Mountain View Conference's Buckhannon (W.Va.) church. At 92 the retired pastor is still active in ministry and walks 2 to 4 miles a day. Not surprisingly, his words of wisdom reflect the secret to his longevity and make for a good New Year's resolution.



EXTRA, EXTRA!

With the help of our sponsor ADRA, we mailed 55,000 copies of the 2014 *Visitor Calendar* to members across the Columbia Union. Because so many of you appreciate our annual labor of love and ask for extras, we printed 5,000 additional copies in hopes that you will share them with friends, neighbors, co-workers and others in your community. To get your free copies, please email bweigley@columbiaunion.net.

ADRA
Adventist Development and Relief Agency

MORE FREE STUFF

Each month the calendar includes a call to prayer, a suggestion for outreach and a social media challenge for giveaways. Participate to win a Roku, discounts on Adventist products and more. This month let us know your favorite hymn on facebook.com/columbiaunionvisitor and you could win a Hope Channel *My Story My Song* DVD.

—Celeste Ryan Blyden

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MISSION STATEMENT ■ The *Visitor* provides news and information, resources for effective ministry, and insight on issues with a spiritual focus to help people celebrate God's transforming grace in preparation for His return.

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Volume 119 ■ Issue 1

The Emperor and Ellen White

Franz Joseph I, the emperor of Austria and king of Hungary and Bohemia from 1848 to 1916, ruled for 68 years, the third-longest reign in the recorded history of Europe. Though his life was not exemplary in every aspect, he did have one commendable practice. Each morning he arrived in his study at 5 o'clock to pray at the altar next to his desk. The altar remains today in his palace in Austria as a testament to the value he placed on prayer.

During the same time period, Seventh-day Adventist Church co-founder Ellen G. White also lived, prayed and wrote much about the value of prayer. My favorite written work on connecting with God comes from "The Privilege of Prayer," chapter 11 in her book *Steps to Christ*. It articulates four elements of meaningful communication with God that, when applied, facilitate a vibrant relationship:

1. Recognize our great need for Christ. When we realize that, as the apostle Paul states in Ephesians 6, we wrestle not with humanity but with great spiritual forces beyond our strength, it becomes clear that we need a power greater than ourselves to prevail in our Christian walk.

2. Sin separates. The psalmist David says, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me" (Ps. 66:18). It is not so much that God turns a deaf ear to us, as much as our sin prevents our hearts from hearing *Him*.

3. Forgiveness opens the floodgates of blessing. Experiencing God's mercy and grace becomes a blessing He wants us to bestow upon those who have wronged or wounded us, thereby "paying it forward."

4. Faith is the key to unlock His promises. When we pray, we must believe He will answer in a way that is best for us. Psalm 84:11 promises, "No good thing does He withhold from those who walk uprightly" (ESV).

Some years ago at a conference office worship, Pastor Cindy Tutsch, who recently retired as associate director of the Ellen G. White Estate, Inc., shared another moving message about the value of prayer from *Steps to Christ*, which reads in part: "Keep your wants, your joys, your sorrows, your cares, and your fears before God. You cannot burden Him; you cannot weary Him. … There is no chapter in our experience too dark for Him to read; there is no perplexity too difficult for Him to unravel" (p. 100).

My prayer for 2014 is that we will make prayer our daily priority. In doing so, we will experience the immeasurable joy of God's presence, which is the first step toward helping us reach our union wide goal to "experience the mission."

Dave Weigley (dweigley@columbiaunion.net) is president of the Columbia Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

Newsline

TAASHI ROWE

SIX UNION MEMBERS HONORED FOR MINISTRY

At their year-end meetings, the officers of the Columbia Union Conference recognized those who have made a significant contribution to ministry in the union. Six were honored with a special luncheon and the Notable Person of Honor Award.

The honorees (pictured left to right) were Samuel DeShay, PhD, MD, who served in Africa as a medical missionary; Carol Wright, undertreasurer for the Columbia Union; Henry Wright, pastor of the Community Praise Center in Alexandria, Va.; and Raj Attiken, retired president of the Ohio Conference. Sedley Johnson, pastor of Chesapeake Conference's Northeast and Dundalk churches in Baltimore, and Judy Olson, director of the Friends-R-Fun Child Development Center in Summersville, W.Va., were not present to receive their awards. Read more about the honorees at columbiaunion.org/personofhonor.

TWO OUTGOING COMMITTEE MEMBERS RECOGNIZED

During year-end meetings, Columbia Union officers also recognized two committee members who will no longer be serving. After 2.5 years on the committee, William Joseph (pictured with Dave Weigley, Columbia Union president) is no longer eligible to serve as he was recently named Ministerial Association secretary for the Allegheny West Conference. Raj Attiken, who served 15 years on the committee, recently announced his retirement from the presidency of the Ohio Conference. Weymouth Spence, president of Washington Adventist University in Takoma Park, Md., also recognized Attiken for his service on the university's board.

COMMITTEE TO EXPLORE EVANGELISM INITIATIVE

At the Columbia Union Conference Executive Committee's last meeting of 2013, members voted to create a subcommittee to develop a unionwide school of evangelism for young adults.

"There is a crisis in Adventism," said Dave Weigley, union president. "We are getting grayer ... We need to figure out a better way to engage young adults because, now when they leave, studies show that they are not coming back."

Frank Bondurant, the union's vice president for Ministries Development, shared the results of a visit to SOULS West, Pacific Union Conference's school of evangelism based in Arizona. He and a study committee recommended that a Columbia Union equivalent be formed for the following reasons: churches need more trained, experienced Bible workers; it could be a life-changing experience for young people; those trained would return to their churches and revitalize them; and this would be a low-cost, effective approach to filling gaps in the cycle of evangelism.

The hope is that after finding a director, the school could be launched in September. They also established a separate young adult subcommittee specifically tasked with addressing one of the union's six priorities for the 2011-16 quinquennium: engaging and partnering with youth and young adults to further the mission of the church.

WHAT DID YOU GAIN FROM ATTENDING THE TREASURY MEETINGS?

I was inspired by devotional speaker Mary Grace's testimony. She showed us there are no limitations to God, and that there is always a blessing to everything He has in store for each and every one of us. God can use what we think of as a disability to bless others as long as we are putting Him first and allowing Him to live through our lives.—*Haycin C. Nurse, Allegheny West Conference assistant treasurer*

I enjoyed getting information from professionals outside of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. It was also very helpful for me to get information on the new healthcare law. I work with Hispanic Ministries, and we have about 20 pastors who I'm sure will have questions. I am now in a better place to explain how this will affect them.—*Luis Alferez, Potomac Conference assistant treasurer and auditor*

The meetings encourage unity in the area of our financial ministry. It was a time to share similar experiences and ideas and create relationships that increase camaraderie among conferences. Within the next year, as I may struggle with an issue that I know another associate treasurer is struggling with, I'll pray for them.—*Karen Schneider, Pennsylvania Conference associate treasurer*

18 Million

The number of members belonging to the global Seventh-day Adventist Church as of September 30, 2013.

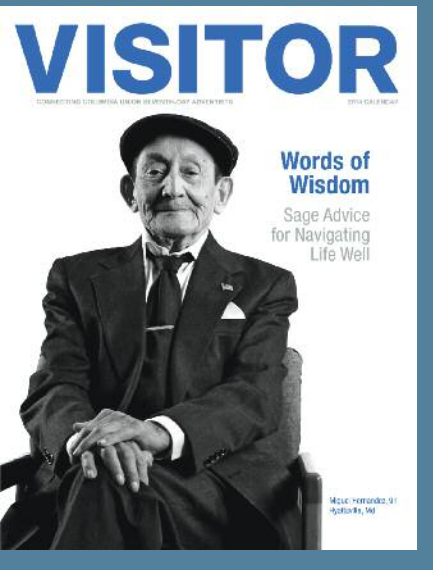
Source: General Conference Archives, Statistics and Research Department

2014 *Visitor Calendar* Features Senior Members

Miguel Hernandez, 91, is one of 16 Columbia Union senior members featured in this year's *Visitor Calendar*. In this issue, titled *Words of Wisdom*, we asked members who are enjoying their golden years to share their favorite Bible verses and some valuable lessons they've learned along the way.

Hernandez, a member of Potomac Conference's Langley Park Spanish church in Takoma Park, Md., believes in staying involved. "There is no age limit for serving in your church," says Hernandez, who still serves as a deacon. He has always been fascinated by Jesus' life, and found a lot of meaning in the text, "The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10).

Each month we plan to feature a senior on our new website, columbiaunionvisitor.com, and on our Facebook page, which is facebook.com/columbiaunionvisitor.



Noticias

TAASHI ROWE

EL TESORERO DE LA ASOCIACIÓN FUE INVITADO A LA GRAN INAUGURACIÓN DE UNA IGLESIA DE ARGENTINA

Seth Bardu (segundo a la izquierda), tesorero de Columbia Union Conference, y Rubén Ramos (en el centro), asistente del presidente para Ministerios Multiligües de Columbia Union, junto a los miembros de la iglesia de Carmen frente a su nuevo edificio en Jujuy, Argentina. Cuando las autoridades de Columbia Union visitaron el lugar hace dos años para llevar a cabo una campaña evangelística, los miembros de la iglesia se reunían en sus casas. "No podían crecer porque no tenían espacio", compartió Ramos. Las autoridades se interesaron en ayudarlos con los fondos necesarios para construir una iglesia y cuando regresaron a las oficinas de la asociación en Columbia, Md., se mantuvieron en contacto. Los hermanos argentinos construyeron la iglesia ellos mismos. Aunque todavía no está terminada, los miembros invitaron a Bardu y Ramos para que asistieran a la gran inauguración de la iglesia. Bardu tuvo la predicación y hubo varios bautismos.

LOS MIEMBROS DE CHESAPEAKE COMPARTEN ALIMENTO ESPIRITUAL CON 5,000

En el día de Acción de Gracias, cuando la mayoría pensaba en pavos, rellenos y pasteles de calabaza, los miembros de la iglesia hispana Dundalk en Baltimore, Chesapeake Conference, se preocupó por el hambre espiritual. Los miembros se reunieron en la iglesia para celebrar un servicio especial y compartir una cena de Acción de Gracias. Luego del mensaje de Orlando Rosales, asociado de la asociación para Ministerios Multilingües, donaron remeras con el mensaje "Jesús dice: ven a mí, vengo pronto, vengo por ti" en inglés y en español. Luego, viajaron a cinco zonas de Baltimore para distribuir 5,000 copias del *Camino a Cristo* en español y en inglés y 100 revistas misioneras. Alrededor de ocho visitas se unieron para esta actividad y distribuyeron todo el material en tres horas.

LAS IGLESIAS HISPANAS DE FILADELFIA SE UNEN PARA EVANGELIZAR

La última vez que las iglesias hispanas de Pennsylvania Conference se unieron para evangelizar fue hace aproximadamente 25 años. Este otoño, varias iglesias en el área de Filadelfia decidieron que ya era hora de cambiar eso. Después de distribuir CD con sermones a los amigos, familiares y vecinos, las iglesias Philadelphia Spanish I, II, Maranatha Spanish, South Philadelphia Spanish, Philadelphia Youth Connect y Lawndale Spanish se reunieron en un salón de bodas local para patrocinar una serie evangelística de una semana de duración titulada "Transformados por el Espíritu" y conducida por Andrés Portes, evangelista/director del ministerio La Voz del Consolador. Cada noche, una iglesia diferente dirigía los servicios y brindaba información sobre la iglesia, la ubicación y los ministerios a un número de 450 a 500 asistentes. Al final de la campaña, hubo 30 bautismos, 100 personas se interesaron en estudios bíblicos y se estableció una nueva iglesia, Juniata Spanish.

Entre los pastores que participaron estuvieron Winston Simpson, Gabriel Montalvo y Elias Saud (foto). "Tuve que alabar a Dios", contó Montalvo. "Queríamos ver a la iglesia unida con un propósito y vimos que el Espíritu llevó a los miembros a participar. Creo que la vida de la iglesia aquí en Filadelfia ha cambiado y lo hicimos como una iglesia y fue maravilloso".

VISITOR CALENDAR 2014 CON LOS MIEMBROS MAYORES

Miguel Hernández, 91, y Juan Sánchez, 93, son algunos de los 16 miembros mayores de Columbia Union que aparecerán en el *Visitor Calendar* de este año. En esta entrega titulada *Words of Wisdom* [palabras de sabiduría] pedimos a los miembros que disfrutan de sus años dorados que compartan sus versículos bíblicos favoritos y algunas lecciones valiosas que aprendieron con los años.

Hernández y Sánchez, ambos miembros de la iglesia hispana Langley Park en Takoma Park, Md., Potomac Conference, permanecen activos. "No existe un límite de edad para servir a la iglesia", dice Hernández, que todavía es diácono. Sánchez aconseja a los lectores que "sigan en movimiento". Hernández cuenta que siempre estuvo fascinado por la vida de Jesús y que encontró un gran propósito en el texto, "El ladrón no viene sino para hurtar, matar y destruir; yo he venido para que tengan vida, y para que la tengan en abundancia" (Juan 10:10). Sánchez señala que su versículo favorito es Éxodo 20:12, que dice "Honra a tu padre y a tu madre, para que tus días se alarguen en la tierra que Jehová, tu Dios, te da".

FOTOGRAFÍA DE PATRICK SMITH

Cada mes queremos presentar a un miembro mayor en nuestro sitio web y en nuestra página de Facebook: facebook.com/columbiaunionvisitor. Si quieres copias adicionales del calendario, contáctate con Becky Weigley en bweigley@columbiaunion.net.

LA "CARAVANA" DE NUEVA JERSEY GANA 222 ALMAS

"Nuestro objetivo era bautizar a 100 personas, pero para el tercer día, ya teníamos 97 hermosas almas que habían entregado sus vidas a Dios. En total se bautizaron 220 [222] personas", dijo el pastor Jorge Agüero, director de Ministerios Personales de la asociación.

