

# Lake Union HERALD

NOV/DEC 2017



**CAROL JORDAN,**  
God's Hands For Kids

FOR ILLINOIS MEMBERS  
**ILLINOIS FOCUS INSIDE**

PORTRAITS  
OF GRIEF

A MOTHER'S  
LAMENT





The holidays — especially the first ones after losing a loved one — are especially difficult for people who are grieving. Often, friends and family members of those affected by a loss are unsure how to act or what to say to support their grieving loved one during the holidays.

As you delve into this issue of the *Herald*, you'll find practical solutions, and discover how those in our community, including the widow of Norris Ncube, Indianapolis Junior Academy principal who died tragically in a car accident, search for healing.

We hope you'll be encouraged to find ways to support those grieving around you this holiday season.

On another note, what you're holding is the new redesigned *Herald*, which will continue to "tell the stories of what God is doing in the lives of his people." As usual, we invite your submissions and welcome your feedback.

*Debbie Michel*

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COVER PHOTO: JEAN-IRÉS MICHEL

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# Here to Serve: An Introduction

Dear Lake Union Family,

It has been an honor to serve you for nearly two years as your Executive Secretary in the Lake Union Conference.

Sharon and I both have enjoyed getting to know many of you at camp meetings, Sabbath services, evangelistic meetings and youth events. We have been blessed to serve the leadership team of each of our five conferences at your annual meetings and our executive committee and board of trustee meetings. I can say, without equivocation, we have found the members in the Great Lakes union to be great people — warm and loving, too! You have opened your homes to us and, most importantly, you have opened your hearts, making it hard to do anything but fall in love with the wonderful people of this region. With that said, I would like to share a little about my history in the hope that you will be able to get to know me better and, ultimately, to understand my personal core values.

I was raised in the Midwest by two godly parents, both of whom were great examples of servant leadership. My dad would spend most Sabbaths transporting members and guests to church, directing the church choir, and entertaining members and visitors at our home. I'll never forget how he built two extra leaves for the dining room table so that it stretched into the living room. My seat on many Sabbaths was on the piano bench with my younger brother. My mother, serving by his side, was willing to take the whole 35-40-member choir under her roof for a Saturday night chili social after having entertained visitors from church earlier that day. Dad also led the Junior Missionary Volunteers Society (JMV) and, later in life, became an elder in the church while Mom served as church clerk. Many who were youth in that day still remark at how they enjoyed the Saturday night JMV hayrides, playing croquet in our backyard, or the Sunday morning tennis lessons Dad would provide to any youth who were interested.

From Ingathering to selling church magazines in front of grocery stores, to teaching the Primary or Youth class as a teenager, and later, becoming a deacon and elder in the church, I, too, became enthused with serving God and my fellow man. When we were not entertaining church members, we were working.

After serving in the military, Dad worked for the Social Security Administration and Mom for an international insurance company. Yet, because of their deep appreciation for Christian education, Mom, an alumnus of Adelpian Academy (yes, her roots are right here in the Lake Union), and Dad, an alum of Oakwood University, often worked most of the day on Sunday and every Tuesday and Thursday evening cleaning offices to provide a Christian education for my older sisters, and we all helped. Dad would say, "If we have to eat beans to keep your sisters in school, then that's what we'll have to do." Thank God, beans were not the only thing on the table because God was a gracious provider. But I do recall occasionally eating a catsup sandwich to help my sisters get through school. Surprisingly, a ketchup sandwich is not as bad as it sounds, but I wouldn't suggest it either.

I share this to say I thank God for the way my parents, in the words of the apostle Paul, addicted themselves to the ministry (1 Corinthians 16:15 KJV). They were great examples — hence, the DNA of love for God, love of family, and love of fellow man has kept me and all my siblings solidly rooted in the Adventist message and given me the opportunity to serve you, our great members of the Lake Union Conference. ■



Maurice Valentine

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*Maurice Valentine is president of the Lake Union Conference.*

# Never Part Again

By Willyta Ruiz-Wamack



▲ Willyta, in the middle, surrounded by her sister, Luz, and mother Wilfrida in 2010

**LAST CHRISTMAS DAY**, as my baby sister drew her final breath, I was reading, . . . *though I walk through the valley of shadow of death I will fear no evil* (Psalm 23:4). It was just two months earlier that Luz had been diagnosed with an aggressive form of bone cancer. The grim news came as a shock because she fully embraced a healthy lifestyle and never had been sick in her entire 58 years of life. It took great courage to be strong. There were many moments when we hugged and I tried hard not to cry. As she lay there on the bed, in the wee hours of the morning, I pictured God holding Luz in his arms as she went to sleep, resting until the day of his coming.

Luz and I had formed a close bond that grew tighter after our mother, Wilfrida Tenorio-Ruiz, died in 2013, and we only had each other. I could have never imagined how one would feel when all members of your immediate family are gone, but now I do.

After my mother and sister died, I sifted through family photographs and wondered, *what does grief look like?* I came to the conclusion that an aspect of grieving is quietly and respectfully going through your loved one's belongings. I call it a "sacred moment — a sacred ceremony."

Grieving is being alone in the room with no one else around. Opening drawers to find pieces of belongings and, as you hold those pieces in your hands, you begin to relive those special moments when your loved ones were with you.

It's finding their driver's licenses, their school diplomas, their signatures on important documents which once had value. Each document is a piece of their story. Their sweaters and scarves still hold their perfume and, like magic, you are transported; you hear their laughter and recall the special names you had for each other.

To grieve is remembering that you were closest to them, had spent thousands of hours loving them, sharing a happy, bitter and sad moment; that is how your chain became unbreakable. It was because of those life experiences, regardless of the situation, that your love for each other remained the same throughout the years.

Because of that bond, you can respectfully hold their possessions in your hand and the memories in your heart, and only you can understand how much those items meant to them.

As I grieved, I must admit it was painful and I sometimes blamed myself. Maybe it's my fault for making a choice when I was younger to not have a family of my own. Maybe this period of my life would have been more bearable if I could have seen the smile of my mom in one of my children, or I could see my sister's look in one of my daughters.

I'm learning to not dwell on the negatives, and instead, find the ways in which God is revealing himself to me. I've learned that, in spite of grief, you find God in every step of the way.

**God uses people to help us through this journey.** A few weeks after my sister's passing, I reached out for counseling and was encouraged to talk to another lady undergoing a similar situation. It was helpful sharing with someone who experienced what I had gone through. But it's not only strangers but also relatives

Daniel Brent Photography

who were there for me. God used my cousins, including one who is a minister and noticed I was on the Internet late into the night. He knew I was struggling and let me know that I could call him, regardless of the time. Another cousin quietly kept an eye on me, sending notes and calling when I needed help most.

**Emotional healing comes before our loved ones are gone.** I was in my late teens when my mother lost her father and her husband, my dad, in less than two years' time. I often wondered how brave she was to be able to go on after losing the two most important men in her life. The memories of her example of a very strong woman kept me going during Luz' illness.

**It's the quality of life, not so much the quantity.** My sister's decision to not receive chemotherapy allowed us to enjoy the last two months of her life at our home. There were two beds in the room — one for her and one for me, and she was very happy that we were going to share a room, as we did when we were young. In the midst of uncertainty, we had our talks at midnight, hugging and resting our heads on each other's shoulder.

**Social media can be like medicine.** I asked Luz for permission to share information about her condition with my friends on Facebook and she consented. Some people may criticize Facebook and consider it a negative tool, but I thank God for this medium of communication. Even though friends and family were miles apart from each other, I kept them close to my heart through social media. My network of Facebook friends all over the world became like family and helped me go through this difficult journey. They constantly reminded me that I was not alone, that people were praying for my baby sister, Luz, day and night. Their notes of encouragement meant a lot to me.

**A life well lived is a witness to others.** There is not a single day that I don't meet people or read comments from people on Facebook who tell me how much Luz impacted their lives, that she was a through-and-through missionary, and because of her witnessing, they are now back following Jesus again. Because of my dear sister Luz' death, I learned so many wonderful testimonies about my parents, too, and how their ministry had impacted the lives of others.

**Home, sweet home.** After my sister's body was cremated, I told my husband that I wanted to immediately visit my sister's home. I wanted to face the reality



▲ Willyta and her sister, Luz, in 2014.

that I would not find her in her Berrien Springs home. Staying in that familiar place brought comfort to my broken heart.

**Spouses are a great source of comfort.** My husband's hugs and his constant refrain, "If I could take the pain away, I would . . ." While I no longer have my sister or parents, God has given me someone who put his life on hold to support me in every way, including giving up his job to move across state lines for me to begin a new career.

**Music soothes the soul.** It would be easy to stay home, but I made myself go to church even though the hymns penetrate the innermost parts of my soul. Yes, hymns trigger memories. I try to be strong and sing along. And the hymns bring comfort to my broken heart and the hope of Christ's soon return.

**God provides a place of refuge and strength.** Losing my dear sister, Luz, has brought me to my knees, and these past eight months I have experienced God's presence and comfort as I never have before. The cemetery is a refuge where I have planted perennials around Luz and my mother's grave. It has become a very peaceful place — a place where I think of the second resurrection and where I picture God calling my little family out of their graves to never part again. ■

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*Willyta Ruiz-Wamack is girls' dean at Wisconsin Academy. She believes God knew the future and placed her at WA right before her sister's diagnosis to care for 30 girls in the midst of her sister's illness.*

# Healing After Loss

Welcoming a newborn, a new bride and groom, a new job opportunity, a new friendship, or a new life accomplishment is a cause for celebration.



Judith Fisher

We often applaud those happy moments with laughter, warm accolades plus a number of other verbal and non-verbal responses. Psychophysiological responses to losses can be just as wide-ranging and specific to personalities, personal beliefs, cultural and generational perspectives.

Whether we experience the loss of a loved one, a relationship, a job, a pet, a season of life or an opportunity, the void or change brought on by the loss often results in emotional responses unique to who we are. The many different models of grief processes, including Kubler-Ross' five stages of grief — denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance — suggest that individuals travel through the grief process at their own pace, following their own path.

Although we understand to some extent how people grieve, no one can predict the exact path a grieving individual will take on the journey to healing and resolution. Those of the Facebook generation, open to public scrutiny, often post pictures of a departed loved one, eliciting dozens and sometimes hundreds of brief comments of sympathy. The sense of community that many feel through these public expressions of care seems to provide a supportive element and thus promote healing. Others, more protective of their privacy, may share about specific losses with only a small group of trusted friends, choosing to travel the path of grief with less fanfare.

Grieving is a natural process. Some who grieve may sometimes find themselves thrown into a state of depression, requiring professional intervention; however, most individuals are able to transition back to a place of healing, primarily through the support of a caring community. Although each one's path through the grief process is unique and personal, there is a common

thread that needs to be interwoven in everyone's journey of healing — genuine, compassionate and thoughtful support. This caring support will include:

1. Accepting individual expressions of grief even when they do not fit into our own cultural and generational schema or lenses.
2. Being sensitive to the grieving person's need for privacy or personal time alone.
3. Not rushing someone through the grieving process.
4. Being thoughtful enough to give the grieving person individualized support, meeting specific needs. Sometimes your quiet presence is the best gift you can offer.
5. Having the courage to provide stable support even when the grieving person expresses acute pain and despair.
6. Demonstrating genuine compassion in our words and actions. Hollow words do not promote healing.
7. Providing a safe place where the grieving person may share thoughts and emotions without fear of being judged.
8. Making sure that special and sensitive attention is given to those who grieve, especially during the holiday season and special occasions.
9. Remaining attentive enough to refer the grieving individual to community resources, including professional help, when the need is observed.
10. Helping to create and maintain a community culture of genuine care and support where resources are actively sought and made available to those in need. ■

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*Judith Fisher, PhD, is director of Counseling and Testing at Andrews University.*

***To everything there is a season, A time for every purpose under heaven . . . A time to weep, and a time to laugh; A time to mourn, and a time to dance . . . (Ecclesiastes 3:1, 4, NKJV)***

# When Loss is Gain

Loss is a part of life — the hardest part — and it starts early. Loss has many faces and it touches many lives.

