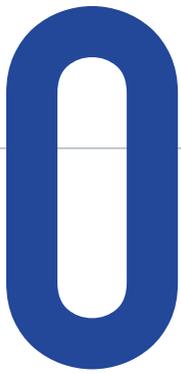


OUTLOOK



**MAKING A
CHANGE
FOR NEPALI
YOUTH**

P. 6



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THE GEM CALLED GENEROSITY



BRENDA DICKERSON
editor

In his book *Growing Strong in the Seasons of Life*, Charles Swindoll likens generosity to a rare gem that sparkles brightly and blesses both the giver and the receiver with its beauty.

In this issue of OUTLOOK we share stories of individuals who have come to the United States from war-torn countries, suffered persecution and survived harsh conditions in refugee camps. Yet instead of being overcome by trauma and fear, many are generously reaching out to help and support others.

For each of us, whether through giving our tithes and offerings or directly assisting and encouraging people who are in need, expressing kindness and generosity at any level is certain to bring joy. "The generous will prosper; those who refresh others will themselves be refreshed" (Prov. 11:25 NLT).

Are you sparkling today? Or have you perhaps misplaced the gem called generosity?

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Speaking in "Tongues" Series

outlookmag.org/corinthian-correction-brings-healing

ON THE COVER

Young people representing multiple cultures, languages, beliefs and experiences have found friendship and purpose in the NC4Y Pathfinder club in Kansas City, Missouri.

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Photo by Caleb Haakenson



OUTLOOK (ISSN 0887-977X) May 2018, Volume 39, Number 5. OUTLOOK is published monthly (10 months per year) by the Mid-America Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 8307 Pine Lake Road, Lincoln, NE 68516. Printed at Pacific Press Publishing Association, Periodical postage paid at Lincoln, NE and additional offices. USPS number 006-245. Free for Mid-America church members and \$10 per year for subscribers. ©2017 Mid-America Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. Unless otherwise credited, all images are iStock. Adventist® and Seventh-day Adventist® are registered trademarks of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. CONTACT us by email: info@maucsda.org or phone: 402.484.3000.



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Where Does Your Tithe Go?

The journey is really not that complex

This article is the fourth in a six-part series about the ministry of generosity. Read more online at outlookmag.org/author/brennanhallock

The official statements and guidelines of the Adventist Church on the use of tithe say: “The tithe is the main source of funding for the total proclamation of the gospel to all the world by the Seventh-day Adventist Church.”¹ But what is actually being funded with your tithe? And how is your tithe being used to proclaim the gospel?

Titling in the early Adventist Church

The Adventist movement did not immediately adopt the current church views on tithing. In 1859, the church leaders established a practice called systematic benevolence.² This plan involved

each man in the church 18-60 years of age setting aside between 5 and 25 cents per week, each woman in the church setting aside between 2 and 10 cents per week and everyone in the church setting aside between 1 and 5 cents per \$100 of property each week to be given for the church’s operating costs.

In an article published in the *Review & Herald* at the time it was explained, “The lowest sums stated are so very small that those in the poorest circumstances (with very few exceptions of some widows, infirm, and aged) can act upon this plan; while those in better circumstances are left to act in the fear of God in the performance of their stewardship, to give all the way up to the highest sums stated, or even more, as they see it their duty to do.”³

Systematic benevolence was not based on a

percentage of your income, as tithing is. But as the pioneers of our church studied God’s Word, their knowledge of the scriptural practice of tithing grew as well. Systematic benevolence quickly changed into a tithe system modeled after the Israelite nation’s tithing practices, which has outlined many of the church’s modern uses of tithe.

Nowadays, we do not generally set aside nickels, dimes or quarters to pay our tithes and offerings. In fact, today’s tithe does not usually consist of physical money anymore. Tithing online or writing a check has all but eliminated the dollar you set in the tithe and offering plate. But physical or not, your dollars and cents still go on a journey from their giver to their destination. This journey may at first seem complex, long and confusing. But in reality, this journey is probably not as long as you

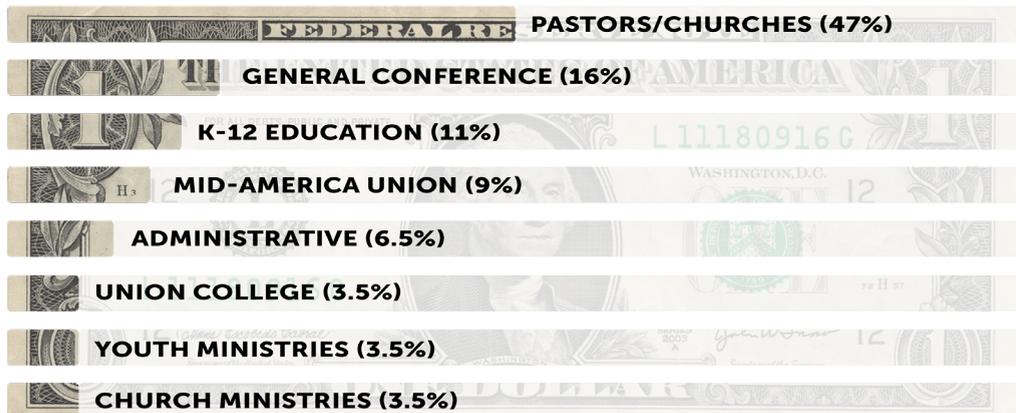
expect, and the destination is closer to home than you may realize.

How does it get there?

The first question that must be answered is how your tithe makes it from your hands to its destination. The answer begins with your generosity. Without your generosity, your tithe would never go anywhere. But because you are faithful enough to put it in the offering plate or submit it on your church’s website, you send it on its way.

Your tithe, whether physical or electronic, is collected by your church and submitted directly to your local conference treasury. Each conference in the Mid-America Union has its own bank account, or “treasury,” where tithes are tracked separately from other church funds. Even if your tithe is submitted to the General Conference or the Mid-America Union, the tithe will be given to the conference of the church where you attend or are a member.

The Adventist Church regards the local conference to be the “storehouse” or “treasury” referred to in Mal. 3:10: “Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in My house, and test Me now in this; says the Lord of hosts” (NASB).





Ellen G. White also refers to this treasury in *Testimonies to the Church Vol. 6*: “He [God] places His treasures in the hands of men, but requires that one-tenth shall be faithfully laid aside for His work. He requires this portion to be placed in His treasury.”⁴

How is it used?

Your tithe is collected into the conference treasury along with the tithe from all the other churches in your conference, but it does not stay there. Your tithe money is put to use in God’s work.

Tithe is used to fund many things in the church, and these vary depending on the union you reside in, but approximately 84 percent of the tithe dollars given return to the union where they are given, and 71.5 percent return to the conference where they are given.

Each conference chooses its own way of dividing up tithe according to the North American Division policies, but most are similar. The conferences in the Mid-America Union begin by giving the North American Division and the General Conference about 16 percent, including about 1 percent toward special assistance for other conferences; giving roughly 9 percent to the union—of

which 4 percent is used for operations and 5 percent for Union College and conference programs; and giving about 3.5 percent directly to Union College. The remaining approximately 71.5 percent goes into pastors/churches, K-12 education, administrative, youth ministries, and church ministries within each conference. The amounts change from year to year, but the approximate percentages (based on the whole) are as follows:⁵

- **Pastors/Churches (47%)**
- **K-12 education (11%)**
- **Administrative (6.5%)**
- **Youth ministries (3.5%)**
- **Church ministries (3.5%)**

Close to home

The Adventist official statements and guidelines regarding the use of tithe begin by saying, “God’s plan for the support of His work on this earth is through the tithe and freewill offerings of His people... This includes a balanced and comprehensive evangelistic outreach to the public and the spiritual nurturing of church members.”¹

The staff of the unions and conferences do their best to make sure when you give your tithe dollar to the church, it is used to support God’s work on this earth. They do their best to make sure a “balanced and comprehensive” approach

to public outreach and spiritual nurturing of church members is the ultimate result of your gift.

This is accomplished by returning a vast majority of the tithe money given in a conference directly back to that conference. The reality is your tithe dollar does go on a journey, but that journey is really not that long or complex. Much of that tithe dollar comes right back to where it was given and is used for purposes closer to home than you may have originally thought. 

1. Official Statements: Guidelines. “Use of Tithe.” Oct. 14, 1985. www.adventist.org.
2. White, Arthur L. “Highlights of the Beginning of the Tithing System.” www.whiteestate.org.
3. *Review & Herald*. Feb. 3, 1859, p. 84.
4. White, Ellen G. *Testimonies to the Church Vol. 6*. p. 386.
5. Figures are from Mid-America Union 2016 financial reports and *Kansas-Nebraska Conference Communique* (April 2017).

Approximately 84 percent of tithe dollars return to the union where they are given, and 71 percent return to the conference where they are given.

BRENNAN HALLOCK is designer/ad manager for the Mid-America Union.



