

OUTLOOK

DECEMBER 2012

CHRISTMAS SPECIAL

LIVING TO GIVE

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JUST ABOUT
ANYWHERE

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Christmastime again! For some, it's a season to be ignored because of its ancient pagan origin. Others see it as an opportunity to bear witness to the world here and now about the Babe of Bethlehem—something better done by loving than by sermonizing. You'll see an amazing example of this from St. Louis in the article on page 12: "Tabernacle of Praise Adopts a Baby." See if that story doesn't touch your heart! If you need fresh suggestions about practical ways you too can show compassion this Christmas season, read the guest editorial by Amy Prindle, former managing editor of OUTLOOK. And from your current communication staff in the Mid-America Union—Brenda Dickerson, Randy Harmdierks and myself—best wishes in Jesus for a wonderful holiday season.

—MARTIN WEBER

Cover Photo: Mollie Cummings, a junior religious education major at Union College, is completing a 200-hour practicum in communication at the Mid-America Union. Photo by Brenda Dickerson.

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Full of Grace and Truth This Christmas Season

by Martin Weber



And the Word became flesh
and dwelt among us, and
we have seen his glory...
full of grace and truth"
(John 1:14).

Into the weary wasteland of this world, Jesus came as God's living word in human form. The spoken word through prophets and their precepts hadn't accomplished enough in Old Testament times. Finally God Himself came, up close and personal, in Jesus. Since that holy night in Bethlehem, the world has never been the same.

It was our living, loving God who hiked the hills of Galilee, who slept on the lakeshore with snoring disciples, who dabbed the tears of worried mothers and carried their gleeful children on shoulders muscled by hard labor. He showed skeptical fisherman how to catch human souls with love that was more than bait on a hook.

But it wasn't long before the world was fed up with the living bread from heaven. Only by a miracle did Jesus survive the wrath of fervent religionists long enough to be nailed to a cross. But He didn't let that happen before creating and commissioning an alternative spiritual community called the church.

Christ's plan was to conquer human hearts by love, one by one. And then He

took these scattered graced-based converts and united them into a new human race: the fellowship of the church.

When Jesus ascended to heaven, He left this world in quite a mess. But He left His church in charge of resolving that mess by commissioning us to love one another as He has loved us. He went so far as to say that His love within us would be the distinguishing mark of His church: "By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:35).

The first Christians were faithful to that calling. "Behold how they love one another" was how they were seen in the nasty world of Nero. Christians even loved their enemies, as their Master did. And their love was more than an imitation of His example—it was His real-time love from heaven, shed abroad in their hearts on earth, by the Holy Spirit He continually bestowed upon them (see Rom. 5:5).

We hear much these days about revival and reformation, the Holy Spirit and the need to experience all of that through prayer. Indeed we need to pray—but prayer in itself makes us no better than the first century Pharisees, whose long prayers were mocked by their loveless religion. They could tell you all about the law of God and which is the right day to worship Him—but actually so could the devil himself. We need something more to show the world

that we are the Spirit-filled people of truth that God has called us to be.

Should we pray that the world will come to its senses and recognize God's truth in our fundamental beliefs? Or rather pray that we will come to our senses and realize that claiming God's truth without showing Christ's love is merely living a lie?

Real truth always comes bundled with love and grace. The body of Christ, like our Master Himself, must be full of grace as well as truth. Someone admonished us about this many years ago. Her words are frequently quoted yet tragically slighted:

"Christ's method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Saviour mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, 'Follow Me.' There is need of coming close to the people" (Ellen G. White, *Ministry of Healing*, 143).

Close to the people, in love. Just like Jesus, our Lord and our life.

How do we make Christ's love practical this Christmas season? Let's look across the page and see what Amy Prindle has to share. **■**

Martin Weber, DMin, is editor of *OUTLOOK* and communication director for the Mid-America Union.

**All Scriptures are from the English Standard Version.*



Go Ahead—Make People’s Day This Christmas

by Amy Prindle

I admit it—even with considerable effort, it’s hard for me to stop associating Christmas with material gifts. Though it’s easy to talk of the true meaning of Christmas in Christ’s ultimate Gift and the spirit of servitude we live out in response, society seems to have a sly way of saturating my psyche with materialistic pressures. Not only do I find myself pining for very specific things (like a tricked-out bread machine or a bulk load of Hawaiian Host chocolate-covered macadamia nuts), I’m also picky in what I want to give.

The other day I received a toy catalog. I saw a train set I felt my oldest son deserved. That same day I got a call from a Make-a-Wish-type charity, wanting a “small” donation to help provide gifts for terminally ill children. Earlier that week I was trying to figure out how I could arrange a massage appointment for a stressed-out friend and help another with a significant financial setback. A mental list burgeoned with needs of my friends and family. I didn’t have the means to give to these situations in the exact ways I felt I should. Maybe I used to, but with two kids and a home business, I now struggle with focusing on anything beyond my house’s walls. I suddenly felt powerless to give anything at all.

Finally, after praying about my perceived hang-ups in help-giving, I realized I had

fallen into a cleverly-set trap, compliments of the devil himself. Cultivating an appetite for material goods isn’t the only way Satan discourages generosity. If distracted by feelings of inadequacy, we can forget to exemplify the resourceful giving spirit that Christ Himself modeled.

Right from His birth, Jesus didn’t have much—but that certainly didn’t stop Him from being the most helpful, generous person in history (after all, He fed the masses with a random kid’s lunch, healed folk with mud, spit, water... whatever was lying around). I resolved to follow His example of resourceful, compassionate servitude, regardless of how I perceive my own situation. Then God revealed opportunities that had been flying under my radar.

I considered my average day. Where do I go? With whom do I interact? What impression do I leave behind? Perhaps Christmastime can provide the perfect excuse to build relationships and start leaving a Christ-inspired impression.

On the mornings I find myself needing a drive-thru pick-me-up, maybe I could also spread a little holiday cheer in the Burger King line by buying an order of “cini-minis” for the car behind me. Maybe I could make prayer cards with my first name and a designated e-mail address. I could leave a trail of them as I go, offering prayer for special holiday requests.

To challenge the comfort zone, perhaps I will introduce myself to the cashier at Panera who makes my drink when I come in each week with stacks of work. I can complement her efficiency. I can tell her how I appreciate a smiling face on a stressful day. With Christmas as an excuse to be friendlier and more service-minded, I can finally start building relationships with people I regularly encounter. Maybe I can also tell her about my prayer-card project I’m doing in the spirit of Christmas. I can ask if there are burdens on her heart I could pray for, whether specific or silent. I might find out more about her and discover small ways to make her day.

After all, isn’t it the little, unexpected things in life that make us smile? Buying cini-minis for Burger King customers isn’t going to pay off their mortgages or bring estranged family members home, but the simple serendipity of the situation can still make their day. And if we prayerfully make these random acts of kindness into a habit, God can use these small opportunities to draw people to Him. And that just makes His day. **||**

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Amy Prindle lives in Lincoln, NE, with her husband, Cale. They have two boys—both under age 3! She is a member of Piedmont Park Church and is the former associate director of communication for the Mid-America Union. Currently she is the owner of Flawless Documents, a freelance writing and editing company (amy@flawlessdocuments.com).



Adventures in Adventist Frontier Missions

Reports from four missionary families with roots in Mid-America

Courtesy Adventist Frontier Missions



The holiday season can be difficult for missionaries who are separated from their loved ones and family traditions. Yet these families with roots in Mid-America are sharing with their chosen people groups the most valuable of all gifts—the love of Jesus Christ.

Beauty from Pain

We met Malina a few months ago while we were leading a week of spiritual emphasis at a Christian school in the Kathmandu Valley. She is a high school student who has lived at the school since she was a little girl. Her bright smile and friendly demeanor drew us to her immediately. Malina has a jagged scar that runs from just below her left ear to her mouth.

“Malina,” I asked, “how did you get the scar on your face?”

“When I was a small girl, I lived in a remote village with my mother and younger brother. My father was a soldier, and he used to get drunk. He also had other wives and girlfriends with children.

“One day he came home after being away a long time. For some reason he was very angry at us. Maybe one of his other wives was jealous and didn’t want him taking care of us anymore. He came into the house yelling and swinging his khukuri (a large, curved knife). He grabbed my mother and cut her face and head. She was bleeding so much. Then he hacked my little brother in the head so fiercely that he crumpled to the floor. He also cut me in the neck. Then he left. My mother and I survived, but my brother didn’t.

“After that, some Christians from Australia sponsored me to come to this school to study and live. I sometimes go and see my



mom in the village. I try to help her because she can't take care of herself very well anywhere. Her mind works slowly now. She is like a child. Some of my aunts try to help her also."

