



See Page 3



Official Newsletter for the Michigan Conference of Seventh-day Adventists:

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# Michigan Memo

## SHE FOLLOWED ME, A TOTAL STRANGER

—by Dennis Page  
Edwardsburg Church Elder

**N**ot long ago I was at Lowe's home improvement store picking up some supplies. I needed assistance and during the conversation I gave praise to God for having work. The employee responded back with his gratitude to God as well. I then shared a brief testimony of how I discovered through studying history the fulfillment of prophecy in the Word of God and how that impacted my view and knowledge of God. We continued to talk and I asked him if he would like us to study the Bible together.

As we studied over the next several weeks he began sharing the things he was learning at his work place and told his colleagues about the prison ministry program that we were involved in. This sparked interest with another employee named Diana Straight. He made arrangements for us to meet at his house the following week. Upon my arrival at his house I discovered he was not home. Before I could leave, Diana pulled in right behind me so I approached her and introduced myself. I asked if she would like to come over and meet my wife and have a study with us. She agreed.

As we drove for the next 20 minutes I was praying that she would not be afraid. I was quite amazed at her willingness to follow a complete stranger to another town,

to a home out in the countryside that was all new to her. Truly the Spirit of God was giving her the peace and encouragement she needed. Upon our arrival we went in and she met my wife and son. We had a nice conversation together and decided to go through the first *Amazing Facts Bible Study*. She was thrilled as we read things in the Bible that she had never read before. After we finished we asked her if she would like to come back the following week. She said that she would love to. When she told her husband, Richard, about the study, he asked if he could come along the next week and, of course, she agreed.



*Richard and Diana Straight were introduced to new truth when a fellow employee of Diana shared what he was learning in Bible studies. She wanted to know more and went looking for truth. She took a chance and found a new church.*

As we went through the series of studies, my wife and I found that we were being rooted and grounded into the truth more fully. As we studied together for the next several months they faithfully shared the new things they were learning. Richard started sending studies to his best friend in Minnesota. Diana started sharing with her neighbor. Richard also started passing out *Amazing Facts* booklets on different topics to people at work and witnessing to them. As a result two people signed up for on-line studies.

(Continued on page 5)

# Impossible!

*(There was no way that we could raise the money!)*

—by *Judy L. Shull*  
*Greater Lansing Adventist School Principal*

Last February the Lansing Church decided to sponsor a mission trip, working with Maranatha to build a church in the small cattle city of Juigalpa, Nicaragua. Usually the country's local church and conference pay for the cost of the building. But Nicaragua is the second poorest country in Central America, poorer than Haiti until their earthquake. Nicaragua could not afford to do anything but pay for Maranatha's One Day Church Frame. Lansing Pastor Justin Ringstaff and mission trip coordinators, David and Judy Shull, began to pray about the needs of this church and all were strongly convicted that the funds should be raised to build walls, in addition to the church frame.



*Friday afternoon the volunteers stood in front of the Sanctuario Church they built.*



*This steel frame would have had a roof and been the new church if the funding had not arrived for a complete block structure.*

The Lansing Church teamed up with the Grand Rapids Central Church and with six other churches.

Together they began trying to raise the needed funds for the Juigalpa Sanctuario Church. But money came in very slowly. As summer moved into fall, the Christmas trip rapidly approached but the money for building the church did not come in as expected. Many other local needs were easier to see than the need of a Nicaragua Church half a continent away.

The volunteers kept praying and talking to everyone they knew about the needed money but at the end of November, the project was still short several thousand dollars. Then the miracles began to occur. Money came in from unexpected sources and a week before the team's

departure date in mid-December, enough donations had arrived for not only the completion of the church, but the addition of another three-fifths of a building for a children's Sabbath School classroom!



*The Sanctuario children celebrate their first Sabbath in their new Sabbath School room.*

With God's money in hand, the team worked long hours in 90-100 degree temperatures and by the second Sabbath in Nicaragua, the church members worshipped in their own sanctuary, proving again, nothing is impossible for God.



*Judy Shull*

# I'm Not Interested in Organized Religion

—Greg Emelander  
*Literature Evangelist*

**A**s a Literature Evangelist, I have the honor of watching God reveal Himself to others on a daily basis. In October, Lindell Jensen, Michigan Conference Publishing Department Associate Director, and I decided to follow up some leads in the Lansing area. Beginning our day with prayer, we decided that we would start with a card we had received from the Eaton Rapids area. We made our initial stop only to find that nobody was home. Knowing how God works, we followed standard procedure and began knocking on the doors of neighboring homes.