NC4Y PATHFINDER CLUB

Making a Change for Nepali Youth

By Anna Coridan

“We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us and his teaching in our past history” (Life Sketches, 196).

With all the suffering and uncertainty in this world, how is it possible that forgetting God’s past leading is the only thing to fear? I have wrestled with that question. Fear of the unknown seems reasonable when waiting for test results to find out if the cancer has returned, or when children have just learned the doctors can do nothing else to save their father. When death, sickness and heartache are the realities of this world, what is God asking of us?

In Heb. 13:8, we are told that “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever” (NLT). That

means something! He was, He is and He will forever be. In Rev. 22:13 God says, “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End” (NLT).

These verses are not mere acknowledgments of who God is. Rather, they tell us something deeper and more personal. We can acknowledge there is a God; the Devil himself acknowledges that. But do we believe He is the answer? Do we believe He knows and understands? Do we believe He is faithful? If so, then maybe when faced with the uncertainties of life God is asking us to *remember*. To remember Him when we face the unknown. To recall His mercies when doubt and fear overwhelm us. There is real pain, real suffering and real questions that are too

much for us to handle on our own. And by the grace of God, He does not ask us to!

Doors of friendship

Last year I had the opportunity to share with OUTLOOK readers a testimony of how God opened the door for me to move into downtown Kansas City. My prayer was that God would open doors of friendship and that His love could be shared with those around me. The apartment complex I live in and the surrounding neighborhoods are packed with people from all over the world. Living amongst different cultures, languages and beliefs I have found value in spending time with others and listening to their stories. Many of my neighbors are Bhutanese refugees from Nepal. They have come from a war-torn country, suffered persecution and have survived harsh living conditions in refugee camps. Now in the United States they are attempting to build new lives. Although we met as strangers, we soon became friends and can now call each other family.

As friendships developed with my neighbors, it quickly became evident

that God was opening doors to work with the Nepali children. When someone suggested we start a Pathfinder club, however, I found myself letting fear of the unknown get in the way. I immediately thought of all the reasons why it could not be done. I knew nothing about leading a Pathfinder club, after all.

Then one day my mom sent me information about an upcoming “Soccer Camp” Vacation Bible School at the West Lenexa Church. Nepali children love soccer, but I quickly dismissed the idea. How would we transport all these kids to a church half an hour away? But God provided a bus and a driver, and 40 kids from my neighborhood attended a week-long VBS. They were thrilled and by the end of the week were asking, “Can we do it again?”

We began meeting every week to play soccer and continue learning stories from the Bible. Pastors from different parts of Iowa and Missouri came to play with the kids and tell the stories.

As the summer came to an end, it became clear that starting a Pathfinder club was the next step. But how? Where would we meet? Who would lead? Where would the money come

Photos: Caleb Haakenson





NC4Y Pathfinders proudly display T-shirts signifying their pledge to remain 100 percent drug free, a pledge they each make—along with not swearing—when joining the club.

from? Would the parents allow it? How would we get the kids there?

A good place to start

There were so many questions without answers, but God was up to the challenge. He provided a way. All He needed was for us to be willing. The Chapel Oaks Pathfinder club from Shawnee, Kansas, donated funds to buy club shirts. Then I met Anne Wham, a retired conference Pathfinder director. She had heard about our desire to start a club and asked where we were in the process. Not knowing what to say, I blurted out, “We have the kids, and that’s about it.”

I will never forget her response. She looked at me and simply said, “Well, that’s a good place to

start.” She offered to help, so we exchanged phone numbers and planning began. God also moved on the hearts of five men from surrounding churches—Charlie Kendall, Kurtis Cowan, Jesus Valenzuela, Emmanuel Valenzuela and Samuel Tapia—to serve as club staff.

Doors continued to open. Parents gave permission, funding became available and nearby St. Luke’s Lutheran Church agreed to let us use their facility at no cost. At just the right time and when we needed it most, churches from Kansas, Iowa and Missouri provided Bibles, flags, banners, shirts and transportation (including drivers, a donated van and a trailer full of Pathfinder supplies). We thought we

would start the year with 20 Pathfinders, but God surprised us with 36!

I give glory to God as I watch these children grow and develop a desire to make a difference in their community. Life in the inner city is filled with violence, drugs, gangs and crime. Our Pathfinders gave themselves the name NC4Y (New Change for Youth). They want something different.

When asked the question, “What do you like about Pathfinders?” one said, “When I am here, I feel strong enough to keep my hopes.” Another said, “I like Pathfinders because we learn how God can help us when we need it.”

My heart rejoices as I reflect on God’s faithfulness throughout this past year.

Facing life’s challenges together

The refugees in my community face many fears, but they are not the only ones. There are people in your community—broken families, orphans, struggling students, single parents, widows and many others—who are dealing with their own struggles and fears. But they don’t have to face them alone. God can use you and me, even in our brokenness, to make a positive difference. I encourage you to get to know your neighbors. Hear their stories. Share your own. And most of all, take time to remember how God has blessed along the way. **0**

Anna Coridan is director of the NC4Y Pathfinder club in Kansas City.

Who, Me? Reach Refugees?

By Terri Saelee

Growing up in a small farming community in central Nebraska, little did I know that at age 20 I would find myself on the opposite side of the globe in Thailand, sharing the gospel with refugees from some of the most war-torn countries of the world, and learning their languages.¹ Nor did I dream that one of those Southeast Asian languages (Vietnamese) would become the top language spoken in my home state,

after English and Spanish.²

Working in refugee camps was an experience of a lifetime. It opened the eyes of this shy farm girl to atrocities I had never imagined, and acquainted me with some of the most delightful, gracious and resilient people I have ever met.

Have you seen my parents?

A 17-year-old refugee from Laos whom I met in the Napho refugee camp was

just one. “May I tell you my story?” he asked. Delighted, I listened.

He shared how his parents, who both had good jobs in the capital city of Laos, had been captured, leaving him at the tender age of 10 to care for his 7-year-old sister. Now the man of the house, he valiantly tried to support his sister by raising fish in the bathtub (a rare possession in his culture) and selling them at the market. But he soon realized his best efforts were insufficient for the task and, finding

someone to smuggle him and his sister across the Mekong River, the two children left their home and all they knew and owned, including the car in the driveway (also a rare treasure in his country).

It had been seven years since that sad day. Eager for news of their parents, he had asked everyone, especially refugees newly arriving from Laos, if they had seen his parents. No one had.

“I don’t know if my parents are dead or alive,” he told me. “I don’t know if I will ever see them again, but I am so glad communism came into my country.”

My mouth must have dropped open in astonishment because he was quick to explain. “If communism had not come to my country, I never would have learned about God.” Knowing God meant that much to him!

Thrust into our arms

You may be thinking that only a few people are called to be missionaries, and that, due to your circumstances, you could never reach the unreached. But I have good news for you! God has a way for you to participate in reaching the world with the gospel. God has brought thousands of His precious children, many yet unreached by the message of His love, right into communities near you.

Every state has refugees, but Minnesota has nearly half a million foreign-born residents and is home to the largest Somali population in

Photos: Courtesy Terri Saelee



Over 500 people attended the North American Division Myanmar Convention held in Brainerd, Minnesota, last summer (left).

Hmong Adventist youth and friends gather in their traditional dress to celebrate Hmong New Year (below).



Six Ways to Reach out to Refugees and International Guests

the United States, and the second-largest Hmong population.³ These may seem like random facts, but in reality, they are part of God's master plan of salvation.

In her book *Evangelism*, Ellen G. White wrote, "If we were quick in discerning the opening providences of God, we should be able to see, in the multiplied opportunities to reach many foreigners in America, a divinely appointed means of rapidly extending the third angel's message into all the nations of earth. God in His providence has brought men to our very doors and thrust them, as it were, into our arms, that they might learn the truth, and be qualified to do a work we could not do in getting the light before men of other tongues."⁴ **O**

Terri Saelee coordinates Adventist Refugee & Immigrant Ministries for the North American Division. Visit refugeeministries.org for more information.

1. Laos (from which the Lao, Hmong, Mien, and Lahu refugees come) is the most bombed country in the world.
2. "Top 15 Non-English Languages by State." <https://www.cms.gov/CCIO/Resources/Regulations-and-Guidance/Downloads/Appendix-A-Top-15.pdf>
3. Elliot, Megan. "10 States Where the Number of Immigrants Is Growing Fastest." *Culture Cheat Sheet*. www.cheatsheet.com/culture/states-where-the-number-of-immigrants-growing-fastest.html?a=viewall
4. White, Ellen G. *Evangelism*. p. 570.