It is difficult to make sense of many terrible losses, whether it's death, injury, health, property, friends or a job. In varying degrees, we have all experienced loss — circumstances beyond our control, life-changing events that shake us to our core. As a health educator, I have heard heartbreaking tales of childhood abuse as well as wrecked lives from destructive choices. My children have experienced the loss of their father, and I have lost their dad, my ministry partner, companion and husband of 32 years. It is impossible to make sense of many terrible losses. One author wrote: "God marks across some of our days, 'Will explain later.'"

**How do you face loss?** To the atheist, agnostic or person who sees God as an absentee landlord who looks on indifferently, there is no assurance of Divine love, comfort or guidance. To the person who believes that God will never let bad things happen to people who live right, feelings of betrayal and bitterness can fester and finally destroy faith and trust in Divine power. Jesus said plainly that *in the world you will have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world* (John 16:33 KJV).

**Jesus never sought to create a glossy picture of the Christian's sojourn on this earth.** *When Jesus knew that His hour had come that He should depart from this world at the Last Supper, he explained to his anxious disciples, What I am doing you do not understand now, but you will know after this* (John 13:1, 7, NKJV). It's the "after this" part that is filled with significance and shines the light of hope into the heart of those whose hearts are shadowed by grief and loss.

**Grief happens but, over time, so can strength, courage and even joy.** Notice the progression from grief to joy in this statement by Ellen White: "Into the

experience of all there come times of keen disappointment and utter discouragement — days when sorrow is the portion, and it is hard to believe that God is still the kind benefactor of His earthborn children; days when troubles harass the soul, till death seems preferable to life. It is then that many lose their hold on God and are brought into the slavery of doubt, the bondage of unbelief. Could we at such times discern with spiritual insight the meaning of God's providences, we should see angels seeking to save us from ourselves, striving to plant our feet upon a foundation more firm than the everlasting hills; and new faith, new life, would spring into being."<sup>2</sup> When trials hit like a tornado, God's angels seek to save the believing child of God from utter, hopeless, reckless, relentless, unremitting grief.

"The Lord has special grace for the mourner, and its power is to melt hearts, to win souls. His love opens a channel into the wounded and bruised soul, and becomes a healing balsam to those who sorrow."<sup>3</sup> ■

1. Morgan R. *The Red Sea Rules*, p. 90.

2. White E.G. *My Life Today*, p. 328.

3. White E.G. *God's Amazing Grace*, p. 120

Adapted with permission from [www.LifestyleMatters.com](http://www.LifestyleMatters.com).

*Vicki Griffin, MS, Human Nutrition; MPA, is the director of the Lifestyle Matters Health Intervention series and director of Health Ministries for the Michigan Conference.*



Vicki Griffin



# Two Kinds of Righteousness, Part II

*Was not Abraham our father justified by works . . . ?*  
(James 2:21, RSV)



George R. Knight

The relationship between faith and obedience is at the heart of righteousness and justification. Yesterday we found Uriah Smith arguing in early 1888 that obedience was the key to salvation. His primary illustration was the rich young ruler. What Smith failed to notice was that even though the young ruler had kept the commandments he still went away from Christ quite lost.

Smith and his colleagues, of course, believed in justification by faith. They had to, since it's in the Bible. But they based their understanding on the King James Version's misleading translation of Romans 3:25, which claims Christ's *righteousness for the remission of sins that are past*. Thus J.F. Ballenger could write: "To make satisfaction for *past* sins, faith is *everything*. Precious indeed is that blood that blots out all our sins and makes a clean record of the past. Faith only can make the promises of God our own. But present duty is ours to perform. . . . Obey the voice of God and live, or disobey and die."

One result of their belief that justification by faith dealt with past sins was that Smith, Butler and their friends taught that maintaining justification after conversion was a matter of "justification by works." After all, Ballenger later wrote in quoting James, *was not Abraham our father justified by works . . . ?* "When we obey, that act, coupled with our faith secures our justification."

Thus for these Adventists, justification was not by faith alone, as Paul repeatedly asserts (even of Abraham; see Romans 3:20–25; 4:1–5; Ephesians 2:5, 8; Galatians 2:16), but faith + works.

It was precisely that theology that Waggoner and Jones disagreed with. In a January 1888 editorial in

the *Signs* entitled "Different Kinds of Righteousness," Waggoner, in contending with Smith, noted that a person could not improve on the moral righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees because "they trusted to their own works, and did not submit to the righteousness of God." In fact, he asserted, their righteousness was not "real righteousness at all." They had simply tried "to cover up one filthy, ragged garment by putting on some more filthy rags."

How are we saved? And how do works relate to that salvation? That was the essence of the struggle at Minneapolis. It also was the conflict between Paul and his adversaries in Romans and Galatians.

Give us understanding of this crucial topic, Father, as we reflect upon it day by day. ■

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*George R. Knight is a retired professor of church history at the Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University. This article is from his book, Lest We Forget, a daily devotional, published by the Review and Herald Publishing Association, page 265, printed by permission.*



**How are we saved? And how do works relate to that salvation? That was the essence of the struggle at Minneapolis.**

# How Should We Pray?

As I write this morning, September 22, 2017, I'm reflecting on the events of this past week.

It began with our fall week of prayer in the chapel of our Lake Union headquarters, presented by my pastor, Dwight Nelson. His messages were focused on praying for and receiving the daily baptism of the Holy Spirit, based on his three-part sermon series: "Ground Zero and the New Reformation: How to be Baptized with the Holy Spirit." I recommend you take the time to view or listen to this trilogy of sermons at <http://pmchurch.tv>.

In a few more minutes, I'll make my way to the chapel where the Lake Union staff will gather together for prayer. We have much to pray about as yesterday the Lake Union Conference executive committee voted to ask Maurice Valentine to be our new president to fill the vacancy created by Don Livesay's retirement on October 1.

God sent Don and Barbara to us in 2009, after much prayer and through a series of circumstances that convinced us all that God was calling this ministry team to the Lake Union *for such a time as this* (Esther 4:14 KJV). It is important to note that prayer has continued to be the driving force in our office to accomplish mission.

I don't know what shape our church, country or world will be in by the time this issue of the *Herald* reaches your mailbox but, as I write, Hurricane Maria is still on a path of devastation through the Caribbean, leaving rubble, confusion, brokenness and death in her wake; fires have decimated many of our forests in the West and filled the air and streams with smoke and ash; Trump and Kim are exchanging threats and insults with the real possibility of nuclear results; our church is preparing for annual Fall Council meetings at General Conference headquarters that have the potential of either fracturing or uniting us as a people; and Maryann and I just learned that another one of our friends has been diagnosed with cancer and this couple is now having to walk a similar path as our own.



I'm reminded of a song that I used to hear Tommy, William, Paul and Fred sing when I was just a boy sitting on the front row at the little church on the hill in Germantown, Ohio: "If we ever needed the Lord before, we sure do need him now!"

So, when you need the Lord, I mean really *need* the Lord; when you've tried everything else in your own strength and only seem to be losing ground rather than gaining; when you see no evidence of hope — no way out, what do you do? You pray!

But how do you pray? How about we start by praying for the baptism of the Holy Spirit, because, "Christ has promised the gift of the Holy Spirit to his church, but how little is this promise appreciated. How seldom is its power felt in the church; how little is its power spoken of before the people. The Savior has said: *Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me.* With the reception of this gift, all other gifts would be ours" (Ellen White, *Review & Herald*, March 29, 1892, Acts 1:8 KJV quoted). ■

Gary Burns is the prayer coordinator for the Lake Union Conference.



Gary Burns

# A Doctor Sets Out to Heal His Community

By Debbie Michel



Jean-Irès Michel

▲ Manuel Alva (right) operates his clinic in the space where Elton DeSousa pastors the Church of Vanguard in the Chicago suburb of Berwyn.

**THE NONDESCRIPT BUILDING** sits on a busy stretch of Ogden Avenue eight miles west of the Chicago Loop. As you enter the doors on any given weekday, chances are you'll see office staff combing through stacks of patients' charts, while a fit, middle-aged man in a doctor's coat darts from one examination room to the next. Come evenings, the same office is transformed into a classroom for healing and, on Sabbaths, it's a church for a Hispanic congregation.

Since this multi-use facility opened in May, along a stretch of the historic Route 66 thoroughfare, it has served a testament to the hard work of a gastroenterologist melding a desire to not only treat patients but also help them overcome preventable diseases.

Peruvian-born medical doctor Manuel Alva wasn't always a poster child for a healthy lifestyle. While a medical student at Montemorelos Medical School in Mexico — learning about the benefits of nutrition, exercise, water, sunlight, temperance, air, rest, and trusting in God, he would eat whatever he wanted.

By the time he moved to Chicago to do his residency, his blood pressure was extremely high and so was his cholesterol. He vowed to do better and turned to

his wife, also a physician, for help. This meant no more eating out at the hospital and giving up some of his favorite foods.

Two months later, he went back to his doctor and received startling news. His blood pressure improved drastically and his cholesterol level was much better. "I said, 'Okay, God, I get the message. What you have told us as a people works.'"

He decided to share what he had learned and began conducting health programs at his church. Meanwhile, he noticed that he was seeing sicker and sicker people in his clinic.

"God has given us tons of patients that are sick with reflux, with constipation — those two are complaints that we hear day in and day out," he said.

He decided to host health education classes each Sabbath morning, as part of the weekly church service. These were held in unlikely venues: a hospital waiting room; a carwash.

Elton DeSousa had just earned a theology degree and offered to help Alva with the group's spiritual needs. He saw an opportunity to extend the reach of the gospel in Chicago where he notes, "We have a huge population and every time we try to communicate the gospel message to a secular community it's difficult to teach them with the old traditional methods we've always used in the past."

Through a series of miracles, Alva purchased the Ogden Avenue building and plans are well underway for a center of influence. Currently there are nutrition, exercise and massage classes, with plans to add cooking and stress management classes. ■

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Debbie Michel, associate director of Communication, Lake Union Conference

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Watch more online at <https://vimeo.com/237761589>

# ¿Dónde está Dios?

En los últimos dos meses es sorprendente ver acontecer terremotos y huracanes que afectaron en una manera tan desastrosa a Houston, varias ciudades en Florida, México e islos en el Caribe.

De todo lo acontecido, lo que más me impactó de manera personal fue la destrucción que causó el Huracán Maria a la tierra donde mis padres nacieron, Puerto Rico.

Aunque no nací en la “isla del encanto”, tengo lindos recuerdos de cuando mis padres hicieron la decisión de mudarnos de Nueva York a Puerto Rico. El tiempo que pasamos fue difícil económicamente para mis padres y por eso llegamos a vivir allí solamente un año. Aun así, ese año resultó ser una gran bendición porque en ese tiempo mi mamá tomó la decisión de bautizarse en la Iglesia Adventista. Al regresar a Nueva York ella introdujo a su familia al mensaje Adventista y después de dos años nos unimos también a la iglesia. Estoy muy agradecido a la “isla del encanto” porque además de ser la isla de mi familia, también es el lugar donde se sembró la semilla del adventismo en la familia Mercado.

