



Photo by Scott Manly

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



# Michigan Memo

July/August 2014, Volume 26, Number 6

## All Parts of One

— Michael Fracker

Communications Secretary, Ionia Church

**D**ennis Earl and Lindell Jensen, literature evangelists for the Michigan Conference, were canvassing in the Ionia area five years ago when they met Olivia Negrete. Leo Rowland was sitting in the living room when Olivia came in with a handful of books and told him she was going to buy some Christian books from two guys at the door. Leo told her, "You don't know who these guys are. They might have stolen the books. They don't even have a card or anything." Olivia went out and came back with a card in her hand for Leo to see. So Leo went out as well and talked with Dennis and Lindell. Leo said, "They seemed like sincere genuine Christians, not like some people who come to the door and asked if you've been saved." They talked and prayed together. Leo and Olivia bought *The Great Controversy*, *Desire of Ages*, and a couple of cookbooks. Leo mentioned that they had already visited two churches because they were looking for truth. Leo was hungry for truth and was reading Christian books, especially ones on history.



Dennis Earl contacted Mike Fracker of the Ionia church for follow-up. Knowing that Leo and Olivia had a Hispanic background, Mike contacted Jeff and Edna Thompson, who spoke Spanish, to go with him and his wife Marcela to meet Leo and Olivia. Jeff Thompson was the [then] school teacher for the Ionia Seventh-day Adventist Elementary school and Edna worked with him at the school. Jeff and Edna didn't do Bible studies with them right away. In fact, they never did get around to that part, but they had dinner together a couple of times and invited Leo, Olivia, and their children over to swim in their pool. They started friendship evangelism.

Olivia and Edna started talking about church school. Leo and Olivia wanted to put their oldest son Ben in a private school for a better environment, for him to be filled and taught in a spiritual sense. They already watched what they ate and didn't let the kids watch certain TV programs as they had a different perspective on how to live. Leo stated, "And here we were meeting people like Jeff and Edna who were already like us, who had similar ideas on how we should live. So we decided to put Ben in the Adventist church school." On the way

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# Evangelism is a Family Affair

— Daniel Ferraz

*Pastor of the Kalamazoo and Downtown Community Churches*

The “Battle for the Bible” series, held at the Downtown Community Seventh-day Adventist Company, was preached alternately by Pastor Daniel Ferraz and the local church elder Isaac Kubvoruno. The theme was based on the struggle of understanding true salvation from the Word of God; it was traced through first century Christianity and the Dark Ages to the Reformation and the fulfilling Bible prophecies of our day.

A large part of the meetings were based on the main chapters of *The Great Controversy* by E. G. White. All who attended the 13 meetings received a free beautifully illustrated hardback edition. About this book,

E. G. White said, “*I am more anxious to see a wide circulation of this book than any others I have written; for in The Great Controversy, the last message of warning to the world is given more distinctly than in any of my other books.*” Colporteur Ministry, p. 127

In the “Battle for the Bible” series, each presenter brought their own unique perspective, experience, and emphasis to the topics.

The Holy Spirit blessed and there was a real revival in the church! Both presenters and attendees did not want the meetings to end! Some seasoned members said it was the best evangelistic series they ever been a part of. The Holy Spirit brought conviction with historic content, pictures of the Reformation sites in Europe, and the stories of how God’s people were martyrs, reformers, and founders of the Advent Movement. We decided to extend the meetings by another week to 33 nights in total. Praise the Lord!

God blessed us with a harvest of three young precious souls: Josanana, Yasmine, and Samaria. Then five more surrendered their lives to the Lord in baptism. They were the four Gonzalez family members and Rojelio Batas.

Tito Navarro, a Downtown Community member who works for the same company where Mr. and Mrs. Gonzalez work, invited them to the meeting. They came every night. The whole family

would sit together and did not want to miss a thing. It was so encouraging to see them and others attending so regularly. The Gonzalez family said they learned more from God’s Word in six weeks than all the years that had been attending church on Sunday. They attended every Sabbath and also had regular Bible studies in preparation for their baptism.

