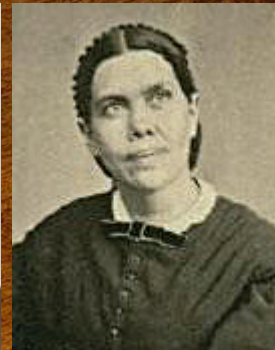
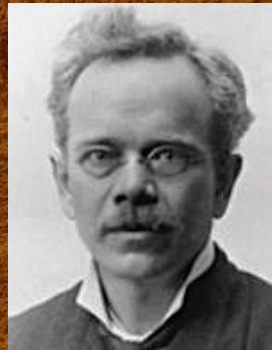
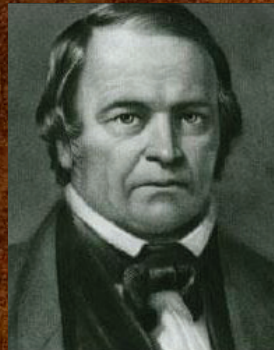


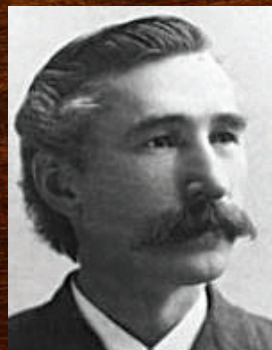
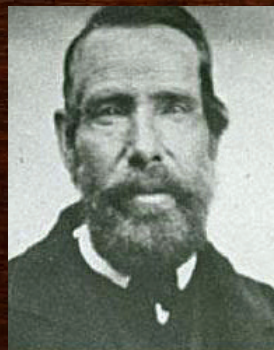
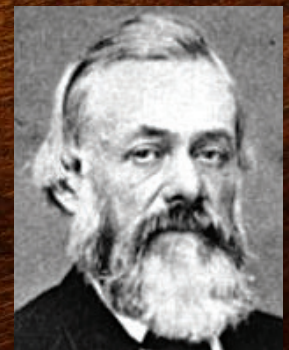
CONNECTION

SPRING 2019 • VOLUME 37 • ISSUE 1

NORTHERN NEW ENGLAND CONFERENCE



***HISTORY HAS
SHAPED US.
NOW LET'S
SHAPE
HISTORY.***



See story on page 8.

Message From The President

By Bob Cundiff



LOOKING BACK AND LAUNCHING FORWARD

As many of you know, Tanique and I recently welcomed our first grandbaby into the world. Jackson Louis Brizuela was born on February 9th, in Denver, Colorado. For some odd reason, my daughter did not kick us out of the room during the delivery, so we got to witness the actual birth. What an amazing experience! Such an event humbles a man and causes him to reflect on the weightier and eternal matters of life.

During the birth, I had the distinct feeling that two momentous events were occurring simultaneously. One, a new generation was coming into the world, and two, I myself was transitioning into a new generation. Henceforth, I would be a grandpa. I guess, in that sense, we were both experiencing a birth.

A few days later, I found myself lying in bed with the baby on my chest and enjoying a deep-seated feeling that all was right with the world. In this particular room of my daughter's apartment, there is a family tree that decorates most of one-bedroom wall. It's an intriguing piece of art. It's a large sticker of a tree trunk with various branches that sprawl out in

any direction the artist desires. As the family grows, additional branches (stickers) can be added to make the tree representative of one's expanding lineage.

Boughs and forks are marked with pictures of family members from both sides of the family. Of course, I was there with Tanique, our other children, and a slew of aunts, uncles, cousins, nieces and nephews. As I held our family's future in my arms and gazed at our families history, I realized how I longed for him to know about that history. I imagined that in a few years I would be sitting in front of that same wall with him on my lap as I told stories of the people he would see there.

The stories would include the three Cundiff brothers who first crossed the Atlantic in a tall ship in search of opportunity in the new world. Other stories would recount the heroism of those who fought in the great wars for freedom and democracy as well as stories of those who lifted themselves from poverty by the sweat of their brow and a determination to give something better to their children than their parents had been able to

give. Still other stories would be of family units broken by the scourge of alcoholism, dysfunction, divorce and abuse.

As I looked at that wall, I thought of the myriad of lessons that could be learned from the stories represented in our family tree, and I knew right there that I would use that tree to guide my grandson around many of life's common pitfalls if he will but open his heart to learn from the successes and failures of our family history.

Of course, this is also true of us as Seventh-day Adventists. Our history teaches us much about ourselves. They say theology is informed by biography. If that is true, who we are as a people is determined to some degree by where we as a people have come from. This issue of the coNNECTION will invite you to take a look back at our family tree (denominational history) in a way that I hope will bless your Christian walk. Our identity as a remnant people is rooted deeply in where we have been. To forget where we have been would be to neglect the lessons that

article continued on pg. 5

Message from the Executive Secretary

By Ted Huskins



Standing structure in the ruins of Greece.



NOVEMBER, 2019 HOLY LAND TOUR IS GOING, GOING....

If you were part of the group that traveled from NNEC to the Holy Land in late 2018, or if you've talked to anyone who went on that trip, then you already know it was an amazing and deeply spiritual experience for everyone who went. There is something about walking where Jesus walked that makes for a deeper connection to His ministry and Gospel.