Is Malina shy about the scar on her face? "No," she says, "because if my father hadn't cut me, then the Australians probably wouldn't have learned about me—and I wouldn't have been sponsored to this Christian school."

To the question "Are you a Christian?" she answers: "I haven't been baptized, but I want to be someday. I love Jesus very much, and I know He loves me, too."

There is so much ugliness and pain in the world. But God is always working to create something beautiful from the ugliness—healing wounds and restoring stolen innocence.

.....
Jared Wright, AFM missionary to the Gorkha people of Nepal

Pizza Makers and Paradise

There is a hole-in-the-wall Turkish pizza place I like to visit. The food is cheap—and for good reason. They use broken chairs and cardboard boxes to fire the pizza oven. The bare walls are dirty, and lights are off to save money. Newspapers on the floor soak up drips from leaky plumbing.

I don't frequent this pizza joint for the food or the atmosphere. I come here because of the owners—two brothers who knead pizza dough 70 hours a week and love me like a brother. While they sift ants out of the flour, I chat with them about their favorite subject, eternity. They are devout Muslims but unusually open to learning new things. About four months ago, I gave them a Bible. Yesterday when I visited them, they happily reported they had made it through Genesis and Exodus.

Rashat stands in front of the fiery mouth of the stone oven for hours each day. I asked him why he doesn't have a fan overhead. "We are saving money so my father can

go to Mecca," he said with a shrug. "It will cost \$6,000." Rashat stared at the wall blankly. "Do you think it's worth it?" he asked.

Here was a wide-open door for me. I began to tell the story of how, many years ago, a man named Martin Luther made a pilgrimage to Rome. There God opened his mind to understand that salvation comes through faith.

Rashat and his brother listened, but largely lost the point. Then they asked why I didn't believe that Mohammed was the last prophet. "The Quran says Jesus will come again," I replied. "That means Jesus will be the last prophet."

Rashat stopped kneading. I continued, "What if the term 'last prophet' meant the last in a series?" Looking around the restaurant at the empty chairs, I smiled, "If I told you I was your last customer? Would I be telling the truth?" Rashat caught my point. I added, "The prophet Joel said the number of prophets would increase in the last days."

"Can you come back so we can talk more about the end of all things?" Rashat asked. That was an offer I certainly can't refuse.

.....
Barnabas Hope, AFM missionary to the Turkish people of Turkey

The Offering Basket

Yau's gnarled fingers skillfully wove thin strips of wood back and forth as a basket slowly took shape. My in-laws were visiting, and they had asked her to make a special two-part basket for collecting the missionary offering at their home church. One side was for the Pnong Project and the other side was for General Conference missions. The offering basket would actually be two short baskets woven together with a handle over the top.

It took some time for Yau to figure out what they wanted. "What are you making?" the curious villagers asked her.

"I don't know," she would reply, "I've never made anything like it before."

When Cara and her parents went

to pick up the basket, Yau asked what they were going to use it for. They told her they were going to take it to Chief God's house to collect money to help the Pnong.

Yau was overjoyed. The strange basket took on a whole new meaning for her.

.....
Daniel Greenfield, AFM missionary to the Pnong people of Cambodia

Discovering India

We are finally in India! For the past couple of years we have anticipated this moment. Training, team building, paperwork, vaccinations, packing and leaving. Now we are like newborn babies. The warm, familiar world we knew is nowhere to be found. New sights, tastes and smells. Oh, the smells! Our noses are overwhelmed. Are we breathing air, or something else?

And yet, isn't this what everyone told us to expect? Why is it still such a shock? We didn't think it would be, and yet it is.

As we look around, all we know is what we observe. As adults, we recognize the meaning behind most things in our home country, but here we have no answers. Why is that man sitting there? Where is everyone going? What is she eating? Why do people live like this?

We are beginning to look for answers to those questions in the larger context of how to share the Gospel here. This first part of our journey will be a time of childlike learning as our senses are bombarded by what we do not understand. It is both exciting and intimidating. We ask God to help us embrace a vulnerable curiosity as we twist our tongues to form unfamiliar sounds, make mistakes and then recover from them. We can't wait to grow to understand our people, becoming friends and then brothers and sisters with them in the family of our heavenly Father.

.....
Sukhi and Anandini Singh, AFM missionaries to the Kullu Pahari people of India

There is so much ugliness and pain in the world. But God is always working to create something beautiful from the ugliness.

(far left) Yau, of the Pnong people in Cambodia, weaving an offering basket that will be used for the Pnong Project and other GC missions



He Lost \$3 Million and

by Wissel Joseph

Courtesy Wissel Joseph



Haitian immigrant Wissel Joseph turned down a modeling contract in Canada worth three million dollars so he could keep the Sabbath holy. OUTLOOK brought you his amazing testimony in January 2010. Pictured here are Wissel, with wife Mehemie and their two daughters. Read on for an update of how the Josephs are reaching out from Columbia, Missouri to their homeland.



Found a Ministry

Whatever comes our way in life, God has better things in store.

When I chose to follow my faith and refused to sign the contract to work for Top Model agency, they chided me for squandering an opportunity “to help a lot of your family in Haiti with the millions.” I yearned to be helpful to my loved ones on earth—but not at the cost of being untrue to my Father in heaven. I learned this as a child from my mother, whose patience and guidance showed my siblings and me the right way to live: through prayer and faith in God.

Despite the blessings of living in America now, my wife and I have never forgotten the land of our birth. In November 2009, we took our children to Haiti to show them where we were born and raised. We visited the Adventist schools I attended: our university in Port-au-Prince and elementary school in Gonaives.

It was great to reconnect with families and friends, but I felt profoundly troubled by the living conditions of the people—particularly children in some rural areas. It broke my heart to see them drinking water from a river contaminated with animal feces.

I didn't know what to say or do, but I could not go back to the United States and simply resume normal living. My family is not rich, but God has been good. He has blessed us with work and our daughters are getting a Christian education at our church's elementary school. We are all healthy, we have a place to stay, we have means of transportation, etc. Our life is way better than those of many in my homeland.

Lingering images of what we saw throughout our trip to Haiti troubled me so deeply that I knew my life would be taking a new course, with a new purpose. But unsure of exactly what to do, I prayed to God and discussed my

concerns and desires with my family. During several weeks of corporate fasting at our church for the new year in 2011, we wrote a list of things to surrender to God. One of the first items on the list was how to help Haiti in a sustainable way.

One evening during our family fellowship and prayer, I felt impressed to start an organization that would help Haitian children have access to education, healthcare and balanced nutrition. I shared my thoughts with my family. They voiced caution, but I knew deep inside that God would provide as He always does.

The next morning I started gathering information on how to launch a nonprofit organization. A few weeks later, we had it registered with the state. “International Action Group for Sustainable Development” (also known as “Children for a New Haiti”) is an official 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.* It is dedicated to empowering and bettering Haitian children by providing, in a Christian environment, educational and physical support through sponsorships. We match children in Haiti with sponsors here in the United States. Sponsors are kept informed regarding the progress of their children through annual report cards, school year photos, Christmas cards and handwritten notes.

Based in Columbia, Missouri, “Children for a New Haiti” is governed by nine board members. We currently support 37 children in four areas in Haiti: Port-au-Prince, Milot, Lascahobas and Dos-Palais. Located in the central plateau, Dos-Palais has the majority of sponsored children (currently 27) because it is the most needy area. The 2,200 residents of this village lack every aspect of infrastructure—no electricity, no clean water, no transportation, no communication.

During my last trip, we

established a weekly one-day clinic for the community. Among a list of needs too long to detail here, our board has identified the drilling of water wells as an immediate must.

When impressed to start this organization, I perceived it as a call from God and simply answered like the prophet Isaiah did: “Here I am, Lord!” We are a young organization, but I praise God for His guidance and for sending the right people who share my dream. We have become like a family, working not for our own glory but for God's. The words of Jesus in Matt. 25:35-40 comprise our commission: “Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.”

Together we can change the lives of these children and give them hope, and this Christmas season would be a good time to begin! As someone unknown but obviously enlightened observed: “The best place to see God is where there are needs! How can we see God clearly? Uncover a need and there He will be, reaching out His hands in compassion. His hands, of course, are our hands: He has no others on the earth today except you and me. The ears that hear the cry of need, the feet that run to help, are our ears, our feet. And as our ears, hands, and feet respond, He opens our eyes to see His glory.”

Wissel Joesph and his family belong to the Columbia (MO) Church.

For more information about Children for a New Haiti, contact Joseph via phone: 573.673.2297, email: wisjoseph@childrenforanewhaiti.org or visit www.childrenforanewhaiti.org.

Lingering images of what we saw throughout our trip to Haiti troubled me so deeply that I knew my life would be taking a new course, with a new purpose.