1. **Visit a refugee congregation near you.** There are now 152 refugee congregations scattered across the North American Division. Ask your local conference about the one nearest you, and drop by for a visit. Ask them to teach you a greeting or two in their language.
2. **Help a refugee resettlement (reception and placement) agency near you in welcoming incoming refugees.** Google "refugee resettlement agency" in your city for contact information. Now, especially, with the recent funding cuts, many are looking for creative ways to continue to care for refugees.
3. **Volunteer for the Literacy Council, or start your own ESL or citizenship class.** Your knowledge of English is one of the easiest things to share with refugees and immigrants. You don't have to be a trained teacher—just share what you know in a friendly way.
4. **Help refugee children with their homework/education.** One of the areas in which refugees and immigrant parents feel most helpless is finding tutoring and good role models for their children. Refugee children are very motivated to learn and some have been saved from gang involvement this way.¹
5. **Invite refugees to share their experience with a small group of friends from your church.** One of the things refugees and international guests crave most is friendships with Americans. Asking them to spend time with you and your friends will be heart-warming for them, and eye-opening for you.
6. **Pray that God will lead you to a refugee/asylee/international student or guest who you can welcome.** These "random" divine appointments are often the best! "All heaven is in activity, and the angels of God are waiting to cooperate with those who will devise plans by which the souls for whom Christ died may hear the glad tidings of salvation."²

1. <http://www.educatingrefugees.org>

2. *Review & Herald*. May 13, 1902, Art. A, par. 15.



REFUGEES IN OUR UNION

NUMBER OF RESETTLED REFUGEES IN EACH STATE 2013-2017*

*Countries listed are 10 highest for each state.

Data taken from Refugee Processing Center (<http://ireports.wrapsnet.org>).

SOUTH DAKOTA

Total	2,180
Bhutan	627
Burma	501
Somalia	363
Eritrea	199
Dem. Rep. of Congo	192
Sudan	84
Iraq	83
Ethiopia	49
Burundi	31
Ukraine	25

NORTH DAKOTA

Total	2,514
Bhutan	1,139
Iraq	528
Somalia	493
Dem. Rep. of Congo	211
Ethiopia	29
Eritrea	18
Afghanistan	17
Sudan	15
Burma	12
Chad	10
Iran	10

MINNESOTA

Total	10,503
Somalia	4,734
Burma	3,267
Iraq	614
Ethiopia	566
Bhutan	448
Dem. Rep. of Congo	213
Ukraine	150
Eritrea	81
Moldova	75
Sudan	54

WYOMING

Total	1
Somalia	1

COLORADO

Total	7,795
Burma	2,143
Iraq	1,281
Somalia	1,022
Bhutan	869
Dem. Rep. of Congo	787
Eritrea	337
Syria	251
Ethiopia	198
Ukraine	131
Sudan	121

IOWA

Total	3,737
Burma	1,551
Dem. Rep. of Congo	560
Bhutan	558
Iraq	249
Eritrea	243
Somalia	199
Sudan	136
Syria	123
Ethiopia	35
Burundi	28

NEBRASKA

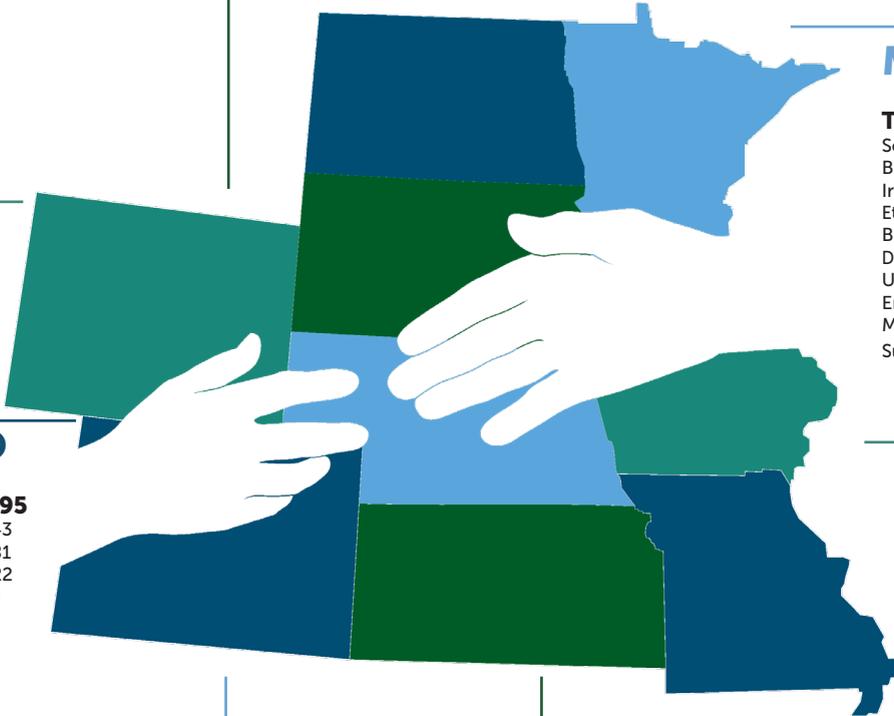
Total	5,844
Burma	2,282
Iraq	1,124
Bhutan	972
Somalia	436
Sudan	264
Syria	199
Dem. Rep. of Congo	153
Ukraine	106
Iran	99
Rep. of South Sudan	68

KANSAS

Total	3,170
Burma	1,006
Dem. Rep. of Congo	700
Somalia	395
Iraq	221
Bhutan	194
Eritrea	172
Sudan	129
Syria	56
Cuba	55
Ethiopia	43

MISSOURI

Total	7,199
Somalia	1,593
Dem. Rep. of Congo	1,446
Iraq	934
Burma	871
Syria	537
Bhutan	530
Eritrea	270
Sudan	255
Cuba	173
Afghanistan	140





WHO ANSWERED THESE PRAYERS?

By Carol Leonhardt

Most Friday mornings find me volunteering at the Good Neighbor Community Center, a service agency sponsored by the Adventist churches in Lincoln, Nebraska. In the winter, I usually wear my coat inside while working because the back door of the area where donations are received is often open to receive or dispense donations.

One morning I put my car keys in my coat pocket and set to work in the receiving area sorting clothing and other donated items. Later, I moved to another room where surplus items are set out for clients to take. It was warmer in that area, so I took off my coat as I went about putting shoes and clothing out for the center's clients.

When it came time to leave, I realized I did not have my coat with me and went looking for it. There were many volunteers at the center that day, some from the immigrant and refugee community and some from a community organization doing a day of service. I thought that perhaps someone had picked up my coat thinking it was a donation. I searched the area where

clothing is hung on racks for clients to take and couldn't find it. I felt foolish about what I had done and thought about praying, but didn't.

Finally, I called to see if my husband could bring me a second set of keys. It was an inconvenience for him to leave work, but soon he showed up with another key to my car so I could drive home.

I kept the keys to both my car and my husband's car on the same ring, so I had lost two sets of keys. They were both the remote-entry type and I knew that replacement would probably be more than \$100 for each set.

Surprise!

When I got home, I finally prayed and asked God that whoever had taken the coat would find the keys and that the Holy Spirit would impress that person not to throw away my keys. The next day was Sabbath and during the afternoon, I received an unexpected call from Zainab Al-Baaj, who heads the Middle East North Africa Hope project at the Good Neighbor Community Center. Zainab is a tireless helper to new

immigrants and refugees who need help getting settled in our city. She provides case management services for Arabic speaking immigrants and refugees and is a devout Muslim.

She said, "Carol, I have a surprise for you," and giggled. I had no idea what she was talking about, but Zainab went on to tell me that when she heard my coat and keys were lost, she prayed about it. Later she received a call from Hawa, a woman who does daycare for the MENA Hope women's group. Hawa said she had picked up a coat in the giveaway area and when she got home, there were car keys in the pocket. Hawa's friend told her to throw the keys away, but Hawa decided not to.

Hawa said she was going to return the keys in case they belonged to someone. Hawa returned both the coat and the keys.

Accepted by God

I was very glad to get the news that my keys had been returned. I was equally humbled to realize that when I had not prayed, my Muslim friend was faithful to do so. I also realized that when I asked for the

Spirit to impress the finder, that Hawa, also a Muslim believer, had listened to the Spirit and had not thrown away my keys.

Who answered these prayers and who was listening? I have often been impressed with how easily Zainab speaks of God's blessings and expresses gratitude to Him, referring to God by His Arabic name, Allah. She faithfully prays and pauses during her workday to do this.

Lately, we have heard many messages of prejudice against our Muslim neighbors, but here is a message we can believe: "In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him" (Acts 10: 34-35 NKJV). **O**

Carol Leonhardt is an elder and the Women's Ministries leader for the Piedmont Park Church in Lincoln, Nebraska.

Free online course from Adventist Learning Community: "Connecting with your Muslim neighbor." www.adventistlearningcommunity.com/courses/1116

ReBoot: The Summit Recap

Central States Adventist Youth and Young Adult Summit

The Central States Adventist Youth and Young Adult Summit took place in Overland Park, Kansas, March 15-18. The theme was ReBoot and it was an incredible experience with the Holy Spirit moving in the lives of our youth and young adults.