La Caravana de la Esperanza es una serie de evangelismo móvil presentada por el evangelista Alejandro Bullón. La serie, de una semana de duración, comenzó en la iglesia Luso-Brazillian en Newark y realizó otras 32 paradas en iglesias hispanas de Bridgeton, Robbinsville, Edison, Vineland, Rahway, Newark, Jersey City y Elizabeth.

Los líderes de la asociación afirman que los bautismos fueron el resultado del arduo trabajo realizado por miembros, grupos pequeños, iglesias y pastores de New Jersey Conference.

Gracias a los bautismos, el número de miembros de la asociación ascendió a 15.006.

209,711

El número de adventistas del séptimo día hispanos en la División Norteamericana (DNA) en 2012 según el departamento de Ministerios Multiétnicos de la división. Significa que constituyen el grupo étnico más grande en la iglesia norteamericana.

Artículo especial de *Visitor*: Orad sin cesar

En esta edición de la revista *Visitor*, nos centramos en la oración. Pablo nos exhorta: "Orad sin cesar" (1 Ts. 5:17). Queremos hacerlo. Sabemos que debemos hacerlo. Pero es una lucha. Muchos de nosotros luchamos para tener unos pocos momentos de oración en la mañana antes de que comience el trajín diario.

Con la ayuda de Survey Monkey para realizar una encuesta no científica, pregunté a más de 50 pastores, profesores y administradores de Columbia Union cómo hacían para orar diariamente en medio de sus ocupaciones. El treintaiuno por ciento respondió que oraba menos de 20 minutos por día.

El enemigo hará todo lo posible para evitar que oremos: nos distrae, nos mantiene muy ocupados, nos hace dudar de que Dios responda "nuestras" oraciones y nos hace temer que no estemos orando "bien" o lo suficiente.

Creo que debemos seguir orando de todas maneras. No pienses que tus oraciones no son lo suficientemente buenas. Recuerda que le estás hablando a un Dios que *desea* saber de ti. Un encuestado dio este excelente consejo: "Que no pase un día sin que hables con Dios". Lee más en inglés en la pág. 10.

—Tamyra Horst

ARIN GENCER

Despite Negative Press and a Drop in the Polls, is God Making a Comeback?

About a year ago, a Pew Research Center report revealed that a rapidly growing number of Americans didn't identify with any religion, jumping to 20 percent of the public and one-third of adults younger than 30. But, a quick scan of the country's cultural landscape suggests Americans do have a keen interest in—if not a passion for—God and spiritual things. From books to television to the digital realm, religious subjects and themes surround us. Some books like *Zealot*, *God is Not Great* and *The God Delusion* question its relevance, while many other sources offer a more positive viewpoint.

A glance at the *New York Times* best-seller list shows Bill O'Reilly's *Killing Jesus* held the top spot for more than a month in 2013. *Proof of Heaven*, a neurosurgeon's account of his otherworldly experience while lying in a coma, resided on the list for a year and, along with the devotional *Jesus Calling*, was among the top overall sellers of the first quarter of 2013, according to *Publisher's Weekly*.

Programs with religious themes have popped up all over cable television in the past few years, including *The American Bible Challenge* on the Game Show Network and *The Bible* miniseries, which debuted on the History Channel in March 2013 with 13.1 million viewers—reportedly the biggest audience for a cable broadcast at that point of the year. The show became the top-selling miniseries of all time after its home-video release, and an NBC sequel is in the works.

Online, the 2012 YouTube sensation "Why I Hate Religion, But Love Jesus" has had more than 26 million views and led to a corresponding book, *Jesus > Religion*, released last October. GodTube, the Christian answer to YouTube, continues to see tens of thousands of hits, while monthly Google searches for "God," "Jesus" and "Christianity" surge. And, the Bible app YouVersion has millions of users across the country.

"There's been a growing gulf between formal religion and what people might call spirituality—it's very much an individual thing," says William Johnsson, who leads interfaith relations for the North American Division (NAD) and teaches world religions at Loma Linda University (Calif.). "In fact, spirituality is being manifested in all sorts of ways. ...There is a big tendency toward individuals seeking after God, or seeking in small groups rather than churches."

SEEKING ANSWERS AND AUTHENTICITY

For Raj Attiken, retired Ohio Conference president, and others, the reasons behind the popularity of God and religious subjects, even as fewer affiliate with a particular religion, vary. Our interconnected world has become smaller, exposing people to forms of spirituality beyond the Judeo-Christian tradition dominating Western culture, Attiken says, which may drive some to seek God (or a god).

The trend may also reflect a realization that science, technology, reason and experience don't satisfy, and that there must be something more, he says—as well as people's attempts to make sense of national and global calamities and crises in recent years.

Generational differences, from the baby boomers to the Millennials, are driving this shift as well, says Dave Gemmell, associate director of the NAD Ministerial Department. "Every new generation has to express faith in their own unique setting," he says. "Millennials, by and large, have not accepted the cultural setting of boomers … and don't attend traditional church."

But, this doesn't mean they have no interest in God. "There is among our [Seventh-day] Adventist young people a searching for authentic Christianity—to not be satisfied with traditional answers, but to really study the Bible and go deep," Johnsson says.

Yet relativism, the notion that there is no such thing as truth, also plays into whether people identify with a certain religion, says Stewart Pepper, an evangelist and the pastor of Mountain View Conference's Charleston (W.Va.) church. "If there's no such thing as right and wrong, if the truth is what you make it, why would I identify with a denomination that spouts truths?" Pepper says. "People without a clear sense of truth tend to lack commitment."

Join Our Twitter Chat

Take this conversation deeper!

Join church leaders from this article in our #relevantreligion Twitter chat on January 21 at noon.

MEETING PEOPLE WHERE THEY ARE

In a world where organized religion holds less sway, Adventists must find fresh ways—and patience—to make connections. Those ways may involve less focus on selling our faith and more on creating "the conditions and environment in which a person meets and falls in love with Jesus," says Attiken, who recently authored *Refreshed*, a monograph about making the Ohio Conference more Christocentric. The conference, for example, emphasizes that "the church must turn its face outside its own walls and immerse itself in the community," he says. "Jesus immersed himself into the brokenness and into the filth and messiness of our humanity."

Just paying attention to the people around us can allow God to open our eyes to their need and, in His time, show us opportunities to share Jesus, says Season Cromwell, evangelism director at Chesapeake Conference's New Hope church in Fulton, Md. "Jesus doesn't need to be sold. All we have to be is honest and love somebody and show them the truth," she says. "It's not about my success in being able to convert someone. It's about Jesus."

Cromwell launched a class at New Hope last fall that is specifically designed to offer a place for people to just ask questions about God and Christianity. A lot of times, people "want to see if that's what they want," she says. "They don't want to be indoctrinated; they want to check it out. This is an opportunity to do that."

Pastor Pepper has found getting people to believe the Adventist message isn't the real difficulty so much as getting commitments beyond that point. People are drawn by relationships, by being able to connect and identify with others. We need to engage people outside of evangelistic meetings and Bible studies, he suggests. "If you want to make your church outreach more effective, you have to have a social life," he says. "Don't bring them to a party to tell them about the Sabbath. Just tell them, 'We're going to have fun tonight.'"

The world may be turning away from organized religion, but a thirst for the divine clearly remains. "We have much to offer the world," Johnsson says of the Adventist Church. "But, what it comes down to is this: living close to the Lord, letting the Holy Spirit simply use us."

BY THE NUMBERS:

Average Monthly Internet Searches

320,000	Jesus/Jesus Christ
165,000	God
135,000	Greek gods
60,500	Christianity
49,500	Devil
27,100	Holy Spirit
12,100	Is God real?

SOURCE: GOOGLE (OCTOBER 2012–SEPTEMBER 2013)

Millennials Share God Through Art

For Jacob Gemmell (pictured) and his friends, church had become a routine of sorts. "We just didn't feel like church connected with us anymore," he says. "Church seemed more of a production rather than a celebration of God."

So, these Millennials decided to find new purpose in their spirituality. After brainstorming for months, they recently launched The Good Forum, a "community of artists and the like-minded" that meets monthly in Takoma Park, Md., to tackle a specific theme. Short presentations followed by discussion make for an interactive, conversational setting that is "less about the program and more about the people," and offers "not just one perspective of God," Gemmell says. "You're talking about a group of people who each has some insight on who God is. … God becomes less one-dimensional." Read more about this group at thegoodforum.org, and join one of their upcoming live streams.

Like Prayer?

why you should do it more

Tamyra Horst

It's still dark when I wake up. Squinting through eyes not ready for morning, I see that it's not quite 5 a.m. "Really, Lord?" I ask. "Do I have to get up this early?" But, I stumble out of bed before daylight because I've made a commitment to spend time with God in prayer and study each morning, and have asked Him to wake me to spend time with Him, claiming the verse, "He awakens me morning by morning" (Isa. 50:4). ■ Sitting in the chair by our big living room window, curled up in a blanket to ward off the early morning cool in the house, I watch the day dawn while studying and praying, giving God my day and praying for my husband, our sons, their girlfriends, family and friends—the list of people struggling and in need of prayer seems to grow longer each day. It's no longer dark by the time I get up to get ready for work. Feeling that peace that comes from hanging out with God, I head to the office, wanting to keep this connection all day.

Six Simple Ways to Pray Without Ceasing

Utilize quiet moments. Instead of turning on the car radio, talk to God. Skip using iTunes while exercising and pray instead. Pray when you wake in the middle of the night and as you fall asleep.

Schedule it. People who schedule time to pray are most likely to follow through. Set your phone, tablet or clock alarm to remind you—once a day, three times a day, every hour. Or place post-it notes in prominent places that you frequent (i.e., on the bathroom mirror or over the kitchen sink).

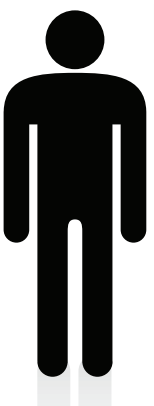
Solicit prayers from others. Let your Facebook wall, Twitter feed and Instagram pictures be your prayer request list. Or join the 1.4 million who have "liked" Prayer on Facebook and share.

React to life prompts. Let things you see throughout your day prompt you to pray: for people you see in photos at home or work and for those whose names you come across. When you hear sirens, pray for those impacted by the emergency. Pray for clients or patients as you visit with them.

Ask God for help. If you really want to pray more, ask God to wake you each morning (see Isa. 50:4) or to remind you throughout the day. He longs to spend time with you.

Pray for others—immediately. When someone asks you to pray for them, take a moment right then to pray aloud.

Want to pray more throughout your day? Above are six simple ideas for making prayer a consistent conversation with God.



PRAY WITHOUT CEASING

Paul encourages, "Pray without ceasing" (I Thess. 5:17). We want to. We know we should. But, it's a challenge. Our days are full to overflowing. Many of us struggle just to get a few quiet moments of prayer in the morning before the craziness of life begins. And, too often, if you're like me, you get to the end of the day and realize that you haven't really prayed much in between.

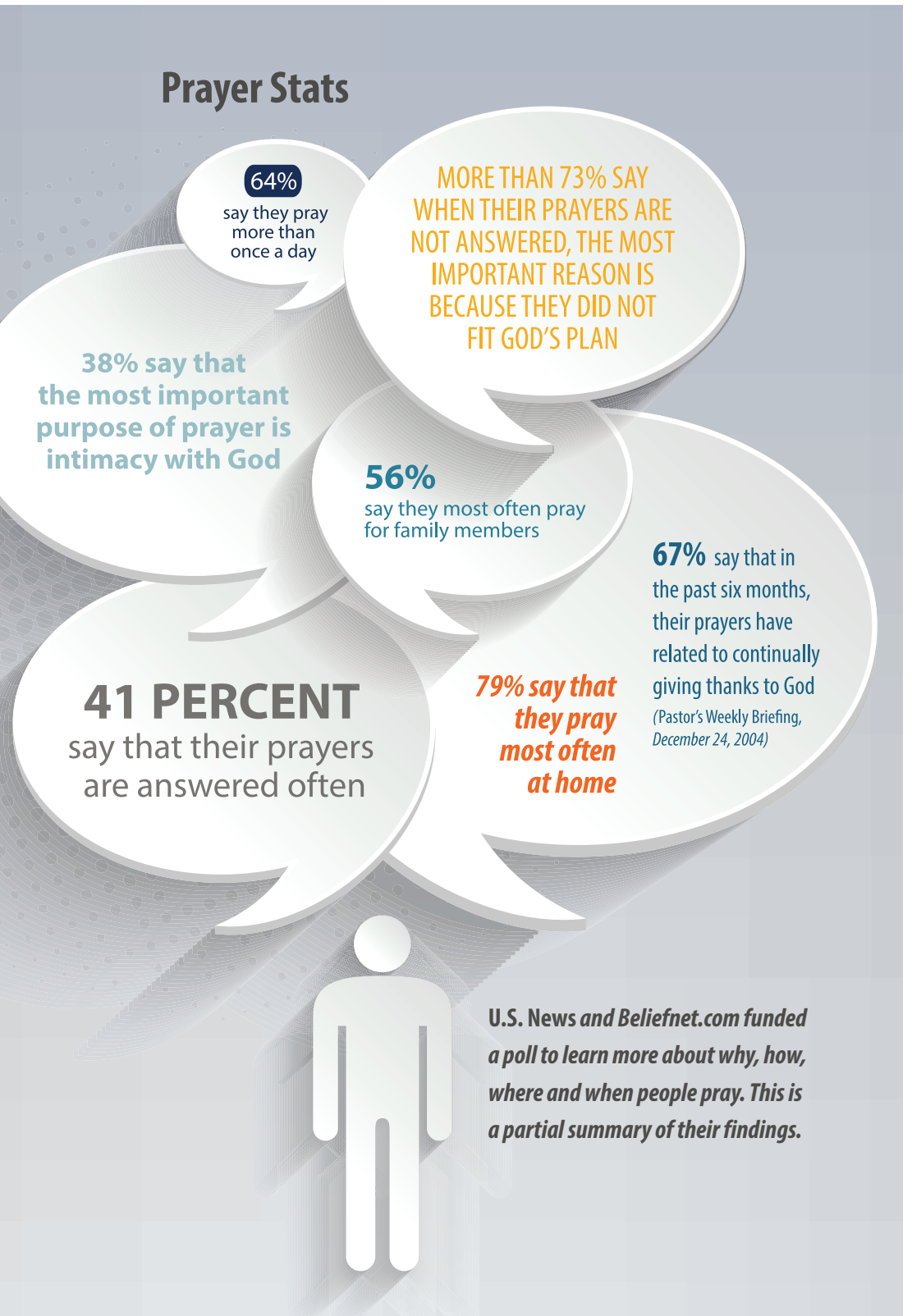
I'm not the only one who has decided to schedule time to pray each day. John Rengifo pastors four churches in Pennsylvania, three English and one Hispanic. He's also a husband and dad to three young children. Prayer is important to him, so he schedules time to pray with two of his head elders each morning at 6 o'clock. "It is most helpful in a super busy life to have a prayer partner who keeps you accountable," Rengifo encourages. "That time makes a big difference."