Al oír del desastre que aconteció me comuniqué con algunos dirigentes en Puerto Rico para saber sus necesidades y tratar de conseguir los recursos necesarios para apoyarlos. Resultó interesante e inspirador hablar con ellos porque me di cuenta que a pesar de las muchas dificultades que están enfrentando su fe se mantiene fuerte y siguen confiando en que Dios contestará sus oraciones.

Me siento muy mal pensando que los puertorriqueños están sufriendo y que no hay

remedios inmediatos para aliviarlos. Por eso creo que ahora es la oportunidad para demostrar al mundo la realidad de que Dios no nos abandona en esas circunstancias, sino que demuestra su amor a través de sus hijos. Al entrar ahora en el Día de Acción de Gracias y la Navidad pido dos cosas de los hermanos hispanos de la unión. Primero, pido sus oraciones por la situación que allí están pasando. Segundo, les invito a considerar el dar una donación especial en un sobre de diezmo escribiendo en el “Puerto Rico,” el tesorero de su iglesia enviará su donación directamente al Lake Union Conference y nosotros lo enviaremos a la Unión Puertorriqueña. ■

*Carmelo Mercado es el vicepresidente de la Unión del Lago.*



Carmelo Mercado



▲ Huracán Maria destruyendo a su paso.

Courtesy Inter-America Division

# When My Daddy Died

By Sherine Brown-Fraser



All photos courtesy, Sherine Brown-Fraser

▲ Sherine with her father in 2008.

**AS I WAS RECENTLY DRIVING** to the store with my 17-month-old daughter, I saw a man standing on the side of the road who reminded me of my father. The emotions flooded over me and the tears poured down my face. I immediately calmed myself by quietly saying, “Sherine, Daddy is resting in Jesus. You will see him again. Remain faithful.”

Coping with loss is never easy. For me, looking into my sweet daughter’s face, staying around positive people, helping others, walking, laughter, staying busy, and reflecting on inspiring Bible texts or precious hymns keeps my mind in a good place. These things don’t always take away the sting, the tears or even the burning in my heart, but they do help me cope as I grieve the loss of my father.

I miss my daddy dearly, and have many precious memories of him. One childhood memory that comes to mind was each night when he came home from work. I would hear his keys jingling as he approached the door, then I would race to hide behind the door. As

he walked in, I would jump out from behind, leap into his arms and say, “Love you, Daddy!”

There were times I would come home to visit my family from college or graduate school. Occasionally, it would be a surprise and I would arrive in the evening, giving my daddy a big bear hug as he was sleeping and say, “I’m home!” He loved that. I also remember when Daddy took our family deep-sea fishing. Besides getting a bit seasick (except Daddy), we had a great time! I caught 17 fish with his help.

Another fond memory was my brother and I watching my parents bowl on Saturday nights, for over 20 years, in their monthly league. A particularly precious memory was singing a duet with my daddy for Sabbath school at church. We sang “How Great Thou Art,” one of his favorites. My father was known for his beautiful tenor. It’s what swept Mommy off her feet in their early years. Finally, attending the 59th General Conference Session in Atlanta with my family has such rich memories that tears swell up in my eyes as I write. This was the first and last GC Session my daddy attended. I can still see the sparkle in his eyes as he listened to the messages, walked through the expo or reconnected with old friends.

Fast forward through the years, and I arrived at Andrews University the summer of 2014, as department chair and tenured associate professor. One month after arriving, I received a call from my mother that Daddy fell.

It was after church on the Fourth of July weekend. My father suffered a traumatic brain injury, leaving him in a coma for more than two years. There are no words to express the emotional and physical pain of seeing your loved one in such a state, especially since I was pregnant with our first child and my parents’ first grandchild. My father was never able to meet his granddaughter, Samantha Juliet Fraser.

The second call came from my brother on August 19, 2016, at 5:15 a.m., that Daddy was not responding. “He’s gone.” The anguish was suffocating and we cried inconsolably.

So, then how does one cope? How do we continue to live full lives after loss? For me, clinging to Jesus as a new mother was my salvation. Literally. Asking for help; when the hurt became unbearable, letting the tears come without apology; spending more time with family; and doing things that matter most.

According to the American Psychological Association (APA), mourning the loss of a relative or close friend “takes time, but research tells us that it also can be the catalyst for a renewed sense of meaning that offers purpose and direction to life.” Here are some strategies APA shares to help come to terms with loss:

- Talk about the death of your loved one with friends and colleagues in order to understand what happened and remember your friend or family member.
- Accept your feelings. People experience all kinds of emotions after the death of someone close. Sadness, anger, frustration and even exhaustion are all normal.
- Take care of yourself and your family. Eating well, exercising and getting plenty of rest help us get through each day and move forward.
- Reach out and help others dealing with the loss. Helping others has the added benefit of making you feel better as well.

- Remember/celebrate the lives of your loved ones. Possibilities include donating to a favorite charity of the deceased, framing photos of fun times, passing on a family name.

Daddy’s funeral was a beautiful tribute to his life, our family, 46 years of marriage to Mommy, and the amazing God we serve. The reflections were deeply heartfelt, weaving memories of my father’s life with those he loved and who loved him. The music lifted our hearts. Songs such as “The Holy City,” “Ship Ahoy,” “I’m Going to Make It” and “We Shall Behold Him” comforted us in ways only music can.

*O, death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Jesus, thank you for your blood, your resurrection and your soon return. Daddy, “on that great gettin’ up morning,” I will see you again and leap into your arms (with Samantha) . . . for eternity. ■*

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*Sherine Brown-Fraser, PhD, RD, CPT is the chair and associate professor of Public Health, Nutrition and Wellness at Andrews University. She is a biochemist, registered dietitian, personal trainer and new mom who resides in Berrien Springs, Michigan, with her husband, Handel Fraser.*





# Portraits OF GRIEF

By Felecia Datus



Levi Shuler

## Sonya Christensen

**For over 30 years, Sonya, a hospice nurse practitioner, has worked with patients and their families in the final stage of life.**

“For us in hospice, it’s about supporting the family. Hospice care is end-of-life care for people who are ready to choose quality of life at the end and stop any aggressive treatment, which includes any intervention or testing. Some patients have blood work every week, but they are using the last bit of their energy to have tests done. There are very few symptoms that cannot be managed at home at end of life. You can treat symptoms at home where the patient wants to be. They are with their family, you can explain what’s happening and you don’t have to wait in the waiting room.

“What happens is that when hospice comes in, we treat symptoms aggressively. Our job is not to hasten death or slow it down but to make it as pleasant as possible and satisfying for everybody as possible; that’s the role of hospice.

“Death is a part of life and, even if we do everything right, people still die. It’s a result of sin. The other thing is that helping someone be comfortable at the end of life doesn’t mean giving up on them; it means letting them choose how they want their life to be at the end. Studies have shown that people who choose hospice early, rather than waiting until the last minute, live three to six months longer and have a much better quality of life at the end. Many times, clergy may dissuade a family from choosing hospice because they don’t understand. They may see it as giving up, but it isn’t.”

# Carol Jordan

**Carol is founder of God's Hands For Kids. She and her daughter, Asha, have adopted six children.**

"I awoke that morning, the morning after my son died, with a feeling that my breath had been taken away, like someone had punched me in the stomach. It was a feeling of grief so profound it was painful. It was the sense that life would never be the same again. Why? Because life would indeed never be the same again. How does one move on in life after an experience like this? Where does healing take place? As time went on, I sensed a draw to ministry and prayed for God's leading. I found myself pulled into the foster care world and, as I allowed myself to be involved in the lives of hurting babies, I found healing for myself.

"I see that same comfort and healing come to others through giving. A 'friend' of mine (I only know her through Facebook) often makes donations to foster care needs I share on Facebook. She recently found herself a single mom to three after the death of their dad. I thanked her for giving in the midst of her pain. Her words to me were, 'It's the way I am finding healing.'

"Then there is my real world friend who also frequently makes donations to foster world needs. Not long ago, her husband left her. The pain of grief can come from any great loss but my friend responded to a need for a sketchbook that an aged-out-of-foster-care mom needed for her college class. Her reason? 'Giving is how I am finding healing.'"

*Give and it will be given to you (Luke 6:38).*



Jean-Irès Michel

# Cynthia Small

**Ronald Small woke his wife Cynthia at 5:00 a.m. in July 2015. He wasn't feeling well. Moments later, he was gone.**

"I tried to revive him and was unable. I immediately dialed 911 . . . I was by myself.

"My mom passed away four months before, and my dad and brother died a year before that. What kept me was my faith in God, knowing that there is a Second Coming and that death is not the end. I had wonderful friends who came over and supported me, stayed with me and made sure that I was okay. My Highland Church family was there for me.

"You always feel the pain, and it never goes away. There are things that you feel, see, smell or think about that reminds you of the person. You wonder, *Why did this happen?* But you know that this is a sinful world. The biggest lesson that you learn in dealing with death and grief is that you have to have God in your life. He's my Everything.

"The whole book of Job helped me. I look at Job's life and I can only think, *Blessed be the name of the Lord.* If Job went through all that, kept his faith and still loved the Lord, then I can, too."



Levi Shuler



Jonathan Logan

## José Cardenas III

**In 2014, doctors diagnosed José’s mother, Idalia Cardenas, with cirrhosis of the liver.**

“Her skin color had changed; she was incoherent and in pretty bad shape. But then we got a call and learned there was a donor. She had the transplant and was becoming herself again. She had other appointments and, after one of the visits, they told her that she now had stage four cancer. The doctor said that she had two weeks to live. I remember her being plugged into all these things in the hospital and I thought, *This isn’t good*. She was placed in hospice and family members came to visit.

“She died in my arms.

“I remember, before my mother died, she was appealing with her brothers to give their lives to God. When she passed, that flooded my mind. When I see her again, it will be at the resurrection. I was deeply affected by her passing, but equally as strong was the desire to do whatever I could to do what she wanted, and that was to share with others the knowledge of God.”

## Jasmin Wilson

**On September 13, 2017, a few weeks after starting graduate school, Jasmin received a call from her father — her grandmother had just passed.**

“I’ve always been close to my grandmother. Before I moved to Michigan, I was taking care of her every single day. That was the time when we really got close.

“I’ve learned that you only have one family. Make sure the people in your life know that you care about them because they’re not going to live forever. For anyone dealing with death and grief, I would say, take it day by day, minute by minute. The most important part about the grieving process is letting yourself feel.

“During these times, your faith goes one of two ways — either you become angry with God and blame him, or you find yourself depending solely on him. For me, I had to totally depend on him. I was in grad school and had so many things to do, and I got to a place where I was, like, I cannot do this on my own. Lord, give me peace and give my family peace.”



Levi Shuler



Jonathan Logan

## James Allred

**James Allred has been a funeral director for five decades.**

“Some persons think that they are strong enough to deal with death, so they just do a cremation and that’s it. But, over the years, it’s proven that such a person will have a harder time dealing with death.

“It’s important to memorialize a person by either having the body present at the service or allowing people to gather at a memorial. It’s good to know that your loved one meant something to other people and not just yourself. Sometimes people wonder, *‘What can I say or do to help the family that is grieving?’* When they are able to come to a gathering, they can let the family know that the person meant something to them, too. It’s important for both parties.