You Can Fish Just

by Mollie Cummings



American churches are dying because we expect people to come to us. We need to get out of our pews and go to them.

“I don’t want to grow up. Actually, I don’t want to go to college. I just want to be an evangelist,” I told my mother.

“Mollie, you are going to grow up whether you like it or not. And yes,” Mom declared, “you are going to college!”

“How can I find a job where all I do for a living is make friends, and tell them about Jesus?”

“You’re going to college, Mollie,” Mom reiterated.

“But all I want to do is fish for people. Take them off the hook, and give them to Jesus.”

“That’s nice,” she insisted, “but you are still going to college.”

A couple weeks later, my wish came halfway true. With a happy grin I boarded an airplane to the Philippines. Shipping off to the other side of the globe, I handed my life over to be an evangelist for the next two weeks. Sadly, my ticket said “round trip,” which meant I had to return to the USA and go to (dreaded) college.

During my entire time in Asia,

God spoke to me—and so did the people there. One conversation in particular was worth traveling across the world to experience. It happened unexpectedly as all of us evangelists were sitting around a table slurping up mangoes. (I was the most barbaric consumer.) A Filipino pastor ventured over and volunteered to inform us about what grinds his gears.

He started by describing how he had moved to America for pastoral work. (He was back visiting his family in the Philippines.) His talk became heated when he asked us: “Do you know why churches in America are dying?” Puzzled, we all looked at each other, not having an answer.

“I’ll tell you why! I am an associate pastor in the States. I went to the head pastor one day and said, ‘Hey, we should get the church together to hand out *Steps to Christ* door to door.’ And do you know what he said to me? The head pastor said, ‘No, no, we

keep those on the shelf. If people want them, they can come and get them.’”

The Filipino pastor concluded: “American churches are dying because you expect people to come to you. You need to get out of your pews and go out to the people.”

None of us had anything to say in response, because we knew he was right.

All too soon my evangelistic adventure came to an end. My heart stayed in the Philippines while my body came home. I returned with heavier luggage—the burden to do mission work in the United States.

I stared looking for every opportunity for evangelism here. I thought, *I want to fish for people in AMERICA. How do I do that? And where?*

I looked up, down and sideways but my mom blocked each dynamite plan. She kept telling me: “You need to go to Union. Go for at least your first



About Anywhere



Photos courtesy Mollie Cummings

year, Mollie.”

I smiled, because I knew God was on my side and would make my dream happen, even if Mom said no.

One month later, I stood solemnly on registration day at Union College. I guess this was God’s plan for me? I didn’t understand why He would send me to normal school, when I offered myself to Him as an evangelist!

God and I had long talks about how His plans were not matching up with mine. Finally, He snapped me out of my grumbling by sending me a lady and her story.

The woman told me about a time when she couldn’t hear from God about where she was supposed to go in life. “At that moment of confusion,” she recalled, “God said to me: ‘I don’t care where you go, just take me with you.’”

I nodded my head slowly and agreed to God, “Okay, You and

me at Union College.”

Throughout my time at Union, God has given me multiple opportunities to work for Him. Though I felt forced to go to college when I sincerely wanted to do evangelism, God taught me a valuable lesson: I can fish just about anywhere. I thought I had narrowed the horizon enough by telling Him I wanted to do evangelism in the United States. But He narrowed it even more to the point by telling me, “Whether it is Union College, a grocery store, the laundromat, an airplane, or a ski lift, you can fish for people.”

My burden became the United States, and my mission is to fish everywhere I go—just by taking Jesus with me.

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Mollie Cummings is a junior religious education major at Union College.

Meet Mollie Cummings

by Martin Weber

Each school year Union College encourages a student studying communication to complete 200 practicum hours of real-life media experience with the MAUC Communication Department. For 2012-13 we are favored with Mollie Cummings, born and raised in Bemidji, Minnesota. She attended Maplewood Academy, where I saw her at camp meeting speaking for Sabbath school in the main auditorium. I had never witnessed an older crowd so captured by a teenager’s testimony. That experience was repeated twice when Mollie shared her vibrant faith at College View Church and then with a group of education administrators.

Mollie Cummings has much to offer her church and the world. Her major is religious education and her minor is communication, with a public relations emphasis. Her life passion is simply sharing Jesus.



Tabernacle of Praise Adopts a Baby

by Karen T. Louis

Courtesy Central States Conference



It's a boy! Born June 10, 2012 weighing 5 lbs. 2 oz., his name is **Shawn**—and he's our first child.

It all began when Shawn's mother (DW) moved from Raleigh, North Carolina to St. Louis earlier this year in search of stability for her life. Tabernacle of Praise (TOP) church members met DW through their homeless ministry.

DW was pregnant, addicted to crack cocaine and prone to seizures. Her first son had been taken into protective custody by the state of North Carolina, and was later adopted. DW didn't want that for baby Shawn.

TOP's homeless ministry program started out with the simple purpose of providing meals for the hungry. Little

did church members realize that God had bigger plans. Soon they were providing care packages to the homeless and picking up several individuals every Sabbath for church. DW was among them.

After a few weeks, she shared her story. DW had been adopted when two months old because her parents were both on drugs. She is the youngest of 12 biological siblings, whom she has never met. She had a close, loving relationship with her adoptive father, who encouraged and helped her. In 2008 however, he went in for knee surgery and unexpectedly died a few days after surgery. Two months later, DW returned home from school and found that her adoptive mother had thrown her things out on the front lawn. After that she ended up on drugs.

Because DW used cocaine

throughout her pregnancy with Shawn, the baby at birth was immediately taken into state protective custody. The state sought to place him with a foster family pending DW's successful completion of rehab and counseling. When TOP member **Torrey Mcray** learned that the baby needed placement, he contacted **Kawaski White**, TOP's youth leader. So it was that Ms. White was entrusted with Shawn.

Although no one knows the future God has planned for this baby, TOP members are certain that He brought Shawn into their church family, if only for a little while, to change the course of his life—forever.

Karen T. Louis is communication director for Tabernacle of Praise Church in St. Louis (MO).

Meet Central States' New Family Ministry Leaders

by Philip Baptiste

Courtesy Central States Conference



Marlon and Denise Johnson have been appointed as Central States Conference family ministry coordinators.

The proud parents of two adult children and one young grandchild, the Johnsons have a passion for family ministry. They

demonstrated this while serving their local congregation as family ministry leaders. Marlon is an educator with expertise in health, science and physical education, and Denise is a pediatrician in private practice.

The Johnsons believe that in this day of attack on the family, God has endowed the Christian home with unique ministry opportunities. There are many difficult-to-reach segments of the community that families are positioned to positively impact for Christ. Families can influence people who may never respond to a traditional evangelistic event. These individuals will often attend worship events at the invitation of a family with whom a relationship has been established. But in

order to make such an impact, Christian families must be spiritually, physically and emotionally healthy.

Accordingly, the vision of Marlon and Denise Johnson is to assist local church family ministry leaders in building stronger and healthier families. Over the next four years, the Johnsons plan to focus on four areas in serving the Central States Conference:

1. Strengthening the spiritual life of families
2. Supporting and affirming seniors
3. Enriching marriages
4. Establish a ministry for single adults.

Philip Baptiste is communication director for the Central States Conference.

Philadelphia Church Serves Its Community

by Sharon Tate

From the community garden plot to the local shelter for homeless individuals, members of Philadelphia Church in Des Moines are reaching out to serve their community. Most recently they sponsored Health and Wellness, a family workshop. Attendees discovered remedies to foster physical health. Sessions included demonstrations on making healthy smoothies, choosing the optimal fruits and vegetables, and “The Whole Truth about Whole Grains.” Additionally, children could get their eyesight checked.

The Women’s Ministry Department is reaching out to people in the local homeless shelter. And this year the church started planting a large garden for the community. Everyone is welcome to get in on the harvest and enjoy fresh produce.

As a follow-up for interested individuals, personal ministries leader **Derek Covington** has been conducting weekly Bible studies for the community—yielding seven baptisms so far in 2012. New members include **Michelle and Zrftick Ross**, mother and son, who were baptized in September after receiving studies from Covington and **Shirley Duffy**. Two others have joined the Seventh-day Adventist Church by profession of faith.

Sharon Tate is communication director for Philadelphia Church in Des Moines.



A Health and Wellness workshop helped attendees discover new ways to improve their lives.



Philadelphia Church’s community garden



Death-defying Miracle at Johnson Corners Christian Academy

by Jacquie Biloff

September 17, 2012 was a day of miraculous deliverance at Johnson Corners Christian Academy (JCCA) near Watford City, North Dakota. An out-of-control semi-truck careened off the highway outside and smashed into the school

facility, causing significant damage. Students and staff were terrified, yet amazingly no one inside the school was killed or even seriously injured.