The baptism was a great celebration! The Lord answered our prayers where several of our churches came together in spirit. There were over 100 people attending the service for the Gonzalez family and Rojelio (who was re-baptized into the Filipino Company).



*Top: Pastor Daniel, Jessica, and Petra Ferraz  
Below: Stephanie, Ruben, Diana, and Jennifer Gonzalez with Maria, Mitcy, Mina and Nathan Galicia*

Some of us only learned later that day that Diana Gonzalez had a sister Maria Galicia, a member of the Kalamazoo Spanish Seventh-day Adventist Church who had been praying for her and her family for 15 years to accept the truth! So, a good portion of the Kalamazoo Spanish and Filipino churches came to share in the rejoicing! We nearly panicked when we saw so many people downstairs for the fellowship lunch; we knew we didn’t have enough food for everyone. But more hospitable Spanish and

Filipino church families started coming through our doors with plenty of extra food to make our rejoicing complete! Kalamazoo Spanish Church Pastor David Garcia joined us for lunch as well.

Ruben and Diana are being trained as a deacon and deaconess. Their girls enjoy their Sabbath School class and studying their first real Bible. The family has had to face some difficult choices, but the Lord is strengthening their faith in Jesus as they honor Him. Ruben’s mother has started attending church and is having Bible studies led by a member. Diana and Maria’s brother attended the baptism with his family, so they are now praying for him to be converted! Truly, evangelism is a family affair!

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home from the Thompsons, Olivia asked Leo, "What are Seventh-day Adventists?" Leo responded, "I don't know. I think they go by the Old Testament."

Dennis Earl came back to start studies with Leo and Olivia. Leo stated, "He brought some young guy with him and asked him to pray for us, which I thought was strange, because Dennis usually was the one who prayed. Later when we took Ben to the church school, there was this young guy there in the classroom. He introduced himself as the [then] pastor, Scott Manley. He didn't say he was the pastor in our home. He invited us to church. We started coming to church and Ben was in church school. We went through about thirty studies with Dennis Earl and finished the studies."

Leo added, "Ben, then Zachary the next year and Christian two years later, went to church school. The kids know so much: biblical things, not just American history, but church history, knowing and understanding good versus evil, that prayer is powerful. They just have learned so much in that school."

"We had been looking for a church. But after Pastor Scott invited us to church, we never went anywhere else. Anyway, we finished the studies with Dennis, and now we were going to church and the kids were in church school. But Olivia and I weren't married. We felt convicted that we should get married. It didn't feel right going to church, giving your heart to God and praying to live the way God wants you to live, and not be married. So I asked myself, what's holding you back? So we went to a Justice of the Peace and had a small, simple wedding in a house. It didn't make sense to live a certain way, be a certain way, and not be married. We wanted to be whole-hearted in this. So two years after meeting Dennis, we got married."

"But we were concerned about Ellen White and her role in the church and its teachings. There was a tug-of-war in the heart. We were still teetering on committing to the Lord in all things. Our Sabbath-keeping was always there - Friday evening we would tell the kids, no video games, turn the TV off, let's do some family activities. We took nature walks and got involved in church activities. But we hadn't committed to joining the church."

Leo continued, "The kids love church school. They

want to go to Great Lakes Adventist Academy when they finish here. I don't know how we could do it; I might have to work two more jobs. Ben is twelve and has been in church school for five years. Zach is ten and in church school four years, and Christian

is nine and has been in church school three years."



"So last fall, Mike Fracker had meetings in Ionia. They've had meetings almost every year here, but Olivia is so busy. I'm busy and tired; Olivia has such physical pain that it's hard for her to go anywhere or do anything other than taking care of the

children. When I saw that Olivia wanted to come to the meetings this time, that she would drag herself to go, that she was willing to sacrifice to come, it seemed like it was for real, so I was willing to go. I like history and learning, so we came with all our children. When Mike had an appeal, the whole family came forward. We sat down with Mike later for the pre-baptismal class and worked out our concerns for Christian, who was eager but young; and Ben, who was older but reluctant. When Mike asked him why he didn't think he was ready, Ben said, "I don't think I could give a Bible study and answer all the questions people would ask me." Don't you wish all Christians thought and felt the way Ben did?"