Using Survey Monkey for an unscientific poll, I asked more than 50 pastors, teachers and administrators across the Columbia Union how they manage to include daily prayer in their busy lives. Thirty-one percent reported praying less than 20 minutes a day! One admitted, "This is an area that I struggle with." Many said that scheduling time to pray was important to having a consistent time; most made a morning prayer time an important part of their routine.

But, they all said they want more. One respondent wrote, "[I] always begin and end each day with prayer. I also pray in between but still don't think I pray nearly enough." This desire to make prayer a consistent part of the day is more challenging than it seems. We head into our day with good intentions, but the urgent demands, interruptions and never ending to-do lists often keep us from remembering to "pray without ceasing." So, some of us have built reminders into our lives to send us back to prayer.

"I have a prayer list with all the names of the people I'm visiting and giving Bible studies to," comments one survey taker. "I keep it in my car. As I drive from one place to another, I pray for them."

Another comments, "I have visual reminders placed at different locations.



For example, on my desk I have a note that says, 'Nothing of any significance will happen without prayer!'"

John Kent, a church planter in metro Pittsburgh, shares, "I use the Reminder App on my phone to remind me to stop every hour and seek the heart and will of God." But, maybe nothing reminds us to pray like the struggles and challenges we and those we love face each day.

WHY PRAY?

Prayers for our family, friends and our own struggles keep us praying. Writing *Praying Like Crazy for Your Kids* was the quickest book I've ever completed—it just flowed from my heart because nothing drives me to prayer like the desires I have for my sons and the challenges they face. Most parents would agree—especially as our children grow older and have tougher choices and decisions to make.

And, while not all of our prayers are answered the way we want, seeing answers to prayer gives us hope that prayer really does make a difference. "The more I pray, the more I realize how powerful it is," says Joey Pollom, lead pastor of New Jersey Conference's Robbinsville church. "So, it is a constant goal of mine to pray more."

The more I pray, the more I realize that prayer isn't just something I "should" do; it's more than just a spiritual discipline or even something that God "wants" me to do. It's something I *need* to face life's battles.

The Great Controversy is more than just a book on our shelves; it is the truth of what we live every day. We live in a battle zone with an enemy who is out to destroy us. We may know the verse, "Your adversary the devil walks around like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Pet. 5:8), but most of us don't live in fear of being destroyed. Yet, the Bible tells us to "put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil" (Eph. 6:11), and then, once protected, to pray "always with all prayer and supplication" (verse 18). But, the enemy knows what will happen if we do pray and will do anything he can to keep us from it. "Satan well knows that all whom he can lead to neglect prayer and the searching of the scriptures, will be overcome by his attacks. Therefore he invents every possible device to engross the mind" (*The Great Controversy*, p. 519).

The enemy will do whatever he can to keep us from praying: he keeps us distracted, too busy, doubting that God will answer *our* prayers or fearing that we don't pray "right" or enough.

I believe our part is to just keep praying anyway. Don't get caught up in fear that your prayers aren't good enough. "Prayer is like talking to a friend," shares one respondent. "It doesn't have to be complicated."

Remember that you're talking to a God who *longs* to hear from you. One survey responder gave these great words of advice: "Don't go a day without talking to God—everything from long prayers to help-me-in-this-time-of-need prayers, to I-love-the-colors-You-put-in-the-sunset-today prayers, to thanking Him for His blessings and closeness and for taking-our-place-on-the-cross prayers, to laughing with Him over something funny that happens."

Tamyra Horst, director of Women's Ministries and communication for the Pennsylvania Conference, has published a number of books and resources.

Meditation: Road to Enlightenment or Ruin?

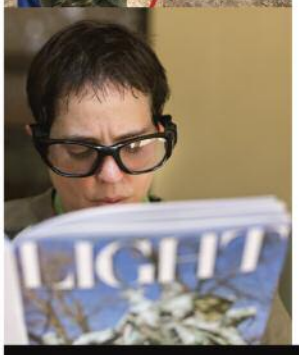
Meditation is becoming increasingly popular in the United States because of its health and spiritual benefits, but is it something Christians should incorporate into their prayer lives? Bodgan Scur, the associate professor of religion at Washington Adventist University in Takoma Park, Md., suggests avoiding types of meditation that focus on emptying your mind, but says meditation is a biblically based spiritual discipline we should use.

If you only have 15 minutes he recommends: a.) spending five minutes reading Scripture; b.) taking 10 minutes to try to understand the text and how it applies to your life.

Scur says Christian meditation is saturating your mind with the Word of God. "When it permeates your mind, it spills over into action, and we start reasoning and making decisions the way the Bible teaches," he says.

To read our full interview on spiritual growth with Scur, visit columbiaunionvisitor.com.

—V. Michelle Bernard



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Coatesville Church Acquires Historic Building

The W.C. Atkinson Memorial Community Services Center, a outreach ministry in Allegheny East Conference (AEC) based in Coatesville, Pa., recently enjoyed a milestone in what has been a 25-yearlong journey. Last month members of the nonprofit arm of the First church of Coatesville gained full ownership of the building (pictured) and complex that make up the center. The center began as a five-days-a-week homeless shelter housed in the lower level of the Coatesville church where they held their Sabbath School classes. The complex, built as hospital in 1927, contains a men's shelter which houses up to 22 homeless men each night, 18 apartments for low- to moderate-income families, two transitional houses for men and three permanent homes for disabled men. The center also provides a series of social services to the community.

The conference loaned the money for the purchase of the building in 1988 and turned the operation over to the diverse Atkinson board of trustees. It took collaborating with several banks and housing organizations to raise the necessary funds for what amounted to $1.5 million in renovations. The center, which is a beacon of light in the community, retains the name of the physician who first built it. "We have an open-door policy, just like the heart of God," says Minnie McNeil, the conference's Adventist Community Services director and former chair of the non-profit that runs the center. "We continue reaping the rewards of seeing lives transformed."

Oxon Hill Filipino Church Hosts Typhoon Fundraiser

The images on Quang Ngo's TV screen were graphic. They showed just how devastating an impact Typhoon Haiyan had, not just on the landscape of the Philippines, but also the people. Moved by the images, Ngo ended up on the doorsteps of the Oxon Hill Filipino church in Oxon Hill, Md., toting some 1,000 T-shirts. "We saw the people suffering and it reminded me of our situation. My family and I escaped our country of Vietnam in a boat," he said. "When we got to Malaysia, we had no food, no clothes and no water. So, we see what's happening in the Philippines and feel like this was us and we have to do something for them."

Ngo, who owns a souvenir business, came to the church after seeing an article in the local paper about a fundraiser the church was hosting for victims of the typhoon. Instead of Sabbath services, the Oxon Hill Filipino church held a six-hour fundraiser in November and asked people in the community to donate whatever they could. Some people, like Ngo, donated clothes, while others donated shoes, food and cash.

"We ended the collection at 4 p.m.," said Ariel Matira, the church's pastor. "We were really amazed to see how many people of different religions, races and countries responded to the needs of the Filipino people. It was so nice to pray together and extend our love to the victims as representatives of God."

Church members shipped the clothes and food directly to a local Adventist church in the Philippines and sent the cash to ADRA.

NEWS

New Ghanaian Church Planted in Parlin

Inspired by the General Conference's NY13 evangelistic initiative blanketing metropolitan New York, members of the New Jersey Ghanaian church in Hillside planted a church in Parlin.

Members of the Ghanaian church who live in central and southern New Jersey met as a small group, embarked on active visitation, distributed literature and evangelistic brochures and invited people to the

evangelism meetings held last year. Twelve were baptized. The church, which has grown to 75, was officially inaugurated as a mission by Marcellus Robinson, AEC's vice president of administration, last fall (pictured).

Amofah A. Asamoah, pastor of both churches, says, "The members are working hard and are looking forward to being organized as a company soon and then into a full-fledged church in 2014." Members worship at the Messiah Lutheran Church at 3091 Bordentown Avenue.

Berea Temple's Revival Series Draws 50-Plus Nightly

At the Berea Temple in Baltimore, a revival series, titled "The Revelation of Jesus," caught the interest of many. An average of 55 to 60 attended the eight-week session led by pastors David Franklin and Maurice N. Taylor (pictured front), which concluded with a graduation

ceremony. Attendee Hugh Scott called the revival "enlightening; a learning opportunity for spiritual growth." Eunice Ricks, one of two guests committed to baptism, said, "I really enjoyed the Word of God and learning about the Bible like never before. The people were loving and kind; [that] made me more eager to come."—*Kelli Kensie*

Metropolitan Pastor to Support Women Clergy Nationally

Brenda Billingy (below), senior pastor for the Metropolitan church in Hyattsville, Md., was recently welcomed as the new associate director for the North American Division's (NAD) Ministerial Department. Billingy, who will remain at the Metropolitan church, will focus on serving women clergy. She will also support and mentor younger women on their ministerial journeys.

Ivan Williams, NAD Ministerial director, says, "Pastor Billingy brings a passion to serve pastors in our division. She will use her church as a classroom for training and her position as senior pastor to help lead, mentor and coach other women clergy toward excellence. We are excited to have her on our team and know God will greatly use her."—*NAD NewsPoints*

Berea Temple Pastor Wins Communication Award

David Franklin, co-host of Hope Channel's *Let's Pray* program and assistant pastor of the Berea Temple in Baltimore, recently received the Young Professional Award at the recent meeting of the Society of Adventist Communicators in Salt Lake City, Utah. The award is designed to recognize the achievements of communication professionals under the age of 35. Franklin is noted for his natural communication abilities and high standard of excellence.

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SPIRIT
ALLEGHENY WEST CONFERENCE NEWSLETTER
JANUARY 2014

Akron Bethel Celebrates 75 Years of Ministry

From its humble beginnings on Chittenden Avenue, Bethel members began to spread the three angels' messages in the Akron, Ohio, area. They later moved to a larger building on Home Avenue, then to an even larger facility on Copley Road, where they worshipped for many years.

Soon the church leadership felt the call to move again but had no idea how they could financially accomplish it. They, like Joshua and the Israelites crossing the Jordan, stepped out in faith and started the search for a new church home. In honor of their faith, they soon received a call from someone seeking to purchase their building. The asking price was given and accepted—just like that God, manifested Himself.

Their search for a new home led them to their current edifice on Canton Road.

"We are in a new area, not previously evangelized, with great opportunities and possibilities to share the kingdom of God," says Derrick Moffett, ThD, senior pastor. He says his members believe their journey is exemplified in their theme, "We've come this far by grace, now moving forward in faith."

Benjamin Jones, Jr., and Abel Bartley, PhD, both sons of Bethel, help Derrick Moffett, ThD, senior pastor, and Calvin Roberson, a former Bethel pastor, provide words of reflection and wisdom during the celebration weekend.

PHOTO BY CLIMON LEE

During Bethel's celebration of 75 years in ministry, they received many greetings and congratulations, including one from John R. Kasich, governor of Ohio, who sent a letter recognizing their many years of influence in the community.

The speaker on Friday evening was Benjamin Jones, Jr., ministerial secretary for the South Central Conference, and a son of Bethel. Abel Bartley, PhD, director of Pan-African studies at Clemson University, was the speaker for the Sabbath morning divine service and the facilitator for the lesson study. Calvin Roberson (pictured left, top), senior pastor of the Progression church in Atlanta and a former Bethel pastor, was the speaker for the contemporary worship service. Pastor Moffett closed the weekend by sharing the Word of God at the Sunday morning prayer breakfast.

"Each speaker was chosen … to speak from past to future, and they hit the nail on the head," says Maurice Bell, head elder.

Music filled the sanctuary the entire weekend, including performances by gospel violinist Obed Shelton (pictured left), the Cantata Choir, an ensemble choir, a praise team and guest Richard Cash.

"It was unbelievable to see the handiwork of God manifested in this anniversary celebration [that] we planned [and] He enabled and executed," says Clifford Reynolds, 75th anniversary chairperson.

SPIRIT

Ephesus Women Focus on Making Reconnections

In keeping with the Ephesus church's 2013 theme, "Family Matters," Pastor Donald Burden has been intentional about focusing on the needs of each member. Although the Women's Ministries department had a full weekend last May, Pastor Burden chose another women's reconnect weekend for the end of the year. Ladies throughout the conference were invited to reconnect with those they have lost touch with through the years.

Augusta Olaore, the returning women's retreat speaker, reminded attendees just how much God loves and adores all of His children. On Friday evening, she encouraged the women to spend time reconnecting

Guest speaker Augusta Olaore reminds attendees that God loves and adores all of His children.

with God, spouses, family, friends and themselves. As she talked about the basic love of God, her message that evening offered strength and a sense of renewal.