If you didn't get to go on that trip, I have good news for you: we're doing it again! But the door is almost closed. This time, we're going to be following the footsteps of Paul, and since his journeys were undertaken partly by sea, the trip lends itself to being done by cruise ship – which is exactly how we're doing it.

Bob Cundiff and I will be hosting the trip, which is being facilitated by Educational Opportunities Tours (EOT), the same company that put together our Holy Land tour last year. EOT books the flights, books the cruise ship, provides ground transportation and tour guides, etc. If you join the tour, you'll fly to Rome, and there we'll board the Royal

Caribbean cruise ship, Jewel of the Seas. If you want, EOT provides both pre and post-tours in Rome for an additional fee.

The cruise ship will stop in Rome & Taormina, Italy; Jerusalem & Sea of Galilee, Israel; Limassol, Cyprus; Ephesus, Turkey; Athens & Corinth, Greece; and on the way back – Pompeii, Italy.

The cost of the Footsteps of Paul tour ranges from \$3600 per person (New York departure, interior stateroom) to

\$4850 per person (Boston departure, ocean view stateroom with balcony). Most meals are included (all meals onboard the cruise ship are included). Bob and I would love to take a deep dive into Paul's ministry with you, and immerse as many people from Northern New England as possible in his travels and his spreading of the Gospel. If you are interested in joining us, please contact me and I'll be happy to send you more information. You can reach me at thuskins@nnec.org.



All aboard: Jewel of the Seas!

EXCEEDINGLY ABUNDANTLY

By Trevor Schlisner

“Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.” Ephesians 3:20-21.

Do you believe this verse? Has God done *exceedingly abundantly above all* that you ask or think? Pause a moment and think about how God has come through for you, often in radical ways. Isn't God good?

The position I hold has afforded me the opportunity to see the miraculous leading of our heavenly Father. I am able to see, hear, and be a part of many decisions our schools and churches are making. In the fall of this school year, one of our schools had nearly \$20,000 of debt because giving and enrollment was down. Today, that debt is gone due to the hard work and sacrificial giving of the church members! God did exceedingly abundantly above what we asked or thought. In another one of our schools, the discussion at last year's constituency meeting was that the reserves would soon be gone, debt would possibly incur, and that would put the school in a precarious position. At a recent constituency meeting, it was reported that a donor had given nearly \$8,000 at the beginning of the school year and the school still had not used any of that money. It was projected that it could be reserves for the rest of the year. Again, God delivered in an exceedingly abundant way!

Even more exciting is the young people that are dedicating their lives to the Lord. Our teachers minister to their students in Bible



We now have the start of our first endowment fund dedicated to getting our kids in our NNEC schools.

class, worships, and look for ways to incorporate the Bible in all subject areas. Our pastors have been diligent in providing baptismal studies and have been a spiritual support to both the teacher and the students. Those seeds are now turning into fruit. I had an opportunity to do a worship for an older group of students. One of those students was new to the school and has been raised in a secular background. To say this student had a hunger for spiritual truth is a gross understatement. He is starving for truth. After an engaging worship, I found out that this young man had been poring over his Bible every day and reading the Great Controversy in his “free time.” Words cannot describe my exceedingly abundant joy and excitement over seeing young people get excited about the Gospel.

Often times, God gives us an answer far better than what we imagined. Our church schools are just that—church-schools. I am of the opinion that no child, regardless of finances, should ever be turned away. That can complicate things because, while “buy-in” from the parents is critical for many reasons, some parents have nearly nothing. I have brought this issue before the Lord in my daily

prayers, asking that each school finds a way to get a child in those doors. I forgot, however, that He works in the *exceedingly abundantly* realm. It was recently announced at a joint pastors-teachers meeting at Lawroweld that a gentleman would be donating his entire estate – so no child would be turned away from our schools due to finances. That announcement literally brought me to tears and all I could think about was how our Father always exceeds anything we could ask or think.

We now have the start of our first endowment fund dedicated to getting our kids in our NNEC schools. By the way, this fund is called “Our Kids”, because the donor and his wife never had children, but they always felt that they had a responsibility to provide for the children in our schools.

Ellen White put it best. “Our heavenly Father has a thousand ways to provide for us, of which we know nothing. Those who accept the one principle of making the service and honor of God supreme will find perplexities vanish, and a plain path before their feet.” DA p. 330. God is good. Exceedingly abundantly good.

A LEGACY I DON'T AGREE WITH

By Jennifer Hernandez

If you could leave a legacy, something that would be remembered until Jesus comes, and even into eternity, what would it be?

One of the things I most admire about my husband is the respect and love with which he serves his parents. He is very dedicated to communicating with them, ministering to their needs, and just making sure they are okay. He is attentive, both emotionally and financially because although they do not need his money, he wants them to know that he cares, and it joys my heart to watch him. Of course, when you are far away, you are missed more, and so it's always a huge deal when we visit his family in Mexico. We always feel the love of the family and the sense of nostalgia when we leave. It's always difficult for my husband, as he has very strong family ties.

In the last few years, his father, who is Catholic, said something to him that just blew him away. He said, "I would like to donate some land to your church." Now you must understand that these words are coming from a man who completely rejected my husband's choice of education (he went to Montemorelos University to become a Seventh-day Adventist pastor), and when his two sons became Adventist, he and his wife became more faithful Catholics! In fact, his family had hoped he would become a priest!