“One of the most important parts of the service is viewing the loved one; seeing is believing. Also, the family needs time to spend together. Having the support of friends who can hug them and to have that personal touch helps to get through their grief.”



Jonathan Logan

## Zola Becbec

**Over a span of three years, Zola and her family buried three family members; her 12-year-old brother, her sister and her father.**

“What helped me was my faith in God and the belief that there is a God who cares for me, even if these things are happening. I believe that God doesn’t want [death] to happen; it’s a result of sin. Although I was active in church and ministry in the Philippines, I didn’t care about a personal relationship with God. Before the family crucibles, I met God while attending an Adventist University. I believed God prepared me and my family. Faith brought us closer and made us trust God more every day. My daily experience with God shows that his grace is sufficient.

“God identifies with how we feel. He is a Man of Sorrows and understands how we feel. Grieving is not forever. We can heal from it, and that’s what I keep on believing. We can heal by being personal with God, and his strength is perfect in our weakness.

“I didn’t know that I could be as emotional as I was dealing with family losses. I can now empathize with others coping with this kind of loss. I also learned that I should communicate more with my family while they are still here with me — expressing to them my feelings that I love them is very important.” ■

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*Felecia Datus recently graduated from Andrews University with a master’s degree in Communication.*

# Joy Comes in the Morning

## Words of Hope and Comfort

*Blessed are those who mourn for they shall be comforted. Matthew 5:4 NKJV*

*He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds. Psalm 147:3 NKJV*

*Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. Isaiah 41:10 NKJV*

*The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit. Psalm 34:18 NIV*

*For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. Therefore encourage one another with these words. 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18 ESV*

*And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away. Revelation.21:4 NKJV*

# A Mother's Lament

## A TRAGIC ACCIDENT LEADS TO SEARCH FOR MEANING

By Debbie Michel



Jean-Lirés Michel

Looking back on the week before her world turned upside down, Busi Ncube says there were a few odd signs. Her husband, Norris, gave away extra furniture from their house. He picked out a car to purchase for their older daughter. He even jokingly asked about a jacket he had bought.

“Do you think your next husband will wear this jacket?” She looked at him in the jacket and playfully shot back, “My next husband is kind of shorter. He’s not going to fit into that.”

Her 12-year-old son also did something out of the ordinary. Joshua picked flowers from the yard and gave them to her.

“Thank you for being my mother.”

“Thank you, Sonny.”

“No, no, thank you. Don’t thank me.”

As she now reflects on this unusual gesture, she believes her son was saying “Thank you for being my mother,” because he was never going to get another chance.

### Early Years

While growing up in Zimbabwe, Busi met Norris at their church youth choir practice. It wasn’t an instant attraction, she confesses. “He used to smile a lot, and I’m like, *Why is he always smiling?*”

But she was exposed to his gentle side, as she watched him interact with others, including her brother. Norris asked her out and her brother encouraged her to give the relationship a try. “My brother is the kind who doesn’t make friends easily,” she says with a hint of her native

accent. She concluded that, since he was a friend of her brother, he was a “good guy.”

They courted for seven years while in high school and college, and were married in 1993. When their children, Culo, now 25, and Cebolenkosi, now 23, were born they thought they were done having children.

The family moved to Indianapolis and, nine years after Cebolenkosi’s birth, they were blessed with twins, Joshua and Jessica.

Norris, a trained teacher, found employment at Capital City Adventist School. After three years there, he took a position at the Naples Adventist School in Florida, which proved challenging for Busi. She had remained in Indianapolis while the twins attended the school where her husband had taught.

One day, feeling impressed to see if there were any available jobs closer to Indiana, Busi did something she had never done before. She went to the North American Division’s education website.

“Behold, there was an advertisement for IJA looking for a principal,” she recalls, referring to Indianapolis Junior Academy.

Norris applied for the position and, within one week, was hired.



▲ *Busi and Jessie*

Jean-Irès Michel

“I just saw God’s hand working in it,” Busi says with confidence.

When Norris started the job, they received further confirmation.

“He loved it,” she says. “He was welcomed by everyone. The church was supportive of their teachers. The pastor was supportive. The board was behind him 100 percent.”

Norris began looking for ways to grow the fledgling school, tapping into state funds for a pre-K student voucher program. The school board purchased a van to transport students. After one year, the student population grew 70 percent.

“I really saw God blessing him in so many ways,” Busi recalls.

### October 6, 2015

Busi came home from working the overnight shift as a registered nurse at an Indianapolis hospital. Since she also was in school, she debated whether to study, watch TV, or go to sleep. But just as she picked up the television remote, her phone rang. On the line was a familiar voice, the parent of a child whom Norris transported to IJA each morning.

“Hey, there’s been an accident,” the calm voice said. “The kids are at Riley [Children’s Hospital].”

“Okay,” Busi replied.

Then it dawned on her. “What did you say?”

The caller repeated the message.

“If you say ‘kids,’ that means my kids are in the car.

That means my husband is in the car. Okay, I’m on my way!” Busi said as she got up from the couch.

As she drove the 13 miles to the children’s hospital, her phone rang again; this time, it was an unfamiliar voice.

“Are you the twins’ mom?” a caller from the hospital asked.

“Yes.”

“Do you want me to send the police to get you?” the unfamiliar voice queried.

“No, I’m on my way. I’ll be there shortly,” Busi responded.

As she continued to drive, she began to wonder, *Why the police? What’s going on?* She found herself shaking, so she uttered the prayer, “Lord, I need to get to Riley [hospital]. I need you right now because I cannot control this car. You have to control this car!”

She called Norris, the one she leaned on for support during times of trouble. His phone rang without an answer. She then called the school, only to learn he hadn’t shown up for work.

When she arrived at the hospital, she insisted on making contact with her husband. *These doctors are taking care of my children, she reasoned. There's nothing I can do. I need to find my husband. These are his kids, too.*

As she prepared to search for her husband at the hospital across the street, she was ushered into a room where a group dressed in white coats surrounded her.

She sat down to listen as one of the ladies introduced herself.

"I'm the coroner . . ."

It took a while to sink in that something was seriously wrong with Norris.

"Do you want to identify your husband's body?"

As they showed her a photo of her husband of 22 years, her world, as she describes it, "collapsed right there."

The details came later. There was a tragic accident during the morning's rush hour. Her husband was carrying five children in his silver Honda SUV to school when the 80-year-old driver of another vehicle slammed into him. Norris, 49, died at the scene. The children were in serious condition, with Norris' five-year-old niece, Malia, succumbing later at the hospital.

### Hard Choices

In the hours after learning of her husband's death, Busi was confronted with a grim prognosis for her 12-year-old twin son and daughter. Both on ventilators, Joshua faced zero percent of survival, and Jessica, one percent.

She leaned on her two older children and a brother-in-law with medical background for guidance.

Initial news reports identified Joshua as one of the casualties, but the family determined to keep him on the ventilator until they knew for sure there was no possibility of his recovery.

"As a nurse, . . . you tell other people out there — 'You can just say, Yes or no. Do not resuscitate, or resuscitate.'"

"I remember asking my supervisor, 'What do I do in this case?' She looked at me and said, 'Busi, you're going to do the right thing. I have faith in you.' But I was like, *I don't have faith in myself.*"

It was a heart-wrenching decision, but the medical community was in agreement — Joshua had no chance of living. Three days after the accident, they took him off

life support. Busi's attention soon shifted to Jessie, as her daughter was affectionately known.

### "God is in Control"

Jessie's injuries were life-threatening. She had a broken neck, head injuries, a fractured left hip and was in an induced coma. To Busi, that period of time is a blur, one she doesn't like dwelling on.

"In the midst of all this," Busi says with confidence, "God was telling me, 'I will not disappoint my people. I will use that one percent chance to witness to you, to tell you I'm in control.'"

Jessie spent almost two months in the hospital and had to relearn how to eat and walk.

"Instead of focusing on the loss, all of my energy was diverted to making sure she was taken care of. That one percent is my miracle today. I'm still amazed at it," she says softly. "I lost my husband. I lost my son, but you [God] kept this gift for me."

### The Community Rallies

Norris was well-loved and the community made sure Busi did not have to worry about financial matters. A GoFundMe.com page was launched, raising \$33,000, which helped pay for the double funeral.

Since Jessie required long-term care, Busi contemplated quitting her job. But God had already put things in place.

A mother of one of the other children in the deadly crash, Sofa Nkomo, volunteered to help.

Sofa says she saw Busi was worried about her parents returning to Zimbabwe, so she suggested, "When you go to work, I'll come to your house to stay with Jessie."

Sofa's daughter, Anita Nkomo, now a sophomore at Indiana Academy, suffered a broken hip in the accident but wasn't medically challenged. Sofa says she "wanted to help my sister."

Busi praises God for finding a solution. "The only thing I can say is, 'God, you're amazing. You're amazing!'" Sofa now lives with them full-time and helps care for Jessie.

### A New Normal

While photos of her past life with Norris and Joshua adorn the walls of her two-story contemporary ranch



Jean-Irès Michel



Jean-Irès Michel

home, Busi is reminded by her new family unit of God's power to heal. With her daughter and Sofa around, it means she can't wallow in pity for too long.

"At times I feel like not getting up, and [Jessie] comes and says, 'What's going on with you? You need to get out of that bed. Why are you still sleeping?'"

*I'm human*, Busi tells herself, when she sometimes gets angry. "I really want to ask the Lord, 'Why did this happen? Why did you do it after all these plans we made? I thought I was your child and this guy was doing an amazing job. Why didn't you want him to see the fruits of his labor? Why are you cutting them short?'"

Busi had envisioned that she and Norris would enjoy more time together when the twins went off to academy. They had joked about who would push the Walmart grocery cart when they grew old. "I'm never going to get this chance of walking with my loved one," she says as her voice trails off.

She questions herself, too. "Even today, I still ask myself, was [taking my son off life support] the right decision or the wrong decision? I still don't know."

As the two-year anniversary of the accident looms, Busi says facing that date is the toughest time. So are holidays and birthdays. Celebrating one twin's birthday, means remembering one who is no longer with them. Jessie reminds her mother that, while Busi lost a son and husband, she lost her other half.

In times of struggle, Busi turns to Scripture, drawing strength from the Psalm: *I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help[?] My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth* (Psalm 121:1, 2 KJV). And, *He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust* (Psalm 91:1, 2).

The three surviving girls — Jessie, Anita and Dion Siziba (Dion's sister died in the accident) became part of

a sorority they never asked to join. They're fiercely loyal, protective of each other, and guarded when dealing with outsiders.

Jessie stopped going to counseling, finding it hard to discuss her feelings with a stranger. But the girls are each other's therapy. Their parents call them the "Three Musketeers." They do typical teenage stuff — dress up for selfies, braid each other's hair, giggle and horseplay with each other.

One lasting vestige of the tragic accident is the tracheotomy tube Jessie wears to help her breathe. She's scheduled to have surgery in November to remove it.

### Finding Purpose

Busi says she's asking God: "What's step number two? Is there something you want me to do? Whatever the purpose for this, you will bring it to me, because I believe there is a purpose in why this happened."

She's grateful for what she has, comparing herself to the widow in Zimbabwe who has nothing. *Is this a ministry God is calling her toward?*, she wonders.

She has learned to extend forgiveness toward the driver who lost control of his vehicle and upended her life.