Sabbath was filled with glimpses of God's willingness to strengthen and uphold His children. Olaore admonished the ladies to "sing in a strange land," meaning that no matter the circumstances, praise to God is vital to Christian growth.

Women attended from all over the Allegheny West Conference and were overheard declaring, "This was just what we needed at this time in our lives!" One woman

PHOTOS BY CHELSEA MOSBY

stated, "I thought I should have remained at home to get a jump on the holiday cooking, but this weekend has been food for my soul. And, I know that my family will benefit from my having been here in Columbus!"

There were also impactful musical renderings. Tamaria Kulameka sang a familiar hymn from her childhood, as well as a heartfelt rendition of "Open My Heart." Jasmine Best warmed hearts with her song "In the Midst of it All." There was also a featured musical guest, Israel Olaore (pictured above), the speaker's son, who provided musical numbers throughout the weekend and, on Sabbath afternoon, presented a riveting workshop on music ministry.—*Ruth-Ann Thompson*

CALENDAR

January

5	Clerks Training, *Cleveland*
9,10	Multicultural Workers Meeting and Leadership Training
12	Bible Workers and Clerk Training, *Columbus*
19	Church Officers Training, *Columbus*
26	Bible Workers Training, *Southern Ohio*

February

2	Va./W.Va. Leadership Training
	Sensational Seniors Event, *Columbus*
9	Executive Committee Meeting
16	Leadership Training, *Columbus*
23	Leadership Training, *Northern Ohio*

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Blue Mountain Academy COMMUNIQUÉ

JANUARY 2014

Senior Testifies of Spiritual, Educational Growth

It was during her sophomore year in high school that Cheyenne Walker began to worry about her spiritual life. "I didn't like who I was becoming," she admits. Growing up in a Seventh-day Adventist home, Walker loved Jesus, His word and Sabbath, but those values were fading. Her friends were not good for her, she was usually in trouble and her grades were plummeting. She had attended public school most of her life, but now the worldly lifestyle was pulling her in dangerous directions.

To attend Blue Mountain Academy (BMA), Walker had to leave her home in New Haven, Conn., which was more than 190 miles away. In addition, boarding school had never been in her family's plans. They had simply agreed she could attend Academy Days in April 2012. "I prayed about it, and when I received the call that I was accepted, I knew it was where God wanted me to be," she recalls.

From her first class, Walker says she knew she was in trouble. BMA's classes were much harder than her previous school. "My whole junior year, my grades were Ds and Fs. I wanted to go back home," she says.

In despair, Walker turned to David Morgan, BMA principal. "I would go in his office, sometimes crying, and he would listen and give me ways that worked better. I saw him a lot," she shares.

Cheyenne Walker says her grades and spiritual life turned around with the help of Blue Mountain Academy staff, like principal Dave Morgan.

Cheyenne Walker studies with Kerene Anglin, BMA's education psychologist.

It was also at BMA's learning center, where Kerene Anglin, an education psychologist, helped Walker develop new study habits. Even though she used to read and re-read the assignments, Walker still struggled. It was by adding the skill of taking notes that made the difference, as did additional ways of management for a successful life.

"Cheyenne recently came to me with a huge smile on her face as she recounted how 'finally'—those were her words—she had As and Bs after a year of struggles. This was a very uplifting and rewarding moment for me!" Morgan recalls.

"I feel like my grades have brought me to a closer connection with God. If it wasn't for God, I wouldn't be here," says Walker. "I would pray and He would show me things."

Her advice for others? "Don't give up. No one said it would be easy, but it will be worth it! Pray and let God lead you. And, find a good mentor," she suggests.

COMMUNIQUÉ

New Teacher Connects Technology to Ministry

Paulo Laguna recently joined the Blue Mountain Academy staff as the computer technology teacher, leaving behind 17 years of lucrative job opportunities in the industry. "It is not about the money," he explains. "It's about the ministry." He also teaches robotic engineering, computer skills and A+, a specialized certification class.

Freshman Jessica Hanna helps Paulo Laguna, new techology teacher, unpack one of the 35 new computers that were recently added to the computer lab.

Laguna starts each computer class with worship as "a unique way of teaching computer keyboard commands while demonstrating spiritual applications," he explains. An example of these parallels is the "delete" key, which he relates to Micah 7: 8-9, which instructs, "In offering forgiveness to us, God wants to delete all our sins and give us a clean page," he paraphrases.

Born in Brazil, Laguna has lived in several countries—Bolivia, Argentina, Mexico—as well as Southern California, where he completed his degree in computer science. "Since I started working in the computer industry, I felt something was missing. I had always wanted to be in the education field," he says.

Laguna's passion is to integrate technology into teachers' daily lives. He says, "Teachers are not trained in the field, and there are conflicts with having time to learn technology as a tool." He adds, "We have great teachers in math and science, in English and history, yet technology is racing ahead. I want this department to be solid in computer science and multimedia." For the students, he says, "We are preparing our students to be ready for whatever occupation they pursue, and, most of all, for Jesus' call in their lives."

Laguna's wife, Keyla, son, Samuel, and daughter, Tatiana, have also signed on for the adventure.

Girls Club Members Learn About Virtue

Each October the BMA Girls Club spends a weekend exploring God's will for their lives. Going along with the girls dorm theme this school year, "A Virtuous Woman," suggested by Tiffany Ellis, dean, the girls were encouraged and educated about making healthy choices in what they watch and read and in their relationships.

"Today's society is very difficult for young ladies, definitely not a safe place to grow up. Our girls are surrounded with unhealthy lifestyle choices that reflect the values of this world. We wanted to show a different perspective—how Jesus would want our young ladies to be," says Lauren Anderson, another dean.

The weekend included "An Amazing Race" adventure and sending lighted Japanese lanterns into the sky to symbolize how connected humans are and the need to support each other. Sabbath morning's outdoor church started with a special feature. Dressed as women of the Bible, girls and faculty women told their character's story with modern perspectives. The morning service also included a challenge for the girls to recognize they are created to matter. The day ended with a game of laser tag.

Freshman Ashley Hunte said she now understands what it means to be virtuous. "The deans are like my moms, and it is so comfortable to be here," she adds.

Girls Club members release a Japanese lantern to symbolize their understanding that humans need to support each other.

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THE CHALLENGE

chesapeake conference newsletter

JANUARY 2014

Daily Growth

What can you do to grow closer to Jesus in 2014? Of course, a foundational premise of the question is that we want to grow closer to Jesus. Right now, 2014 is filled with unknowns and possibilities. But in a little more than a blink of an eye, it will be gone, and the only things of truly lasting value will be those done in our relationship with Christ. I invite you to join me in a plan to grow daily in your walk with Jesus. By reading 10 pages each day, it is possible to read through the entire five volumes of the *Conflict of the Ages* series by Ellen G. White. You might start with the incredible stories of Old Testament heroes in *Patriarchs and Prophets* and in *Prophets and Kings* and see the work of God's hand in each generation. The stories come to life with relevant applications for our spiritual pilgrimage.

In the *Desire of Ages,* we read of the matchless love of Jesus, His miracles, messages and mercy. His ministry gives birth to the Christian church as chronicled in the *Acts of the Apostles*. The model of the New Testament church empowered by the Holy Spirit refreshes our sense of mission. The *Great Controversy* chronicles the brave reformers who kept pointing people to the Scriptures as the sole basis of truth. It then turns to the most important issues in the religious world today, culminating with the final events leading up to the glorious return of Jesus.

Throughout the breadth of human history, we see the redeeming love of God repeatedly displayed. It concludes with the end of sin and the uniting of God with His people. This series, combined with the parallel passages in the Bible, provide a powerful devotional plan for 2014. Join me in this walk with Jesus.

Rick Remmers
President

Waldorf Members Witness Through Live Nativity

Last month members of the Waldorf church presented a live nativity at the local fairgrounds as part of the first Kris Kringle Christmas Market of Charles County, Maryland. Volodymyr Grinchenko, church pastor, says that organizers approached him to ask the church to participate. Grinchenko saw the opportunity to "put Christ back in Christmas." Church members rallied to help with the event, and several volunteered for the roles of Mary, Joseph, wise men and shepherds.

Agnesa and Volodymyr Grinchenko along with Carla and Rich Garrison prepare for their roles in the Waldorf (Md.) church's live nativity presentation.

PHOTO BY GARY COOK AND VOLODYMYR GRINCHENKO

Charles Gardiner (center), fairgrounds director, joins Hope Butler and Enoque Filho, Waldorf church members, in singing Christmas carols.

"The fairgrounds provided animals for the nativity for free, and we even had a very friendly camel called Jasmine," said Grinchenko.

Church members had a chance to serve and witness to about 3,000 people who came out to enjoy the event. The local newspaper, *Maryland Independent*, featured the Waldorf church and other organizations in an article promoting the event, giving the church some local exposure.

NEWS

Women Focus on Spiritual Growth

A recent conference-wide retreat, themed "Intimate Moments With God," drew some 260 women to Hershey, Pa. Meetings were offered in English and Spanish.

PHOTO BY MEGAN KIRBY

At the retreat, women close the Sabbath with singing.

The Saturday evening social included a silent auction, games, facials and hand massages. Many visited the prayer room during the weekend.

The group made 75 fleece blankets for patients at the nearby Penn State Hershey Children's Hospital as part of a service project. "[This is] absolutely the best [retreat] so far," said Valerie Nozea, a member of the Wilna (Md.) church. "Extremely powerful!" Visit ccosda.org to view photos and hear sermons.

Spencerville Makes Pillowcases, New Friends

Members of Keep in Stitches (KIS), a small group ministry of the Spencerville church, recently sewed more than 200 pillowcases as part of a project sponsored by *American Patchwork and Quilting* magazine, to provide 1 million handmade pillowcases to people in need. Spencerville selected four charities near the church's Silver Spring, Md., location as recipients.

Thirty-two women and men came to the sewing marathon, several from the surrounding community. A neighbor said, "I almost didn't come today, as I have not slept well lately. Yesterday, I said to God, 'If I have a good night's sleep tonight, I will go.' This morning I awoke and realized I had slept for nine hours!"

She is one of two locals who continue to join the weekly KIS meetings at the church, says Marilyn Scott, associate pastor at Spencerville. Meetings begin with worship, and then group members make scarves, blankets and other items for those in need.

Spencerville Adventist Academy third-graders gave the participants bags they decorated, which contained a copy of *The Great Hope*, church information and a small gift.

PHOTO BY SAMANTHA YOUNG

Vania Baioni (right) cuts fabric for a pillowcase.

WSK Health Expo Meets Local Needs

The Washington-Spencerville Korean (WSK) church in Spencerville, Md., recently drew about 500 visitors to its third annual Health and Welfare Expo. This year WSK partnered with the nearby Washington-Spencerville Spanish and Mizo congregations as well as members of other denominations to staff some 15 booths offering medical, social and legal services and educational materials. Representatives from the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services and Adventist HealthCare conducted health screenings, while Walgreens offered free flu shots.

Isiah Leggett (third from left), Montgomery County executive, and Charles Yang (second from right), Washington-Spencerville Korean associate pastor, pause for a picture with expo participants.

"A positive result is that many former and long absent members actively participated this year and developed a deeper interest in the church," says Unjong "Charles" Yang, WSK's associate pastor.

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An Antique Store, Book and Seminar Leads Man to Parkersburg Church

Looking back over David Coffman's life, one can see the hand of God interwoven with the finer details, which gives proof that God cares and is interested in every aspect of life. Coffman was born and raised in Parkersburg, W.Va., and attended the local schools. At the age of 12, Coffman took his stand for Christ and was baptized into a local Baptist church. He moved out of the area for college and joined the choir and ensemble while away.

Some years later, Coffman moved to Vienna, W.Va., and it was there that he received a visit from a gentleman in the area, who welcomed him to the neighborhood. Coffman now knows that this man was Ken Wright, then secretary/treasurer for the Mountain View Conference, and though Wright shared where he worked, this was not the first time that Coffman had heard the Seventh-day Adventist name. A Baptist music teacher had given him accordion and piano lessons, and, for some reason that Coffman still has not figured out, they met at the Parkersburg church for those lessons.

Daniel Morikone, pastor of the Parkersburg church, gets ready to baptize David Coffman.

Many years later, while browsing through an antique store in the town of Marietta, Ohio, Coffman came across an antique-looking book titled *The Great Controversy Between Christ and Satan*. Always eager to learn and intrigued by the title and the age of the book, Coffman bought the 1888 edition. "I took the book home and began reading and realized that Ellen White was warning the world about end-time events, and I noticed that these events were happening now," Coffman later shared.

David Coffman stands in front of the Parkersburg church with the book that taught him about the Adventist Church.

As he continued to read parts of the book, it was clear that the words contained in it were to "prepare His people for the kingdom of God at His second coming," and Coffman concluded that the book was written by a Seventh-day Adventist and that the Adventist Church was the remnant church that was written about in the Bible. "In thinking over the past churches that I had attended, I came to the conclusion that the Seventh-day Adventist Church was the right church for me," he said.

Several months later, Coffman received a flyer in the mail advertising the Islam and Christianity seminar by Tim Roosenberg to be held at the Parkersburg church. Coffman faithfully attended the 10-night program with two meetings each night and a meal in between. At the conclusion of the seminar, Coffman attended the weekly follow-up Bible marking program as well as Sabbath services.

Not long after, in October of last year, Coffman made the decision to join the Adventist Church by baptism. Ironically, his second baptism took place right across the street from the church where his first baptism took place when he was 12. Through this journey, Coffman says he knows that God guided his footsteps and brought him safely home to the Parkersburg church family.—*Valerie Morikone*

How Do You Maintain a Walk With God in this Busy World?