What is it that has made the difference for these people, that even amid family turmoil, differences of opinion, and religion, that my husband's dad would desire to give to a Seventh-day Adventist organization over some other charity? I have a

hunch it has to do with what he sees in his boys. Imperfect as they are, their passion for the Lord's work has never waned. My husband's brother, in spite of his struggles, has maintained in the forefront of his mind a passion for preaching the health message like no one else I know. He started by selling fruit drinks on the street and now he has a vegan restaurant in Villahermosa, Tabasco. My husband's sister-in-law has another vegetarian restaurant in the same city. My husband has not only passionately and lovingly spoken to his parents about the love of God since he became an Adventist, but he has lived this love and passion in a way that makes sense to them. I'd like to think his father ponders, "There is something to the Seventh-day Adventist Church. There is something special about them." Before, my husband's studies were an embarrassment to the family. Now, his mother tells everyone with pride that her son studied to be a pastor. The family's respect for him has gradually grown as they have seen how God has transformed his life. And that transformed life is transforming his family.

As his parents get older, they are beginning more and more to think about what they are going to do with their assets once they are gone. And one of the things that amazes me about my husband is that he consistently tells them they should do whatever they want with what they have. It's not a priority for him whether he receives something (or doesn't) on this earth. He may counsel his parents to seek the Lord in their decision-making process, but he will never disrespect them saying, "*This is a legacy I don't agree with.*" In other words, he will accept whatever they give him and will be grateful, whether that is nothing at all or an equal share between siblings, or whatever.

My husband loves his parents and wants to share in their joys, but his

mind is on his heavenly home. He has considered his life and determined that his service to God will be meaningful. In fact, a lukewarm or inconsequential legacy, he would say is, "*A legacy I don't agree with.*"

My prayer is that every Adventist in the entire conference will consider how we use our time and how we use our material resources, and that we will all decide that the expansion of God's kingdom is a top priority. Our enemy would have us do nothing. He would have us caught in snares of inaction and indecisiveness. But to this we need to say, "*That is a legacy I don't agree with,*" and then act to partner in God's mission and create a true legacy.

Looking Back and Launching Forward
article continued on pg. 2

our forebears learned and passed on for our care and keeping.

But the purpose of looking back is not just to celebrate history. It's to use that history as a platform to launch into the future. It occurs to me that the term "Adventist History" is a contradiction in terms. The word "Adventist" comes from the root word "Advent" which means "coming." "Coming" is a word that is oriented to the future. It looks forward to that which is yet to take place. The point of our faith is to look forward to the soon return of Jesus! We do history well when we do it with an eye toward the coming of our Savior.

My prayer is that this contemplation of our roots will have the result of causing us to look forward with impatience and an earnest desire to see our Lord come again. Rather than simply celebrate what was, I want us to celebrate what is coming, Who is coming and the fulfillment of that great, second, Advent message that Jesus is coming again!

YOUTH 4 TRUTH

By Tim Raymond

While I was prayerfully wrestling whether to be considered for the position of Youth and Young Adult Director of NNEC, a thought coalesced in my mind. In my discussions with the Lord, the thought formed into a phrase that kept returning whenever I broached the subject. I accepted the position with the conviction that the Lord was calling me to implement the vision of ministry He formed in my thinking. The catch phrase for my vision of the ministry of Youth and Young Adults is this: Youth 4 Truth.

So, what is truth? Hmm! That was Pilate's response when he was confronted with Jesus. But Pilate wasn't asking a question. He was stating a position – the exact same position our society is pushing today. What is truth! It's not in the form of a question, as if they are searching for truth, but in the form of a loud and proud statement that denies there is objective truth. Pilate's attempt to avoid conviction and justify himself was founded on the rationalization of relativism. He was asserting that there are all kinds of gray areas, that there is no meta-narrative, that reality is subjective to each person's perspective, and that everyone must find what's true for them. In other words, the world is saying, "Stop judging – there is no absolute truth!!!"

Of course, the end of this line of reasoning is that there is no truth at all. And, if there is no truth, then there can be no right or wrong, and if it feels good, do it! There is no such thing as guilt or conviction, since reality is whatever you choose it to be.



Pastor Tim with his beautiful wife, Melanie.

What we see in our time is the same, old denial of truth and goodness that originated with Lucifer in heaven and that was adopted by Pilate. Now it has been recycled, repackaged and embraced by our post-modern society as something new and cutting-edge. The church, especially our youth, are not immune to the infiltration of relativism, which is evident in many of the current trends, though many young people are not aware of the philosophies they are touting. As is always a danger, the norms of society are becoming the norms within the church. But any attempt to shift the source of *the Truth* to something within us, such as my opinion, or feelings, or experience, is relativism.

Youth 4 Truth is a call to re-establish

the Word of God as the source and standard of *the Truth*. A direct challenge, with no apology, to the post-modern sophistry that is poisoning our youth and changing the Gospel to empty words or emotional experiences that have no power to set them free from sin and transform their lives. Jesus prayed to the Father for you and I when He said, "Sanctify them by Thy truth, thy word is truth." (Jn 17:7).