"In this world that we're in, you hear people saying, 'Why don't you sue?' Then, you ask yourself, 'If Norris was the one who did that, would I want someone to sue me?' No. It was an accident. You forgive the person and you find a way to move on," Busi says with resolve.

But moving on is easier said than done. "I'll never get through what happened because, every day, it feels like I'm still in a dream. I still haven't really processed everything. I'm like, *Okay, did this really happen?*"

"It's good to know the Lord," says Busi, "because I have hope for the resurrection one day. And that's what keeps me going — that I have that hope and this is not the end. There's something to look forward to!" ■

▲ Best friends Anita, Dion and Jessie.

Debbie Michel is the associate director of Communication of the Lake Union



Amanda Orrantia

▲ Obed Cruz is the new vice president and chief nursing officer.

# A Leap of Faith

*New vice president and chief nursing officer believes God had a plan in bringing him to AMITA Health Adventist Medical Center Bolingbrook*

Obed Cruz, R.N., M.S., H.S.A., was considering a move from his position as emergency services director at Memorial Hospital Miramar in Miami when he got a message asking him to call Bruce C. Christian, president and chief executive officer of AMITA Health Adventist Medical Center Bolingbrook.

He did not know Bruce Christian, and had no idea where Bolingbrook was. But when he was a boy in Florida, Cruz had a classmate whose father's name was Bruce Christian, so wondered if this could be the same person. (He would soon discover it

was.) It was late when he picked up the message, so he decided to wait until morning to call back.

"By 8:30 the next morning, Bruce called me and said he was on the way to my office to talk to me. For me to have the time to meet with him that morning — not to have been in an all-day meeting or out of the office — was pretty much a miracle in itself," he said.

"Bruce told me that he had been praying for God to lead him to the right leader, and I also had been praying," Cruz said. They talked for three hours, as Christian recruited

Cruz for a position as vice president and chief nursing officer at the Bolingbrook hospital.

As their talks progressed over the next days and weeks, there were more events that Cruz believes were more than coincidences. "I think God had a plan in this," he said.

First, Christian and Thor Thordarson, executive vice president and chief operating officer of AMITA Health, had dinner with Ron Aguilera, who was about to become president of the Illinois Conference. The dinner was to discuss general topics, but they mentioned they were trying to recruit Cruz. Aguilera noted that he had been the assistant dean when Cruz was a student at Southern Adventist University and that his father had baptized Cruz.

Carlos Martinez, emergency department medical director at the Bolingbrook hospital, had gone to high school with Cruz' wife. Christina Gryss, a chaplain there, knew the Cruzes from Miami.

"These are a lot of connections for a place I didn't even know was on the map," Cruz said. "It was definitely an unexpected turn of events that we believe God has been leading the whole way."

Cruz accepted the position as vice president and chief nursing officer, starting July 24. "I'm here because God opened the doors for me and pointed me in that direction," he said. He is settling into his job and feeling even more convinced that he is where he is meant to be.

"I feel like when Peter wanted to walk on the water and put one foot on the water," he said. "The first couple days, I had one foot on the water and one in the boat. But now I feel like I've been walking on water, living my faith every moment and working toward whatever it is that God has planned for me here." ■

# Sisterly

Nina Vallado's Story



▲ Karen, Nina and Lisa after the screening of "Sisterly" at Andrews University last year.

In May 2017, Nina Vallado graduated magna cum laude with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in documentary film. Her senior project, a short documentary called "Sisterly," talks about Nina's relationship with her sister, Lisa, who is on the autism spectrum.

"It's strange to put into words what it was like growing up with Lisa.

"She's my sister, and I love her. I interacted with her by the means I knew but, because there was no verbal communication, I didn't really know her. She could repeat things she'd been trained to say, such as responses to, 'How was your day?' or 'What is your favorite color?', but her interests, her personality, her dreams — they were a mystery to me.

"Telling our story through film taught me what sisterhood is. Before this, I based my idea of what sisterhood should be on what my mom and her sisters had, or what my friends and their sisters had. But sisterhood

is a unique bond that you create with your own sisters.

"My sisters, Karen and Lisa, and I have our own special sisterhood. We met Lisa where she was. It was never the worst thing in the world that Lisa couldn't speak; we just found things we could do together — things Lisa loved, like puzzles and Memory, and everything Disney. Sisterhood can be complicated, messy or broken, but it's still sisterhood. And we always have had that.

"Lisa and I have always had connection and intimacy, and now it's really just a matter of exploring those things. Since Lisa began expressing herself in writing at age 16, we've had a breakthrough, and my film kind of gives viewers

a glimpse of that, but I'm still searching. The breakthrough wasn't the end; my film just gave me a place to start, and I haven't stopped.

"I didn't really have a dream for 'Sisterly.' That may be sad, but I think I just didn't want to be disappointed. I submitted it to some small, local film festivals, but none of them accepted it, so I started looking for free festivals, and found the student Oscars. I had nothing to lose. Out of the blue, I got an email from them that started with, 'Congratulations!' My first thought was, *What?! I'd made it into the semi-finals!* A month later, I received notification that I'd made it to the finals. I could go to the Oscars. I also look forward to sharing my film in churches and schools, because they are communities that need a voice for autism. I'm proud to be able to share a voice to that end with my sister."

For more real stories of real people at Andrews University, including a longer version of Nina's story, visit [andrews.edu/stories](http://andrews.edu/stories). ■

*Editor's note: Unfortunately, Nina's film did not win.*

*Becky St. Clair is the media communications manager at Andrews University.*



▲ Nina (left) and Lisa in 1987.

## YOUTH NEWS

## Kindness at Critter Carnival

MICHIGAN — The Eau Claire Church's annual Critter Carnival held Sept. 3 turned out to be the perfect way to celebrate the end of summer. People enjoyed food, music, fun and games, and picked up backpacks filled with school supplies for their children.

The annual celebration, sponsored by the church's Pathfinders youth group, moved this year to Veterans Park in downtown Eau Claire after many years of being held at the church on Naomi Road. It was the first year for the backpack give-away, also sponsored by the church.

Church member Mary Peters said the church's vacation Bible school staff came up with the idea for the backpack drive as a community service project for VBS students this summer. Students made items and church members donated school



Debra Haight

▲ Cousins, from left, Madison, Isaac and Brooklyn Klemm, Katie Walsh and Jayden Glupker, all from Eau Claire, show off the back-to-school backpacks they received at the annual Critter Carnival, sponsored by the Eau Claire Church and held at Veterans Park.

supplies to fill 215 backpacks, given out on a first-come, first-serve basis.

"We were emphasizing being a missionary in vacation Bible school and decided to do a mission project with the kids," Peters said. "The children made handouts about praying to God, put packets together with the pieces to refrigerator magnets and decorated glow sticks."

She said church members decided to combine the carnival with the backpack give-away and add some other health and educational events. She spoke to parents about nutrition and disease prevention, while dietetic students and a nurse talked to people about affordable, quick and healthy cooking.

"We wanted to start a community event and bring the church into the community," she said. "We saw this as another way to reach out to the community."

Pathfinder leader Brandon Luppert agreed. He said his group saw merging the different events as a good way to attract more people to the celebration. "We're all about kids and doing fun things," he said. "Mary convinced us to move it here and have a community day."

"We're absolutely pleased with the turnout," he said Sunday afternoon as people streamed to the park. "People have come when they see the bounce house and then have stayed for the other activities, including the backpack give-away."

The Critter Carnival is one of the Pathfinders' annual fundraisers to raise money for their projects along with an auction and a bike-a-thon held at other times of the year. Club members have decided to split the money raised from the carnival between donations to Hurricane Harvey relief efforts and sending members to the 2019 International Camporee in Wisconsin.

Adriana Bailey, of Dowagiac, brought her son, Derrick Hill, to the carnival and backpack give-away.

"It's helpful to get supplies," she said. "We saw the event advertised and said we had to go." ■

*Reprinted with permission from Southwest Michigan's Herald-Palladium Sept. 5, 2017. Debra Haight is a correspondent for the newspaper.*



Debra Haight

▲ Nurse Marina Rietman and Andrews dietetics students Soraya Fish and Alison Baker

Pictures by Jeremy Hall and Diane Barlow



▲ Teachers participating in the new Bible curriculum training.



▲ Lanelle Cobbin (standing) is one of the principal authors of the curriculum.



▲ Teachers must receive training before teaching the new curriculum.

## EDUCATION NEWS

### Encountering Jesus in Adventist schools

MICHIGAN — The principal author of the Adventist Encounter Curriculum for elementary students trained Bible teachers at the annual teachers' convention held at Camp Au Sable in early August.

Since the new curriculum is a significant shift in both teaching and learning, Lanelle Cobbin, a curriculum specialist with the New Zealand Pacific Union Conference, provided critical guidance to the 70 teachers and two full-time principals who attended the training session.

The curriculum, first developed in Australia, has been adapted and published for the North American Division.

What makes the new curriculum unique is that the Bible is the textbook and there are a variety of activities, which appeals to all forms of learners. The Encounter curriculum is relational, rather than just informational.

Encounter will help lead students to develop their own personal relationship with Jesus with the desire to live a lifelong, vibrant relationship with him, and to be passionate about the salvation of others, rather than merely filling them with head knowledge.

Each teacher who completed the 16 hours of training received a certificate, endorsing them to use this new curriculum. Without the training and endorsement, teachers are not permitted to use it.

The teachers left the training excited about the new curriculum. Even though

this is an optional pilot year, almost every teacher opted to use the Bible curriculum for the 2017-2018 school year.

As a parent of grown children, looking back on their schooling, I realize the most important component is for them to accept Jesus as their Lord and Savior. If our children miss this, we have failed. *For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?* (Mark 8:36 NKJV).

The Adventist Encounter Curriculum is the most effective tool I have seen in promoting a lifelong relationship with Christ. I encourage parents to enroll their children in an Adventist school and take advantage of its eternal benefits! ■

*Diane Barlow, education superintendent, Michigan Conference*

As a parent of grown children, looking back on their schooling, I realize the most important component is for them to accept Jesus as their Lord and Savior.



Dave Sherwin



## Andrews University shares #1 national ranking for Campus Ethnic Diversity in 2018 *U.S. News Best Colleges*

MICHIGAN — The 2018 *U.S. News Best Colleges* rankings released in September listed Andrews University as one of the country's most ethnically diverse national universities.

The ranking comes after a decade of significant diversification for Andrews University; in recent years, the university was listed as second most diverse in these *U.S. News* rankings but, a decade ago, the university ranked 13th in the same Campus Ethnic Diversity category.

This new number one ranking for Campus Ethnic Diversity is shared with University of Nevada–Las Vegas and

Rutgers University in Newark, New Jersey. The *U.S. News Best Colleges* determines its Campus Ethnic Diversity ranking on a 1.0 diversity index scale. This year, all three universities who received the number one ranking had a factor of .75 for ethnic diversity.

In response to this new ranking, Andrews University president Andrea Luxton notes that “in a global and diverse environment, a university community that reflects those realities offers an unparalleled opportunity for university students who are preparing to change the world; this is a core aspiration of our university’s mission statement: Seek Knowledge. Affirm Faith. Change the World.

“As a result, we’re proud to be ranked by the 2018 *U.S. News Best Colleges* as a joint number one national university within their annual rankings for Campus Ethnic Diversity. In addition, as one out of every five of our students comes to study from outside the United States each year, we’re also proud to be recognized as the 11th ranked national university for schools with the most international students.”