The keynote speaker, **Pastor Richard Martin**,

brought a word from the Lord, reminding us that we are planned, prepared and purposed—and ultimately challenging the delegates to be ready for His return.

Innovative prayer exercises led by **Tatum Fowler** along with community outreach led by **Henry Chaney** gave opportunity for the youth to put their faith into action.

Workshops ranged in topics, including building wealth, loving the church, social justice, faith and social media and sexuality. Thirty-five youth leaders completed training with **Natasha Richards**, a consultant at Netsel Management.

One of many highlights from the event was The Walls Group ministering in

music. In between songs they shared words of encouragement that resonated with attendees of all ages.

“The Summit was an overall great event, but the greatest part was that it didn’t feel like just another event,” said **Pastor Kory Douglas**, CSAYYA Director. “Our speaker, Pastor Richard Martin, poured his heart out,

Photos: Hannah Banks



Pastor Richard Martin, a graduate of Oakwood University and Andrews University Theological Seminary, has shared his passion for the Word of God nationally and internationally.

our presenters challenged our attendees, and our attendees were able to engage the community in service. As a result lives were touched and 18 young people gave their lives to Christ!”

Brittany Winkfield is communication director for the Central States Conference.

The ReBoot Summit included speaker Richard Martin (right, bottom right), prayer exercises, community outreach and music by The Walls Group (middle right).



From Despair to Joy

Chona Lendy Llasos finds forgiveness and family

The Hot Springs Church is a quaint little church sitting on a main thoroughfare in the middle of Hot Springs, South Dakota. On a recent Sabbath there, a young lady walked to the front of the church to share her personal testimony. This is her story.

My name is **Chona Lendy Llasos**, a Filipina. I came from the Romblon Island of the Philippines. I moved to the U.S. in 2015 and found a good job at the Veterans Home in Hot Springs.

This is a beautiful country and I love being here, but my family is in the Philippines

and I feel alone.

When I was a young woman, I did a lot of crazy, worldly things in my life full of sin. I was sad and felt guilty for what I had done. I was devastated when I ended up divorced, full of heartache and suffering from depression. I was at the point where I wanted to end my life.

I was discouraged because I thought God wouldn't forgive me of the sins I had committed. I thought I would go to hell, so why continue to suffer like this? Why continue to live in this world full of pain? I thought I'd rather commit suicide than suffer. I hid in a dark room and cried until my

whole body shook.

At the time, I lived in an apartment called Brookside. It was a six-story building, and I lived on the second floor. My plan was to go to the fifth floor and jump off the building so everything would be gone. But then I heard a song in my ears: "'Tis so sweet to trust in Jesus." A little voice whispered, "Jesus loves you and He will forgive whatever you have done."

Prayers and peace

It was a Wednesday night. The Hot Springs Adventist Church is walking distance from the building where I live. I felt something pushing me to go to that church.

I did go to church that night. When I arrived, the people were reading their Bibles and talking about God's second coming. They talked about how He died on the cross to save everyone. It

was wonderful to hear.

I saw **Pastor Sam Thomas** and some of the people from the church, and they started praying after reading their Bibles. It felt good to hear them pray. I felt a joy and peace in my heart.

I was so blessed that night that I started coming to church every Saturday and Wednesday night. I believe it was the Holy Spirit who guided me and whispered in my ear. I praise God for all the blessings He has given me!

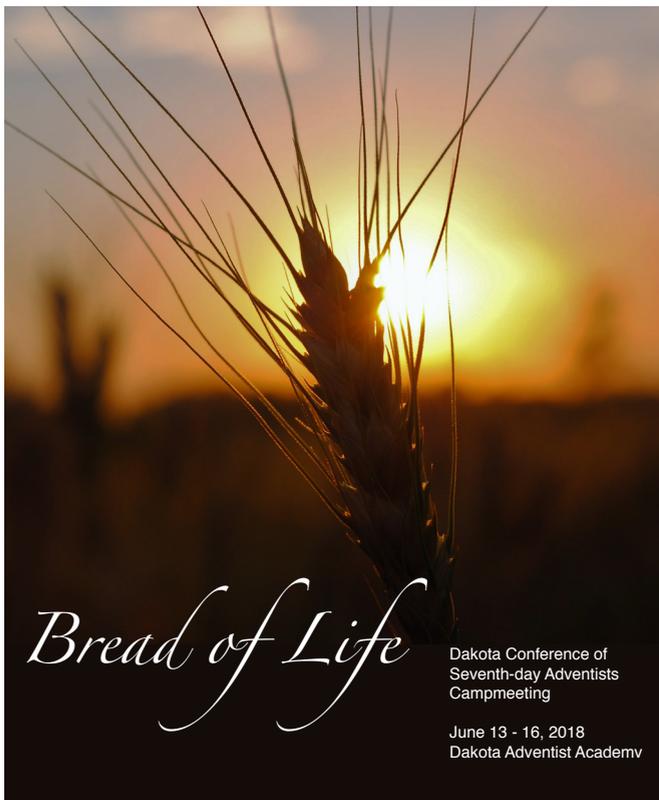
Llasos then sang a beautiful song, a cappella, about God's love called "Unshakable Kingdom of God." She thanked the members for their faithfulness in coming to prayer meeting and to church and for being her family while she is so far away from hers.

Stories on these pages were written by Jacquie Biloff, communication director for the Dakota Conference.

Jacquie Biloff



Chona Lendy Llasos moved to Hot Springs, South Dakota, from the Philippines in 2015. Through a miraculous set of events, she happened upon the Hot Springs Church and has been faithfully attending ever since.



Luz Naasz Honored by South Dakota Governor for Being a Servant Leader

Thirty-seven years of service to the state of South Dakota

Dennis Daugaard, 32nd governor of South Dakota, honored **Luz Naasz** of the Pierre Church for her 33 years of service at the governor's mansion.

Naasz was not born in the U.S. She immigrated here from Colombia. "We flew into Florida on a Colombian plane," she recalls. "There were Adventists on the plane, and they wanted to help me come to America." Those Adventists were **John** and **Esther Nikkels**, missionaries to Colombia. Nikkels was on his way to Pierre to work as Sabbath school and lay activities director for the former South Dakota Conference.

Naasz was soon on her way with the Nikkels to Pierre. Naasz arrived in Pierre Dec. 5, 1974 at midnight. She spoke little English and had been in the country less than a week.

Within six months she was hired as a custodian at the state capitol when **Governor Richard Kneip**, the 25th governor, was presiding. "He and his wife had eight boys," remembers Naasz. "I worked at the capitol and on the grounds."

She then giggles, "I had no coat and it was snowing when I came to Pierre. They told me not to go out in the snow because I might get sick. But I was like a little kid. I loved the snow." She hesitates, "And I got sick."

Within a few years, she met her husband to be and on July 4, 1979 **Governor William**

Luz Naasz was honored by the South Dakota governor for her 33 years working at the governor's mansion and 37 years working for the state of South Dakota.

Janklow gave her in marriage to **Howard Naasz** in the South Dakota state capitol building.

Naasz transferred from the capitol to the governor's mansion in 1979, where she worked until her retirement in 2012. According to an article written about her in the *Pierre Capital Journal*, she "kept house for five governors, six administrations and two mansions." These included **William Janklow** ('79-'87); **George Mickelson** ('87-'93); **Walter Miller** ('93-'95); **William Janklow** ('95-'03); **Michael Rounds** ('95-'11) and **Dennis Daugaard** ('11-present).

Naasz has received two Proclamations during her tenure. One was the declaration of a **Luz Naasz Day** (June 8, 2012) shortly before her retirement, having served 33 years in the governor's mansion and 37 years for the state of South Dakota.

On Dec. 6, 2017, Governor Daugaard presented Naasz with a plaque which reads "Luz Naasz, Thank You For Being a Servant Leader." The date is significant for Naasz because it was 43 years since she arrived in Pierre.



Courtesy: Luz Naasz

DAKOTA ADVENTIST CAMPS

Flag Mountain Camp		
Junior Camp		June 24-01
Teen Camp		July 01-08
Northern Lights Camp		
Family Camp		July 10-15
Junior Camp		July 15-22
Teen Camp		July 22-29

Where kids & families come to meet Jesus.

Escaping War-Torn Burma

A Karen refugee and a Mizo immigrant overcome adversity and find a pastoral calling in Iowa-Missouri

Met **Stephen Moe Tha Po**, a Karen refugee and pastor of the Des Moines Karen Company; and **Joseph Zohming Thanga**, a Mizo immigrant and pastor of the Des Moines Mizo Company. Both are from Burma (Myanmar), a country that has been devastated by civil war for decades.

Below they share their harrowing stories. Their experiences are not unlike those of many other refugees and immigrants trying to build new lives here. Their stories also illustrate the redemptive power of God to transform lives and to bring good out of the most unimaginably horrible circumstances.