Pilate's statement of denial, "What is truth?" (Jn 18:38). was in response to Jesus, who said, "For this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to *the Truth*. Everyone who is of *the Truth* hears my voice." (Jn 18:37). Do you hear the Voice of Truth? Then come be a part of Youth 4 Truth.



Conference Evangelist, Scott Christiansen, brings vision and a message to the growing church plant.



Luke Cook of The Ark church plant engaging kids and adults alike with a message of love and truth.

NNEC CHURCH PLANTING EFFORT GAINS MOMENTUM

By Scott Christiansen

Church planting is currently a major evangelistic thrust across the North American Division, and it is also *the* major evangelistic thrust in the Northern New England Conference. Currently, there are six distinct church plant efforts underway in the conference with more being added. If all the currently active church plant efforts are successful, the number of churches in the conference will grow by more than ten percent!

Church planting efforts are taking a multitude of forms. Take, for instance, the congregation that has formed out of The Ark in Lewiston, Maine, which is considered the most post-Christian city in the United States. About five years ago, The Ark was formed by Conference Evangelist Rick Kuntz and numerous volunteers. It was focused on health education, outreach, and a vegan restaurant

known as The Olive Branch Café. A small group of volunteers gathered in the restaurant on Sabbath mornings for worship. That small group dramatically blossomed a little over a year ago when an outreach was made to children of refugee families in the area. Now, there are 60+ people packed into the restaurant on Sabbath mornings, and the company now has their own pastor and is looking for a larger worship place.

Some church plants come together in a matter of weeks, such as recently happened in Williston, Vermont (see accompanying story on page 10). Most often, however, church plants require years of patient work. Such work is underway in Hanover, New Hampshire. There, a group of Adventists have planted a church that is literally a stone's throw from Dartmouth College, and have engaged in steady and targeted outreach on the campus. That group has grown to include community members and students.

Other efforts include sites that are part of The Planting Project, a long-term church planting model that deploys teams of patient, long-term, tent-making, young adult

missionaries that use the Adventist Frontier Missions model of raising up communities of believers. Two teams are currently preparing to plant and more are being recruited. The project, which is anticipated to function for a decade or more, is intended to plant up to 20 churches over its life.

Overall, the North American Division plans to add up to 1000 churches through individual planting projects over the next 5-10 years. This is a massive goal, but the Northern New England Conference is determined to at least make a dent in that number. Some of the church plants underway in NNEC are designed according to a mother/daughter model where a church (the mother) provides the people, space, and leadership necessary to plant a new congregation (the daughter). Some of the plants are the result of focused outreach (such as with The Ark), and some are definite missionary outposts taking place in areas where there are few or no Adventists currently (such as with The Planting Project). But, whatever the design of a church plant, where they are successful they expand Christ's Kingdom, and that means a substantial effort is justified.

HISTORY HAS SHAPED US. NOW LET'S SHAPE HISTORY.

By Scott Christiansen

The Millerites were an odd bunch. They came from a wide array of religions and denominations from all walks of life. They were not united by an organizational structure, nor by any economic or social interest, but by a compelling belief – the belief that Jesus was returning to claim His faithful, and He was returning on a specific date that was rapidly approaching.

The Millerites were the object of derision by both secular society and by some in organized religions. But, despite this criticism, their number and influence increased and word of Christ's imminent coming spread through much of the Christian world until, on a day almost 175 years ago, their hopes and dreams were dashed, and their lives upturned as a result.

The Millerites were a movement – a people united by a belief so compelling that it swept aside their differences and disparities and united them in an urgent and compelling mission. As Seventh-day Adventists, we are the direct descendants of the Millerites - we have some of their DNA. This DNA can be seen in how we proclaim the imminent return of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is also seen – though less clearly – in the fact we aspire to be more a movement than an institution, a group of individuals impelled urgently forward by a set of shared beliefs. And it can be seen in how we attend to our compelling mission of proclaiming a message despite being derided or ignored by the world.

If the Millerites were an odd bunch, so too were the first Sabbath-keeping protestants who believed in the imminent return (or “advent”) of Jesus – people who were just starting to be called Seventh-day Adventists. The Millerites, though formerly fellow travelers, had rejected these Seventh-day Adventists, considering them fanatics. And yet, despite the rejection, the new Seventh-day Adventists persisted, basing their convictions on scripture. Most of those early Adventists were “highly

determined – not to say stubborn – and it would have been impossible to build the Seventh-day Adventist movement without them. We have a fair amount of their DNA in us yet.

Stop for a moment and think what those Adventist pioneers were like. They had searched the scriptures. They had weighed the research and opinions of others. They had spent a great deal of time in earnest prayer and had formed hard and fast opinions. They knew they were right. And these people who knew



The early Adventist Church emerged from a climate of religious revival in the Northeastern United States. Camp meetings, such as this Millerite gathering, were a hallmark of the Second Great Awakening. [photos courtesy Office of Archives, Statistics and Research]

individualistic,” which is a nice way of saying they didn’t run with the herd, that they did not let society choose their course, that they looked to the Word of God for wisdom and direction and not to the world. They were

they were right held among them a great number of opinions, some of which were in conflict with others. What an interesting and contentious process it must have been for these headstrong people to discuss, debate

and reference scripture as they tried to find common ground. Ellen White, in writing about the second Sabbatarian Conference held in upstate New York in 1848, said “There were about 35 present, all that could be collected in that part of the State. There were hardly two agreed. Each was strenuous for his views, declaring that they were according to the Bible. All were anxious for an opportunity to advance their sentiments, or to preach to us. They were told that we had not come so great a distance to hear them, but had come to teach them the truth.” (2SG, 97-98).