After limited success with our first few stops, we considered the idea of following up on another lead card when Lindell said, "Let's make one more stop." Exiting the car, we immediately took note of the surroundings. Clean yard, kept lawn, and entry-way windows covered with cardboard! I immediately knew that if someone was home, we were in for an interesting situation; God did not let us down.

After knocking, a man named Joe\* opened the door. Lindell and I introduced ourselves and began presenting some of our materials. While Lindell was speaking, I handed the man a couple of brochures which he immediately handed back as he said, "I don't want anything to do with organized religion." Seeing a potential door closing, I began praying that God would keep the dialogue open so that we could continue. Moving forward we began conversing about health. Joe began actively engaging us in conversation.

After about 30 minutes, we were allowed to come in. We sat at the kitchen table and began going through the prospectus. Periodically we would take a moment to talk about how these issues were directly affecting Joe in his life. He confided that he was a recent colon cancer survivor and that he was becoming more and more aware of the steps that he needed to take in order to continue experiencing improved health, and finally he opened up.

Joe began telling us about his past. He told us about his son who died 22 years ago at the age of 20 and about his father's death just days after that. He told about how he had told his doctor not to operate on his colon cancer but just to lay him in the grave beside his son. Then, the bombshell hit! He then told us about how, when racked with all of this grief, he went to his priest for guidance and was casually dismissed as if a mere inconvenience. A man, crippled by grief, looking for direction and help, was cast aside by the very person whom he had considered his spiritual strength. Herein lay the reason why Lindell and I were in his home.

Upon hearing about this situation, we ceased going through the canvass. We immediately turned to help a man, who in tears, was reaching out for help. Twenty years of misery and anger were beginning to surface. With prayer we opened the Word of God and began discussing life, death, and the hope that we have through

Christ. We studied the story of Lazarus and by the time we had finished, we could see that after 20 years of misery, Joe finally had hope.

When we left that home that cold and rainy afternoon, Joe, a man who wanted nothing to do with organized religion, had made the spiritual decision to purchase not only the Encyclopedia of Foods, but the entire Bible Reference Library as well. He even made the decision to start the Amazing Facts Correspondence Bible Study Course. Though our meeting took 5 ½ hours, Lindell and I both know that the sole reason for our being in that area that day was to bring the hope and love of Christ to a man who wanted nothing to do with organized religion.

Each and every day, we Literature Evangelists, nay, we Christians, are confronted by situations where we are called to witness. If we would but move forward we would be witnesses to the power of God. Sometimes the devil discourages us by planting seeds of doubt. We see our environment or circumstances and immediately begin allowing those apparent barriers to dissuade us from knocking on the doors to which we are being led. For some of us, Joe might have been one of those situations. His apparent animosity towards religion could have been an immediate "out" for us, but his story just reveals that many times the walls that are there are simply shielding pain that we are there to help alleviate.

As you go out into your field of labor, I encourage you to actively pursue the "Joes" that you encounter. It could be that God is calling you to be the avenue by which He reveals His abundant love.



*Greg Emelander*

\* Not his real name



## Cover Photo

In January, the ministers of Michigan Conference assemble at Camp Au Sable for their annual Evangelism Counsel to pray, study and plan together. On the last day of this year's counsel, the wives and daughters surprised the ministers with a special song. Not all the wives could attend, but can you spot your pastor's wife?

# Generation.Youth.Christ. and Michigan

Michigan Conference was well represented at the Generation.Youth.Christ. (Formerly Generation of Youth for Christ) convention held at Seattle, Washington this past December. Justin Kim, Director of CAMPUS (Center for Adventist Ministry to Public University Students), and Ken Micheff, Michigan Conference Youth Director, give their thoughts on the event and Michigan's contribution to the event. Photos courtesy of Adam Jackson.

**A**lmost ten years after convening in Ann Arbor, the Generation.Youth.Christ. movement convened in downtown Seattle at the end of 2012 and opened 2013 with its annual convention. Under the theme "Acts: The Revolution Continues," the weekend found thousands of young people collectively looking through the book of Acts and its repercussions for the Adventist movement today.

Main speakers in the morning and evening included Michigan pastors Wes Peppers and David Shin, respectively. Emphasizing the global nature of the Three Angels, Israel Ramos preached on revolutionary miracles while Sam Bonello, Michigan's Adventist Interfaith Initiative (Muslim Ministry) shared his powerful experiences with Muslims, appealing for three to seven year commitments for overseas missions.