"In this chaotic world ... I must choose to put God first in my life. I need to discuss issues with Him throughout the day, whether I am in the shower, the car, the office or on a park bench."—*Linda Jones, a member of the Weirton (W.Va.) church*

"I find that ... I must have my 'closet time' with the Lord when I first get up, [and] I claim His constant love for me and His amazing grace—that's what helps me maintain my walk with Him."—*Robert "Doc" Michael, a retired Mountain View Conference pastor*

"Every once in a while, I step back and [ask] is this thing (book, song, computer, activity, etc.) really helping me in my relationship with God, or is it wasting my time by distracting me from what God wants me to do? Setting those things aside or getting rid of them altogether has helped me grow closer to God."—*Jessica Martin, a member of the Cumberland (Md.) church*

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Phone: (304) 422-4581 ■ mtviewconf.org ■ President, Larry Boggess ■ Editor, Valerie Morikone

The Lord Continues to Add Those Who Shall be Saved

During last year's Caravan of Hope with evangelist Alejandro Bullón, we traveled to 33 Hispanic churches throughout New Jersey. At the end of our tour, we were all tired but happy and inspired as 222 new disciples were baptized for the glory of God! I firmly believe that this can and should be repeated so we can continue growing until Christ comes.

As our brothers and sisters, with their pastors and small group leaders, worked to bring people to Christ, we felt like we were back in the apostolic days. We could feel the presence of the Holy Spirit moving throughout our conference. "Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved" (Acts 2:46-47, NIV). There was not a single celebration without worship, prayer, preaching and baptisms.

Evangelist Alejandro Bullón preaches in one of 33 Spanish-speaking churches in New Jersey.

New Jersey Conference Membership
15,006

Alejandro Pastor baptizes his brother, Maximiliano, who first heard the gospel message more than 30 years ago.

One of the highlights of the event was when Alejandro Pastor baptized his brother, Maximiliano. Both came to know the Adventist message more than 30 years ago, one accepted it, got baptized and later became a pastor. The other refused to give his life to Jesus. On the last day of the caravan, this man surrendered his life to Jesus and brought tears to the eyes of many who witnessed the baptism.

Today I invite you to join this great movement of growth for the kingdom. Start small groups to study the Bible and participate in evangelism campaigns, large and small. Every soul counts. We are baptizing people of every race and nationality, including blacks, whites, Filipinos, Indonesians and Koreans. We also welcome people from every tongue—English, Spanish, Portuguese and French. The doors of the kingdom are open to all, and remember the only evangelism that does not work is the one that is not done. Let us move forward and evangelize to make a great impact during the year 2014!

If you would like training on small group leadership, to participate in the April 2014 Caravan of Hope, or in any other area, call us at the conference's Personal Ministries or evangelism departments. We are here to help and guide you.

José H. Cortés
President

Some 51 people prepare for baptism at the Rahway church.

What is Your Wish for the Church in 2014?

"My wish is that the congregation becomes more united and closer to Christ and that everyone gives attention to what's really important—not to things that don't matter. We are all on Earth aiming for the same goal: to see Christ ASAP."
—Larissa Alencar, a member of the Luzo-Brazilian church in Newark

"My wish for the church in 2014 is that the youth in our church will feel that love for God that they used to feel. That they will all come united as one, so that we can do what God commanded us to do, which is to preach His word."*—Evelyn Roque, a member of the Harrison Spanish church*

"It would be beautiful to see young people, adults, families, pastors and laity together, speaking of Jesus, living and ministering to the needy and helping every community get ready … for their heavenly home."
—Ramon Daniel Sancerni (not pictured), a member of the Edison Spanish church

"My wish for the church is that we would all, as a collective body, go back to the Word of God. There is present truth in God's Word that is very relevant to our day. May we all choose to follow Psalms 119:11."
—Thare Lebron, a member of the New Brunswick English church

"My wish for the church is for selfish desires to be set aside and the focus to be put on Christ. With that, everything else will fall into place."
—Dunia Maxime, a member of the Maranatha French church in Newark

"Let's celebrate our diversity while we come together in following Jesus."*—Rob Sigler (pictured, left), a member of the Wayne church*

"My wish for the church in 2014 is to … have more compassion for those who have physical and spiritual needs. Let's bring hope to this world. Let's share Jesus in every corner of the Earth. What people need is love, compassion and the amazing truth that we hold as the Seventh-day Adventist Church."
—Omar Aguero, a member of the Elizabeth Spanish church

"I wish for the establishment of a mentorship program for the youth. The mentor will invest sincere love, discipline, interest and guidance in their mentee inside and outside of church. I believe this will affect the youth's personal self-worth and spiritual growth. Also, this will enhance the longevity of the church."*—Terrina Williams, a member of the Burlington church*

New Jersey News is published in the *Visitor* by the New Jersey Conference ■ 2303 Brunswick Ave., Lawrenceville NJ 08648
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Mission Ohio
OHIO CONFERENCE NEWSLETTER
JANUARY 2014

Two Leaders Receive Overdue Ordination Credentials

Today we are revisiting the days of pioneers of the Adventist movement, when there were women evangelists who raised up churches, who preached and baptized," said Dave Weigley, Columbia Union Conference president, as he introduced Hazel Burns (81) and Margaret Turner (90). The ladies recently received Emeritus Ministerial Credentials during a ceremony at the Kettering church.

Weigley acknowledged that the past culture of the Seventh-day Adventist Church precluded women from being recognized for their service in ministry, and such acknowledgements were usually set aside. However, that culture continues to change within Ohio and the Columbia Union. As Charles Scriven, former Kettering College president, wrote recently, "The ordination of women remains controversial, but the revolution afoot in Adventism is now reaching deep into the ranks of the retired. It is another arresting step toward whatever the future will turn out to be."

The brief ordination service began with Raj Attiken, then Ohio Conference president, stating, "We regret we were unable to have this service while they were still employed." After Weigley recognized and affirmed the "specific and personal" calls to ministry each woman received, he stated they were "pioneers in their own right," and offered the ordination prayer. Rob Vandeman, union secretary, concluded by stating, "Better late than never. We apologize for the delay in getting these to you." He then presented their Emeritus Ministerial Credentials—the same credentials given to every retired, ordained minister in the denomination.

"Both Hazel and Margaret were second-career pastors," said Linda Farley, ordained pastor and chaplain at Kettering Medical Center (KMC). Burns left a full-time career in the community and started giving Bible studies without pay for nearly 10 years. She "ministered freely without pay for the Kettering church before being recognized for her service," said Farley. Eventually Kettering church leaders did extend an invitation for her to become an associate pastor.

PHOTOS BY JAKIN THOMAS

Rob Vandeman, Columbia Union Conference secretary, announces to Hazel Burns and Margaret Turner that they are being awarded with Emeritus Ministerial Credentials.

Turner started her ministry after being called away from a nursing career. Garnering courage, she started taking classes one quarter at a time for clinical pastoral education. Ultimately, she attended and graduated from the seminary, 40 years after getting her original college degree. She went on to complete requisites to become a board-certified chaplain, ministering to patients and staff at KMC, and serving as a local church elder.

"Kettering church and surrounding communities still feel the effects of the ministry and mentoring of both of these women, who though retired, remain active in outreach to church and community," said Farley.

Video of the service may be found at http://vimeo.com/79566262, beginning at minute 16:20. Scriven's article "A Belated Yes!" may be found at http://spectrummagazine.org/blog/2013/11/18/belated-yes.—*Heidi Shoemaker*

Akron First Members Teach Others to Eat Well

Twenty people recently attended Akron First church's Eating Well cooking classes. The church's health outreach team designed the classes to help people implement principles from the *Forks Over Knives* movie and learn how to make healthy, delicious and easy meals. The classes struck a chord, particularly among visitors, which included two attendees from the Discover Bible School and a man from the Akron Area Interfaith Council, of which Pastor Jerry Chase is a member.

Focusing on different themes (i.e., healthy breakfasts; soups, sandwiches, salads), each class included brief presentations on natural health remedies and a variety of cooking demonstrations. Guests enjoyed tasting recipes and got to take home food samples each evening. "This is heaven-sent and truly wonderful," said one guest.

Each participant gladly paid a nominal fee of $25 to help cover the cost of food and materials. One guest stated, "With all of the food we were able to try, and all of the samples we were given, you should have charged much more, and I would have paid much more!"

Attendees expressed a strong desire for more such sessions, which the health outreach team is already planning.—*Brenda Chase*

Akron First members put their skills together to lead Eating Well cooking classes at their church.

PHOTO BY SUE KIRSCHBAUM

Medina Church's Prayer Garden Attracts New Members

Three years ago, the Medina church started looking for innovative ways to attract and invite visitors in a nonthreatening way. With a shared driveway on the east side of the church leading to a new office building, as well as a new hospital behind, they considered an LED sign, but found it to be cost prohibitive. Instead, they decided to beautify the property with a prayer garden.

Members make annual improvements to the garden, which have included adding benches, a pergola and additional flowers and trees. They report that visitors regularly enjoy the variety of God's nature and beauty. There is a small pond with waterfalls and a section with flowers specifically chosen to attract butterflies.

Since starting the prayer garden, the congregation has experienced a renewed interest from the neighborhood, and attendance has increased considerably. The most recent addition to the church body was Darrin and Yvette Moore, who joined last year. The Moores have two teenage children, one of whom was recently baptized.

"We have noticed visitors in the prayer garden at various times, and now we know that God directs not only human neighbors to find rest there, but even a nesting mother duck," says Pastor Chester Hitchcock. "Eventually we would like it to be a sort of botanical attraction where people will be drawn to relax, meditate and pray."

Members stand in front of the prayer garden's new pergola, which hosted the nativity last month.

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Pennsylvania Pen

JANUARY 2014

Churches to Unite in Evangelism Effort

In the coming year, churches across the Pennsylvania Conference will work to fulfill the mission of preparing as many people as possible for the second coming of Jesus—resulting in a coordinated Bible prophecy series in churches this October. Pastors, church leaders and young people will share the three angels' messages with their communities.

In order for the event to truly be a reaping event, churches are encouraged to begin preparing now. Here are some events planned to more effectively reach surrounding communities for Christ this year:

Day of Prayer and Consecration

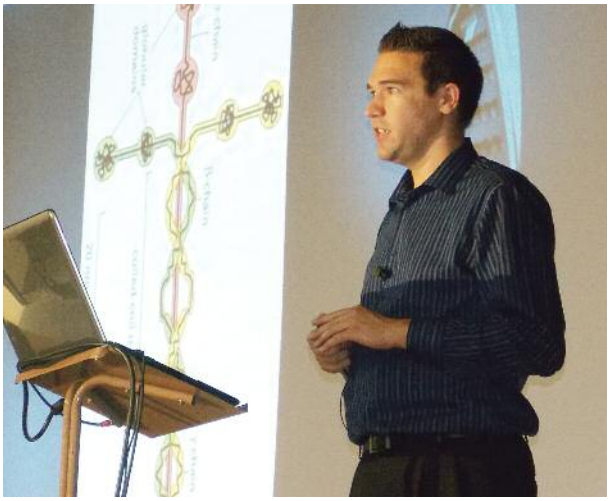
Members across Pennsylvania are encouraged to either travel to the Bucks County church, which is located at 10 Greene Road in Warminister, or meet together in their local church or homes and connect via live streaming for a day of prayer and consecration. The event takes place January 11, 3-6 p.m., and features John Bradshaw, director/speaker of It Is Written.

Training

Training will be provided for those who will be leading evangelistic efforts in October. On April 12, churches will have the opportunity to join conference leaders in person or via online streaming for practical mission training to discover how they can serve as missionaries in their personal context. Then on May 3, speaker training will be offered—both at a central location and online through the conference's live streaming site.

Students can get involved too. In September most Pennsylvania schools will host a preaching series for the students, families and friends of their local school. Students will lead the preaching, special music and greeting, and will invite their family and friends to commit their lives to Jesus.

For more information, visit paconference.org and watch the conference Facebook page for updates.
—Tim Madding



Brandon Senior, a young adult from the Chambersburg church, preaches in a recent evangelism series at his church.

East Suburban Church Turns 75

They began as a small group with big dreams—to have a Seventh-day Adventist church in McKeesport, a community southeast of Pittsburgh. A house on Bailey Avenue became the first church home in 1938, under the leadership of Pastor R.K. Krick and Elder Robert Boothby. Three of those charter members still attend the church and remember the days when food for fellowship meals had to be prepared on the first floor and carried to the third floor for the meal. But, the commitment of the East Suburban church members was strong. They began to grow and paid off their first mortgage in five years.

After 55 years in McKeesport, the congregation moved to North Versailles, their current location. They recently celebrated 75 years of ministry. The event included music by the choir—their first choir in all of their 75 years. Donald Lewis, lay pastor, led the day's service, during which members honored Charlotte Rezes (pictured) for her 25 years of service as the church treasurer.

Students Exceed Goal to Help Children Around the World

The 145 students of the Huntingdon Valley Christian Academy (HVCA) in Huntingdon Valley didn't want to set a small goal. Despite the fact that they didn't quite reach their goal of packing 300 boxes for Operation Christmas Child in 2012 (they packed 286), they decided to pack 500 boxes for 2013.