The process of testing and weighing and deciding what core beliefs would form the basis for carrying the movement forward was a trying one, but it also was one that matured the people involved and deepened their faith in God; time and again when pioneers were at a

interactions.

Time went on and the movement matured. An organized church was officially formed in 1863 and the name “Seventh-day Adventist” was officially adopted. Many Adventist congregations, including in Northern New England, were chartered that same year and even more in the years shortly afterward. These congregations were viewed by the secular community and by other denominations as odd. They didn’t worship on Sunday. They had strange ideas about the state of the dead and about eternal punishment in hell. They were so odd that not even the Millerites accepted them!

But those early Adventist congregations persisted, and did so because they’d read their Bibles and were determined to follow the Word of God. They also acted on their

evangelism, sending out first just a few missionaries, then a flood of missionaries all around the world. A focus on health and healing grew in the movement, and became a defining characteristic, along with Christian education.

It has been over 150 years since the formal organization of the Seventh-day Adventist church and, praise God, it is still a movement propelled by a compelling belief. The church we have today is very much a product of the history that has shaped it and, looking back, it is obvious that it was God who shaped the history that shaped the church. But here is the thing: the work for which God fitted and shaped this movement isn’t finished yet. Think about that for a second. Here we are, perhaps the terminal generation of Adventists, who have been shaped and formed by our history, who have more resources and more accumulated knowledge at our disposal than our pioneers ever dreamed of, and it falls to us to finish the work. It is a big job, but we can do it. We have good DNA – we are a faithful, determined, even stubborn people who have a message God Himself gave us, and we have His support in proclaiming it.

We – this final generation – have been shaped by history. Now it falls to us to shape history. Not just to live in history, mind you, but to shape history. The pioneers were unafraid to think in terms of God’s goals and claim His promises in pursuing them. They were unafraid to buck society and proclaim truth. They moved in faith. They sharpened each other. They sacrificed. They persevered.

The Gospel of Christ changes history. Let us return to our mission of evangelism, proclaiming truth and living truth in such a way that Northern New England is profoundly reshaped by our presence and by our work in our time. We can do it – God put the ability in our DNA.



Adventists gathering at Camp Lawroweld for a time of revival and restoration.

dead end or an impasse God used His prophet to guide them. But, generally, the pioneers figured things out by searching the scripture and debating truth. This was a healthy thing, because “iron sharpens iron.” (Proverbs 27:17). The pioneers grew in faith and courage because of these

convictions and were unceasing in their support for (and involvement in!) evangelism. At the core of their existence was the holy duty of proclaiming the message the Lord had given them. The whole movement (and the organization that facilitated the movement) grew but retained its focus on

WELCOME TO THE MAN CAVE!

By Doug Berrill

Men's Ministries has served the men of our conference with great spirit in the past (thank you pastor Twitchell and those who went before him!), and we want the blessings to increase and continue! The mantle of Men's Ministries has been passed on to me, and it is my desire to keep this

ministry moving forward because it is my belief that God has a special calling for us as men. We are called to be the priest and leader in our families, communities, and churches. If you are like me, you get easily distracted. So, as brothers in Christ, we need each other's help to shoulder the calling. Proverbs 27:17 says, "Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend."

I was brought up to believe that, as a man, you held everything in, and you never let anyone see what you were

feeling or thinking. I was brought up to believe that a man pulls himself up by his own bootstraps. But I met Jesus, and soon after, realized that we all need Jesus and we need each other. I was introduced to Men's Ministries early in my walk with Christ., so this has been, and continues to be, a huge part of my journey with Jesus. My prayer is that more men will experience the abundant life He is offering.

My first goal is to make sure Men's Ministries is a safe and fostering place for all men. Every man should know that he matters. This ministry is here to serve you as a man in our conference. Secondly, I want to encourage prayer together because I believe that, for us to fulfill our calling as men of God, we need to be connected through prayer. Thirdly, I want to utilize a variety of ways to communicate with the men of this conference, including our blog "The Man Cave" on the conference website. I will use email, make phone calls, and send group text messages. I will use the Pony Express if I have to!

Men's Ministries is also looking to take on a community service project (let me know if you have suggestions!) that we can do together. In addition, we'll have stuff going on at Camp Meeting 2019, the annual Camp Lawroweld retreat (Oct. 18-20th), and some other events that are still in planning. And, perhaps most exciting of all, we're planning a July 2020 mission trip to Bethel, Alaska! Stay tuned on our webpage at www.nnec.org/mens-ministries/ for updates on all these activities.

We want to provide the resources and space for you to grow as a man of God. Men's Ministries is self-funded, so, with that in mind, I ask that you prayerfully consider including this ministry in your giving. For more information about Men's Ministries, you can reach me at (207) 590-8891, or by email at DougBerrillSr@gmail.com



Adventist refugees from Kenya and the Congo looking forward to their church company formation.