As Andrews University seeks to deepen commitments to and possibilities for its

ethnically and culturally diverse community, it has recently appointed its first vice president for Diversity & Inclusion, Michael T. Nixon.

“Understanding and navigating an increasingly globally-focused and diverse environment for careers and life isn’t something that is simply learned in a classroom,” says Nixon.

“At Andrews University, both cultural and ethnic diversity is literally a part of the fabric within our Andrews University community. With this number one national university ranking in Campus Ethnic Diversity comes a serious responsibility to thoughtfully engage the entire Andrews University community in navigating, celebrating and deeply understanding the opportunities that diversity brings to our campus community.”

In the overall 2018 *U.S. News Best Colleges* rankings, Andrews University was #192 on a list of 311 National Universities included in that report.

Andrews University also was part of the rankings in “A+ Colleges for B Students,” “Most Students Receiving Merit Aid,” and “Highest Proportion of Classes with Fewer than 20 Students” (this latter measurement seeks to assess which universities offer more personal instruction through a higher number of smaller classes — Stanford, MIT and Pepperdine all had similar rankings to Andrews University’s in this category).

Founded in 1874, Andrews University is the flagship institution of higher education for the Seventh-day Adventist Church and offers more than 200 areas of study including advanced degrees. Its main campus is in Berrien Springs, Michigan, but the University also provides instruction at colleges and universities in 19 countries around the world. ■

Related link: <https://premium.usnews.com/best-colleges> and <https://www.andrews.edu>

*Stephen Payne, vice president for Integrated Marketing & Communication*



Sheikainah Decano

▲ Scott Griswold of Reach the World Next Door ministries based in Houston

## Refugees and migrants focus of conference at Andrews University

The U.N. Refugee Agency reports that by the end of 2015, there were 65.3 million individuals forcibly displaced worldwide due to war, persecution, violence or human rights violations. This means that every minute, every day, 34,000 people are forced to leave their homes in search of safety.

With the number of refugees and migrants increasing daily, this has created a need for mission to those displaced. In light of the current refugee crisis and the effects of globalization, the Department of World Missions collaborated with the North American Division Evangelism Institute and Lake Union Conference to organize the Mission in an Era of Migrants and Refugees Conference on Sept. 13–16 at Andrews University.

The conference, made up of plenaries, break-out sessions and hands-on projects, sought to give more insight on how church members and leaders can meet the humanitarian and evangelistic needs of migrants and refugees at home and abroad. Presenters included off-campus guests who specialized in

refugee and migrant relations, such as Kristine Van Noord, program manager for Bethany Christian Services' Refugee Adult & Family Programs. Also in attendance were on-campus speakers which included Boubakar Sanou, a native of Burkina Faso. The conference covered an abundance of topics ranging from Hispanic migrant issues to refugee ministry among Muslims.

Speaking on what he aimed to achieve as a result of the meetings, Carmelo

Mercado, general vice president and director of Multicultural Ministries for Lake Union Conference said, "My hope is that people will be sensitized to the mission that we have — the mission of reaching out to all people groups." He emphasized the importance of using a biblical approach when ministering to foreigners. "Even though the culture is anti-migrant and anti-refugee, we have a moral obligation to follow what the Scripture says — 'show a spirit of hospitality.'"

Leroy Ramos, a pastor in Milwaukee and originally from Argentina, found the conference beneficial, stating, "It helped me to understand the context of where I work with a lot of foreign people." Tiana Rabearison, also an attendee, found the conference useful due to the increasing number of persons in the United States originally from the 10/40 window. Rabearison said, "Instead of us going to the place ... now God has brought those people to us." He also stated that he hoped that the meetings would propel individuals to reach out to those whom God is bringing from distant shores.



Sheikainah Decano

▲ A plenary session featured (left to right): Lake Union President Maurice Valentine, NAD Refugees Coordinator Terri Saelee, Andrews University Religion Chair Glenn Russell, Andrews University Social Work Professor Ingrid Weiss Slikkers, and Andrews University World Mission Professor Gorden Doss.

The conference included testimonies from immigrants and refugees. One such presentation came from violinist Mariela Shaker who escaped Aleppo, her home city devastated by civil war. Talking about her passion for music, Shaker said, "I hope to spread a beautiful message, a message of hope. I believe music has the power to overcome differences and spread peace." Her hope is to conduct music workshops for children in refugee camps because she believes the beauty of music could help them to heal from the pain of war.

Using the example of the Good Samaritan, Mercado encourages, "Follow the Scriptures; *love thy neighbor*, really love them. Look out for your neighbor. Your neighbor is the man who is in need." As for future conferences on mission to migrants and refugees, logistics remain unknown; however, he would like to see it happen again. ■

*Felicia Datus is a recent graduate of the Communication graduate program at Andrews University.*



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LAKE UNION NEWS

## Lake Union urges compassion toward "dreamers"

LAKE UNION — In response to the phasing out of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, the Lake Union Conference Public Affairs and Religious Liberty (PARL) as well as Multicultural Ministries departments issued a call for compassionate treatment of undocumented immigrants.

On Sept. 5, U.S. President Donald Trump announced that no new applications for DACA — the program allowed law-abiding young adults to attend school and hold jobs for two-year, renewable cycles — would be accepted.

"We believe that Christians should react with compassion and principle to how we deal with undocumented immigrants in our midst," said PARL director, Nicholas Miller. "These persons may be our neighbors, co-workers, friends, students, and even fellow church members. While some have concerns that we should abide by the laws of our nation, many undocumented migrants make no choice to break any laws, but were brought to America by their parents."

The Lake Union has taken the following steps to assist those impacted by the phasing out of the program:

Provide information to aid and support pastors, religious liberty directors, and other qualified and willing persons to aid immigrant members and friends in filing two-year extensions for their DACA. This extension must be filed by Oct. 5, 2017. The sheet can be found at <http://www.lakeunion.org/union-news>.

Provide advocacy information to intelligently and effectively follow the President's example and advice in calling on Congress to pass laws to fix this immigration problem.

"Young people who came to this country through no choice of their own should not be penalized by being sent back to a country that many have not lived in for years, even decades," said Carmelo Mercado, Lake Union Conference general vice president and Multicultural Ministries director. "We think this matter is one that calls biblical Christians to a moral, helpful response, as revealed in Scripture: *[God] executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and shows his love for the alien by giving him food and clothing. So show your love for the alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt* (Deut. 10:18-19 ESV). ■

*Debbie Michel, associate director of Communication, Lake Union Conference*



Carmelo Mercado

▲ NAD Evangelism Institute director Eduard Schmidt talks on church planting for refugee groups.



Carmelo Mercado

▲ The Rwandan choir from Grand Rapids sang during the Sabbath program.



▲ Hurricane victims form long lines at the World Harvest Outreach Church in Houston.

Derrick Lea, NAD/ACS

## Lake Union ACS responds to hurricane victims

LAKE UNION — As news reports blared warnings of a potentially devastating hurricane heading toward the Texas Gulf Coast, the Lake Union Disaster Response Teams began readying for deployment.

“Most of us had responded to Katrina and were having a hard time imagining how much worse this one could be,” said Diana Bruch, who at the time served as Lake Union Adventist Community Services director.

While Harvey slammed into southeast Texas as a Category 4 hurricane on August 25, the ACS volunteers were ready to spring into action. They were first placed standby by the NAD ACS, which coordinates the national distribution, and then given clearance to head into the affected areas in September.

All five local conferences sent volunteers to the Houston area where the local Texas Conference is supplying 12 distribution centers from their Disaster Resource Center. The World Harvest Outreach Church in Houston is the Seventh-day Adventist church where most of the volunteers have donated their time and energy.

This distribution center services almost 600 families each day with hygiene kits, buckets with cleaning supplies, blankets, food and other necessary supplies.

Meanwhile, the Federal Emergency Management Agency coordinated with NAD ACS/Disaster Response to establish a larger multi-agency warehouse to service more victims of Harvey. They settled on a warehouse in San Antonio large enough to accept more donations and service many more distribution centers such as World Harvest Outreach.

Many more volunteers will be needed to manage this large operation, and the Lake Union has a list of scheduled volunteers ready to help for a minimum of two weeks over the course of the next six months.

The Wisconsin, Lake Region, Illinois, Michigan and Indiana conferences have Pathfinder groups, youth groups, schools, churches and individuals making and boxing kits to go down to Texas by semi-truck.

“These kits are very useful in the beginning of the response,” said Bruch, “before the warehouse is set up and stocked.”

After the first couple of months, monetary donations are the best since there is no transportation cost and, with money,



Derrick Lea, NAD/ACS

▲ Volunteers distribute supplies at Houston's World Harvest Outreach Church.

the warehouse can purchase the special items the distribution centers need.

If you wish to contribute to the Harvey response, please put your offering into your local church offering plate marked "Conference Harvey Relief." Your conference will make sure the money gets to the affected areas. ■

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*Diana Bruch is the former Adventist Community Services director for the Lake Union.*



▲ Maurice Valentine

## Maurice Valentine elected Lake Union President

Maurice R. Valentine II was elected to serve as president of the Lake Union Conference during a special executive committee session held on Sept. 21.

"I am deeply humbled that the Lake Union committee has given me this awesome responsibility," said Valentine. After requesting prayers for the outgoing president and his wife, he continued, "We will rally, in light of the times, as never before to finish the work."

Before joining the Lake Union Conference as executive secretary in November 2015, Valentine was in the Mid-America Union where he has served the Central States Conference as president since 2012.

From 2011 to 2012, Valentine served as vicepresident for administration (executive secretary) for the Mid-America Union. He also held the position of Union ministerial director from 2006 to 2012.

Before serving at the Mid-America Union headquarters, Valentine was assistant to the president in the Central States Conference where he began his pastoral ministry in 1985. During the next 28 years, he pastored a dozen churches in Colorado, Iowa, Missouri and Nebraska.

Valentine received a B.A. degree in Theology and an A.S. degree in Communication from Oakwood University in 1985. He completed his Master of Divinity degree from Andrews University in 1992.

Valentine's experiences include serving on institutional boards, ministry advisories, strategic plan development, evangelism strategies and pastoral development. He has conducted a variety of workshops and forums, served as guest professor and presenter at Union College, and provided assistance for health systems in assessing missional outreach, to mention a few.

Outgoing president, Don Livesay, who served the Lake Union as president since December 2009 and retired effective October 1, affirmed Valentine in his new responsibilities. "He has shown grace, the ability to move in and out of many cultures, a passion for the Lord, and brings experience from two Unions now to fill this role," said Livesay. "We thank him for his faithfulness and pray for his great success."

Valentine is married to Sharon (Livingston) Valentine; they have three adult children. ■

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*Debbie Michel, associate director of Communication, Lake Union Conference*



▲ Wayne Johnson from the Michigan Conference is one of the volunteers assisting disaster victims in Houston.

Derrick Lea, NAD/ACS

## LOCAL CHURCH NEWS

## Sabbath school program creatively includes children of all ages

LAKE REGION — Hoping to change the mindset that thirteenth Sabbath programs are only for small children, All Nations Church featured presentations by more than 30 children, teens, youth/collegiate and adults of varying ages. There were memory verse recitations, songs, mission news report and a capstone presentation from live missionaries to India, illustrating the theme, Mission in Southern Asia.



▲ Younger children and their parents recited memory verses while the older children presented a mission report in a news interview-style format.

Children as young as eight months old were assigned memory verses, although recited by their parents with them in hand. According to Joseth Howell, parent and program organizer, the point was not so much for the babies to be expected to

recite, but to reaffirm that they are valuable members of the body of Christ, have something to contribute, and are not too young to be taught and learn Scripture.