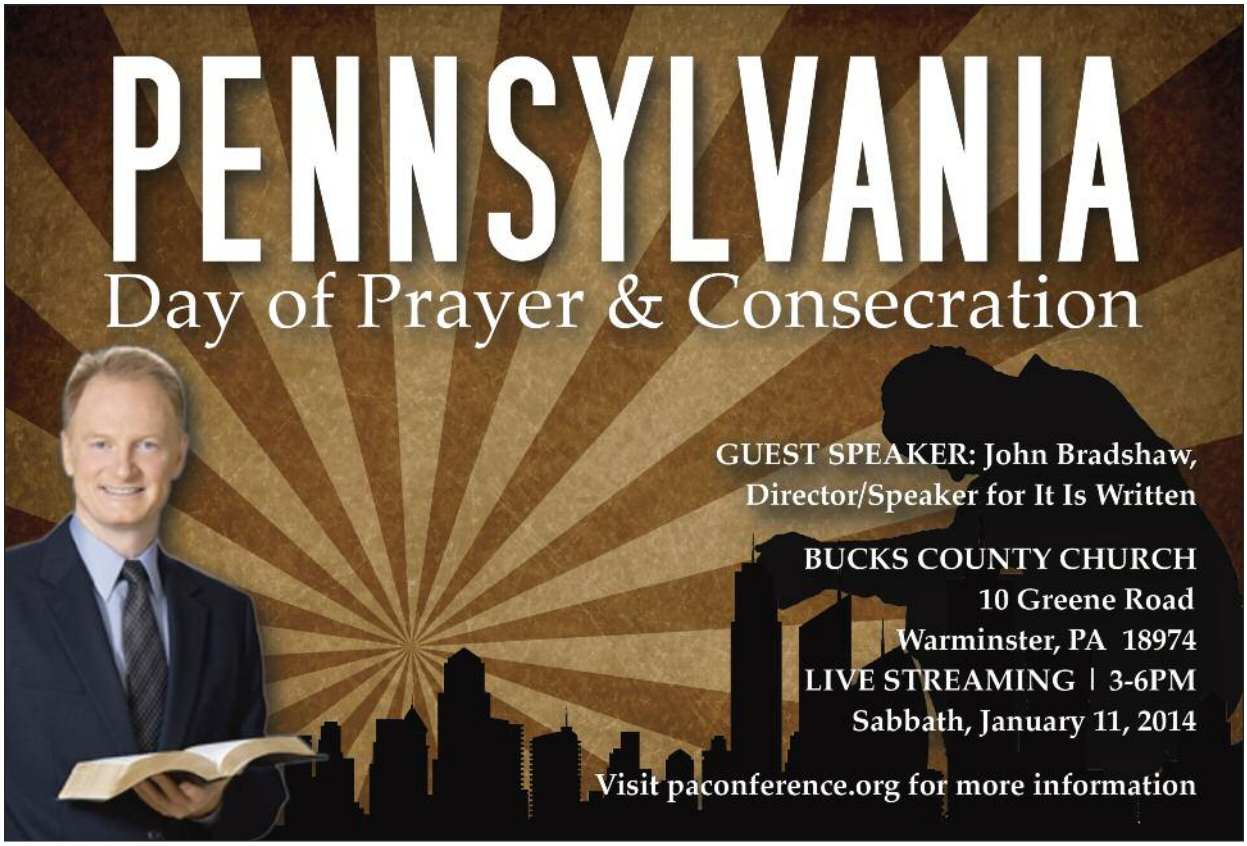
For the past 10 years, HVCA students have packed shoeboxes full of items a child would enjoy or need. Then Samaritan Purse collects the boxes and sends them to children around the world.

While the premise is simple, the task is much bigger. After several years of going to a packing center and helping pack boxes, HVCA students and teachers decided to create their own packing center. They collected items, held fundraisers, purchased more items and planned for the big day.

With Christmas music playing in the background, older students partnered with younger students. They also took the time to create a personal card, often writing a note about Jesus' love and including drawings and their own names. Once completed, they stopped at the prayer station and prayed for the child who would receive that box.

When the dust had settled and every item was packed, students had exceeded their high goal and packed 612 gifts of love to share with children they'll never meet but care about. "It's more than just a gift," said Rick Bianco, HVCA principal, who is committed to helping students learn a worldview of service and care. "It's a way of sharing Jesus."

Keren and Carolino show the contents of a box they packed that will delight a needy child.



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Potomac People

JANUARY 2014

Lynchburg Member Requests Baptism While in Labor

In preparation for a two-week prophecy seminar, members from the Lynchburg (Va.) church mailed more than 40,000 brochures to the local community, bought radio and television advertisements, and went door to door to distribute flyers and make personal appeals.

"It's been about 17 years since our last evangelism seminar," says Mike Hewitt, pastor. "I was hoping for 15 members to come to the evening meetings, but we had more than 50 each night. Their enthusiasm and involvement made all the difference."

Of all the things that took place during the two-week series—11 baptisms, one profession of faith and 105 Bible study requests—one experience stood out. "A couple from Kenya had been attending the meetings and were excited about learning the truth," reports Pastor Hewitt. "We started making preparations for their baptisms, but received an urgent call one morning from [the husband], Jima Jima Arima. His wife, Josephine, was going into labor. They felt it was very important to be baptized before their child was born, because they want to raise their children to know God, His law and be ambassadors for Him."

Church members prepare Josephine Arima (sitting) for baptism hours before giving birth.

Members quickly met at the church and baptized the couple, along with another member. Josephine gave birth to a beautiful baby boy later that afternoon.

Church Sponsors Make Camp Possible for More Kids

In Montebello, Va., staff members at Camp Blue Ridge, the conference's summer camp, report they are working hard to further develop its infrastructure so that people of all ages can experience Jesus.

In the Potomac Conference territory, although thousands of young people are welcome to attend the camp, not all can afford it. This is why partnerships with local Seventh-day Adventist churches are essential. For such families, camp staff members will contact a church and ask them to sponsor a camper through one of three partnership options:

A: The local church covers the full cost of the child's week at camp.
B: Two-way matching allows the church to cover two-thirds of the camp fee while the family covers the rest, or vice versa.
C: Three-way matching allows the church, camp and family to split the cost three ways.

Fifty-nine campers were able to enjoy camp last year because of the work of 19 churches. Some congregations build these partnerships into their budgets, some take up offerings and others participate spontaneously. "We ask you to consider making this a year-round ministry so that, together, we can send even more to camp," says Jennifer Gabel, assistant camp director.

Camp leaders have hired a firm to help them make the camp experience even more powerful. Changes will likely include a larger meeting area, a cafeteria and cabins, which will better facilitate small church retreats. To make comments or get involved, write to jerrodg@campblueridge.org or call (540) 377-2413.—*Jerrod Gabel*

Potomac People

Hyattsville Spanish Members Celebrate New Home

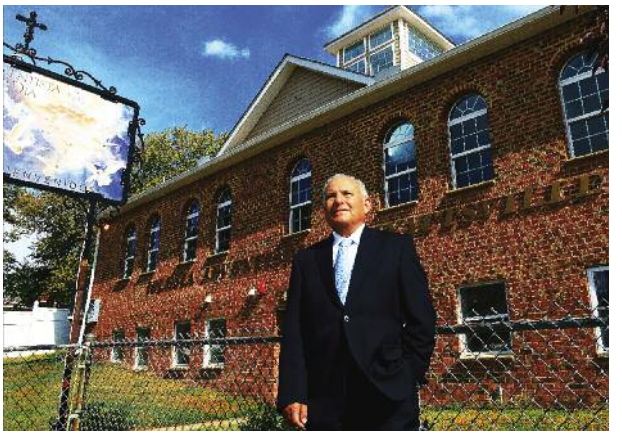
When members of the Hyattsville Spanish church found a building in the heart of an Hispanic area in Hyattsville and Riverdale, Md., they thought their dream had come true. "We were looking at a vision becoming a reality," says Pastor Fausto Salazar. "However, we soon realized we had a lot of work to do. The outside appearance of the building was great, but everything inside was damaged."

For years church leaders worked to transform the structure into a place of worship, but the area wasn't zoned for a church building. "The years passed and we considered selling the building and maybe finding another place to meet, but that step would have been even more difficult," explains Pastor Salazar. "One day I was overwhelmed with the Lord saying, 'Accept this building project challenge and trust Me.'"

Their first miracle soon followed, when the city finally approved for them to begin transforming the building into God's temple. The second occurred when an Adventist member on the local parking panel showed them that a church would not negatively affect traffic flow in that area, but rather increase the vitality of the neighborhood.

"It was a joyful day when the demolition finally started," says Salazar. "It's easier to demolish something than to construct it. However, more inconveniences occurred and we had to stop construction for months because of new building codes. We had to design new plans and include new exemptions to the sanctuary. Again, another angel appeared in the scene. The boss of the inspectors was a Seventh-day Adventist. He showed us alternatives to our design that would meet requirements, and, because of him, our plans were approved and we continued construction."

In the midst of all of this, the members suffered a great loss. The right-hand man of the construction, Sergio Vargas, passed away. "Along with his death, we thought we should stop this idea as well," says Pastor Salazar. "However, the message of God says that we should not look back. Instead, we should move forward until we get to the end of the race. God provided the people and contractors with a spirit of love. The Lord showered His believers with blessings."



Pastor Fausto Salazar stands in front of the new Hyattsville Spanish church.

Hyattsville Spanish church members and friends pray during the inauguration service.

Potomac Conference and Hyattsville Spanish church leaders cut the ribbon to welcome attendees to the new temple.

Finally, after years of worshiping on Sabbath afternoons in the basement of the English-language church, the Hyattsville Spanish church moved into a home of their own, allowing them to hold worship services in the mornings and expand their services to the community. They are already offering GED classes in Spanish, classes for citizenship preparation, crafts, sewing, piano and a food bank project.

The new church is located at 4815 Edmonston Road. For more information on programs offered, contact Pastor Salazar at (301) 613-2770 or pastorfsalazar@gmail.com.—*Tiffany Doss*

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Phone: (540) 886-0771 ▪ pcsda.org ▪ President, Bill Miller ▪ Communication Director, Dan Jensen

Spotlight on Spencerville

JANUARY 2014

Science Teacher Enriches Students' Learning Experience

Most Seventh-day Adventist teachers will agree that science is a subject that directly speaks of God's creation and its importance. At Spencerville Adventist Academy (SAA), science teacher Paty Serrano has incorporated many different types of activities to help her students master scientific concepts.

"To enhance and enrich learning in a science classroom, it is necessary to have a variety of teaching methods that will use as many different learning styles as possible. All students can learn, they just learn differently," says Serrano.

In the Earth Science class, in order to become familiar with the concept of prediction and the need for accuracy to predict weather, Serrano has her students make their own instruments using household products. The students present the weather forecast to other classrooms to demonstrate mastery of meteorology concepts and to increase the younger students's interest in science. She even has scientists from NASA teach the students about the sun's importance, the latest discoveries about the sun and other topics in astronomy.

"This helps the students understand that the material they are learning in class is used by professionals and is relevant to our everyday lives," Serrano explains.

In her unit on alternative energy and stewardship, students build a house out of cardboard. Serrano gives them a variety of insulation items they'll need to make sure the house can retain heat within a specific temperature range. The goal is to have their "homes" retain the temperature but use the most cost-efficient and environmentally friendly items. This activity allows for innovation, creativity, research, and trial and error.

"I love doing experiments in the science lab. It helps me understand what I'm learning," states Katherina Roman (left), pictured with classmates Griffin Hoskinson and Nick Baccete.

Science teacher Paty Serrano (second from left), Adrianna Aguilar, Christian Ovalle and Georgia Kent pet the subjects they will use for a unit on observing animal behavior.

Serrano has biology students prepare their own microscope slides to show their cheek cells, which she says helps them develop laboratory skills by using equipment and preparation of slides. They also extract DNA from vegetables and fruits, as well as their own saliva to observe the relative size of DNA. Working in groups also allows them to practice collaboration skills. Activities that involve puzzles and models help bring to life the processes that students learn in textbooks.

"I like the labs we do in biology class because it not only allows us to hear about science, but actually see it with our own eyes, and lets us experience what we are learning," says sophomore biology student Harrison Mann.

Some of Serrano's students recently put in time and effort to fix a very expensive, dual-head microscope, which had not worked for a number of years. Now the class has a microscope that can be used by the student and teacher at the same time. "When provided with opportunities, students will show their talents and leadership abilities," says Serrano.

Spotlight

National Honor Society Inducts 12 New Members

Spencerville Adventist Academy's Chapter of the National Honor Society (NHS) is proud to announce the recent induction of 12 new members, which brings this year's membership to 33. Inductees are chosen for the excellence they exhibit in areas of scholarship, character, leadership and service.

Nathan Hess, NHS sponsor says, "I am so proud of the commitment to excellence that each of these scholars has shown. They are the leaders on campus—not just in the up-front kind of ways, but also in the quiet, small ways that make a school excellent."

Congratulations to the new members pictured: (back row, left to right) Chantelle Rodriguez, Kathy Roman, Ben Dabney, Kyle Juneau, Victor Kolle, Corey Shim, (front row, left to right) Allison Retz, Rebecca Puii, Sara Hebert, Brenda Rodriguez, Sherri dela Cruz and Hannah Klingbeil.

PHOTO BY STEPHANIE JUNEAU

Incoming High Schoolers Welcomed to Attend Academy Day

All interested, graduating eighth-graders and other incoming high school students are invited to attend Spencerville Adventist Academy's Academy Day on Wednesday, February 5, from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Visiting students will have the opportunity to learn more about SAA's academic offerings, meet the teachers and students, hear and see the school's touring groups perform, compete for scholarships, tour the facility and see what SAA has to offer. SAA leaders will even treat visitors to lunch!

To RSVP, contact Heidi Wetmore at (240) 883-3502 or hwetmore@spencerville.org.

Calendar

January

19 Erin Boyer Basketball Tournament

20 No School—*Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday*

February

5 Academy Day

15 Talent Show

18-21 School Spirit Week

20 PK-Kindergarten Open House

27 New High School Parent Open House

Spotlight is published in the *Visitor* by the Spencerville Adventist Academy ■ 2502 Spencerville Road, Spencerville, MD 20868
Phone: (301) 421-9101 ■ spencervilleacademy.org ■ Principal, Brian Kittleson ■ Editor, Heidi Wetmore

SHENANDOAH VALLEY ACADEMY
HAPPENINGS
JANUARY 2014 www.shenandoahvalleyacademy.org

How Can We Afford Academy?

This is a difficult question many of our families face as their teenage children review options for high school. Sometimes, just looking at the tuition fees can feel overwhelming and discouraging, but Shenandoah Valley Academy (SVA) staff are dedicated to Seventh-day Adventist education because we know what a difference our school makes in the lives of young people. Every day we see God working here, and we have seen and heard about the miracles He works to ensure that students can attend our school.