Several seminars were presented by other familiar Michigan people: Steven Conway, pastor of the Cherry Hill and Detroit Northwest churches; Kameron DeVasher, pastor of Muskegon and Fremont churches; Jay Gallimore, president of Michigan Conference; Jim Howard, pastor of the Detroit Metropolitan and South Lyon churches; Alanna Knapp, secretary of Michigan Conference Youth Department; Jeff Marshall, future pastor at the Cedar Lake Church; Ken Micheff, director of Michigan Conference Youth Department; and Jarod Thomas, pastor of the Grand Haven and Wright churches. Uniquely run by young adults, G.Y.C. leaders included Andrews University students, former CAMPUS missionaries, and Emmanuel Institute graduates.

The convention exploded onto downtown Seattle and surrounding areas, where the largest outreach initiative took place in America's most secular urban territories. With each year gaining momentum with the accelerated contagion of the "revolution," join next year's G.Y.C.: "Before Men and Angels," in Orlando on January 1-5, 2014. For more information, visit [www.gycweb.org](http://www.gycweb.org).



*Justin Kim*



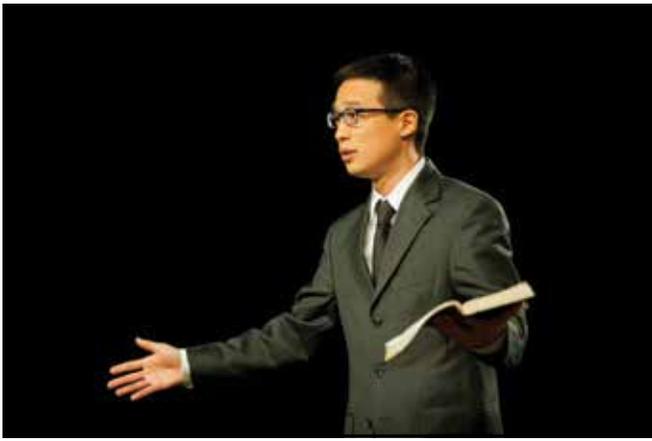
*Wes Peppers pastors the Traverse City Church. He was the morning speaker for the G.Y.C. convention.*



*Israel Ramos serves as the Associate Director for the Public Campus Ministry Department. He was the keynote speaker for the opening meeting at G.Y.C..*



*(Left) Kyle Allen studied at Andrews University before moving to pastor in California. Olivia Knott (on right) is a sophomore at Andrews University and currently serves as G.Y.C.'s Executive Secretary.*



*David Shin is Pastor of the University Church in East Lansing, Michigan. He was the evening speaker at the G.Y.C. convention.*



*Left to right: Jeff Marshall is the pastor at Bass Memorial Academy and currently serves as G.Y.C.'s Vice President (VP) for Evangelism; Sikhhu Hlatshwayo is the secretary for Michigan Conference's Public Campus Ministry Department; Michel Lee, graduate of CAMPUS' Missionary Training Program (MTP), is a masters student at Stanford University and currently serves as G.Y.C.'s VP for Resources; Natasha Nebblett is a student in Arizona and currently serves as G.Y.C.'s VP for Logistics; Valmy Karemera, graduate of CAMPUS' MTP, is a student at Andrews University Seminary and currently serves as Assistant to G.Y.C.'s President*

**M**ore than 50 buses drove into Seattle filled with eager young adults passing out literature and giving invitations to an upcoming evangelistic campaign. As a result, over 22,000 homes were visited! It was wonderful to see the organized work in the Washington Conference and G.Y.C. young people working side by side to organize and plan the outreach.

We are living at the time of this prophecy by Ellen G. White found in the book *Education*, page 271:

*With such an army of workers as our youth, rightly trained, might furnish, how soon the message of a crucified, risen, and soon-coming Saviour might be carried to the whole world! How soon might the end come—the end of suffering and sorrow and sin! How soon, in place of a possession here, with its blight of sin and pain, our children might receive their inheritance where “the righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein forever;” where “the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick,” and “the voice of weeping shall be no more heard.”* Psalm 37:29; Isaiah 33:24; 65:19.

G.Y.C. is growing, not only in the United States, but in Europe, Australia and many other parts of the globe.

Check out the available sermons and workshops from the official site, [www.gycweb.org](http://www.gycweb.org), as well as on Audioverse.