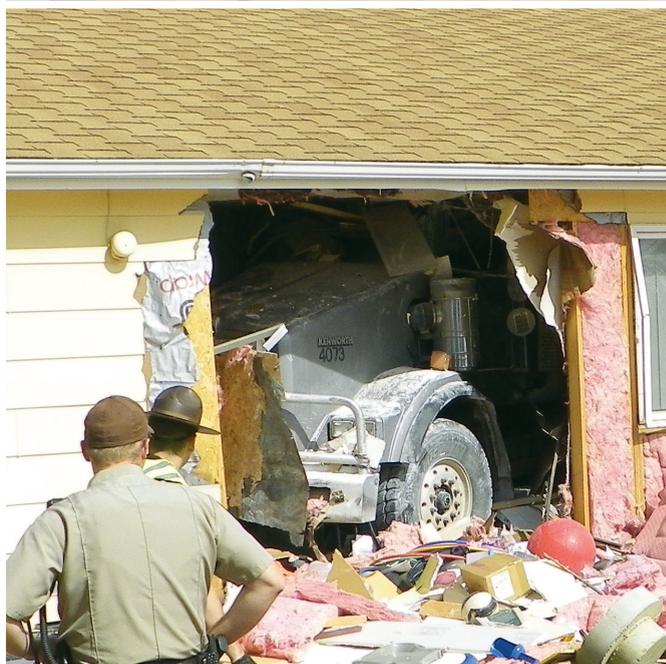
At the Johnson Corners intersection, the semi was traveling 63 mph when it

hit a car that failed to yield, knocking the truck driver unconscious. The semi then “bunny hopped” a ditch, careened up an embankment, plowed through a chain-link fence and slammed into the school. It first hit a bus at an

estimated 55 mph and then a student’s pickup truck before bursting through the building.

“It was like watching a video game as everything exploded,” reported Devin, a student. He stood up just before a large printer hit him in the

Photos courtesy Torrie Adams



An out-of-control semi-truck plowed 60 feet into JCCA, destroying the principal’s office, three classrooms, the lunchroom and the boys’ bathroom.



midsection. Had he not stood, he might not have lived to tell the story.

Students raced for refuge to the chapel, where they realized that not everyone had made it out of their classroom. Three students were missing: **Sandi, Lois** and one of the senior guys. Sandi and Lois had been closest to the door where the semi had entered the room. Sandi remembers thinking as the bumper of the truck hit her, "This is going to hurt." Both girls finally escaped, white with sheetrock dust. The senior boy had run around to check on the driver of the semi. He smashed a window in the cab and pulled out the driver, still unconscious.

At the time of the accident, sisters **Josie** and **Shelly** were sitting in the lunchroom. **Olivia**, a younger student, was outside on the playground tying her shoe before running off to play. Suddenly she jumped up with a horrified

look on her face, giving the others a couple of seconds' warning before the room exploded. Josie reported, "There was a whooshing sound." Her chair went flying across the carpet as if on ice. She started screaming, not knowing why it was sliding so fast but realizing she had to quickly evacuate the room.

Meanwhile, Shelly's chair was pushed into the table by a collapsing wall, pinning her. A friend pulled the wall off her and they ran to the chapel as the ceiling came down. She remembers having to jump over a lot of debris.

Barbara Henderson, longtime staff member and the mother of Josie and Shelly, recalled: "No one did what they usually do that day." **Principal Timmons** usually takes phone calls or has a one-on-one study course with a student during that time in his office. It was his empty office that was hit first. Another teacher who usually

goes to her room to make phone calls decided she was hungry and left her room. It was demolished. Henderson's daughter, who usually carries her books to the classroom before lunch, decided not to that day. That classroom also was destroyed.

The bus was not usually parked in the spot where it was struck by the truck. The pickup was never parked in that location or direction. Both slowed the momentum of the semi and changed its direction before it slammed into the school, thereby saving all the children's lives. With the pickup in front of the semi, the wall was pushed inward from the bottom first instead of collapsing onto the children from the top, allowing for escape. Even the boy in the bathroom made it out as the semi plowed 60 feet into the school—destroying the principal's office, three classrooms, the lunchroom

and the boys' bathroom.

Henderson later told the 19 JCCA students (from five religious affiliations): "I think God has a great work for each one of you. You are going to be witnesses and testify to family and friends because of what happened here." She also asked **Hannah**, driver of the pickup, why she had parked where she did that day. Hannah replied, "I never park facing east. I never do that!" Barbara assured her, "God had a plan. He needed you to do that."

And the whooshing sound? The students believe it was the sound of angels' wings.

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Jacquie Biloff is communication director for the Dakota Conference.

DAKOTA CONFERENCE 18TH ANNUAL



MEN'S RETREAT



MARCH 8 - 10, 2013

BAD LANDS BIBLE CAMP

MEDORA, NORTH DAKOTA



The Rolla (MO) Church hosted a Fall Family Fun Festival one Sunday in September for "Let's Move Day." The event began with a two-mile Fun Walk to feed a nearby herd of alpacas. The course featured entertainment diversions along the way, including a water balloon toss. Back at the church parking lot, Sarah Kuerzinger set up a petting zoo with miniature ponies, hens, rabbits, goats, and a donkey.

The 70 attendees enjoyed an afternoon of games, including tug-of-war and sack races, organized by Rolla Adventist Elementary teacher Frank Meidell and Pathfinder leaders Scott and Alicia Spaid.

Activities continued all day until a concert by the Montana family rounded off the festivities.



Frank Meidell

Gladstone Church members in Kansas City donated everything from antiques to zippers for a yard sale this past September.

The purpose was reinvigorating the church's evangelism fund to secure an Amazing Facts speaker for community outreach in 2013. While raising \$4,000, the 25 yard sale volunteers also connected with many neighbors who dropped by to browse and shop.



Courtesy Rick Floyd



Preparation Leads to Evangelistic Success

by Trish Williams

Kansas City (MO) Central Church held a “Cracking the Prophetic Code” series with Amazing Facts speaker **Dave Steward**. Seven new members were baptized, and 12 more are taking Bible studies in preparation for baptism.

Six months prior to the July series, members began praying individually at a set time every day, and then weekly they interceded together during

Sabbath worship. After the church ambitiously raised \$40,000 for the outreach project, 20,000 Bible study cards were mailed to the surrounding community. Nearly 40 people responded. Bible workers **Emily** and **Steven Shafer** nurtured their interest, along with 35 local lay members trained in giving Bible studies. Just before the Prophetic Code meetings,

100,000 advertising fliers blanketed a 10-mile radius of the church.

The venue for the meetings was the Community Center in Belton, Missouri. The first night 185 neighborhood guests came, and attendance stayed strong throughout the series. Among them were a Methodist pastor and a chaplain, both of whom are taking Bible studies.

Pastor Edye Campos commented that it was the most successful evangelistic series the church has held, due in part to the power of three things: prayer, preparation and planning.

Trish Williams is communication secretary for the KC Central Church.

Mission-minded Students Fund One-Day School

by Bev Reasoner



Frank Carnahan

Principal Bev Reasoner and 32 students present a giant check for a One-Day School funded by Springfield Adventist Junior Academy.

A two-year fundraising project came to fruition as students of Springfield (MO) Adventist Junior Academy presented a giant check for \$6,108.43 to the Iowa-Missouri Conference for building a One-Day School. The project began after a discussion with Springfield students about benefiting children in other parts of the world, providing them opportunity to learn about Jesus.

Students faithfully brought an offering each Wednesday to group worship. After the school year ended with less than half of the needed \$5,000, they decided to extend the project another year. **Dr. Joseph Allison**, conference education superintendent, visited the school with a slide presentation showing students from Sunnydale Adventist Academy constructing an eight-building school complex

in Africa. This encouraged the students in Springfield to continue raising funds, but they still lacked \$1,000 at the end of the 2011-12 school year.

Seeking closure, local church members dedicated the Lamb's Offering one Sabbath, which usually goes toward local school needs, toward the One-Day project. Local Sunnydale alumni agreed to match whatever funds came in, and the response yielded more

than what was needed.

The One-Day School initiative is a response to the rapid growth of the Seventh-day Adventist Church overseas and the requisite need for Christian education, which requires proper facilities.

Bev Reasoner is the principal and a teacher at Springfield Adventist Junior Academy.



God in Shoes Continues to Empower

by Sue Carlson

John Treolo



Christian clowns, Candy Sartin and Teresa Peckham from the Gothenburg (NE) Church, making balloon animals for guests at God in Shoes Family Fun Day in Wichita

In Wichita, six congregations are excited about ministering to their Kansas community. During a 10-day stretch in September, they joined forces for God in Shoes, a ministry to encourage, educate and empower underprivileged women and their families.