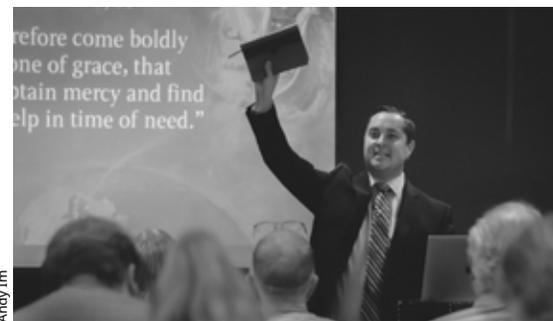
In addition to the recitation of memory verses and children collecting the offering, the Youth/Collegiate class presented a mission report on Southern Asia in a news interview-style format, followed by a quiz to the congregation facilitated by students from the Primary and Youth classes.

To help younger children grasp the meaning of the presentations, there was a mock trip to India, where a live person acted the part of a pilot making the announcement as the plane took off on the screen. "All of this was to make it tangible and real for the younger audience," said Howell. "Many times, the younger kids miss out on the meaning or essence of presentations because it's too advanced."

The event, held Sept. 30, also featured the Sharma family who spoke about their experiences as foreigners and missionaries working in India. They shared how God had led in their lives in India, allowing them to start a house church as well as their sharing about their culture shock and hardship experienced. While not all may be called to go overseas as missionaries, they noted that one can be missionaries here at home and can start by befriending a non-Christian, inviting them to special events at their homes like 4th of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving and Christmas gatherings. They also stated that Berrien County presents a unique opportunity given its diverse people groups, many of whom are not Christians.

One of the parents who presented alongside her infant, Beatrice Jean-Baptiste, said the program made her "want to be more intentional about sharing the gospel with others in my area and making an effort to regularly attend Sabbath school." ■

Joseth Howell is a member of All Nations Church in Berrien Springs, Mich.



Andy Im

▲ Over 100 hundred simultaneous evangelistic meetings in Michigan, Indiana and California.

## Hundreds flock to Unlock Revelation

MICHIGAN — Unlock Revelation, a conference-wide evangelistic initiative, is demonstrating what God's hand can do when local church members come together to fast, pray and be used by him to share their faith. More than 100 churches in Michigan, Indiana and California have united their efforts for our second Unlock Revelation endeavor.

After the successful launch of BibleStudyOffer.com, a Bible study generating effort, thousands have requested Bible studies. Those who signed up were channeled to and cared for by local members. Many who enrolled in BibleStudyOffer.com are now attending Unlock Revelation. More than 1,700 people pre-registered for the event, and over 1,500 are now attending nightly. More than 60 laypersons, both young and old, along with seasoned pastors, are preaching each night. Individual testimonies are springing up everywhere as God is transforming hearts and lives.

It is exciting to witness the success of implementing the full cycle of evangelism, which Jesus promises to us when we use his method alone. Preparing the soil, planting, cultivating, harvesting and preserving through effective discipleship are the steps Jesus laid out for his church to bring precious souls to him. Let's continue to plead for an abundance of God's Spirit, revival and blessing as he leads his people home. ■

Wes Peppers, Personal Ministries and Evangelism director, Michigan Conference

Churches, schools, conferences, institutions and organizations may submit announcements to the *Lake Union Herald* through their local conference communication directors. An easy way to do this is to visit the *Lake Union Herald* website at <http://www.herald.lakeunion.org> and submit the announcement online. Readers may verify dates and times of programs with the respective sources, as these events are subject to change. Submission eligibility guidelines are listed at <http://www.herald.lakeunion.org>.

ANDREWS UNIVERSITY

HOWARD PERFORMING ARTS CENTER EVENTS:

For more information on the following events and to purchase tickets, contact HPAC Box Office by phone at 888-467-6442 tollfree or 269-471-3560, by email: [hpac@andrews.edu](mailto:hpac@andrews.edu), or on its website at <https://howard.andrews.edu/events/>. Please verify dates and times of programs as these events are subject to change.

**Nov. 12, 4:00 p.m.:** Sunday Music Series . . . SMSO: Angel's Song, featuring principal harpist Rachel Miller (tickets required)

**Nov. 17, 7:00 p.m.:** Faith of Our Fathers: A Voice Vespers, featuring the voice students of the Department of Music with hymn arrangements and settings of African-American spirituals

**Nov. 18, 8:00 p.m.:** Andrews University Symphony Orchestra, under the direction of Claudio Gonzalez (tickets required)

**Nov. 19, 7:00 p.m.:** Anthem Lights, an American Christian group made up of four gifted vocalists and talented songwriters whose collaboration of pop and religious music has resulted in an edgy style that is effectively making them a favorite among young people (tickets required)

**Dec. 1, 7:00 p.m.:** "Welcome Christmas" Concert, under the direction of Stephen Zork; the Andrews University Singers is the select choir from the Department of Music

**Dec. 2, 8:00 p.m.:** Andrews University Wind Symphony Holiday Concert, under the direction of Byron Graves (tickets required)

**Dec. 10, 4:00 p.m.:** Sunday Music Series . . . Christmas Sing-A-Long, this annual favorite brings in all the sounds of the season! Come prepared to sing your treasured, well-known Christmas carols from your seat with Carrie VanDenburgh and other musicians on stage.

LAKE UNION

Offerings

- Nov. 4** Local Church Budget
- Nov. 11** World Budget (emphasis Annual Sacrifice Global Mission)
- Nov. 18** Local Church Budget
- Nov. 25** Local Conference Advance
- Dec. 2** Local Church Budget
- Dec. 9** World Budget (emphasis Adventist Community Services)
- Dec. 16** Local Church Budget
- Dec. 23** Local Conference Advance
- Dec. 30** IL: Local Combined Budget; IN: Indiana Evangelism; LR: Camp Wagner; MI: Evangelism; WI: Public Campus Ministries

Thirteenth Sabbath

- Dec. 30** Euro-Asia Division

Special Days

- Nov. 4** Stewardship Sabbath
- Nov. 4-25** Native Heritage Month
- Nov. 5-11** Week of Prayer
- Nov. 11** Human Relations Sabbath
- Nov. 15** National Philanthropy Day
- Nov. 18** Welcome Home Sabbath
- Dec. 2** Bible Sabbath

MICHIGAN

CRYSTAL MOUNTAIN MARRIAGE RETREAT

will be held at Crystal Mountain Resort in Thompsonville, Mich., **Nov. 10-12**. The presenters will be Willie and Elaine Oliver. They are the General Conference Family Ministries directors. For more information or to register, call Alyce at 517-316-1543. To download an application, go to <http://www.misda.org> (Family Life).

**2017 MEN'S RETREAT "FAITH WITHOUT FEAR":** Join us for our 3rd Annual Men's

Retreat at Center Lake Bible Camp, 15204 20 Mile Road in Tustin, Mich., **Nov. 17-19**. Keynote Chad Bernard will provide a three-part series, with additional breakout sessions on spiritually-rich topics geared especially to men. Music by Strong Tower Radio Quartet. The weekend registration fee includes meals, lodging and activities. There also is a fee option for Sabbath-only attendees. Register online by Nov. 10 at <http://menofHISmessage.org>. The weekend is presented by Men of His Message, a men's ministry based at Bristol Church. For more information, contact Jeremy Carlson at 616-460-7383 or email [jeremycarlson3@gmail.com](mailto:jeremycarlson3@gmail.com).

2017 HISTORIC ADVENTIST VILLAGE

**ANNUAL CHRISTMAS STROLL, Dec. 2, 6:00 p.m.** SHARP!! This year, each guest will receive a light to carry along a lantern-lighted path for touring between three of our historic buildings. Also enjoy 19th-century Christmas stories. The program begins at the 1863 Parkville Church on Champion Street. Refreshments of hot chocolate and cookies will be served following the program at the Carriage House on Wood Street. Again this year, we are joining with the Battle Creek Police Department for the Toys for Tots program. The Christmas tree goal to raise this year is \$500. Please bring a donation or an unwrapped gift for a child. The parking lot is located at 480 W. Van Buren St., Battle Creek. Please RSVP. For more information, contact Don or Betty Scherencel at 269-965-3000.

NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION

**THE ASSOCIATION OF BLACK SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST NURSES (ABAN) AND OAKWOOD UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF NURSING** are sponsoring workshops and a keynote luncheon on Thurs., **March 29, 2018**, during Oakwood University's Alumni Week. All nursing students from any school, active nurses (RNs/LPNs/LVNs), graduate nurses and retired nurses are invited to attend. Mentoring workshops, educational sessions and CEUs offered. For more information and to register, visit <http://www.abanurse.com>.

Within the Lake Union, the officiating pastor or church communication leader is responsible for submission of information to this column. Forms are available in print format, or they can be filled out and submitted directly online. Milepost forms are available at <http://www.herald.lakeunion.org>. Conference addresses and phone numbers are listed in the masthead on the inside back cover.

ANNIVERSARIES



**ARTHUR AND ESTHER NELSON** celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on Aug. 21, 2017, by a surprise reception given by their children and attended by about 50 of their friends. The reception was held at the Springfield (Ill.) First Adventist Church Family Life Center. They have been members of the Springfield First Adventist Church for 14 years.

Arthur Nelson and Esther Miller were married Aug. 25, 1957, in Salem, Ore., by Marion Mohr. Arthur has served in the education field (Columbia, Campion, Auburn, Gem State, Broadview and Wisconsin academies) as well as secretary-treasurer of Wisconsin Conference and treasurer of Arkansas-Louisiana Conference, retiring in 1998. Esther has been elementary teacher (Meadow Glade and Caldwell Adventist

schools), registrar (Broadview Academy), one of the first female ABC managers (Wisconsin Conference), and secretary in the Arkansas-Louisiana Conference.

The Nelson family includes Debi and Ed Skinner of Pleasant Plains, Ill.; Jere and Jeannie Nelson of Montgomery, Ill.; four grandchildren; and five great-grandchildren.

Funeral services were conducted by Arthur Nelson, and interment was in Fairlawn Cemetery, Decatur.

**PHILLIPS, Mark**, age 54; born March 30, 1963, in Lansing, Mich.; died Sept. 15, 2017, in Indianapolis, Ind. He was a member of the Glendale Church, Indianapolis.

Survivors include his wife, Arlene (Sison); son, Marko; daughters, Rachel and Claudia Phillips; father, Monty; mother, Laurel Copley; and brother, Todd.

Memorial services were conducted at the Glendale Church.

OBITUARIES

**JOCH, Glenda J. (Kasner)**, age 66; born April 19, 1951, in Beaver Dam, Wis.; died Sept. 8, 2017, in Marshfield, Wis. She was a member of the Bethel Church, Arpin, Wis.

Survivors include her sons, Emil and Chadwick Zalabak; daughters, Phelicia Wyant, Christy McBeth and Alicen Thomas; sisters, Joann Ruedinger, Sharon Smith and Violet Seeman; and nine grandchildren.

Memorial services were conducted by David Scofield, and inurnment was in Bethel Cemetery, Arpin.

**LYNCH, Glen F.**, age 91; born Sept. 11, 1926, in Harristown, Ill.; died Sept. 26, 2017, in Decatur, Ill. He was a member of the Decatur Church.

Survivors include his daughter, Doris Swingler; sister, Betty Althoff; seven grandchildren; 12 great-grandchildren; and one great-great-grandchild.