*Ken Micheff*

*Thando Malambo, a graduate of CAMPUS' MTP, directs STRIDE, a sister organization to CAMPUS, and currently serves as G.Y.C.'s VP for Missions*



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*(Continued from page 1)*

Our study was not without challenges. The enemy tried various means to keep these two souls from the truth. For example, Richard, growing up on a hog farm had eaten pork for almost all his life. At one point it seemed to be so overwhelming for him that he said to us that “I would never stop eating pork, I have eaten it all my life.” We just continued to encourage him and continued to take it to the Lord in prayer. Later that same week his wife told us that Richard finally surrendered to the Holy Spirit and was now willing to give up pork.

It was such a joy to witness Richard and Diana being baptized last summer. They are so thankful for the truths they have received through our studies and how it gives them the knowledge to answer questions their grandchildren have. They have also committed

themselves to join us in prison ministry when we do an evangelistic series during which they will be involved in sharing.

Jesus told us to make disciples so that they, too, could make disciples. I have learned that it does not happen through one set of Bible studies and baptism. It is in the ongoing training process that as we share the “truth in love that we grow up into Him in all things.” Richard and Diana are now actively involved with our church in witnessing for Christ.



*Dennis Page*

# 2012 Education Summit

—by *Sunimal Kulasekera*  
Michigan Conference Education Associate Director

**M**ore than 230 pastors, principals, teachers, head elders and school board chair persons convened at Camp Au Sable from Sunday evening, November 18 through noon on Tuesday, November 20, 2012 for intentional Bible study and prayer.

The focus of the educational summit, sponsored by the Michigan Conference Ministerial Department and the Office of Education, was to unite hearts and minds in petitioning God's blessings on our ministry for the children and youth of Michigan.

Michigan Conference personnel were

*If my people, who are called  
by my name, will humble  
themselves and pray and seek  
my face and turn from their  
wicked ways, then will I hear  
from heaven and will forgive  
their sin and will heal their land.*

**2 Chronicles 7: 14 NIV**

assisted by Don Livesay, Barbara Livesay, Garry Sudds and Jim Martz, from the Lake Union Conference as the group explored the significance of the call in 2 Chronicles

7: 14, relative to our mission for the young.

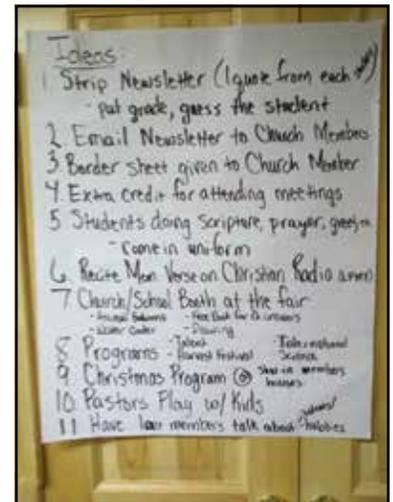
Significant time was spent in small group study, prayer and planning. The groups were drawn together by the deep awareness of the enormous spiritual challenges facing our children and youth and our desperate need to seek divine help on their behalf.



*Sunimal Kulasekera*



*Barbara Livesay, associate director for Early Childhood Education and Care from the Lake Union Conference (above in brown coat) led out in a discussion group at the 2012 Michigan Conference Education Summit. Material was supplied to each group for study in light of 2 Chronicles 7:14. The groups spent time in prayer (below left), asking for guidance from the Great Educator. (Bottom right) The years of service to Michigan Conference by Lyle and Beverly Davis were recognized by Michigan Conference President Jay Gallimore (left).*



*One of the tasks of each breakout group was to make a list (above) of the ways they could improve their schools in light of the material they were studying. They also found there were things they were doing right (below).*





# Discover the Role of the Laity in a Training Center Church

Camp Au Sable  
March 1-3, 2013

Special Inspirational Guest Speaker  
Pastor Michael Oxentenko

## Breakout Sessions presented by TCC Team

- *How to Create an Effective GLOW Tract Ministry*
- *Learning How to Mentor New Members in a Training Center Church (TCC)*
- *How to Become a Training Center Church -- Quick Start Guide*
- *Learn How to Divide Your Outreach Territory and Build Outreach Teams*
- *Utilizing Small Group Ministries for Mentoring and Outreach*

For more information or to register contact Jody Murphy @ [jmurphy@misda.org](mailto:jmurphy@misda.org)  
517-316-1581 or [www.misda.org](http://www.misda.org)



Presently Mike Oxentenko pastors a vibrant young church plant in Spencerville, Maryland and has a radio ministry called, Reaching Your Heart, which is aired on the Salem radio network and on XM/Sirius radio coast to coast on Family Talk channel 131 at 10:00 PM EST.