Leo, Olivia, Ben, Zachary, and Christian were all baptized on December 2013 thanks to the efforts of literature evangelists, Christian friendship, the Adventist school, pastoral influence, and church evangelism.

All parts of the influence of the Holy Spirit working to bring people in harmony with God's Word and the Great Commission. Leo and Mike have completed the Storacles since baptism and continue to study. Olivia spends time with Ben, Zachary, and Christian in the Missionary Volunteers Club at the church, learning how to be missionary Christians.



*Back row l-r: Pastor Monte Landis, LE Dennis Earl, Olivia, Leo, teacher Tamie Hasty, and LE Lindell Jensen  
Front Row: Leo and Olivia's three sons*

# From LDS to SDA

—Michael Taylor  
Pastor of the Paw Paw Church

When Greg and Shandy Piorkowski walked into Kalamazoo Junior Academy (KJA) in late 2011, they didn't have very high expectations. The Piorkowskis had been rejected from several other schools in the Kalamazoo area, both public and private, because of their religious convictions. As Latter Day Saints, they were often scorned by other Christian groups, and they expected that the last school on their list, KJA, would do the same. Instead, they met Anndrea Taylor, the upper-grade teacher who told them that she'd happily work with their oldest son. Within a few visits, Mrs. Taylor's class also added their second oldest son; and, by the start of the next school year, all four Piorkowski kids were students at KJA.

The kids weren't the only ones bonding with KJA. Shandy was quickly recruited to help with field trips, fundraisers, and lunches, and she actively promoted the school to her LDS friends. Some of the staff joked that they wished more of the Adventist parents showed so much pride for their local church school as "the Mormon mom" did. Greg was also growing at KJA, but in different ways. As the father of the household, Greg was impressed to be spiritual leader of his family, and this meant that he had to work on his own struggling faith. He was amazed at the spiritual questions and discussions that his kids were having, and he wanted that for himself. Some afternoons, while waiting for school to dismiss, Greg would sit down with the local pastors, Daniel Ferraz and Michael Taylor, and just "read Scripture." No agendas, no formal lessons; let's just see what the Word of God says, and God definitely spoke through His Word.

The months that followed brought many challenges to the family, but also many joys. Greg's business had ups and downs; his family faced conflict from the outside; and, finances were tight – especially when sending four kids to an Adventist school without any help from a local church. Through it all, the Piorkowskis weren't alone; they knew that they were drawing closer to Jesus, and were actively embraced by the KJA family. Two years in a row, the family spent New Year's Eve scattered among Seventh-day Adventist families, counting down in a way they had never experienced before: with genuine Christian friends. They quickly adopted Adventist practices, such as abstaining from unclean meats and Sabbath-keeping, and

noticed an improvement in many areas of their lives. Greg was also integrated into the Paw Paw Seventh-day Adventist Church activities, and joined their men's quartet "His Story." For a period, they referred to themselves as "Seventh-day Mormons," until they were shown the hope of the soon second advent of Jesus.

In February 2014, Greg emailed Pastor Taylor and let him know that he wanted to join the Paw Paw Seventh-day Adventist Church. After a handful of discussions and lessons, the entire

Piorkowski family decided to leave the LDS church and become Adventists (though Greg admits that their kids were ready to make the jump months earlier, due to the tireless work of KJA staff.) Their new church family has embraced them in a powerful way, involving the whole family in a number of ministries and encouraging them as they continue to learn more about Jesus Christ in the Scriptures. Said Greg on the day he joined the church, "Nobody ever *tried* to convert us; they just loved

and encouraged us. We've never had friends like this before! As nice as that is, however, we've also never felt closer to Jesus as we have in the Adventist church. That's most important to us."



Many items have been left from Camp Meeting. If you have items that you would like to reclaim, contact Alyce Blackmer about these lost and found items at [ablackmer@misda.org](mailto:ablackmer@misda.org) or call 517-316-1543.