BABE IN ARMS

By Bruce Wilkinson
District Pastor

A baby being placed in the arms of their mother for the first time is a fitting analogy describing the recent arrival of 30 refugees at our church doorstep. These refugees – Adventists families from Kenya and the Congo – were newly arrived in a strange land and able to do little for themselves. They needed a great deal of assistance to be able to crawl,

then walk, then run in their new home.

The Williston, Vermont, Church District recently received notice of the arrival of these refugee families. It was a big surprise, though perhaps it should not have been since Northern New England is increasingly a destination for refugees admitted into America, and the arrival of this group hints at an increasingly diverse future for the region and the church. Upon hearing of the group, the Williston church scrambled to find solutions to the needs of this demographic.

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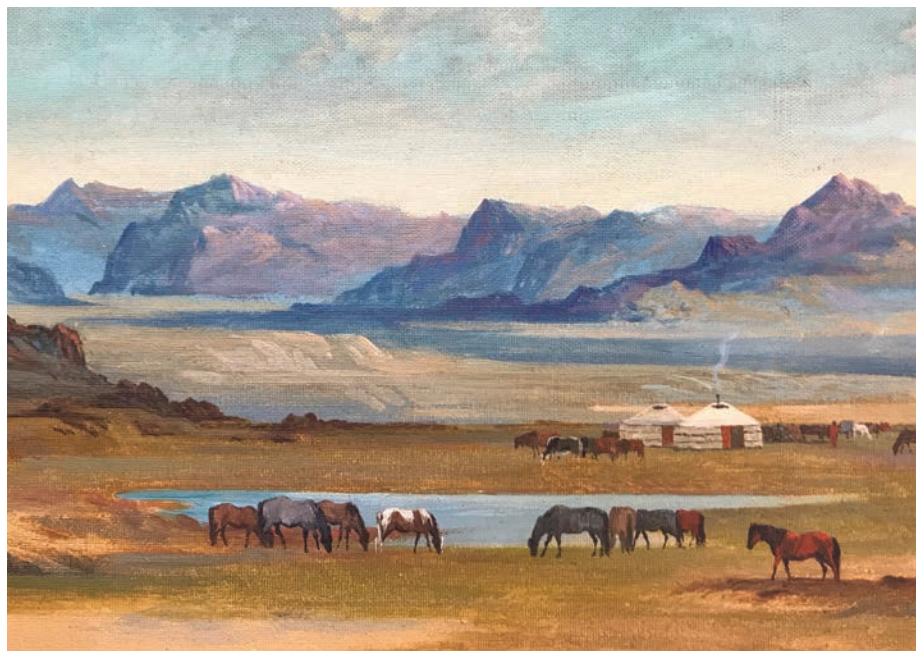
MISSION TO MONGOLIA

By Scott Christiansen

Mongolia. The name conjures up images of a place that is about as remote and exotic as you can get on this earth. In the minds of some Adventists, the proclamation of the gospel in such a place as Mongolia has meant that there is little time left to work. In 2021, the Northern New England Conference will sponsor a mission trip to Mongolia, with opportunities for service in Ulaan Baatar, the capital city (where half the population lives), as well as in Khintii Aimag, a stunningly beautiful province.

The work in Mongolia began in 1991 with the arrival of two AFM missionaries – Brad and Cathy Jolly. The work expanded in 1994 with the arrival Scott and Dee Christiansen and the opening of an ADRA office. That same year, the very first Mongolian convert was baptized. Now, 25 years later, there are more than 2700 Adventists in the country of 3 million people, and churches have been established in the city as well as many rural areas.

The trip is contemplated to take place over 10 days during the month



Many Mongolians continue to live a traditional semi-nomadic lifestyle. This painting by a Mongolian artist shows a typical rural scene.

of August (a beautiful time of year in Mongolia). The exact days will be determined by the preferences and availability of those who want to go as well as the preferences and availability of the Mongolia Mission leaders (a “Mission” is an organizational unit in the Adventist Church that is one step below a conference).

If you think you might be interested in going on this once-in-a-lifetime mission trip, please contact Scott Christiansen at scottdchristiansen@gmail.com

As the trip takes shape, more announcements will be made and definite dates and an itinerary will be posted in this magazine, on our website (<http://www.nnec.org>), and on Facebook. The size of the group going will probably be capped in the future (as a function of available accommodations and service opportunities), and those who indicate an interest early in the process will have priority. So reach out as soon as you can – this is an adventure in service you won’t want to pass up!

Babe in Arms

article continued from pg. 10

After meeting and developing a team plan, the church began work on a strategy to provide warm clothes, assist with financial needs, develop a solid Sabbath worship plan, assist with transportation, and provide an interpreter. Looking to the future, the district plans to help the group become a church company, assist

with submitting tithes and offerings, and establish strong leadership. The district reached out to the conference for assistance with some of these goals.

The Lord has clearly shown His desire to meet the needs of His children by directing the Williston church team. The local Methodist church has been secured for Sabbath worship and the large group of refugee children are receiving spiritual training. Volunteers

from the district, anxious to serve, are assisting with transportation and other needs.