STEPHEN'S STORY

I was born and raised in Ohn Daw Village, where medical missionary Eric B. Hare started a small Adventist mission school in 1915. There

were only two students that first year: my great-grandmother, Naw Htoo, and her brother, Tun Pai. My great-grandmother's parents became the first converts of Pastor Hare's ministry and were the first Karen Adventists in the region.

Becoming a refugee

I attended Pastor Hare's mission school as a boy. When I was 12, a radical Buddhist abbot and his army began to persecute Christians in our village. One evening we were told they were coming to kill us all. It was getting dark and no one knew what to do or where to go. We prayed fervently, and the Lord sent local government troops to protect us.

Eventually our school was taken over by the abbot and his troops. They destroyed the church and all the other buildings on campus. Leaving everything behind, we fled.

We moved from place to place. The mission school reopened in another location, where I finished high school and went on to get a theology degree from Myanmar Union Adventist Seminary.

After graduating, I went to stay with family members. The war had intensified and on my way home one day I was arrested by the government and accused of being a rebel. They eventually let me go, but I knew I was no longer safe anywhere in Burma so I fled to a refugee camp in Thailand and joined other family members who were already there.

Life in America

I was resettled in Nashville, Tennessee, in 2008. A few months later I received an invitation to begin church planting in Des Moines, where there are a lot of Karen people.

During the past eight years, the Lord has blessed our work in Iowa-Missouri. We've celebrated 50 baptisms so far, with growing groups in Kansas City and St. Louis, and our company in Des Moines.

By the grace of God, the

Des Moines Karen Company currently has 136 members. This year we are launching two Bible study tracts, one in Karen and the other in English.

We believe 2018 will be a successful soul-winning year. We're reaching out to Buddhists, Animists and Baptists, and our ministry has an impact not only in Iowa and Missouri but in neighboring states and the greater American Karen community. Our success is truly due to the blessings of God, the leadership of our conference and the collaboration among our dedicated church leaders, board members, youth, women and children's departments.

Opportunities and challenges

Karen Adventists are worshipping in 46 locations around the United States. There are two churches, four companies, three mission groups, 35 church groups and over 2,000 Adventist members.

Many of these groups don't have services in their own language and struggle to understand what's being said in the English services they attend. There is great potential for growth, with much work to be done, many new challenges to be faced and many bold prayers to be prayed for the success of Karen refugee ministry.

Stephen Moe Tha Po (with wife Pawmoo and daughter Sofia) is serving the Des Moines Karen community.

Courtesy Stephen Moe Tha Po



Please keep this work and our family in your prayers as we serve our community for Jesus.

JOSEPH'S STORY

I was born in the small village of Tuingo. A third generation Adventist, I was the second youngest of six children. Our family was poor, and my parents supported us by working the paddy fields.

Seeking asylum

Burma is an extremely dangerous place, and in 2007 I sought asylum with the UN Refugee Agency in Malaysia.

I stayed there a year without legal papers waiting for my appointment, but one night I was startled out of sleep by the sound of Malaysian forces pounding on my door. I was arrested and taken to a detention center.

A prisoner for Jesus

During this time my faith was tested. I prayed three times a day and learned what it really means to put my trust in God.

I began sharing Jesus with non-Christian prisoners. Some of them were excited to learn more about my beliefs, and one man even asked me to baptize him.

Another man told me he had been a Christian in his youth but had converted

to Hinduism and later to Islam because none of the Christians he knew had lived what Christ taught. He believed God put him in the detention center with me to convince him to follow Jesus once more.

Sold to human traffickers

One day there was a fire at the detention center. Afterward, the government decided to deport the prisoners to their own countries.

This was a problem for some of us from Burma because the Burmese government wouldn't recognize us as citizens and refused to take us. Instead the Malaysian government sold us to human traffickers from Thailand. I was sold for approximately \$195 (USD) and would have been made a life-long slave were it not for my brother and uncle, who bought me back.

Once free, I managed to get a job at a Chinese restaurant and worked hard for the next year and a half to help support my family and pay my brother and uncle back.

Life in America

By God's grace I had the opportunity to come to the U.S. in 2010. I settled in

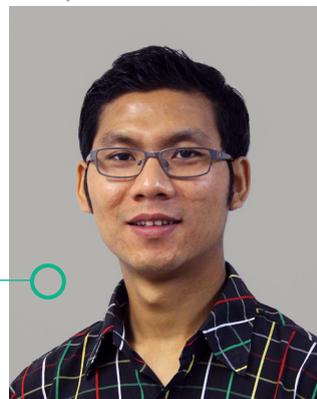
Joseph Zohming Thanga pastors the Des Moines Mizo Company.

Maryland and finished high school. For three years after that, I worked in a factory warehouse in Indiana.

In 2014 God led me to Iowa to work with the Mizo group in Des Moines. We started with approximately 10 members and have grown to 32, becoming a company last year. Many of our children are receiving an Adventist education, thanks to the Des Moines Church, conference leadership and members across the conference. I believe God has big plans for our future.

Please pray for the Des Moines Mizo Company as we work to reach the large number of Chin and Mizo people in Iowa. Jesus is coming sooner than ever. Let's prepare ourselves to finish His mission and be ready for His return.

Courtesy Iowa-Missouri Conference



Iowa-Missouri Camp Meeting

Please join us June 5-9 at Sunnydale Academy for the 2018 Iowa-Missouri Camp Meeting. Registration is now open. Visit imsda.org/campmeeting for more info.

imConnected Newsletter

Want to stay connected to fellow Adventists across Iowa and Missouri? Receive regular emails about things happening around the conference with the imConnected newsletter. Sign up at imsda.org/newsletter.

Loving the Community: Key to Growth at Capitol View Church

If you want to look at church growth, don't count the number of members in the pews. You must count the size of the hearts of these faithful servants.

Capitol View Church in Lincoln, Nebraska, is located in the center of the city, which is the home of many low-income individuals and the stomping ground for many of the city's homeless.

Capitol View was established nearly 50 years ago and currently has more than 50 members attending. These members take seriously their responsibility to minister to those in the neighborhood.

About 15 years ago, Nicky Turner, now deceased, proposed making the church facility one of the city's distribution sites for a program called FoodNet.

FoodNet is a city-wide non-profit food distribution program which began in 1985 and gives food donated by local businesses to the elderly, the homeless and low income people who may not meet the legal requirements for government assistance.

Every Sunday afternoon Capitol View opens the doors of its basement and 150-200 families are given much-needed food items. Most of the food is perishable produce, dairy products, bread and some deli foods.

Week after week, volunteers from Capitol View, assisted by volunteers from other Adventist churches in Lincoln, make this event possible. This steady flow of sharing and giving provides them with the chance to build relationships with not only the people who come to get food, but with the volunteers from other organizations, and even those who are meeting court-appointed or educational volunteer requirements.

A devoted group of students from Nebraska Wesleyan University, a private Methodist university in Lincoln, has continued to serve faithfully every

week—long after their educational requirements were met—just because they valued the experience and the opportunity to serve others in such a tangible way. Capitol View members recently hosted a special luncheon to recognize and thank these students, many of whom graduated this year.

Reaching out through local events

Last summer, Capitol View saw another need and began a depression seminar with a free supper using videos from **Dr. Neil Nedley**. Those who visit FoodNet were invited to learn practical and spiritual ways to lessen the symptoms of depression. The large group that met every week was encouraging. By popular demand, similar programs are now being planned by the faithful members who began this ministry.

Two other big events happen each year at Capitol View. In the summer, a Cornfest celebration is held in the parking lot of the church. This "block party" type of event—with refreshments, live religious music and fun games for the children—is well-attended and appreciated by the surrounding neighborhood.

There is also a holiday meal on Thanksgiving Day, prepared and served by

Photos: Courtesy Capitol View Church



Capitol View has been addressing the needs of their local community through programs such as last summer's depression seminar, which included free suppers and a video series by Dr. Neil Nedley.

hard-working Capitol View members and friends. Over 100 attended the dinner last year, a large majority of them clients from the FoodNet program and other individuals in Lincoln who had no family or means to have a nice holiday dinner of their own.

Reaching out through local causes

The pastor of Capitol View, **Dean Carlisle**, is always seeking ways to help those around the church. He has organized a fund drive for athletic shoes and winter clothes for needy student athletes at a nearby high school, working closely with local businesses to encourage them to contribute to this worthy cause.

When he learned that elementary school teachers from a school in the neighborhood were paying for snack foods out of their own pockets because their students didn't get enough food to eat at home, he put out the call for snack food donations. He didn't only ask for donations from those in the church, he asked his exercise partners and business contacts as well.

Pastor Carlisle enjoys running, and this hobby has the bonus of extending his opportunity for ministry to those outside the church. Training for and running in marathons is more than physical exercise. It puts him

in touch with individuals—churched and unchurched—who don't have a spiritual mentor. When problems hit, they may need someone to fill that role for them. Carlisle has been asked on numerous occasions to lead informal worship services, memorial services and business dedications for the group of friends he sees daily on his runs.