*For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.*

*After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.*

*Therefore encourage one another with these words.*

—1 Thessalonians 4:16–18 NIV

Sabbath Sunset Calendar

	Nov 3	Nov 10	Nov 17	Nov 24	Dec 1	Dec 8	Dec 15	Dec 22	Dec 29	Jan 5
Berrien Springs, Mich.	6:38	5:30	5:23	5:18	5:15	5:14	5:15	5:17	5:22	5:28
Chicago, Ill.	5:43	4:35	4:29	4:24	4:21	4:19	4:20	4:23	4:27	4:33
Detroit, Mich.	6:24	5:16	5:09	5:04	5:01	5:00	5:00	5:03	5:07	5:13
Indianapolis, Ind.	6:41	5:34	5:28	5:23	5:21	5:20	5:21	5:24	5:28	5:34
La Crosse, Wis.	5:54	4:45	4:38	4:32	4:29	4:27	4:28	4:31	4:35	4:41
Lansing, Mich.	6:29	5:21	5:14	5:09	5:06	5:04	5:05	5:08	5:12	5:18
Madison, Wis.	5:48	4:39	4:33	4:27	4:24	4:23	4:23	4:26	4:30	4:36

All classified ads must be sent to your local conference for approval. No phoned ads will be accepted. Allow at least eight weeks for publication. Fifty words maximum. No limit of insertions. Rates: \$36 per insertion for Lake Union church members; \$46 per insertion for all others. A form is available at <http://www.herald.lakeunion.org> for printing out and filling in your ad. Ads must be prepaid. Make money order or check payable to the Lake Union Conference. There will be no refunds for cancellations. The *Lake Union Herald* cannot be responsible for advertisements appearing in its columns, and reserves the right to edit ads in accordance with editorial policies. The *Lake Union Herald* does not accept responsibility for typographical errors. Submission eligibility guidelines are listed at <http://www.herald.lakeunion.org>.

**EMPLOYMENT**

**WALLA WALLA UNIVERSITY IS HIRING!** To see the list of available positions, go to <http://jobs.wallawalla.edu>.

**PUC IS SEEKING A CANDIDATE** for Facilities Associate Director in our Facilities Maintenance Department. Preference is experience in planning, budgeting, maintenance of college facilities, in addition to strong leadership/interpersonal skills/team leader. Responsibilities in roads, building safety, HVAC, water distribution/treatment, general building maintenance, compliance for hazardous materials, etc. For more information or to apply, please call 707-965-6231, or visit <http://puc.edu/faculty-staff/current-job-postings>.

**PUC IS SEEKING FULL-TIME POSITIONS** in our Facilities Management Department. Looking for positions of Tradesman Supervisor-Painter and Tradesman 1-Carpenter. Preference is for training and applied experience in trade areas of general painting and carpentry. For Painter, experience in color/finish/application/etc. For Carpenter, experience in cabinet making/floor coverings/installation/etc. For both, able to be team player, handle multiple projects. For more information or to apply, please call 707-965-6231, or visit <http://puc.edu/faculty-staff/current-job-postings>.

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**Lake Union Herald Statement of Ownership, Management and Circulation**

This Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation was filed on October 1, 2017, with the U.S. Postal Service for the *Lake Union Herald*, for publication number 0194-908X, a magazine owned and published by the Lake Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 8450 M 139, Berrien Springs, MI 49103-9400; P.O. Box 287, Berrien Springs, MI 49103-0287. It is published monthly (except June/July and November/December) at a subscription price of \$12.50 (domestic). For further information, contact Gary Burns, editor, or Debbie Michel, managing editor, 269-473- 8242, at the same address above.

The following figures for the extent and nature of circulation apply to the year ending with the October 2017 issue of the *Lake Union Herald* and were printed in the November 2017 issue of this publication.

	Average for Year	Actual No. for Oct. Issue
Total number of copies	33,620	31,540
Total paid or requested outside-county mail subs	60	59
Total paid or requested inside-county mail subs	1	0
Sales through dealer, carriers, street vendors	0	0
Other classes mailed through USPS	0	0
Total paid and/or requested circulation	61	59
Total free outside-county distribution	29,647	27,794
Total free inside-county distribution	3,547	3,322
Other classes mailed free through USPS	0	0
Total free through carriers or other means	0	0
Total free distribution	33,194	31,116
Total distribution	33,255	31,175
Copies not distributed	365	365
Total	33,620	31,540
Percent paid and/or requested circulation	18%	19%

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# Training Program Opens Door to Ministry

By Rachel Skaife

**RECENTLY DON RUSHFORD** has been growing as a Christian in ways he wouldn't have imagined a few years ago. The jail sergeant has a thriving Monday night Bible study program at the Waukesha (Wisconsin) Church, which began after his lay minister training.

## How long have you been a Christian?

I have been a Seventh-day Adventist for 31 years. Prior to that, I had no religious affiliation at all. Christianity was not a part of my upbringing.

## What are some things that have been transformational in your walk with God?

You can know the Scriptures front to back and be able to quote any text, but if you don't have a personal relationship with Jesus, it is in vain. It's all about a *relationship*. This was pivotal in my walk with God.

Also, letting him take complete control of my life and letting his Spirit dwell within me. I have always had the I-can-do-this-by-myself attitude but, in the end, it only left me down and out, wondering what went wrong. Now, as Jesus leads, I can rest assured that the way I am moving is in the right direction.

## You are currently part of something called the Lay Minister Program (LMP). How did you become involved in this program?

Nate (Skaife), pastor, approached me and asked if it was something that I thought I would be interested in. At the time I was planning on moving to California for a job. I was set to go through training, but found out that the work training would be the same days as the LMP. I prayed about it and asked God what he wanted me to do. A few days later, I got a letter, saying that the training academy for my new position was full. This allowed me to attend the LMP program. I took it as an answer to prayer. I told the Lord that if I am to stay here [in Wisconsin], he needs to open up a ministry for me. He has.



▲ Don Rushford

## How have you been challenged by this program?

I must first have a real love and a desire to reach out. I look at individuals differently, not judging. I see that God is working in their lives as well, no matter what their life circumstances are.

I no longer want to win the argument and lose the person in the process; I'd rather help that person onward to a journey and walk with Jesus.

Surface answers were no longer accepted. We needed to dig deeper into the Scriptures. The deeper we got, the more I realized how much I needed a gracious and merciful Savior.

## How do you see the Lord leading you as you go forward?

He is leading in a way that I never expected. I have always thought of myself as a leader, yet the more time I spend with Jesus, I see him directing me to be a servant. This in and of itself is a leadership role. I didn't see that before.

Servant leadership is important and exemplifies Matthew 28:19-20.

Servant leadership does not just take place in the church. It extends to the community as well. We have a message to share. ■

*Through the combination of academic studies and practical experience, the Lay Minister Program is designed to train and equip lay people in sharing with others the incredible news of what Jesus has done in their life. This has been an active ministry of the Wisconsin Conference since 2005.*

*Rachel Skaife enjoys writing, especially about God's work in individual's lives. She currently lives in Southeastern Wisconsin with her husband and two daughters.*

# My Place of Refuge

By Xao Vang



Alec V. Johnson

▲ Xao Vang

**IN 2010, MY FAMILY** and I came to the United States as refugees from Laos in search of educational opportunities and religious freedom. As Roman Catholics, we knew there was a Creator. I trusted everything my parents told me about God was true. That was until the summer of 2016 when my life changed completely. Looking back on what happened that summer, I'm in awe that the puzzle pieces I didn't even realize were missing from my life came together and formed a new me.

My journey began at the end of my sophomore year in high school when my sister, Nraim, and I, weary of our irreparably broken relationships with our parents, decided to live with my oldest sister, Ncais, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. When we arrived, I discovered that my sister, who is married, was attending the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Ncais had found out about the Adventist church from Ko Saelee, pastor of the Milwaukee Hmong Adventist Church. He was so generous that he once helped my sister fix her house, putting all his effort into the work as if it were his own. Ko eventually introduced my sister and me to his children, whom I thought were awesome and talented.

After a few months of knowing them, they invited me to join them as literature evangelists. At first I was interested, but later on I began to have doubts. *My appearance doesn't measure up. My English isn't good enough*, I thought. After praying, I felt God calling me to go forward.

When I started canvassing, the only thing I knew was that I needed to sell books and get money. In the first few weeks, not many books were sold. However, the Lord showed me that literature evangelism wasn't about earning money but saving souls. My book sales increased when I focused on sharing Jesus.

One morning, one of my fellow literature evangelists, Chris, and I were discussing our canvassing experiences when, without thinking, I blurted out, "I do not really know how to pray and feel spiritually inadequate." He offered to do Bible studies with me and, in a heartbeat, I said, "Yes!"

Bible studies were a joy! Each day I could not wait to learn about Jesus and all the amazing things he had done.

A few weeks before the program ended, the program leader, Daniel Jeon, asked me about baptism. I thought, *Sure, I would love to!* but all I could think about were the obstacles.

My parents would need to give their approval since I was a minor. When I called them, they were strongly opposed to me getting baptized. I prayed, "God, if you want me to be baptized, soften their hearts; but if you do not, just leave them the way they are."

It was while canvassing I received the miraculous news: they gave their permission for my baptism. At that moment, my happiness knew no bounds.

When I was baptized during the iShare conference in the summer of 2015, I felt as if I were a totally new person. What a joy to now have clarity and discover the purpose for my life, which is serving God. ■

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*Xao Vang, 18, is a freshman at Milwaukee's Alverno College where she's studying nursing.*

# Happy Campers

By Sara Kroneck



Patrick Hendrickson

▲ Katie Krawczyk

**EVERY SUMMER, HUNDREDS** of campers come to Camp Wakonda in Wisconsin for a fun-packed week focused on getting to know Jesus. This past summer, several campers attended all the way from China and Taiwan. The pine-filled campground is a place for new experiences — the first time riding a horse, the first time shooting an arrow, the first time conquering a climbing wall. And, for some campers, Camp Wakonda is the first time they learn about Jesus.

Katie Krawczyk tells about one group of campers who left their place in her heart. During Teen Camp, three of the girls from China were assigned to her cabin. One of the girls, Tracy, was extremely homesick. Even though she was there with two of her friends, she spent her time crying and didn't want to participate in any of the activities. There also was a language

barrier. "At first I thought they couldn't speak English, but I think they were just trying to trick me," Katie laughs. She soon discovered that they could understand conversational English, but the more abstract concept of prayer was difficult for them. The girls had no religious background at all but, every night, Katie would go to each girl's bed and pray. She shares, "I would ask if I could pray with them and pray for their families. I don't know if they quite understood what was happening, but I think it was very comforting to them."

After a few days, Tracy warmed up to the family atmosphere at camp and started getting involved. By the end of the week, she and her friends were singing the camp songs and participating in the worship service. One of them even wanted to be put in contact with a pastor to do Bible studies back home. "I think the way the staff acted was different than what they were expecting," Katie says. "I think we made an impact on them. I'm really glad that I got to show God's love to them."

Katie is a freshman at Andrews University and is majoring in Political Science and Business with a pre-law emphasis. Her advice to other young people who desire to be a positive influence is this: "Pray on it. Through your actions, you can really show where your heart is, and it's simple actions that people notice and show what kind of a person you are." ■

*Sara Kroneck is a sophomore at the University of Wisconsin-Sheboygan and lives in Plymouth, Wisconsin.*

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