# Men's Chorus Festival

—Dr. Richard Hutabarat  
Director of the Hinsdale Men's Chorus

The lights were dimmed to the cascading gentle strains of “Holy, Holy, Holy” – sung by the Hinsdale Men’s Chorus (HMC) – floating down from the balcony to the congregation below, as over 109 men processed in to encircle the congregation . . . and in surround-sound, embarked on the second verse. Women’s voices, in unison, sweetly chimed in on the third verse as the festival chorus advanced up the stairs to the platform.

Supported by brass, organ and piano the rafters of the sanctuary were lifted with the majestic last verse of “Holy, Holy, Holy” as everyone present raised their voices to acknowledge the supremacy of this great God whom we serve. The festival chorus’ powerful response – Holy, Holy, Holy – in ascending dramatic chords and increasing volume, yielded a climactic ending! The worship service of the Spring Men’s Chorus Festival at the Hinsdale Seventh-day Adventist Church (HSDAC) had begun.

HMC (a ministry of HSDAC), in partnership with the Illinois Conference of Seventh-day Adventists and our local church, coordinated and hosted the festival, assembling five Christian choruses – four Adventist and one non-denominational – from three states, the first weekend of April. Inspired by a vespers message, on Friday afternoon, delivered by Pastor Ron Kelly, Senior Pastor of the Village SDA Church in Berrien

Springs, MI, the festival chorus, comprised of the Chicago Adventist Men’s Chorus (Marshall Merklin, director); Hanson Place Men’s Chorale (Lincoln Blackwood, director), New York; Proclaim Him! (David Burghart, director), Michigan; the Singing Men of Oak Brook (Wendell Borrink, director), Illinois; and HMC commenced with mass chorus rehearsals and participated in the Illinois Conference convocation occurring that weekend in Hinsdale.

The formal meetings of the convocation ended with the festival chorus leading out in a Wayne Hooper arrangement – “Four Hymns of the Second Coming” – with the congregation joining in the last chorus of “We Have This Hope” pointing us heavenward to our great Hope in anticipation of His soon return.

While it must have been an awesome spectacle to witness and be part of over 109 men praising their Creator and Savior, beyond the shadow of a doubt, it will in no way compare to singing in

that great chorus of heaven when we are all gathered by the glassy sea praising the Lamb that was slain who assured us our salvation.

Even so, Lord, come quickly!

Every Monday morning, the Michigan Conference staff meet together for worship and prayer. Here is the list for the months of July and August. Please join with us as we pray for these ministries.

## July 7-11

Kalkaska/Traverse City  
Pastor Wes Peppers  
Traverse City Elementary -  
Jan Ella Schnepf, Principal/Teacher

## July 14-18

Frankfort/Irons/Manistee  
Pastor Richard Mendoza

## July 21-25

Ludington/Reed City/Shelby  
Pastor Ron Mills

## July 28-August 1

Cadillac/Cadillac West/Lake City  
Pastor Pat Milligan  
Bible Worker - Todd Nietling  
Literature Evangelist - Rebekah Johnson  
Northview School - Emily Graham, Principal/Teacher

## August 4-15

Battle Creek Spanish  
Pastor Mariano Arrua

## August 11-15

Hastings/Kentwood  
Pastor Jeff Dowell  
Hastings Elementary - Karon Davis, Principal/Teacher

## August 18-22

Hartford  
Bible Worker - Christian Smith

## August 25-29

Frost/Riverdale  
Pastor Oscar Montes

# Michigan Cedar Lake Cam



# Conference Meeting 2014



# Oakwood Gospel Revival: Sunday Evangelistic Effort

—Ariel Roldan  
Pastor of the Detroit Oakwood Church

It was an idea that had been swimming in my mind for several years. I was thinking of having a one-day evangelistic meeting on what is commonly called Easter Sunday. I began to share with the local church board how this day, next to Christmas, is one of the most attended services. If we took advantage of Christmas to reach out to friends and family, why not take advantage of this day also in order to reach our community with the Bible's prophetic message?