With the arrival of this refugee group, a new church is being birthed in the Northern New England Conference. Praise God! And as with any fragile newborn, care and prayer are essential. Please join your prayers with ours in support of these precious new arrivals!



Lulu Sanders and the women of NNEC sharing in their camaraderie.

WOMEN'S MINISTRIES ADVANCING WHILE RETREATING

By Lulu Sanders

As the new NNEC Women's Ministries director, I wondered how all the details – big and small – of running this ministry would ever get done. But, God says, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." So, I took Him at His word. He strengthened me, yes, and to my delight He sent a small army of dedicated. And He sent them just when needed most – in preparation for (and during!) the annual Women's Ministry Retreat. The retreat turned out to be an amazing success that propelled us forward. You might say Women's Ministries was advancing while we were "retreating."

God sent women who decorated, organized, and even cleaned bathrooms. He also sent a wonderful group of men who ordered ingredients, cooked, and took care of all the kitchen duties for each of our gourmet meals, which included fresh breads and vegan options. When I asked these men what I could do to help, they always said "everything is all taken care of." Even my supportive husband ended up with "dishpan" hands after the weekend was over! Two men blessed us every meal with a couple of songs.

There was such an outpouring of love, prayers and support for myself, the ministry and each other that I wish I had the space to write about everyone who helped to make NNEC Women's Retreat a spiritual, peaceful, relaxing weekend.



Patty Reiner sharing about God's protection and overcoming power.

Patty Reiner from Phoenix, Arizona spoke to us of how God shields us under His wings, carries us, and heals us through every storm. She led us in understanding how we need to praise Him and use what we have been through to help others. Kelly Veilleux, Director of Prayer ministries, opened our morning sessions with "Connecting with God through prayer."

On Friday night, the weather was perfect as we sang around the campfire with the lake in the distance, and nature surrounding us. Sabbath afternoon, we had free time to hike in the woods and mountains, canoe or kayak on the lake, fellowship with friends, or rest. After Sabbath, we had spa time where some of the women volunteered to do foot and neck massages, nail painting, and paraffin-wax hand treatments in our "cozy corner." One lady even did haircuts.

So many people organized and participated that we were able to offer books to read, puzzles, adult coloring, and board games. We even had a "market place" where some brought items to sell. At 9:00 pm, with many of us in pajamas, we gathered to watch a Christian movie. Too soon it was Sunday morning, and time to get ready to go home. Patty spoke that morning on "Looking for the rainbow." I pray that as the storms of life – which we must all go through – assail us, and that we will remember all we have learned about Jesus and how He will be with us through any storm.

Come join us for more of our Women's Ministries events this year and find out for yourself that you can do all things through Christ Who strengthens you!



Join us again to make another successful work-bee!

LONG WEEKEND WORK-BEE AT WASHINGTON CHURCH IN JUNE!

By Ken Brummel, Washington
Church Site Manager

Do you have a passion for Adventist history, a willing spirit, and desire to help with an important outreach? The Washington, New Hampshire church – the very first Seventh-day Adventist Church in history – is having a work-bee from Friday, June 22nd through Tuesday, June 25th. Those interested are invited to come, camp at the church (or nearby state park) and join in the work, fellowship, and worship for as much of that weekend as you care to. The church site is an important tourist site with visitors coming from around the world each year. It is also a site fruitful in

outreach. Keeping the church and the Sabbath Trail in presentable condition is a yearly undertaking that not only maintains the site, but facilitates in witness and outreach.

Important work needs to be done to maintain the Sabbath Trail portion of the church site, including brush clearing and chipping. It would be excellent if several experienced tree cutters (with their own chainsaws) could be on hand to lead work groups and keep a chipper fed throughout the period. You say you are not quite an experienced tree feller but know how to cut brush? Bring your saw and we'll put you to work!

There is plenty of other work to be done. The monuments in the historic Adventist graveyard and the engraved monuments on the Sabbath Trail need to be washed, and the letters on the trail repainted where necessary. Roadside trees need to be trimmed to allow busses to get to the site. Three roadside signs need to be installed to help people find

their way to the site, and bathrooms and the church need to be cleaned. In addition, since workers need to be fed, several cooks are needed to prepare food under the new pavilion.

One particular need is for a naturalist to help change the habitat on one area of the property to make it more open for rabbits and grouse, perhaps requiring the transplantation of briar-type plants from other parts of the trail.

Workers are welcome to park and camp at the church and will be fed for all meals during the work-bee. A work crew of 30-40 would get the job done (and many hands make for light work!), so please consider joining the work crew for some or all of the work-bee. To help make sure sufficient food is ordered, please call (603) 477-1064 to let the organizers know you are coming. Or email at washingtonsda@nnec.org. If you have any questions about the work-bee or about the church or Sabbath Trail, please call or write.



BMS students take time to learn about each other.



The students pose for a picture after researching Black American Heroes!

BROWNELL MOUNTAIN SCHOOL REMEMBERS BLACK HISTORY MONTH

By Diane Gardner and the BMS Family

Most educators know that February is the toughest month of the year. We call it “grumpy month.” The grumpiness doesn’t just happen – teachers and students have worked hard all year, the holidays have passed and the weather has confined everyone to the indoors. Basically, everyone is enduring what is known as “cabin fever.” However, at Brownell Mountain School (BMS), staff and students have found a spring in their step and have been able to move away from the “grumpiness” as they delved into Black History Month.