God in Shoes gives a venue for church women to share their faith by volunteering time and talent as well as providing supplies for various outreach events—Family Fun Day, Welcome Baby gift baskets, Ladies’ Free Spa Day, suppers and seminars, food drives for

local pantries and painting women’s shelters.

Following are comments about this year’s program:

“It helped create positive synergy among the churches here in Wichita, energize members by seeing how easy it is to share their faith, and

simply tell our community that Seventh-day Adventists care. It has been an exciting journey.”—**Michael Campbell**, Wichita South lead pastor.

“I’m here because it’s the most exciting time for me in women’s ministries. Here is something that women are doing in the community, and I don’t want to miss a thing.”—

Sarah Porter, local member.

“God in Shoes is close to my heart. I can understand a lot of the situations that women are in. I feel impressed to come and join and do this as often as I can for as long as I can.”—

Rhonda Sinclair, a Nebraska church member.

For information on next year’s God in Shoes ministry, contact **Sue Carlson**: scarlson@ks-ne.org or 785.478.4726.

Sue Carlson is Women’s Ministries director for the Kansas-Nebraska Conference.

John Treolo



The annual Samples of the World event benefited the Good Neighbor Community Center, an Adventist-based outreach in Lincoln, Nebraska. Attendees sampled the food of a dozen nationalities. Pictured are representatives from Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Hope, a unique GNCC program serving refugees and other immigrants, many of whom are Muslims.



Fort Scott Church helps Cancer Patients

by John Treolo

To benefit cancer patients and their loved ones, members of the Fort Scott (KS) Church sponsored a fund-raiser for The Sharing Bucket, a local support charity. According to **Janet Tucker**, The Sharing Bucket serves residents

throughout Bourbon County, particularly those in rural areas.

When church members sponsored a yard and baked items sale in their fellowship hall, they had a dual purpose: that their neighbors would

purchase items in support of The Sharing Bucket while also becoming acquainted with Seventh-day Adventists.

Afterward, a check for \$750 was presented to The Sharing Bucket. "This organization has helped several friends of mine,"

said Tucker. "It's a wonderful service. Just knowing we were able to help was rewarding to our members."

John Treolo is communication director for the Kansas-Nebraska Conference.

A Life of Passionate Service

Fond memories of a friend in God's service

by John Treolo



John Treolo

Joel Tompkins (left), former president of the Mid-America Union, presented Lynn Westbrook with the Joe Hunt Award for outstanding literature evangelist service.

Lynn B. Westbrook*, who passed away Sept. 20, lived his life for ministry. For half a century he labored in the Kansas-Nebraska Conference as a literature evangelist and pastor, selling countless books, influencing many baptisms and coordinating fund raising projects.

Born in Oklahoma, Lynn began working after high school for Cessna Aircraft Company in Kansas. He

became a union representative to fight for improved working conditions, wages and health benefits for his colleagues.

Lynn discovered new meaning and purpose after **Sally** came into his life; they were married 56 years. Unlike Lynn, Sally had been raised a Seventh-day Adventist. She never urged him to join her church but quietly prayed that one day he would. This happened after Lynn came down with the flu,

as he later recalled. "For lack of anything better to do I read *The Great Controversy*. When I finished that book, I was a Seventh-day Adventist!"

Through the years, more than 400 baptisms resulted from the books Lynn sold and the kindness he shared. Just months before his passing, he was instrumental in raising nearly \$15,000 for Wichita Adventist Christian Academy, brightening classrooms for

eager young minds.

On a personal note, I first met Lynn in Kearney, Nebraska at a colporteur rally in 1983. We became fast friends and shared ministry concepts, his passion for poetry and music and our enjoyment of sports. Lynn loved his family, life and telling stories to make others laugh.

Sleep well, my dear friend.

*Obituary appears on page 27



Minnesota's Immigrant Diversity in Community

Communication Director Jeff Wines interviews VP of Administration Justin Lyons

Courtesy Minnesota Conference



Minnesota Conference VP of Administration Justin Lyons

The Minnesota Conference has continued to have wonderful growth over the last few years. One of the areas of growth has been among first generation immigrants from multiple places around the world. These immigrants have come to Minnesota, despite the cold weather, and have become an integral part of the community as well as the church. **Justin Lyons**, vice president for administration, has been involved with many of these people groups and their assimilation into the Conference and is excited to see the ways God is working among them.

Jeff Wines, communication director, recently had an opportunity to interview Lyons regarding his involvement with these groups. Following is the interview (questions in bold).

How many immigrant communities belong to the Seventh-day Adventist Church in MN?

There are quite a few people groups that have become part

of the Minnesota Conference. There are churches comprised entirely of members from one region of the world or another—Oromo (Oromia), Karen (Burma), Korean, Russian, Kenyan, Hmong (Laos), Hispanic churches (multiple countries). In addition there are other ethnic groups dispersed among the various churches.

You mentioned that you have had opportunity to work with many of these churches. What types of challenges confront these people groups?

Cultural issues are one of the major challenges. The way the church is run in North America, and how it functions, is considerably different than in the areas these people groups come from. The struggle to maintain their Adventist identity in a new culture becomes a stress point that challenges the church. This becomes especially apparent with the

interactions between the 1st and 2nd generations; the 1st generation often holds closely to the traditions of their homeland while the 2nd generation is embracing and being immersed in the cultures of North America. While many churches deal with generational challenges, this becomes more than a generational challenge—it is a challenge of culture and how it interacts in the lives of these people groups.

Language is also a challenge. While many learn English, there are many 1st generation immigrants who do not, and they have a hard time communicating outside their cultural community. Worshipping and communicating within their local Adventist ethnic church goes well, but communicating with the rest of the conference can be a major challenge. Interpreters are often a necessary resource in ethnic churches.

Obvious financial struggles face many of these church groups. Those who arrive as refugees have income limitations that seem insurmountable. Most refugees have nothing but the clothes on their backs when they enter the United States. Opportunities for educational advancement in the refugee camps were also poor; to compound the issue, when they arrive here they discover the cost of an Adventist education for their children is inhibiting.

Evangelistically, there are also challenges. The traditional ways of mass marketing an evangelistic series in North America would not work, as language would be a barrier. In these cases, friendship evangelism is the best protocol

to reach the audience.

On the positive side, many people coming to the United States are willing to work hard. Their desire for peace, freedom, and the perseverance to have a life that is more than an existence is an indomitable characteristic that is wonderful. And equally wonderful is the fact that many from the varied ethnic communities are willing to accept the Gospel and be a part of the Adventist Church.

How has the Minnesota Conference helped to support these churches/people groups?

In some cases we have provided pastoral leadership appropriate to the culture or language group. We have also provided financial resources for evangelism and Bible work.

Personally, I really enjoy working with the different cultural groups because there is a faithfulness—a bright hope that is wonderful to see. So many of these people share with me how they see God at work in their lives. It feels good and is fulfilling to know that I can help these brothers and sisters, even if it is just a little bit. I ask myself, "If I had to move to another country coming with no knowledge of the culture or language, who would I trust?" These people are coming to the Conference. What an honor! I see the growth of the Minnesota Conference among the ethnic churches as huge strides forward for the kingdom. The appreciation of even the smallest thing we can do for them is wonderful. If we buy a used van for a church or give a small evangelism budget, which to some would seem miniscule, they are still



so grateful. I appreciate and enjoy working on questions of policy for them; it stretches me to understand where they are coming from and to learn how best to help them. And of course, I enjoy being exposed to the various cuisines from around the world.

Could you share an experience you have personally been involved with in supporting a church/people group?

I recently had the chance to officiate a Karen wedding, with the assistance of an interpreter. With the amount of ceremony and tradition that is involved in a wedding, the translation alone was a challenge but very rewarding. The pastor, **See Nay**, asked that I do the entire wedding so he could observe and learn how to officiate. The wedding was a great mix of Karen and American traditions. When the service was finished a young woman, who is a member of the Karen church, came up to me and said that she so much appreciated the service. She felt I really understood and respected their culture. It was heart warming to connect and be able to serve this community of people who are a part of our community of faith. What I have realized is that I am blessed to have friends—brothers and sisters in Christ from around the world, who are all a part of the greater community of faith in the Minnesota Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

Celebrating a Century of Worship and Witness in Blackberry

by Brent Lane

A taste of heaven came to earth last July in Blackberry, Minnesota. The congregation there celebrated its centennial with plenty of smiles, hugs and tears during a brief reunion weekend.

On Friday night, attendees sang favorite hymns and shared memories of the local church and its school. Thoughts expressed were as varied as the congregation, but many harmonized with the text: “Thus far has the Lord helped us” (1 Sam. 7:12). **Anders Lane** and **Melissa Panasuk** shared their musical talent.