Reaching out through local organizations

Another avenue of community service for Pastor Carlisle has been his involvement in local and state disaster response organizations. His conference appointment as Nebraska's Community Service and Disaster Response coordinator has given him the opportunity to organize out-of-state mission trips, such as the one this past year after Hurricane Harvey caused

so much flooding in Houston, Texas. His contacts in the disaster response community in Nebraska opened the door for engineering faculty and students from the University of Nebraska to join him on this mission trip, which greatly contributed to the project's success. Carlisle's outgoing, missionary style witnessing has inspired Capitol View Church to give even more.

The members at Capitol View feel blessed spiritually from all this giving. If you want to look at church growth, don't count the number of members in the pews. You must count the size of the hearts of these faithful servants who see community service and loving their neighbor as key to church growth.

.....
Teresa Thompson is a member of the Capitol View Church in Lincoln, Nebraska.



Capitol View invites FoodNet, a local food distribution program, to use its facilities weekly to give food to homeless, elderly and low-income individuals who may not qualify for government assistance.



Broken Arrow Ranch Camp Dates

June 7-10
Parenting Solo

June 10-17
Adventure Camp

June 17-24
Junior I Camp

June 24-July 1
Junior II Camp

July 1-8
Earlteen Camp

July 8-15
Teen Camp

July 18-22
Family Camp

Students Receive New Computers via Conference Subsidy

We often assume young people are connected to the computer world, since we see them constantly using iPhones, iPads or other devices. However, when it comes to the larger business community, the differences between these alternative electronic devices and a personal computer can be immense. Consequently, it can sometimes be a challenge for employers when young people begin working in an office environment and are unaccustomed to operating a standard computer. This is why we believe it would be wise to start training in business technology at a younger age.

As the Minnesota Conference Education Department studied our elementary schools, it became apparent that computer technology was lacking. If there were computers, often they were older computers no longer of use to individuals and given to the schools for the students to play with. More often than not, computers had different operating systems on them and spent more time sitting unused than being used as a learning tool.

Maplewood Academy, in its adaptation of the Connected Campus venture,



Dwayne Mauk

The Minnesota Conference and local schools teamed up to purchase new laptop computers for conference schools. The goal is to have a laptop for every elementary student within three years.

started out with iPads, transitioned to Chrome Books and is currently using Lenovo laptops. There were limitations with the iPads and the students weren't learning the tools they needed to walk confidently into a business environment.

The conference presented a proposal to each of the elementary school boards: we would partner to split the cost of a new laptop computer, up

to the maximum purchase price of \$600. Of that \$600, \$300 would be appropriated by the conference and \$300 by the local school. Seven of the ten elementary schools took the conference up on its offer, and 37 laptops were purchased.

The conference goal is that within three years, every elementary student will be equipped with a laptop, which will be upgraded or replaced

on a cycle of every three to four years. It is exciting to see students learning how to use electronic tools correctly and efficiently. We want them to be equipped to walk into any career with all the necessary technology training.

Dwayne Mauk is vice president of finance for the Minnesota Conference.

Southview Church Steps Out in Faith to Find New Building

TMOR Photography



The Southview Church jointly hosted a music festival last fall—a perfect example of the type of outreach the church has in mind as they look for a new permanent home.

In the past few years, our congregation at Southview Church has grown to more than 550 members. After many years of addressing over-crowding in our building, which was built in 1916, we have finally made a big move.

We no longer had enough space in our building to support all our ministries: Sabbath school classes were overcrowded, there wasn't enough room in the sanctuary to hold the entire congregation—even with two services every Sabbath—and there wasn't even enough space in the neighborhood to park all the cars, to the frustration of our neighbors. During a business session, our church voted almost unanimously to put our building on the market and

move forward together to a new home.

After two years on the market, and a lot of showings but few offers, the church board made a decision to move forward in faith and look for a place to rent for worship on Sabbaths while continuing to keep our space for our weekly ministries. During the week that followed, we received two offers on our church. God is good! We closed on the sale of our church building in early January. It will soon be the home of a preschool.

The last nostalgic Sabbath in our former church home included an elder's ordination where we ordained our first female, young adult, African American elder; had three baptisms; and hosted

our final all-church potluck. Hearing stories about Southview's history—how the members came together after a fire in the sanctuary, how the pews were lovingly restored and all of the love poured into our building over the years—makes the move a bittersweet one.

A special message from our lead pastor **Dustin Hall** reminded us that God doesn't want us to get so comfortable that we stop growing and reaching out in love to those in our community who so desperately need to see Jesus through us. We eagerly anticipate seeing how God will bless our ministry efforts in the future.

We have rented space at House of Prayer Lutheran Church on 7625 Chicago

Avenue in Minneapolis, Minnesota, for Sabbath worship, and are looking forward to finding our own new church home soon with more space and, we hope, a parking lot. We plan to stay in the Southwest metro so we can continue building on our vision to be a center for ministry in Minneapolis.

Please partner with us in this endeavor by keeping our search for a permanent home in your prayers.

Robin Trana is a member of the Southview Church in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Adventist Churches and Schools to be Designated as Community Shelters



In an effort to further serve our communities, Adventist Community Service Director **Cathy Kissner** recently procured an agreement with the Red Cross that would allow qualifying churches and schools to be designated as shelters for anyone in the community impacted by a natural disaster—tornado,

hurricane, tsunami, fire—or by other incidents such as an intruder or a shooting. These shelters will be used when local shelter operations are unfeasible or when sheltering activities are consuming resources that might otherwise be dedicated to recovery operations.

Conference-owned facilities that would like to be considered as a sheltering facility and whose facility meets the necessary standards will be invited to become part of this agreement when plans are solidified.

After the Las Vegas shooting during the Route 91 Harvest Festival concert last October,

some Adventist pastors who wanted to aid the victims were turned away because they didn't have the credentials needed. Kissner wants to remedy that by providing spiritual care training so pastors can be certified.

Besides the training, pastors or others wanting to be trained would have to present a letter of recommendation and be vetted through a high-level background check.

After experiencing an event such as the recent hurricanes in Texas and Florida or the shooting at Marjorie Stoneman Douglas High School in Florida, many people are traumatized and need

spiritual care in a safe place. They may act in ways that would not be characteristic under normal circumstances. Caregivers must respond carefully, aware of the power of words to dishearten or to support. Training would raise their awareness of appropriate and inappropriate statements.

The training materials are nearing completion, according to the committee developing resources. However, Kissner explained that the plan can't be implemented until its various parts are activated and people are prepared.

.....
Carol Bolden is a communication assistant for the Rocky Mountain Conference.

Castle Rock Young Adult Rally Emphasizes Personal Growth

Ministry to youth and young adults in their local context, and creating an environment for connecting with God and other peers was at the center of a one-day young adult rally hosted by the Castle Rock Church plant on March 10.

Anil Kanda, director of senior youth and young adult ministries for Central California Conference, shared

messages with more than 50 young adults entitled, "Conqueror: The Heart of God." Kanda explored the lives of Jacob, Joshua and David to pinpoint factors that lead to spiritual victory in our own lives.

Commenting on the primary goal of the youth ministry throughout RMC, **Steve Hamilton**, director, commented that the department

"isn't to do the work of ministry for churches." Rather, maximum impact happens "when we can empower churches to minister to youth and young adults in their local context."

That kind of impact happens not just when a conference empowers a church, but also when a church empowers its younger generation. What 20- and 30-somethings need most is a community of faith

that leans on them "to make significant kingdom impact, entrusting them with meaningful responsibility," said Hamilton.

Brent Learned, a Castle Rock young adult, was inspired by not only attending, but also helping plan the event. "I have seen many young people walk right out the back door of their parents' churches because they never had the opportunity to be personally invested," he explained. "I get to lead the change away from apathy and toward growth."

.....
RMCNews with Godfrey Miranda



Courtesy: Godfrey Miranda

Anil Kanda presented on spiritual victory in our lives, emphasizing personal investment in local churches.

Zimbabwean Evangelist Trains Members of Denver South Church

Members of the Denver South Church are intensively engaged in improving their Bible study skills. Consequently, **Christian Martin**, senior pastor of the Denver South Church, recently invited **Pastor Reginald Sibanda**, a church planter from Zimbabwe, to share his insights with the congregation.

A graduate of Zimbabwe's Solusi University, Sibanda's training skills and dedication to church mission contributed to unprecedented church growth in the Adventist Church in Mwenezi, Zimbabwe. He is now a sought-after church growth trainer, and his current trip to the U.S. will

also take him to Indiana and Alabama.

Traveling with the intent to train church planters, Sibanda explained that he teaches lay people how to pray. "One of the first things is prayer," he said. "Also, how to have a good relationship with God. And then teach them how to study the Bible and how to share it."

Sibanda said it was initially his eagerness to preach the gospel that made him a successful evangelist. "The Holy Spirit leads us in everything we are doing," he said.