I searched the writings of Mrs. White to see if there were any reservations or cautions about using Sunday as an evangelistic tool. I shared this quote with my board members:

"Sunday can be used for carrying forward various lines of work that will accomplish much for the Lord... *Whenever it is possible, let religious services be held on Sunday.* Make these meetings intensely interesting. *Sing* genuine revival hymns, and *speak* with power and assurance of the Saviour's love... You will thus learn much about how to work, and *will reach many souls.*" – Counsels to the Church p. 318 (italics mine)

So we decided to develop a simple but engaging program with songs and preaching. I further shared with the board ideas of having a gift bag with our church logo and website. In each bag, we would place a copy of *Steps to Christ*, *Desire of Ages*, and *The Great Controversy*. Several GLOW (Giving Light to Our World) tracts on state of the dead, Sabbath, etc. as well as a tri-fold flier showcasing all of our church ministries were also inserted. Lastly for our first-time visitors, the bag included the Anchor Point DVD entitled *The Ultimate Timeline*. We got excited!



We invested in 5,000 fliers to be mailed and 200 fliers for personal invitations by church members. The church became growingly excited (and myself nervous!) as the date drew near. No one really knew what to

expect. Would people actually come? If they did, how would they respond? The leadership spent a lot of time praying for the Lord to bless our efforts to preach Jesus Christ "more perfectly" to our surrounding community (see Acts 18:26).

At 10:30 AM that Sunday, we had a few members ... and visitors! By 11:00 AM, we began singing well-known and beloved hymns and praise songs. When I got up to preach, I could still see

people coming into the church. Over 100 church members came out to support this event. But to our pleasant surprise, we had over 40 guests, of which 35 were non-Adventists! Some

of them were reconnections from our fall series we did last year. Others were relatives of church members who accepted the invitation because it was Easter Sunday. Still others had come for the very first time because of the unique emphasis of the flier on the prophesied Messiah. One thing they all had in common was they loved the whole program!

I preached from Luke 24\* with strong conviction about how resurrection morning had been the most discouraging and depressing day for the disciples. The only thing that revived their faith was when Jesus revealed Himself through the prophecies of the Old Testament. These prophecies then became a source of a firm and growing faith in the Christian church throughout the book of Acts.

I appealed for all to return to our prophetic Christian roots, to take advantage of the free gift we were placing in their hands, and to take ownership of their faith by becoming familiar with these prophecies. I finally invited them to attend the Revelation sermon series that would begin that very next Sabbath at the Detroit Oakwood Church.

As I engaged people afterwards, several non-Adventist visitors expressed gratitude for the new insights of how to see Jesus through the prophecies of the Bible. All were very happy for the gift bag and the DVD. We will rejoice to see how the Lord used this event to bring a fresh biblical view of Jesus to many for whom Christianity had become monotonous with little spiritual meaning. We have learned a lot from this experience and cannot wait until next year to cast the prophetic gospel net again!

As we seek to continue gathering interests for our fall series by following up on this event, we are trusting in a promise from the Bible: our work in the Lord is not in vain (1 Cor. 15:58). We prayerfully look forward to see what the Lord will do through that sermon, each book, tract, DVD, and smiling handshake with a hug that was shared on that special day.

\* *If you would like to hear that sermon, please visit our website ([www.oakwoodsda.com](http://www.oakwoodsda.com)) and browse our sermon archives.*





# District Six Spiritual Retreat

—Susan Moutsatson  
District Six Planning Committee, Clare Church

The slap of a paddle on water, the crackle of a campfire, children laughing, and the happy buzz of conversations at mealtimes: these are a few of the sounds of the annual District 6 Spiritual Retreat at Camp Au Sable. It begins with a chuck-wagon supper and vespers at the wagon train. It ends with fun and songs around the campfire at the fort. In between, memories are made, friendships are renewed, family ties are strengthened, and hearts are drawn towards our Creator, Best Friend, and Savior.

Whatever your interests or age, there is always something fun to do at camp—a canoe trip, swimming, horses, go-karts, or a leisurely stroll around the boardwalk. This year you can challenge your friends to a volleyball match.

Camp Au Sable is a special place, a place where you catch a glimpse of life that's a bit more like what God intended. Besides being a place for fun and great activities, it's also a place to slow down, to be inspired, and to be refreshed in mind, body, and spirit.