We are committed to doing as much as possible to help students receive a quality, Adventist education. Here are a few of the ways we help make an SVA education affordable for your family:

Early registration discount: Register by February 28 and pay the registration fee to receive a savings of $400.

Church match: SVA will match any tuition assistance from your church up to $1,500.

SVA scholarships: We offer academic, leadership, music and athletic scholarships. Scholarship Sundays are April 6 and 13.

Partner scholarships: Many organizations and individuals sponsor special scholarships to provide additional student aid. For more information, contact Jeff Twomley, vice president of finance, at jeff.twomley@sva-va.org.

Need-based tuition assistance: Donations from SVA alumni and friends provide additional tuition assistance, but it is limited, so apply early to ensure that adequate funds are available!

Prayer: We believe that prayer works miracles, and we are committed to praying for your family's educational needs.

Travis Johnson
Principal

Registration Goes Digital

Gone are the days of application packets and registration folders. Even though there will probably always be some papers to fill out for new students, SVA is striving to make the registration process as simple as possible. For the 2014-15 school year, all students can complete their application and re-enrollment paperwork online. To start the enrollment process or to get more information, go to shenandoahvalleyacademy.org.

All students who complete the application process by February 28 will get $100 off tuition. Plus, save an additional $300 by paying the registration fee early.

Academy Day Showcases Campus Life

This year SVA hosted Academy Day in October so that parents could gain an earlier understanding of what SVA is all about. Some 130 visiting students from 18 schools enjoyed a whirlwind day touring campus, meeting teachers, enjoying the Music Department's showcase of performance groups and competing in a variety of games at the SVA Challenge.

To see all the fun, go to http://vimeo.com/80693686. Families interested in SVA can contact the school for more information, an educational consultation or a campus tour.

Calendar

January

25 Shenandoans Perform, *Manassas and Vienna (Va.) Churches*

February

1 Orchestra, Band and Choir Perform, *Alexandria (Va.) Church*

28 Registration Deadline to Save $400

March

1-2 Elementary Basketball Tournament

Happenings is published in the *Visitor* by Shenandoah Valley Academy ■ 234 West Lee Highway, New Market, VA 22844
Phone: (540) 740-3161 ■ shenandoahvalleycademy.org ■ Principal, Travis Johnson ■ Editor, Kim Twomley

www.ta.edu

TA TODAY

JANUARY 2014

News you can use from Takoma Academy

Chorale Wins I-Sing Competition and $5,000

Late last fall, Takoma Academy (TA) leaders learned of a singing competition being held at the Reid Temple AME Church in Glenn Dale, Md., and decided to sign up, even though it gave them little time to prepare. "We weren't able to include the freshman and new students, as they haven't had the training required for this type of competition," explains Lulu Mupfumbu (pictured), choir director. "Only the select choir and returning choir members from last year could sign up—47 students in all." She adds, "They've sung in talent searches in the past, but this is the first major competition the choir has ever participated in."

PHOTOS BY RICHARD GORDON

Less than two months later, six schools—two Seventh-day Adventist, four public—showed up to showcase all they've learned. Attendees report they could feel the excitement as the teams took to the stage. The crowd erupted in applause as the TA Chorale took the stage.

According to one attendee and chorale supporter, "If you'd been there that evening, you would have noticed something different about this choir. It was clear from the way they were singing, they were singing for more than a competition—they were singing and praising God. This was clearly a moment of distinction—a defining moment—and the audience was clearly moved by the music filling the room."

After the final group sang, and the judges made their decision, chorale members say it was a tense moment as the announcer stepped forward to give the results of the competition. He first announced the three runners up, none of which were TA. That left only two spots.

"And the winner of the 2013 I-Sing High School Choir Challenge is … Takoma Academy!" shared the announcer, which was followed by thunderous applause. Chorale members were visibly delighted, and many of their parents were overheard making comments like, "It was so wonderful to see the excitement on the faces of our students. They've worked so hard, and they really put their all into the competition."

Mupfumbu, however, had this to say about the win, "The thing I'm most proud of, however, is the way the students were able to focus on praising God on stage and not so much on the competition aspect. … I think it's a reflection of what they have come to understand about the purpose of their music."

She adds, "When students learn and appreciate the disciplines of becoming a musician, and when they personalize the message of the music, it naturally becomes a ministry. They come to understand that the reason they grow and perfect their gifts is to serve others and bring others to Christ."—*Dan Jensen*

TA Today is published in the *Visitor* by Takoma Academy ■ 8120 Carroll Ave., Takoma Park, MD 20912
Phone: (301) 434-4700 ■ ta.edu ■ Principal, Carla Thrower ■ Editor, Ron Mills

7600 Flower Avenue, Takoma Park, MD 20912 • www.wau.edu • 800-835-4212 JANUARY 2014

We Deeply Engage and Value People

We at Washington Adventist University (WAU) aim to be the premier place for people to learn, grow and work. We also recognize that they are most likely to flourish and experience transformative growth when they are part of a supportive community that truly cares. As we grow closer and closer to this model, we are committed to pursuing the following imperatives:

1. Intentionally embrace diversity and intercultural understanding

2. Create a student-centered learning community

3. Actively promote an environment where faculty and staff feel valued

4. Create a culture around customer satisfaction

5. Fully engage constituencies

6. Ensure the value of an enduring, strong and supportive learning community, including a residential, developmental learning environment within which, every day, students, faculty and staff practice the values of a WAU education

This is Washington Adventist University!

Weymouth Spence
President

Students Take Church, Food to the Streets

One of Bithja Racine's favorite Bible texts is 1 Corinthians 10:31, "So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God" (NIV). So, instead of rolling over to catch a few more winks of sleep, it was this text that brought her to a kitchen at Washington Adventist University in Takoma Park, Md., at 3 a.m. on a Thursday.

She was not alone. The junior counseling psychology major was joined by several of her fellow students. And, throughout the day, in between classes, more students helped prepare a veritable feast that included rice and beans, macaroni and cheese, a special Haitian dish, lasagna, salad, steamed vegetables, patties and cakes.

PHOTO BY ESTEFANY RIVAS

After the students finished preparing the meal, they then packed it all up in vans and cars and took it down to Franklin Park, located at 14th and I streets in northwest Washington, D.C. They were met by scores of homeless people who often don't have the luxury of a hot, homecooked meal and certainly not during the holiday season. Students met them with smiles and plates of hot food, but didn't stop there. They also shared in an outdoor worship service featuring the university's choir and drama teams and an uplifting word from guest speaker Kevin Sears from Atlantic Union College in Massachusetts.

Why did the students do all this? We wanted to "help those who have no place to sleep, no food to eat and to help those who need clothing, especially when it is cold," Racine explained.

Kaneil Williams, a campus chaplain, observed, "Our students have big hearts. They even raised an additional $300 to supplement the cost of the food."

Cheryl Kisunzu, provost, saw the event as "a portrait of integration of faith and learning. Students' love for Christ and commitment to the highest standards of professionalism were demonstrated in acts of worship and esteem, which fed both body and soul."—*Taashi Rowe*

NEWS

New Alcohol and Drug Counseling Track Offered

The State of Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) recently approved a new master's degree for alcohol and drug counseling. "We now have the opportunity to train students not only for a master's degree in professional counseling, but students may elect to receive special training to become alcohol and drug counselors," said Grant Leitma, PhD, chair of the Department of Psychology. "Our program is unique in the state of Maryland because it is one of only two university programs offering such a graduate program."

The program is not a certificate, but a 60-hour professional counseling psychology degree providing the necessary education to become a licensed alcohol and drug counselor. "We believe in preparing students to become competent and sensitive counselors who see their roles as ministers of healing," Leitma said.

Classes are offered in the evening in an accelerated format so students can complete the program in less than two years. The new program kicks off in March.

Degree in Radiologic Technology Transitions to WAU

The MHEC recently endorsed WAU's associate of applied science (AAS) degree in radiologic technology. The program is transitioning from nearby Washington Adventist Hospital (WAH), where the program began in 1965. It is accredited by the Joint Review Committee of Education in Radiologic Technology. Since its inception in 1965, the WAH program has graduated 45 successful classes and continues to maintain an overall 95 percent national board certification pass rate and a 100 percent employment rate within the first six months of graduation.

This 70-credit hour, two-year, associate degree program will begin this fall. The Bureau of Labor Statistics (2012) projects that radiologic technology employment is expected to increase by about 28 percent from 2010 to 2020.

Radiologic technologic students, like the ones pictured, will receive 2,000 clinical hours at Washington Adventist and Shady Grove Adventist hospitals.

Leaders Break Ground for New Athletic Field

A recent groundbreaking for WAU's new athletic field made way for a long overdue extreme makeover. The new field will host men's and women's soccer, intramural activities and community group activities. "On this new field, we will not only build muscles, but also character and good sportsmanship," said Patrick Crarey, WAU athletic director.

Those present at the groundbreaking included Weymouth Spence, president; Dave Weigley, chair of the WAU board; Jarrett Smith, City of Takoma Park council member; and Terrill North, candidate for the Montgomery County Council. The field will be completed in April.

Alumnus Celebrate 70th Anniversary

Last month Dick and Liz Harris from Hendersonville, N.C., celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary! The two met while attending what was then Washington Missionary College (now Washington Adventist University). Dick graduated in 1948 with a major in Bible and History. Liz studied and taught music. They were married December 22, 1943, when Dick was only 19 and Liz 20. Dick went on to pastor churches in Virginia and Michigan with Liz by his side.

When asked what kept them happily married for seven decades, Dick didn't have to think long. "Both of us love the Lord," he explained. "The more you both love God, the closer you tend to stay together."—*Ivan Blake*

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Phone: (800) 835-4212 ▪ wau.edu ▪ President, Weymouth Spence

Celebrating Fifty Years of Sacred Trust

JANUARY 2014

More than five decades ago, the family of Charles F. Kettering asked Seventh-day Adventists to build and operate a hospital to memorialize their father who had been one of the most prolific inventors in American history. What was it about Adventists that inspired the Kettering family to choose them? Adventists were chosen because of the Kettering's eye-witness of the compassionate care given to children who were stricken with polio and receiving treatment at Hinsdale Hospital. The Kettering's noticed something different in Adventist hospitals. Adventist hospitals were committed to restore and maintain the whole person health experience. The Ketterings' experience was so profound that they were determined to build a hospital to memorialize their father in the city that bears his name, Kettering, Ohio. The hospital would be operated by Adventists.

2014 marks the fiftieth anniversary of the Charles F. Kettering Memorial Hospital. It is far more than a celebration of an institution that has received its fair share of acclaim and distinction. It is more than a celebration of a building or of the man whose name it bears. This anniversary is a celebration of the sacred trust that the Kettering family placed in the hands of the Adventist founders. It is a celebration of the sacred trust that our patients and community place in us in caring for their lives. I am confident the Kettering family would be very pleased to see the same compassionate care now evident throughout Kettering Adventist HealthCare at all of our facilities. Ultimately, our fiftieth anniversary is a celebration of the sacred trust given to us by God to be an extension of His healing ministry.

Fred Manchur
CEO, Kettering Health Network
Kettering Adventist HealthCare

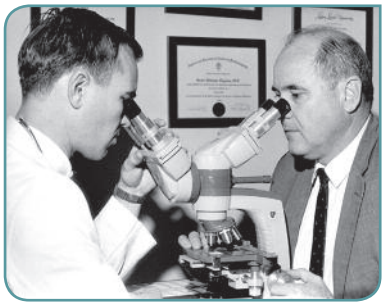
Fred Manchur is a member of the Kettering Seventh-day Adventist Church

The Ketterings noticed something different in Adventist hospitals.

your healing MINISTRY

From the Beginning

By Joseph Nicosia



Fifty years ago, the Adventist community in Dayton, Ohio, fulfilled a request by the family of Charles F. Kettering to build and operate a memorial hospital in their father's name. In the 1950's, Eugene and Virginia Kettering had witnessed firsthand the unique approach of Adventist health care at Hinsdale Hospital in Illinois. It was there they saw a care and concern for patients like they had never seen before. The Ketterings wanted the people of Dayton to experience the same extraordinary care in their own neighborhood. What unfolded was a shared partnership in which like-minded values combined to envision an Adventist hospital in Kettering, Ohio.

Breaking ground for the Charles F. Kettering Memorial Hospital

Charles F. Kettering

From left to right: **Jane Kettering Lombard (granddaughter), Eugene Kettering (son), Charles F. Kettering, Virginia W. Kettering (daughter-in-law), Charles F. Kettering, II (grandson), Susan Kettering Williamson (granddaughter)**

The first patient.

On March 3, 1964, Charles F. Kettering Memorial Hospital admitted its first patient. In 1969, Kettering College graduated its first class. In 2014, the hospital, now known as Kettering Medical Center, celebrates fifty years as one of the nation's elite medical centers. It is also a celebration of the coming together of the rich legacies of Charles F. Kettering and the Adventist healthcare heritage and their shared commitment to use innovation to improve the quality of life for people in our community.

Through the years, the numerous and outstanding achievements of Kettering Medical Center have led to the growth and development of Kettering Adventist HealthCare which now exceeds more than ten thousand employees. The same values that guided the Kettering family and the founding Kettering Hospital Adventist leaders – an organization with a deep sense of mission and community involvement – can now be seen throughout Kettering Adventist HealthCare. What began as a visionary relationship between the prolific inventor's family and Seventh-day Adventists is now one of the premier health systems in the United States and a healthcare beacon in southwest Ohio.

NEWS

JANUARY 2014

Heart Patients Receive Best Care

For the fifth straight year, Truven Health Analytics, formerly the healthcare business of Thomson Reuters, named Kettering Medical Center one of the nation's 50 top cardiovascular hospitals.