A soft-spoken evangelist and trainer who now lives in Bulawayo, where the Zimbabwe Union is located, Sibanda believes that effective church growth



Rajmund Dabrowski

Pastor Christian Martin (left) recently invited his friend Pastor Reginald Sibanda to share insights on Bible study and church growth.

centers around in-home Bible studies.

When asked what mission needs he has observed in North America, Sibanda replied that as a church we need to continue to talk about mission. "We want everyone to be involved in mission," he stated. "Greater

member involvement needs to be encouraged, and lay people need to be taught how to conduct Bible studies."

.....
Rajmund Dabrowski, communication director for the Rocky Mountain Conference and Carol Bolden, communication assistant, collaborated on this article.

Jonathan Leonardo Brings The Love Reality Tour to Rocky Mountain Conference

The Love Reality Tour came to the Greeley and Grand Junction churches in April with a focus on personal identity, purpose and worth based on the gospel.

"So many people today are looking for love," says **Kiefer Dooley**, RMC assistant youth director. "They feel an emptiness in their heart, but can't find anything to fill the void." Speaker **Jonathan Leonardo's** powerful worship and transformational messages are meant to change that.

"His love is stronger than death," exclaims Leonardo. "It is a love that will cast out sin. If you are interested in understanding the depth of who God is, we have to take a look at love itself."

The two-part series focused first on the basics of our identity and who we are because of Jesus, followed by how our new understanding of our identity informs our beliefs.

"The messages impacted my life in terms of my confidence in the gospel message and

what that looks like for me to apply it on a day-to-day basis," says Dooley. "It's freeing. Jesus' sacrifice defeated sin for us and it makes surrendering almost effortless. It's a complete perspective shift."

.....
Carol Bolden is a communication assistant for the Rocky Mountain Conference.

Watch a promotional video for The Love Reality Tour at theloverealitytour.com.



Find a Calling. Guaranteed.

Guaranteed education program allows grad to follow his calling

Russell Palmer III was determined to be a doctor. He enrolled in Union College as a pre-med major and graduated in 2006 with a chemistry degree, planning to attend medical school at Loma Linda University.

But his first attempt at the MCAT didn't go well. "I bombed out," he said. "So I went back home, studied all summer and went to take it again. But something didn't feel right. I stopped at the door of the test and prayed, 'God, if this is what You want for me, let me do well.'" His second score was even lower.

"I felt like God was closing that door and that chapter of my life," he recalled. Within days, administrators at his alma mater, Thunderbird Academy, called. They needed a part-time science teacher.

"I fell in love," he said. "I discovered my calling to be a teacher."

Palmer spent two years at Thunderbird before transitioning to Auburn Academy, where he worked teaching Bible classes. He spent a year there getting a feel for

academy life and finding a new vision for his own life.

"I knew I had to go back to Union," he said. Fortunately, he was in the perfect place timing-wise. Union's Guaranteed Education program offers a tuition-free bachelor's degree for students between two and six years after graduation.

"I was able to go back to Union for a completely free degree," he said. "It changed my life." He graduated for a second time in December 2013 with degrees in religion and science education.

A new career wasn't the only thing Palmer found during his second stint at Union. He met his future wife, **Sarah Kohls Palmer**, a physician assistant studies major, a month after school started. "We were both prayerfully returning to Union, trusting God would lead us into careers and the person He had created for us," Palmer said.

Today, he teaches middle school science, religion and robotics at Mile High Academy in Denver, Colorado.

Learning to adapt

When Palmer started teaching, he knew he was in the right career. "Teaching was so freeing," he said. "My days of trying to be a doctor were over, and I could embrace God's will for me."

Dr. Charles Freidline, longtime chemistry professor who passed away in 2013, had given Palmer a hint at his true calling on Palmer's first graduation day. "Dr. Freidline knew I was struggling with my major. He wrote something on my graduation card that I will never forget. He told me the story of a pre-med student who could have fallen into the path of medicine. But that student was now the longest-serving, most-impacting Union College chaplain—**Dr. Rich Carlson**. Dr. Freidline told me that if God leads me away from medicine, not to be afraid to follow His path. I had no idea the wisdom he was speaking to me."

Looking back, Palmer believes the message was crystal clear. "I could have been

stubborn and forced my way into medicine and be plugging away as a doctor somewhere," he said. "Instead, I'm changing kids' lives and building God's kingdom."

Palmer said he learned adaptability through the process of finding the place God wanted him. "You have to listen for God's voice and His leading," he said. "When God's will links with yours, there's no feeling like it. Finally, after all of these years, I'm on God's path for me."

Palmer sees that the long way around was part of God's plan. "God smoothed out some of my rough edges at Thunderbird and Auburn," he said. "That prepared me to be a teacher and to meet my wife. Before those experiences, I wasn't ready. But I adapted to what He wanted for me, and now I'm living His plan."

Lauren Schwarz graduated from Union in 2004. She is now a freelance writer in Bozeman, Montana.



Russell Palmer III returned to Union to study education after a failed attempt to go to medical school. During his second stint at Union he found his wife Sarah (pictured far left) and a fulfilling calling as a high school teacher.

Photos Courtesy Russell Palmer III

Following a Calling Back Home

Graduate lives dream career in her native Nepal



Photos Courtesy Union College

While studying at Union, Sameera Sigdel dreamed of returning home to Nepal to work in hospital administration. Now she serves as a development and communication officer at Scheer Memorial Adventist Hospital in Kathmandu, Nepal.

Sameera Sigdel always knew she wanted to work in healthcare. At first she thought that meant being a nurse. But now she is following her calling—one she discovered during her time at Union—working in hospital administration in her native Nepal.

After moving to the U.S. for high school, Sigdel enrolled at Union College in 2012 as a pre-nursing major. While she loved the healthcare environment, she quickly realized nursing was not her calling. “I think everything comes back to the health of people,” she said. “Working at a hospital would allow me to make a difference, as long as I wasn’t a nurse.”

After working for **Dr. Linda Becker**, who at the time served as Union’s vice president for student services, Sigdel discovered she loved management and soon honed her skills, earning a degree in business and a minor in leadership while

serving as president of Union’s International Club. At the time, she dreamed of returning to her home country, a place she felt needed good healthcare administrators.

“Nepal has good doctors and nurses, but not the good administrators they need to take care of them,” she explained in a 2014 interview. “I want to go back home and make a difference—I want to make it better.”

Preparation and passion

Sigdel’s dream has come true. In August 2017, she accepted a position as a development and communication officer at Scheer Memorial Adventist Hospital in Kathmandu, Nepal.

After graduating from Union in May 2016, Sigdel completed an administrative internship at Centura Health System in Denver, Colorado, then went to work for the

Rocky Mountain Adventist Healthcare Foundation. Sigdel discovered the opportunity to return home through Global Health Initiatives, Centura’s partnership with several hospitals in developing nations around the world, including Scheer Memorial.

As with most positions in nonprofit organizations, Sigdel finds herself responsible for more than her title indicates. Her primary roles are developing marketing strategy, building strong internal and external communication, creating financial models and sharing the stories of visiting medical volunteers.

Sigdel has drawn heavily on her Union experience in her new job. “My experience in Union’s leadership program helped me make decisions and execute them,” she said. “My marketing class directly prepared me in my role as a communications officer. I recently produced my first annual report for Scheer Memorial. I

know how to build an annual report because we made one in a business class at Union.”

More important than particular skills, Sigdel values the life lessons she learned at Union. “I always thought of a career as a job,” she said. “During my time at Union, I realized a career is more about doing what you are passionate about. My job gives me satisfaction because I work hard so others might have better health. Although I am not directly related to clinical care in the hospital, my work affects patients because I write their stories and try to raise funds for the ones who cannot afford healthcare. I wanted to return to Nepal and work as a healthcare administrator, and I am living that dream today. I can now help people here, and Union enabled me.”

Maren Miller is a freshman at Union College.

SMH Promotes Wellness Through Sponsorship of the Arts

Reaching out to the Kansas City community has always been a top priority for Shawnee Mission Health. With three hospital campuses, a primary care network and four urgent care facilities, SMH has served Kansas City and the surrounding area for 56 years and is an integral part of the community.

A member of Adventist Health System, SMH's belief in whole person care sets it apart from most health systems. The organization is consistently looking for ways to fulfill its mission of *Extending the Healing Ministry of Christ* and enhance whole person care not only for patients, but also for the greater community. SMH's commitment to this objective is evident through the ongoing quality, compassionate care provided on a daily basis within its facilities as well as a broad range of community classes

and events aimed to promote wellness of mind, body and spirit for those living in Kansas City.

On an annual basis, SMH provides nearly \$1 million to support nonprofit organizations that share its mission to make Kansas City a better and healthier place to live. Although SMH considers all types of community involvement, the organization has recently taken a special interest in the arts.

Communicating through drama and music

In summer 2017, SMH began its involvement with Kansas City Starlight Theatre, a premier performing arts venue within the region. Now as the presenting sponsor of the Starlight Broadway Series for the next three years, SMH has the opportunity to communicate regularly with residents of all

ages within Kansas City and the surrounding area.