Sabbath morning, pews and platform were crowded with nearly 90 worshipers. Former pastors **Robert Knaubert**, **Bob Forbes** and **Thearon Staddon** (via mp3 technology) joined current pastor **Ron Booth** in sharing reflections on 2 Peter 1:16—the scripture used on the

dedicatory weekend 100 years ago. Using the same pulpit built by the church’s first elder in 1912, each pastor explained what that verse might mean to Blackberry Adventists today. **Bonnie Knaubert** provided special music for the service, as did the **Polensky family** with **Steve Reiners**. **Ed Barnett**, conference president, challenged members to recommit themselves to God’s mission for the Blackberry congregation.

In 1912 the church facility was constructed debt-free, and charter members dedicated the offering to missions. In honor of their global vision, centennial celebrants took a special offering to construct a Maranatha One-Day Church overseas. The initial offering raised \$1,400—only \$100 short of funding an entire church structure. When this news was announced, the

difference was supplied in short order.

A potluck lunch was followed by plenty of visiting, and viewing the historical displays. Then the pews filled once again as the Polenskys and Knauberts shared more music, and congregants enjoyed stories from the past century augmented with a slide show.

The day’s celebration concluded with a choral benediction. Attendees lingered to tell more stories and give final hugs before heading home, longing for that next great reunion after which there will be no goodbyes.

Brent Lane is a member of the Blackberry Church. He also leads the church’s VBS program.



Current and former members and guests at the centennial weekend celebration of the Blackberry Church



Warm Smiles Attract Dental Student

by Mark Bond

Courtesy Rocky Mountain Conference



Garrett Rasnick (left), a pre-dental student from the University of Colorado, visits with Gordy Gates, a dentist who attends the Boulder Church.

On Sabbath, October 20, Boulder Church members had the privilege of witnessing the baptism of **Garrett Rasnick**, a pre-dental student at the University of Colorado (CU). His fiancée, **Lulu Zhang**, also joined by profession of faith.

Garrett's story began with his search for a dental school. He is very service-oriented and found the mission statement of the dental school at Loma

Linda University fascinating. Consequently, he showed up at the local Adventist church on a Sabbath morning early last August.

Several smiling members greeted him, including **Judi Williamson**. Before Judi invited him to the pastors' Sabbath school class, she learned that he was interested in dentistry. "After class I want you to meet **Dr. Gordy Gates**, one of the

dentists in our church," she said.

The two men enjoyed a lengthy conversation and Dr. Gates encouraged Garrett to shadow him at his office the following week. Garrett observed for two days, and Dr. Gates took him to lunch both days.

Garrett continued attending the pastors' Sabbath school class for the next several

weeks. One Sabbath when the pastoral team was at an event, **Pastor Phil Jones**, a retired evangelist, taught the class. He assumed that all present were already church members, but he felt compelled to make an appeal for a public profession of Jesus through baptism. Garrett raised his hand. His exact words to the class were, "Count me in."

Pastor Jones met with him after class, and they set his baptismal date. When Jones asked what had led him to his decision, Garrett replied, "This is the friendliest church I have ever been in." The rest of the story is divine history.

"Church members should be ready with a 'Gladventist Glow' on their faces to embrace the ones God sends us each Sabbath," said Jones. "The warmth of Jesus needs to shine from our lives."

To view Garrett's baptism, select video archive from the October 20 second service at <http://new.livestream.com/bouldersdachurch>.

Mark Bond is communication director for the Rocky Mountain Conference.

On January 6, 2013, Eden Valley Institute in Loveland, Colorado (pictured) will launch a new program called "THE WELL." The name is an acronym: "Training Health Educators With Evangelism, Lifestyle, & Leadership." The six-month program combines training for Bible workers with health evangelism, bringing a mind-body-spirit approach to reaching people for Christ. According to Matt Dooley, Eden Valley education director, students will learn ways to relieve the needs of suffering humanity and instill hope of eternal life through Jesus.

"I strongly encourage churches and pastors to sponsor a lay member from their congregation to take the program," says Rick Mautz, director of health ministries for the Rocky Mountain Conference. "The program is very affordable and will empower members to extend the evangelistic efforts of the local church."

Further information about THE WELL is available from Matt Dooley at 970.215.0223 or by email: education@eden-valley.org.



Courtesy Rocky Mountain Conference



Rocky Mountain Youth Engage in Missions

by Jessica Beans

As a sophomore at Campion Academy, **Mathew Tomney** felt nervous about going to a foreign country. But he brushed aside his apprehension and embarked on a mission trip to build an orphanage in Honduras. A junior now, Mathew regards that experience as having changed the course of his life.

“What we did there is something I wanted to bring back and do for kids here in America,” said Mathew. He now wants to become a youth pastor focusing on inner city ministries. Meanwhile, he’s making plans for another overseas mission and also wants to organize a local trip for disaster relief from hurricanes or tornadoes.

Many other teens have been spiritually energized by mission trips. **Jamey Houghton**, student evangelism coordinator for the Rocky Mountain Conference, has seen the impact this experience can have on teens, “Trips like these have changed young people’s perspectives,” said Houghton. “Not to say that God can’t do that here in the States, but just the change of pace, the change of surroundings and change of culture makes kids somehow feel more bold. It gives them more courage to stand up for their faith. They come back changed.”

The Rocky Mountain Conference is creating more opportunities like the Honduras trip to empower kids across the conference. Four mission trips are planned for 2013: to Belize, Honduras, Ecuador and Africa. Two will be primarily construction trips, and two will focus on evangelism through a new program called the “Kaleo Project.”

Kaleo is a Greek word meaning “to call” or “to invite,” which is what teens will do on these trips through their preaching. The Kaleo Project will enable teens to present a full series of meetings in Ecuador or Africa.

“Having opportunity to preach our Adventist truths to people in other countries will be a huge faith building experience,” said **Gary Thurber**, Rocky Mountain Conference president. “We are so excited to see this program taking off so quickly.”

Emma Piller, a sophomore at Vista Ridge Academy, has accepted the challenge to present an evangelistic series in Ecuador. “Preaching kind of scares me, but I know it will be good practice for the future,” she said. “I really want to go and help people—and

discover a new part of me. So the idea of this new experience is exciting to me.”

Annie Hodgson, another sophomore at Vista Ridge, hopes to go to Africa this upcoming year and be part of the preaching and building. Annie is already a veteran of two medical mission trips, which changed her perspective in big ways, she testifies. But now she is really excited about trying something new. “Going out on my own and preaching will be a great experience for me,” she predicts. “I’m not an upfront person really, but I feel like it will help me get closer to the local people and bring me closer to God.”

Bailey Haffner, a junior at Mile High Academy, is looking forward to the mission trip to Ecuador. “It will be hard work,” she acknowledges, “but I’m sure

it will be completely worth it!”

Students like Mathew, Emma, Annie and Bailey will be impacted in huge ways because of mission trips such as these. “Encouraging or funding a young person to go on a mission trip isn’t a one time investment,” said Houghton. “This experience will enable them to become leaders in the Adventist movement. It’s an investment in the church of tomorrow.”

Sponsorship information for a Rocky Mountain Conference young person is available from the Youth Department at 303.282.3664 or at www.rmyouth.org.

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Jessica Beans is assistant to the youth director for the Rocky Mountain Conference.



Mathew Tomney, a junior at Campion Academy, with an orphan he befriended during last year’s mission trip to Honduras

Courtesy Rocky Mountain Conference



Union Again Ranked in Top Tier by U.S. News

by Joellyn Sheehy

U.S. News and World Report has again rated Union College as a top pick for new college students in the magazine's highly anticipated "Best Colleges" rankings. Tied with Defiance College in Ohio for 39th place among Midwestern regional colleges, this is the seventh consecutive year Union has earned the title of one of America's best colleges.

"Union College's ranking affirms the quality of a Union College education," said **John Wagner**, president. "While percentages and ratios can not account for the entirety of the college experience, we are always glad to be recognized for the quality of our students and the hard work of our

faculty and staff. Their tireless dedication makes a Union College education a life-changing experience."

The publication ranks regional universities and colleges on key indicators of success, including academic reputation, graduation and retention rates, faculty resources, student selectivity, financial resources and alumni giving. The editors gather data from the schools themselves, peer evaluations and the government.

"In the *U.S. News* assessment, our strengths lie in our student-teacher ratio, which is 10 to 1, and in giving among our recent alumni—nearly 30 percent," said Wagner. "In their

methodology, those are two of the criteria that most closely tie to student experiences. I think our performance in those areas reflects an emphasis on helping students grow rather than simply attracting those who would be successful anywhere."