This year's retreat on August 22-24 features guest speaker Vicki Griffin, director of health ministries for the Michigan Conference. She is also director of the Lifestyle Matters Health Intervention series, the *Fit & free! Building Brain and Body Health* series, and the editor of *Balance* magazine and the *Balanced Living* tract series. Her special area of interest and research is the relationship between diet, lifestyle, stress

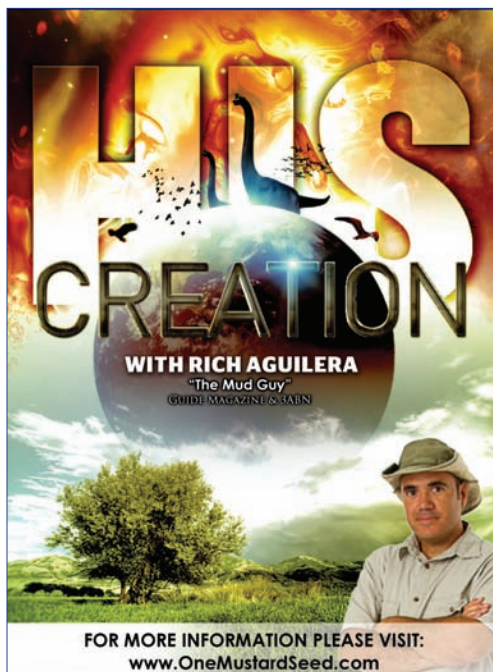
mechanisms, and brain health. It's all about living better and finding balance.



Reid Tate leads a vesper service  
at the camp wagon train.

What if we could learn to do life differently? What if we could resist the world's 24/7 noise and distractions and, instead, live closer to Heaven's plan? Could we actually find peace in our busy lives? What would that do to our bodies, our hearts, and minds? Could we actually be transformed, be more like Jesus, and more eager to see Him?

Our hurting world desperately needs to see the heavenly difference it makes to have God in our lives. We are privileged to have the opportunity to meet together in this special place to seek His face and His favor, to grow in grace, and to become a stronger, healthier body of Christ.



Rich Aguilera, "the Mud Guy," from *Guide Magazine* and 3ABN will be presenting an event that deals with creation and evolution for children and adults.

"His Creation" will be in Michigan at three ticketed locations:

- Sep 5, Friday, 7:30 PM DeVos Center for Arts and Worship, Grand Rapids
- Sep 6, Saturday 8:30 PM Comstock Community Auditorium, Kalamazoo
- Sep 7, Sunday at 8:00 PM at the Community Arts Auditorium, Wayne State University, Detroit

See [www.onemustardseed.com](http://www.onemustardseed.com) for more information.

# "Not Forgotten, in the Forgotten War"

—Jeremy Hall

*Associate Superintendent of Schools*

**W**hat?! This is a war zone, Private! You aren't getting your Sabbath off! Your request might be valid in America, but we aren't in America anymore!"

Reeling from the response to his request, Private First Class Donald Vixie stood in front of his master sergeant thinking about what he would do next. Choices. It didn't seem like there were many of those lately. As thousands of men before him, Donald had been drafted into the Army during the Korean War of 1950-1953. Out of a

college class of 113, Don found his grades ranking 57th. If they had been 56th, he would have missed the draft completely and been able to stay home. As it was, he was drafted into the Army in 1952, sent to boot camp, put through medical training, and now found himself in Korea awaiting assignment. The sergeant was right about one thing: this wasn't America anymore. This was a hostile war zone that would see the loss of some 37,000 Americans in combat. What the sergeant wasn't correct on, however, was the fact that Private First Class Vixie, or any other soldier, was entitled to having a day of worship in order that religious convictions could be followed. Back at home, Don and three other Adventist soldiers had requested leave for worship services and it had been granted. They had been able to leave base, go to the services, and come back when they were over. Things didn't seem to be working out the same way in Korea.