"As we were looking to be more involved in the arts, Starlight stood out for the quality of its programming and the work it does tied to youth education and the performing arts," said **Doug Spear**, SMH's executive director of marketing and strategic development.

During the holiday season, SMH has a long-standing tradition of offering a free concert to show its appreciation for the Kansas City community. SMH has recently partnered with the Kansas City Symphony to present *Joy to the World*, a memorable evening of Christmas music at the iconic Kauffman Center for Performing Arts. The family-friendly event has been widely popular and serves as an introduction to the symphony for many first-time attendees.

"Hosting *Joy to the World* is a heartfelt way for Shawnee Mission Health associates, physicians and staff to extend our mission and thank Kansas Citians for the privilege of serving their healthcare needs," said SMH administrative director of Spiritual Wellness **Mark Stoddart**.

Around the same time each year, SMH also presents the Nutcracker Tea Party, a one-hour version of the Nutcracker ballet and holiday

tea party featuring a child-friendly menu. The four performances sell out each year and proceeds benefit the public arts program in Overland Park, Kansas, a suburb of the Kansas City metropolitan area where many families reside.

During the summer months, SMH encourages the community to enjoy a relaxing evening of theatre in a beautiful 10-acre park setting through their Theatre in the Park sponsorship. Theatre in the Park is one of the largest outdoor community theatres in the country and serves as an outlet for hundreds of aspiring performers and theatregoers throughout the region.

"Participating in the arts and engaging with the community are activities that promote good health," Spear said. "We feel a high level of involvement in the arts will continue to strengthen our position as the leading community and wellness-focused health organization in the Kansas City region."

Jackie Woods is a project manager/writer for Shawnee Mission Health.

For more information about SMH, visit ShawneeMission.org.



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Web: porterhospital.org

Blumenthal, Lawrence S. “Larry,” b. April 17, 1948 in Sioux City, IA d. Feb. 16, 2018 in Missouri Valley, IA. Member of Omaha Memorial (NE) Church. Preceded in death by 1 sister. Survivors include wife Pauline; sons Jason and Nicholas; stepchildren Chris Drowne and Michelle Oakley; 10 grandchildren.

Brown, Wynona Daye Amrhein, b. July 4, 1931 in Baton Rouge, LA. d. Feb. 18, 2018 in Sioux Falls, SD. Member of Sioux Falls Church. Preceded in death by husband Delbert; 1 sister. Survivors include sons Delbert “Earl,” Kirk and Neddy; daughters Jill Rasmussen and Beth Pickhardt; 11 grandchildren; 9 great-grandchildren.

Davenport, Glenn, b. March 15, 1917 in Ringgold County, IA. d. Dec. 6, 2017 in Centerville, OH. Member of Kettering (OH) Church. Preceded in death by wife Bonita; daughter Veryl Kelley. Survivors include 1 granddaughter; 1 grandson; 4 great-grandchildren.

Draper, Grace, b. Jan. 19, 1911 in Yuma, CO. d. Jan. 23, 2018 in Grand Junction, CO. Member of Grand Junction Church. Preceded in death by husband Truman; son Phillip. Survivors include son Stuart.

Freouf, Dorothy, b. Sept. 22, 1947 in Alliance, NE. d. Oct. 14, 2017 in Gering, NE. Member of Scottsbluff (NE) Church. Survivors include mother Valorie Russell; husband Don; son Daryl; 1 granddaughter; 1 brother; 1 sister.

Gerhardt, Wallace T., b. July 18, 1943 in Rifle, CO. d. March 7, 2018 in Ozark, MO. Member of Oak Grove Heights (MO) Church.

Preceded in death by 2 siblings. Survivors include wife Delores; children Duke Vaughn, Zachary Vaughn, Denise Adair, Delores Mincks, Dotie Loveland, Lori Carlock, LeAnn McDaris and Robin Ross; 2 siblings; 15 grandchildren; 13 great-grandchildren. Veteran of the U.S. Army.

Harlan, Wesley J., b. Aug. 16, 1923 in New Mexico. d. Oct. 18, 2017 in Grand Junction, CO. Member of Grand Junction Church. Preceded in death by first wife Bertha; 2 siblings. Survivors include wife JoAnn; sons John Jr., Kenneth and Curtis; daughters Susan Carlos, Cathy and Theresa Belleau; stepson Dana Lester; stepdaughters Soli Ferguson and Candy Lester; 1 brother; 1 sister; 20 grandchildren; 31 great-grandchildren.

Loftis, Leanna Irene, b. Feb. 14, 1927. d. Oct. 4, 2017 in Central City, NE. Member of Aurora (NE) Church. Preceded in death by husband Warren; son Neal and 2 infant sons; infant grandson; 1 sister; 2 brothers. Survived by son Darrell; daughter Karen Butcher; 8 grandchildren; 4 great-grandchildren.

Marston, Dorothy Jean, b. May 14, 1941. d. Jan. 10, 2018 in Lincoln, NE. Member of College View (NE) Church. Preceded in death by first husband Arnie Lanz. Survivors include husband Terry; children Dana Still, Dawn Sevy, David Koza and Jeffrey Marston; 2 brothers; 7 grandchildren.

Plested, Joanne I. (Pierson), b. July 15, 1934 in Ewing, NE. d. Jan. 8, 2018 in Thayer, MO. Member of Mammoth Springs (MO) Church. Survivors include husband Earl; son Dennis; stepson Carl; 1 brother; 1 sister.

SUNSET CALENDAR	COLORADO	May 4	May 11	May 18	May 25
	Denver	7:57	8:04	8:10	8:17
	Grand Junction	8:10	8:17	8:23	8:29
	Pueblo	7:53	7:59	8:05	8:11
	IOWA				
	Davenport	8:03	8:11	8:18	8:24
	Des Moines	8:16	8:23	8:30	8:37
	Sioux City	8:29	8:37	8:44	8:51
	KANSAS				
	Dodge City	8:33	8:40	8:46	8:51
Goodland	7:43	7:50	7:56	8:02	
Topeka	8:19	8:25	8:32	8:37	
MINNESOTA					
Duluth	8:22	8:32	8:40	8:48	
International Falls	8:33	8:43	8:52	9:00	
Minneapolis	8:22	8:31	8:39	8:46	
MISSOURI					
Columbia	8:04	8:11	8:17	8:23	
Kansas City	8:14	8:21	8:27	8:33	
St. Louis	7:56	8:02	8:09	8:15	
NEBRASKA					
Lincoln	8:26	8:33	8:40	8:46	
North Platte	8:43	8:51	8:57	9:04	
Scottsbluff	7:57	8:04	8:11	8:18	
NORTH DAKOTA					
Bismarck	8:57	9:06	9:15	9:23	
Fargo	8:41	8:51	8:59	9:07	
Williston	9:12	9:22	9:31	9:39	
SOUTH DAKOTA					
Pierre	8:49	8:57	9:05	9:12	
Rapid City	8:00	8:08	8:16	8:23	
Sioux Falls	8:33	8:41	8:48	8:55	
WYOMING					
Casper	8:09	8:17	8:25	8:31	
Cheyenne	7:59	8:07	8:14	8:20	
Sheridan	8:17	8:25	8:33	8:40	

Roush, Joyce, b. April 11, 1935. d. Jan. 23, 2018. Member of Wichita (KS) Church.

Rudolph, Kathryn S., b. Nov. 4, 1923 in Deer Creek Township, MN. d. Nov. 12, 2017 in Perham, MN. Member of Wadena (MN) Church. Preceded in death by husband Donald; 5 siblings. Survivors include daughters Pamela Wilkinson and Shirley; son Kelvin; 8 grandchildren; 2 great-grandchildren.

Stout, Marion M., b. Feb. 22, 1927 in Ford County, KS. d. Jan. 25, 2018 near Ford, KS. Member of Dodge City (KS) Church. Preceded in death by wife Betty May Paxson; 2 sisters. Survivors include sons Gerald, Mike,

Les and Joe; daughters Debra Brown, Mary Droste and Wendy Demoret; 1 brother; 3 sisters; 27 grandchildren; 42 great-grandchildren; 3 great-great-grandchildren.

Tennison, James E., b. April 24, 1921. d. Feb. 8, 2018 in Falls City, NE. Member of Doniphan (MO) Church. Preceded in death by wife Thelma; 5 siblings. Survivors include daughters Linda Wallace and Sandra Chaffee; sons Jim and Bill; 2 brothers; 8 grandchildren; 12 great-grandchildren. Served in U.S. military during WWII.

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EVENTS

Auburn Academy's class of 1969 is planning our 50 year reunion with a seven day Alaska cruise. The invitation is for all members and friends from 1967, 1968, 1969 and 1970. We are missing many classmates from 1969. Please send contact information/questions to jan69reinking@comcast.net.

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