The magazine's online college guide also reflected Union's ethnic diversity—greater than 40 percent. The 2013 *U.S. News* web rankings list Union College third in ethnic diversity among Midwest regional colleges—even though the calculation excludes international students, who add even greater diversity to the campus.

The *U.S. News* rankings

are created annually as a service to parents and prospective students in selecting colleges. This year, 370 baccalaureate colleges, divided into four regions, are included in the report. The baccalaureate college category includes colleges that offer a range of degree programs in professional fields such as business, nursing and education with liberal arts degrees accounting for fewer than half of the bachelor's degrees conferred.

Joellyn Sheehy is a junior international rescue and relief and premed major from the United Kingdom.

May Nursing Class Posts Perfect Pass Rate

by Ruby Ruano

Erik Stenbakken/stenbakken.com



Theresa Stimpson, chair of the Division of Nursing, instructs **Angie Chan**, a May 2012 graduate who, along with all of her classmates, passed the NCLEX-RN licensure exam on her first attempt.

Union College's nursing class of 2012 posted a 100 percent first-time pass rate on the National Council

Licensure Examination, or NCLEX. Union's perfect pass rate exceeded the national first-time pass rate (87.56

percent) and the average first-time pass rate for the state of Nebraska (88.32 percent).

The NCLEX-RN is a standardized test that assesses a nursing graduate's knowledge of biology, human anatomy and physiology, basic care and comfort and pharmacological therapies. The exam is required for licensure in all 50 states.

"We are very proud of our students. These pass rates clearly demonstrate that Union nursing graduates are well prepared," said **Theresa Stimpson**, chair of the Division of Nursing. "They also speak to our faculty's commitment to help our students become successful nurses."

Union's nursing program has consistently posted high first-time pass rates—better than 97 percent over

the past two years. This fall, the nursing program overhauled its curriculum to better prepare students for constantly changing healthcare requirements and for a new, tougher NCLEX test. In the past, students finished coursework and then prepared for the exam on their own. "Now we will offer classes that help students prepare for the NCLEX," Stimpson explained.

To learn more about Union's nursing program, visit www.ucollege.edu/nursing.

Ruby Ruano is a senior nursing major from California.



A Teacher Can Make All the Difference

by Mindy Liebelt

Steve Nazario/Union College



Kourtney Shoemaker, a senior business major at Union, had a life changing experience after a professor asked her one simple question.

Kourtney Shoemaker grew up around Union College and, like many Lincoln area students, felt the urge to explore the world and try something different. After her freshmen year at Union, the senior business administration major spent a year in Argentina with

Adventist Colleges Abroad. She thought that upon returning to the U.S. she might search for another college a little farther from home.

But as her year in Argentina came to a close, Shoemaker felt the tug of Union's unique atmosphere and opportunities

pulling her back to Lincoln. "I really liked the one-on-one relationships that you could establish with your teachers—that they are not just your teachers in the classroom, but they become your mentors," she said.

Raised an Adventist, Shoemaker never questioned the existence of God. But while abroad, she reconnected and redirected her spiritual life in a new way. "In Argentina, I had to really depend on God—as God, and as a Friend." But coming back to the States, the reverse-cultural shock of jumping immediately into hectic college life challenged her new faith.

Kourtney was asked to work for associate professor of accounting **Malcolm Gaskin**. Reflecting on this she said, "I had no idea how much it would impact my life. Often he would ask, 'How are you spiritually?'"

For Kourtney, this made all the difference. "One of the reasons I came to Union was because I wanted to be in a spiritual atmosphere where I had the opportunity for growth and where I was surrounded by people who would give me that opportunity." She believes

that having a teacher who took the time to nurture her spiritual walk influenced her to begin reading her Bible again.

Kourtney began the 90-Day Bible Challenge and is reading her Bible cover to cover. She's excited at how God has enabled her to share her own experience in helping spiritually mentor other business students. The one-on-one spiritual accountability provided by her professor and boss completely changed her life, and she now wants to be that catalyst for others. "When things make you uncomfortable," she said, "they're not necessarily bad when they're in the spiritual realm. It's all just helping you to grow."

As Shoemaker contemplates her upcoming graduation, she plans to put her business degree to good use empowering others to be able to provide for themselves—perhaps in the mission field. Whatever her future holds, "Christ is who I want to serve," she said.

Mindy Liebelt graduated from Union College in 2011 with a degree in communication.

Steve Nazario/Union College



Union College's new science and mathematics complex began taking shape this autumn at opposite ends of the pad stretching from Larson Lifestyle Center to Rees Hall on the north end of campus. The 55,000 square foot facility will replace 66-year-old Jorgensen Hall as home of the Division of Science and Mathematics. Scheduled for completion in December 2014, the complex will provide students and faculty with additional room, state of the art laboratories, flexible learning spaces and ample research facilities.

Currently in the final phase of the \$14.5 million "Our Promising Future" campaign to fund construction of the new facility, Union is only \$1.45 million short of the goal. Anyone wishing to help meet that challenge may visit www.ucollege.edu/ourpromisingfuture or call 402.486.2503.



Adventist Healthcare Comes Full Circle

Avista's CEO reflects on 30 years with Adventist healthcare in Boulder County

It would not be an overstatement to say that John Sackett, chief executive officer at Avista Adventist Hospital, is a man who has never been afraid to overcome the odds.

While most hospital executives stay fewer than six years at any one hospital, Sackett's 23 as Avista's CEO puts him on a short list among healthcare leaders—and gives him deep roots into the hospital and the community.

Yet that fact is less notable than how he has navigated life with cystic fibrosis which, at the time he was born, meant an average lifespan of 12 years.

Both of these have given the energetic 56-year-old Sackett a unique vantage point to a hospital as both CEO and patient, and have made him an ardent evangelist for excellence and for delivering healthcare as Jesus did—one person at a time—with respect, a love for the underserved and a healing touch.

His untiring passion plays out in a myriad of little ways: The daily morning prayer that can be heard over the intercom. The admitting team that is trained to acknowledge one positive thing about their incoming patient—before a word is ever said about payment or paperwork. The caregivers who are taught to recognize and appreciate the housekeepers' work, which creates the first impression of excellence. The professional uniforms worn by everyone from caregivers to maintenance staff. And the staff members who are encouraged to pray with patients themselves, if they're

impressed to do so.

Today, Avista ranks among the nation's top hospitals for patient, employee and

physician satisfaction. And as Sackett reflects on the changes taking place in the industry, he's enthusiastic

about the future.

"When the first Adventist hospitals were founded, there simply weren't good treatments for many diseases, so prevention had to be a focus. Now we have these things, but our country can't afford them. So the vision for prevention that gave birth to Adventist healthcare has come full circle," he says. "It's exciting to see how our hospital has redefined itself with this focus. Our doctors are even going into the sickest of patients' homes to assess patients and their environment and look for ways to improve their quality of life and avert a healthcare crisis."

Sackett's love for his hospital's mission and people have characterized his work at Avista from the day he was hired as an administrative assistant at Boulder Memorial Hospital 30 years ago. As CEO, he eventually oversaw the building of Avista, and is always quick to acknowledge the work of his team and divine guidance when there's mention of success.

"It's a sobering responsibility to continue the tenacious legacy of the founders of Boulder Sanitarium—the third Adventist hospital to be opened and the hospital that gave birth to Avista," he says. "If Ellen White came back to see Avista now, I hope she would say that this is exactly what our church should be doing."



Courtesy Adventist Health System

Every Christmas, CEO John Sackett plays The Lord's Prayer on his cello at the annual employee recognition dinner—where the otherwise lively Avista family hushes as the music invites them into a moment of corporate prayer. "I'm not a gifted cellist. For me, it's not a performance, it's a way to give something to my employees that is from my heart and to create a tradition that binds us together as family," Sackett says.

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This article was submitted by Stephen King, senior vice president for mission and ministry for the Rocky Mountain Adventist Health System/Centura Health, where he serves the five Adventist Hospitals in Colorado. It was written by CMBell Company.



Booth, Larry, b. Dec. 11, 1945 in Springfield, MO. d. Sept. 25, 2012 in Springfield, MO. Member of Oak Grove Heights Church. Preceded in death by 1 brother. Survivors include wife Karolyn; daughter Jamie Rockwell; sons Michael and Larry Jr.; stepson Troy Van Horn; 2 siblings; 6 grandchildren.

Bower, Dale C., b. Feb. 10, 1921 in Colome, SD. d. Sept. 30, 2012 in Lincoln, NE. Member of College View Church. Survivors include wife Alice; daughter Jeannie McCarter; sons Rollin, Russell and Randy; 2 sisters; 14 grandchildren; 9 great-grandchildren.