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## A Different Way of Life

—by *Walter Rogers*  
*Harbor of Hope Associate Pastor*

I remember my first summer as the pastor of the Harbor of Hope Church. I was both excited and nervous about sending urban kids to the far forested reaches of Camp Au Sable. Would they have culture shock going from the hood to the wood, from the urban street to the nature boardwalk? Not to mention the sociological change from the approximately 90% African American population of Benton Harbor to a predominantly Caucasian environment. Would the racial tension between St. Joseph and Benton Harbor spill over into their camp experience?

Not only were my fears quelled when I picked them up after camp, but I was bombarded with non-stop stories and relentless theme song singing. Through a generous partnership with Camp Au Sable and Stevensville Adventist Church, this summer we were blessed to send 15 of our youth to camp.

They not only loved camp and dream about working at camp, but most importantly they also made decisions for Jesus at camp!

Even months later, they still insist on playing the theme song in my car to the point that I am tired of hearing it!

Camp Au Sable is a huge spiritual highlight, a mountain-top-with-God experience that will stay with youth, of any culture,



*Fifteen young people from the heart of Benton Harbor and St. Joseph attended Camp Au Sable this summer for the first time. They were sponsored by the Stevensville and Harbor of Hope congregations. It is easy to tell that these six really enjoyed that experience.*

for the rest of their lives! We praise God for the opportunity these children have been given and pray that He will continue to provide the resources needed through the partnerships of our friends and donors.



*Walter Rogers*



## February

- 1-3 CAMPUS Retreat - Camp Au Sable
- 2 Praise & Prayer - District 7 - Charlotte
- 4-7 NAD Presidents Retreat
- 7-10 Lake Union Youth Congress - Chicago
- 8-10 GLAA Bible Camp - Camp Au Sable
- 9 Praise & Report - District 11 -  
Urbandale
- 16 Praise & Report - District 12 - Troy
- 18 Presidents' Day - Office Closed
- 20-24 GLAA Home Leave
- 21-24 Teen Bible Camp - Camp Au Sable
- 23 Praise & Report - District 6 - Midland
- 23 Praise & Report - District 8 - Lake  
Orion/Oxford
- 26 MI Conference Executive Committee -  
Conference Office
- 27 Camp Meeting Leadership
- 28 K-12 Board of Education

## March

- 1-3 Training Center Churches (TCC) -  
Camp Au Sable
- 2 Conf. Level Bible Achievement -  
Battle Creek
- 5 Andrews University Board
- 8 Marriage Commitment - Camp  
Au Sable
- 9 Praise & Report - District 2 -  
Camp Au Sable
- 10 Daylight Savings Time Begins
- 12-14 New In Ministry
- 14 GLAA Home Leave

## PLANNING AHEAD

### ADVENTIST BOOK CENTER

Sunday ABC hours are:

**Lansing** open February 3 & 10, 1-5 PM.

**Berrien Springs** open every Sunday  
10 AM - 5 PM.



See page 7 for  
details of the  
March TCC event.

### MARRIAGE COMMITMENT RETREAT

**March 8-10, 2013.** This retreat is held at beautiful Camp Au Sable in Grayling, Michigan. Make plans now to attend and do something great for your marriage. To register, or for more information, call Alyce at 517-316-1543 or ask your pastor, family life leader, or bulletin secretary for an application. You can also download an application at [www.misda.org](http://www.misda.org) (Family Life Department).

## My Testimony

*by Andrea Schaab*

*Grand Rapids Community Services Director*

I love Community Services because it is interesting to meet many people whose backgrounds are so different from my own—people whose walk with the Lord has led them in directions I could not even imagine and others who are choosing not to walk with the Lord. It reassures me that God has made each of us unique, like oak leaves or snowflakes and has given each of us unique gifts and skills and has made us each uniquely qualified to live the life He wants for us. It is challenging to understand what it is that God wants us to do, to ask Him to show us how to do that specific job, wait for His answer, follow instructions carefully, and listen for Him to tell us what the next step in that process is.

It is fun to be in a collection of circumstances when there are often surprises. Even when I am in a situation that I've never been in before, He makes it possible to find a way to work through these circumstances. It is rewarding to hear back from folks that Community Services really impacted their lives in a positive way. It feels good to know that the gifts the Lord has given me are gifts that I can share with others.



*Andrea Schaab*