"It is an extreme honor to receive this recognition," says Roy Chew, president of Kettering Medical Center. "This award acknowledges the comprehensive, quality care that our heart patients receive from our very talented physicians, nurses and staff."

TRUVEN HEALTH ANALYTICS

50 TOP CARDIOVASCULAR 2014

The Truven Health 50 Top Cardiovascular Hospitals study evaluates performance in key areas: risk-adjusted mortality, risk-adjusted complications, core measures (a group of measures that assess process of care), percentage of coronary bypass patients with internal mammary artery use, 30-day mortality rates, 30-day readmission rates, severity-adjusted average length of stay, and wage-and severity-adjusted average cost.

Guest Speaker Jose Vincente Rojas

Connecting with God

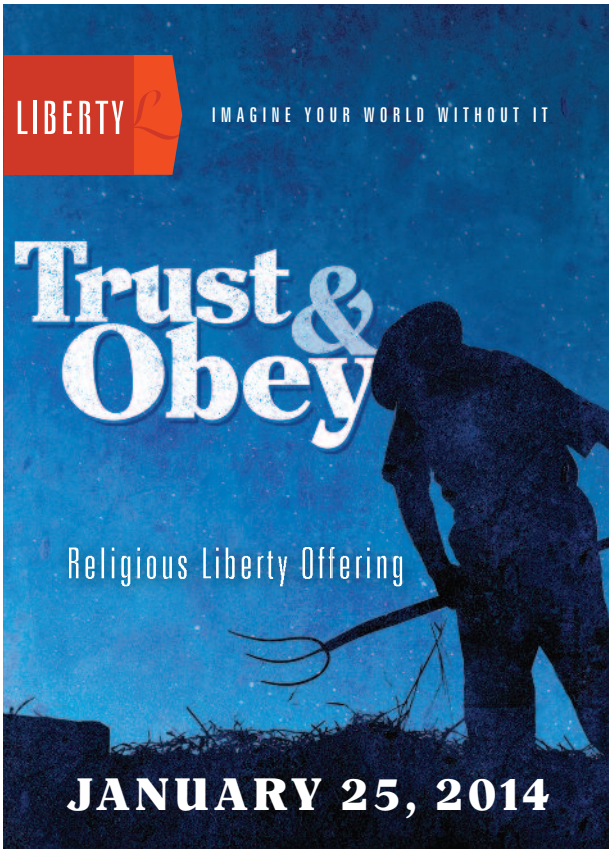
Physicians and employees gathered in November during Kettering Adventist HealthCare's annual Mission Conference. Worship services began on Friday evening with a praise concert by John Owens and Scott Reed. Attendees of Sabbath's services were blessed by guest speaker Jose Rojas as he challenged the congregation with the importance of the Healing Power of Forgiveness in the first service and the Healing Power of Hope during the main service.

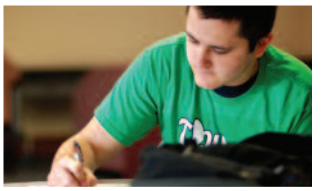
"It is a true blessing to bring such wonderful musicians and speakers to our Kettering Adventist HealthCare family," says Jarrod McNaughton, vice president of Missions and Development at Kettering Adventist HealthCare.

March of Dimes Honors a Kettering Adventist HeathCare Nurse

Pam Stout, a maternity nurse at Soin Medical Center, was awarded the March of Dimes Ohio Nurse of the Year for Women's Health and Centering category. She was chosen from among 160 nominations from 55 healthcare facilities. Pam is a strong advocate for moms and new babies, and loves counseling moms before they leave Soin.

Pam Stout with Terry Burns, President of Greene Memorial Hospital and Soin Medical Center





Kettering College has degree offerings in:

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- Human Biology

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EMPLOYMENT

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ADVENTIST PASTOR NEEDED to help grow an outreach-driven church plant in the Silver Spring, Md., area. Stipend provided. Also, core volunteers (families and individuals) needed for outreach campaign underway. For more details, email astoron99@yahoo.com.

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ELTERNHAUS ASSISTED LIVING, "Adventist Care for Adventist Seniors," is taking applications for Adventist CNAs/med techs for caregiver positions. Live-in and shift work available. Sleeping room provided for overnight or on-call. Housekeeping and cooking experience a plus. Come join our family of wonderful residents and staff in a country setting in Dayton, Md. Email interest to Diane Crane, diane@elternhausalf.com, or call (410) 707-7071.

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MISCELLANEOUS

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Sunset Calendar

	Jan 3	Jan 10	Jan 17	Jan 24	Jan 31
Baltimore	4:55	5:01	5:09	5:17	5:25
Cincinnati	5:27	5:33	5:41	5:49	5:57
Cleveland	5:09	5:15	5:23	5:32	5:40
Columbus	5:18	5:25	5:32	5:41	5:49
Jersey City	4:41	4:47	4:55	5:03	5:12
Norfolk	5:00	5:06	5:13	5:21	5:28
Parkersburg	5:15	5:21	5:29	5:36	5:45
Philadelphia	4:47	4:54	5:01	5:09	5:18
Pittsburgh	5:05	5:12	5:19	5:27	5:36
Reading	4:49	4:56	5:03	5:11	5:20
Richmond	5:03	5:10	5:17	5:24	5:32
Roanoke	5:14	5:20	5:27	5:35	5:42
Toledo	5:16	5:23	5:30	5:39	5:48
Trenton	4:45	4:51	4:59	5:07	5:15
Wash., D.C.	4:58	5:04	5:12	5:19	5:27

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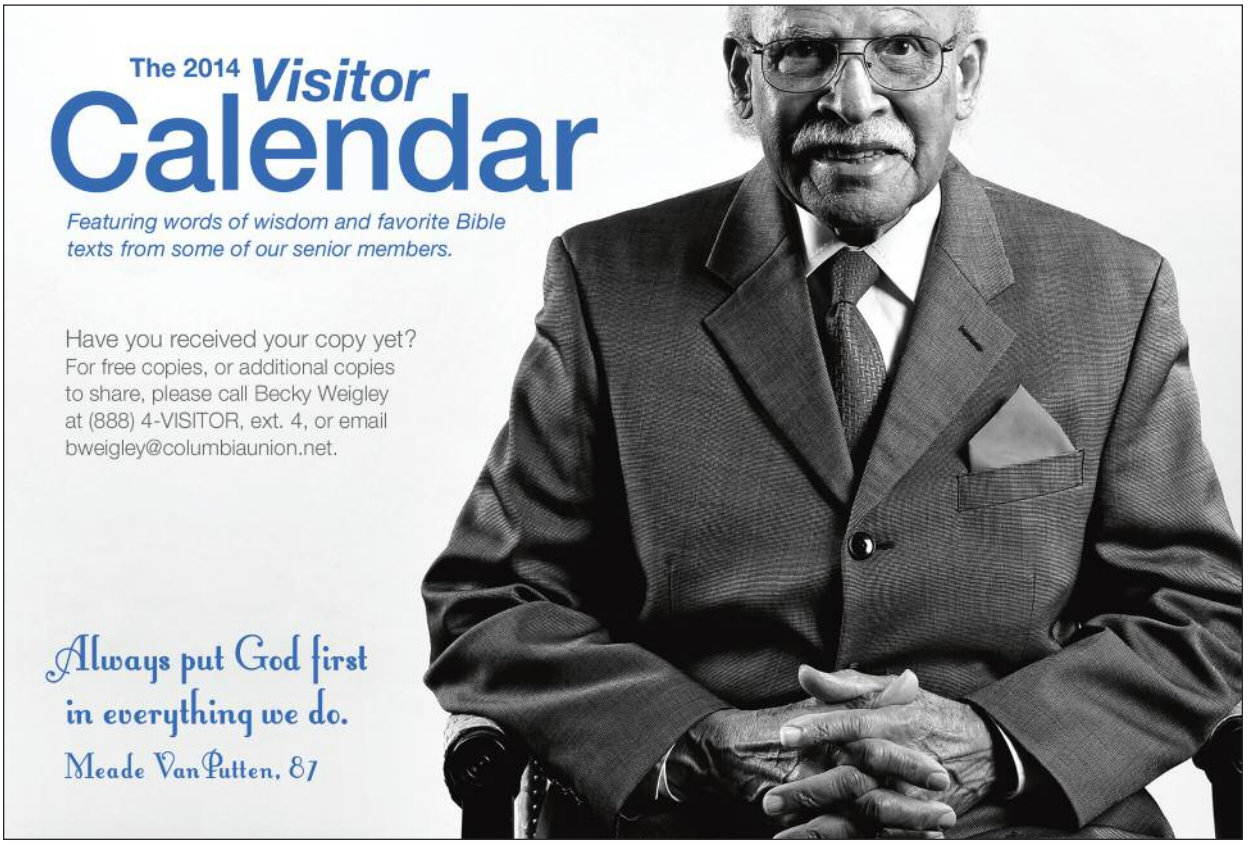
OBITUARIES

CULLUM, Helen E., born May 20, 1923, in Snydertown, Pa.; died October 29, 2013, in Dayton, Md. She was a member of the Triadelphia church in Clarksville, Md. She graduated from Plainfield

Academy (now closed) in New Jersey and attended Washington Adventist University in Takoma Park, Md. Helen accompanied her husband, "Jerry," and family to Blantyre, Malawi, Africa, in 1965, where she served as a missionary, filling in as needed in the South East Africa Union office until 1972. She worked for several years at the Seventh-day Adventist World Headquarters in the Secretariat office. When the Columbia Union Conference office moved to Columbia, Md., she transferred to the Home Health Education Service office. She retired with her husband in 1991 and moved to Berkeley Springs, W.Va., where she was active in the local church there until 2008. She moved to Laurel, Md., then to the Elternhaus Assisted Living Facility in Dayton, Md. She is survived by her husband, Gerald L. Cullum, of Dayton, Md.; her daughter, Cindy (Jim) Swanson of Laurel, Md.; her son Greg (Patty) Cullum of Huntingtown, Md.; and her grandchildren, Maggie and Jake Swanson of Laurel, and Chris, Kim and Kenny Cullum of Huntingtown.

HAWKINS, Donald Edgar, born January 22, 1923, in Lenawee County, Mich., to Homer Grant and Jennie Mae Maude (Moog) Hawkins; died, January 6, 2013, just 16 days before his 90th birthday. He became a Seventh-day Adventist as a teenager and was a member of the Prattville, Angola and Napoleon Adventist churches in Ohio, and the Bryan (Ohio) church for almost 60 years. He maintained the church lawn, and he and his wife, Winona, and their daughter, Rebecca, participated in the ingathering program every year. He lived in Hicksville, Ohio, and previously in Bryan, Edon, Stryker and Evansport, Ohio. He attended the Stryker High School and helped his father by working on the family farm. He served in World War II as a surgical technician in the U.S. Army. After his honorable discharge from the Army, Donald married Winona Lee Warner in 1943, and she preceded him in death in 1999. He married Eva La Vera (Frick) Weeks in 2002. Donald retired from Spangler Candy Company in Bryan, after 31-plus years and worked the family farms in Ohio. He enjoyed traveling, cycling, playing cards and being with his family. He is survived by two daughters, Barbara Lee Jones of Lebanon, Tenn., and Rebecca Lynne (John) Heffelfinger of Bryan; one son, Merle LeRoy (Sandra) Hawkins of Jacksonville, Fla.; grandchildren, Kathryn, Jeffrey and Jesse Jones; Tina Hawkins; and Jason, Joshua and Rachel Heffelfinger; great-grandchildren, Shawna and Alisha Jones; Dakota Hall; and Caroline Jones; and three great-great-grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his parents; five brothers: Gaylord, Clifford Dale, Lloyd, Delbert and Alva; one sister, Sylvia Bailey; his first wife, Winona; his second wife, Eva; son-in-law James William Jones; and grandson, Justin McClure Heffelfinger.

SAHLIN, Norma Jean, born March 11, 1952, in Takoma Park, Md., the daughter of the late Elmer and Martha Seal; died, October 9, 2013, in Springboro, Ohio. She was a member of the Village church in Mason, Ohio. Norma grew up in Silver Spring, Md., and was in the Takoma Academy Class of 1970 and graduated from WAU in 1974 with a bachelor's degree in communication. That same year she worked as communication director for a national trade association in Washington, D.C., until she married Monte Sahlin and joined him in Boston to assist with an urban ministry project and pursue graduate school at Boston University. A few years later, their work led them to the Pennsylvania Conference, where she worked with a radio station in Allentown. While in Pennsylvania, their two daughters, Stephanie Erica and Melissa Hope, were born. In 1983 the Sahlin family moved to Ohio, where Norma became manager of the Adventure and Travel Film Series in Worthington and worked for the Ohio Conference as editor of the conference newsletter. The summer of 1987, the family moved to the Maryland suburbs of Washington, D.C., where she worked at Home Study International as director of marketing from 1987-1991; at Takoma Academy as director of development and alumni relations, 1991-1996; and as media relations manager at ADRA from 1998-2004. During this time, she pursued her master's in communication at Bowie State University and taught English at Takoma Academy and WAU. She also served as Women's Ministries director for the Columbia Union Conference and pastor of Smithson's Chapel near Easton, Md. From 2004 to 2013, Norma served as communication director for the Center for Creative Ministry. Norma was raised in a family that saw church as the basis of their social life and volunteered a lot of their time in their local church, serving as an elder and leading in various ministries at a number of churches, including Sligo church in Takoma Park, Md. Her four passions outside of her church life were gardening, tea, books and her grandchildren. She is survived by her husband, Monte; her daughters, Stephanie (Sam) Jackson of Laurel, Md., and Melissa (Gianluca) Bruno of Mason, Ohio; her three and a half grandchildren, Zeke and Zoe Jackson, and Alex Bruno; her brothers, David and Robert Seal of Orlando, Fla.; her sister, Martha Carol of Biloxi, Miss.; and three nieces and nephews and their families.



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