Clausen, Doris, b. June 10, 1930 in Mason City, NE. d. Aug. 28, 2012 in Kearney, NE. Member of Kearney Church. Survivors include husband Thurman; daughters Marcella Luhn, Elvena Forke and Patsy Clausen; 1 sister; 14 grandchildren; 29 great-grandchildren; 1 great-great granddaughter.

Depeel, Richard E., b. Sept 21, 1934 in SD. d. Oct 19, 2012 in Mitchell, SD. Member of Mitchell Church. Preceded in death by parents. Survivors include sister Loretta Sheffield.

Garnick, Lloyd E., b. Oct. 21, 1927 in Veteran, WY. d. Oct. 17, 2012 in Hot Springs, SD. Member of Hot Springs Church. Survivors include wife Viona; sons Steven, Wayne and Keith; 2 siblings; 8 grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren.

Hensel, Joyce A., b. Apr. 26, 1936 in Boulder, CO. d. Aug. 20, 2012 in Windom, MN. Survivors include husband Donald; children daughters Heidi Hensel and Tina Bankhead; son Latham; 1 brother.

Jensen, Irene E., b. Aug. 13, 1917 in Heidelberg, MN. d. Sept. 13, 2012 in Roseville, MN. Member of St. Paul Eastside Church. Preceded in death by brother Arthur Schultz. Survivors include son Lyle; 2 sisters; 3 grandchildren; 12 great-grandchildren.

Payton, Charles E., b. Aug. 13, 1922 in Casey, IA. d. Oct. 11, 2012 in Sioux Falls, SD. Member of Sioux Falls Church. Preceded in death by wife Florence (Barr); sister Maxine. brothers Prentice and Nile, Jr.

Pinnt, Duane W., b. Mar. 19, 1936 in O'Neil, NE. d. Oct. 9, 2012 in Rapid City, SD. Member of Rapid City Church. Preceded in death by 2 sisters. Survivors include wife Elaine (Darling); daughter Michele Kuhn; son Robert; 2 siblings; 7 grandchildren; 5 great-grandchildren.

Tillman, Clair I.,* b. July 2, 1933 in Ritzville, WA. d. Aug. 14, 2012 in Wauwautosa, WI. Served in the US Army during the Korean War and later as a Bible worker, literature evangelist and pastor. Preceded in death by 5 siblings. Survivors include wife Bonita "Bonnie"; sons Tim and Terry; 2 siblings; 3 grandchildren.

**Special memorial service to be held, summer 2013. For more info, contact Bonnie Tillman at 920.922.2786.*

Wahlert, Mary, b. Apr. 14, 1924. d. Sept. 23, 2012 in Des Moines, IA. Member of Ankeny (IA) Church. Preceded in death by husband Raymond; sons Roy and Joe; 6 siblings; 6 grandchildren. Survivors include daughter Sharon; 14 grandchildren; numerous great-grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren.

Wilson, Kathleen "Kaye", b. Oct. 14, 1938 in Port Huron, MI. d. Sept. 12, 2012 in Nevada, MO. Member of Nevada Church. Preceded in death by daughter Allisa Silvers; grandson Joseph VanRaden. Survivors include

husband William; daughters Polly Dockery, Michelle McIntire and Debbie Aubert; sons Roger and William Dujardin, John, Chris, James and Bill Wilson; 19 grandchildren.

*"Blessed are the dead
who die in the Lord from now on.
Yes, says the Spirit,
that they may rest from their labors,
and their works do follow them."
Revelation 14:13*

The following obituary is a correction of one that originally appeared in the October issue. Our sincere apologies to the family of Mr. Weasel Bear for the incorrect/omitted information.

Weasel Bear, Connie C., b. May 14, 1958 in #4 Payabya Community, SD. d. July 21, 2012 in #4 Payabya Community, SD. Member of Dakota Conference Church. Survivors include wife Pansy Two Bulls; 6 daughters; parents Morris Wounded and Mary Weasel Bear.

Westbrook, Lynn B., b. June 24, 1934 in Haileyville, OK. d. Sept. 20, 2012 in Wichita, KS. Member of the Wichita South Church. Served as a literature evangelist, publishing director and minister in Mid-America Union and Kansas-Nebraska Conference. Survivors include wife Sally; daughter Karen McCarthy; sons Brant, Joel and Thomas; 1 sister; 10 grandchildren; 7 great-grandchildren.

SUNSET CALENDAR	Colorado	Nov 30	Dec 7	Dec 14	Dec 21	Dec 28
	Denver	4:36	4:35	4:36	4:39	4:43
	Grand Junction	4:52	4:51	4:53	4:55	5:00
	Pueblo	4:39	4:38	4:39	4:42	4:46
	Iowa					
	Davenport	4:33	4:32	4:33	4:36	4:40
	Des Moines	4:45	4:44	4:45	4:48	4:52
	Sioux City	4:54	4:52	4:53	4:56	5:00
	Kansas					
	Dodge City	5:22	5:21	5:22	5:25	5:29
	Goodland	4:24	4:23	4:24	4:27	4:31
	Topeka	5:01	5:00	5:01	5:04	5:08
	Minnesota					
	Duluth	4:22	4:20	4:20	4:23	4:28
	International Falls	4:21	4:18	4:18	4:21	4:25
	Minneapolis	4:33	4:32	4:32	4:35	4:39
	Missouri					
	Columbia	4:47	4:46	4:47	4:50	4:55
	Kansas City	4:56	4:56	4:57	4:59	5:04
	St. Louis	4:40	4:40	4:41	4:43	4:48
	Nebraska					
Lincoln	5:00	4:59	5:00	5:02	5:06	
North Platte	5:16	5:14	5:15	5:17	5:22	
Scottsbluff	4:25	4:24	4:24	4:27	4:31	
North Dakota						
Bismarck	4:57	4:55	4:55	4:58	5:02	
Fargo	4:41	4:39	4:39	4:41	4:46	
Williston	5:03	5:01	5:01	5:03	5:08	
South Dakota						
Pierre	5:04	5:02	5:02	5:05	5:10	
Rapid City	4:16	4:15	4:15	4:18	4:22	
Sioux Falls	4:52	4:50	4:51	4:54	4:58	
Wyoming						
Casper	4:32	4:31	4:32	4:34	4:39	
Cheyenne	4:31	4:30	4:31	4:34	4:38	
Sheridan	4:29	4:27	4:27	4:30	4:35	



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EVENTS

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OUTLOOK MAGAZINE'S 2013 THEMES AND DEADLINES

January: Not Church as Usual (11/26)

February: UC: Student-Produced (12/17)

March/April: Collaborating for Outreach (1/21)

May: Camping Ministries (3/25)

June: K-12 Adventist Education (4/22)

July/August: Evangelism (5/20)

September: Health Ministries (7/29)

October: Pastoral Appreciation (8/26)

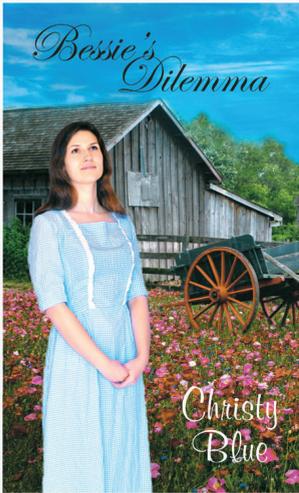
November: Union College Promo (9/23)

December: Not Christmas as Usual (10/28)

Mid-America Union OUTLOOK Statement of Ownership, Management and Circulation

This statement of ownership, management and circulation was filed on October 1, 2012, with the U.S. Postal Service for the Mid-America OUTLOOK, publication number 0887-977X, a magazine owned and published by the Mid-America Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 8307 Pine Lake Road, Lincoln, NE, 68516. It is published 11 times per year at a subscription price of \$10. For further information, contact the Mid-America Union Conference, publisher, or Brenda Dickerson, managing editor, at the above address. The following figures for the extent and nature of the circulation apply to the year ending with the September 2012 issue of OUTLOOK and are printed in the December issue of this publication.

Description	Yr. Avg.	Sept.
Total number of copies	28,000	28,000
Total paid/requested outside-county mail subs	26,243	26,206
Total paid/requested inside-county mail subs	1075	1075
Sales through dealers, carriers, street vendors	0	0
Other classes mailed through USPS	0	0
Total paid/requested circulation	27,318	27,281
Total complimentary distribution	482	469
Total distribution	27,800	27,750
Copies not distributed	200	150
Total	28,000	28,000
Percent paid and/or requested	98.3	98.3



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Jerico Aldana brings tremendous positive energy to every aspect of his life – from his daily patient care interactions to his hobbies of bowling and skateboarding. He recognizes that Loma Linda is a place where people share common values and where his desire to grow professionally is supported. Jerico is one of the people who help to make Loma Linda a center of clinical excellence and supportive faith-based care.

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