At the start of Black History Month, each student was tasked to research and write about a Black American Hero of their choice. Those they chose to spotlight include Martin Luther King Jr, Harriet Tubman, Marian Anderson, Frederick Douglas, LeBron James and Raven Wilkinson. In addition to their research and biographies, students interviewed students. Highlights and personal connections to their chosen hero was recorded during their individualized interviews. The resulting videos will be compiled and shared through a link to BMS’ website, as well as during

Mission Spotlight at the Williston Adventist Church.

As God has led BMS through this work, He has brought smiles to many faces, even contributing more than what was found in formal research. God made it possible for BMS to become closer while adding the dimension of family to their study. In the spontaneous act of bringing in



Rita Sloan presenting to BMS kids.

family pictures along with videos, BMS students found themselves captivated in learning about the heritage and stories of each other’s

family histories and adventures! Gone were “the grumps,” and in came the sense of belonging with a wider lens of empathy.

The family stories went back in time to World War II. They were spread across the world including the Caribbean, Africa and Germany. Students discovered that family traditions were connected to historical, national events. Clarity came to some as they learned how and why some foods are prepared in specific ways. Who knew that eating pumpkin soup on the first day of January commemorated the Haitian New Year? Memory lane was also activated as BMS students watched videos of children gloried in the fall of rain, danced to African song, or just spent time with Dad or Mom experimenting with music. Then, we received yet another surprise from God: BMS’s friend, Madison, facetimeed them from Tanzania where she teaches. She spoke about what it is like teaching Tanzanian children. And guess what? The students responded with a few videos about their school life at BMS. What a fantastic way to get rid of the “grumpy month.” To God be the glory!

The penultimate page is the one right before the last one. But here it means something extra, as we live in the penultimate age – the one right before the end. This page will feature articles talking about our time.

CHRIST OR CULTURE?

By Scott Christiansen

When it comes to what you believe and practice, what are you comfortable sharing?

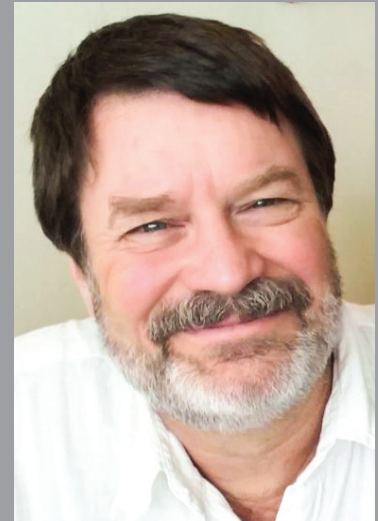
It's an important question, and note that I'm not asking whether or not you are comfortable when faced with an opportunity for sharing your faith. I'm asking *what* you are comfortable sharing. Here is why I ask: many people are more comfortable sharing their Christian culture than the Gospel of Christ.

There is a fuzzy overlap between what we believe – the Gospel of Christ – and the fullness of what we practice – our religion. And then there is our *culture*, which, while strongly informed by our religion, is the norms, beliefs, and practices we absorb from the society we live in. To put it simply, our culture is what people like “us” believe, what people like “us” do, and how people like “us” do it.

But it's actually a little more complicated for Adventists, because we have our own distinct culture or, more accurately, sub-culture. And here is our problem: we often blur the lines between religion and culture and, unfortunately, we do it at the worst possible moment – when we are trying to share the Gospel of Christ. And here is why we do it: it

is easier to share our culture – more natural to share our culture – than it is to share the Gospel of Christ. What that means, in practice, is that when we set out to introduce people to Christ, we are tempted to instead recruit them to look like us, sound like us, and act like us. It's a poor substitute.

So, back to my original question: When it comes to what you believe and practice, what are you comfortable sharing? When the Lord opens a door and presents us with a soul thirsting for the Gospel, we need to discipline ourselves. We need to do the hard thing. We need to introduce them to Christ first and foremost and do so while ignoring the cultural differences that exist. This is crucially important because it forces us to concentrate on our mission and message. It forces us to study the character of Christ from His Word, to better know Him and better introduce Him to others. This combination of studying Him and seeking to share Him brings us closer to Him. Thus, by keeping our eyes on Christ and not on our culture, we advance in our relationship with Him while being better fitted to His service. This allows us to have concern for their welfare, better employ Christ's method of mingling with all people, and minister to their spiritual needs.



Christ Himself told us in Matthew 24:10-13 that the world in our time would be a terrible place full of wickedness and cold-hearted people. But in the very next verse, He told us that the Gospel would continue to be proclaimed to all the earth, and only then would the end come. He also told us in John 12:32 that when He is lifted up, He will draw all men to Him. Our distinct culture is a wonderful thing, but our culture does not have saving power – only a relationship with Christ will do that.

So, let us be true to our first calling to live out and proclaim Christ's message. By doing so, Christ's kingdom will expand, and, likely, some people will join our fellowship and eventually our culture. Especially in times like these, *proclaiming the Gospel of Christ is still a most fruitful exercise!*

**For upcoming events
calendar, please visit
www.NNEC.org
or find us on...**



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