The valley of decision can be a difficult place to find oneself. From a human perspective it would seem somewhat justifiable for Don to follow his sergeant's order and report for work on Sabbath. After all, it was a war zone. Other soldiers had to report for work. Why should Don ask for something that other soldiers weren't asking for? Furthermore, it wouldn't be a good thing to get on the sergeant's bad side. That would mean a miserable time in an already unfamiliar place. All these things played in Don's mind as he stood in front of his sergeant. What should he do?

Donald Vixie was the son of American missionaries. Born in Cape Town, South Africa, he had spent most of his life, until the age of 16, in that beautiful country and seen what it meant for a family to sacrifice for the work of God. Circumstances never seemed to rattle him much. Don had seen his father travel the

continent of Africa working to support the work of spreading Christian literature. He heard the miracle stories over and over about how God, through His providence, had brought his father through challenge after challenge. He had heard his father share the testimony of how God had guided him on a journey from Finland all the way to the southern part of Italy during the beginning of World War II. His father was attempting to find a way back to America to meet up with his family who had left

England some time before. As he stood at the port in southern Italy, hoping and praying he could get on the last ship leaving, he knew it would take a miracle considering there were 400 people signed up ahead of him. As he approached the clerk who was allowing passengers to board, he stated his name only to have the clerk exclaim that there were 400 other people ahead of him. Don's father respectfully pointed to the dock and asked, "But where are they?" As the clerk looked around, he saw that there wasn't a person waiting to board that was ahead of Don's father. With that, he beckoned him to board. Levi Vixie was reunited with his family in New York City soon thereafter.

The stories of faith Don had seen happen to his father had solidified in his heart that God would honor those who honor Him. At the very core of this situation was the simple truth of doing the right thing

because it was the right thing. Yes, there were excuses available that could make a person feel justified in the moment. However at the end of the day, it would be clear that doing regular duties on the Sabbath would be choosing man over God. If Don had been at his post of duty, helping wounded soldiers and caring for medical needs, there would be no question. This was different; Don knew in that moment what he must do. He told the sergeant that he was entitled, through government legislation, a day of worship and that he would not be able to perform his requested duty on that day. The sergeant was furious. "Fine!" he said. "You can have your Sabbath off, but you aren't going to spend it in this camp!" With that he ordered Don to leave camp and not to come back until his Sabbath was over.

The peninsula of Korea sees a winter that can be snowy and cold. As Don trudged out of camp, he realized that he was going to spend hours outside in the elements without the shelter or protection his camp afforded him. He was not deterred. With Bible in hand, he trudged around in knee-deep snow until he

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# Transitions in Mission



Tim Castanon will be the new manager of the Adventist Book Center. With a degree in accounting, he has had experience in sales, business, marketing, and construction for many years. Gary Hillebert will be retiring and work on a part-time basis.

Philip Mills, Jr. will be pastoring the Benton Harbor Fair Plain and Coloma Churches. He replaces Jonathan Rosengren who is on educational leave.

Moise Ratsara will be pastoring the Jackson and Bunker Hills Churches. He replaces Kevin Scott who has taken a call to the Maritime Conference in Canada.

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was able to find a place where he could carve out a snow cave. It was there that he spent the Sabbath hours reading his Bible. Upon returning to camp at sundown, the sergeant put him to work in the kitchen all night long. As morning dawned, the sergeant then informed him that he would be doing his regular Sunday duties. This treatment went for several weeks.

Because of Don's stand for the right, his sergeant saw to it that he lost a rank for his "uncooperative" behavior related to the Sabbath. In spite of these difficulties, Don stayed true to his beliefs and continued to spend the entire Sabbath outside of camp. Everyone in his unit knew what was going on. This became apparent when the captain came before the group to ask if there were volunteers to go to the front lines. Don's hand shot up immediately! Everyone around him laughed because they knew the difficulties he was experiencing were bad enough. Any change, no matter where it would be, was looked at as a relief!

On the front lines, this conscientious objector carried forward his duties with excellence. It was at this time that Don was able to see how the protective hand of God looked after His children. During the lunch hour one day outside the bunker, a mortar round landed only six feet away from Don. The shrapnel from the blast hit the man in front of him and behind him, but it did not do anything more than graze his cheek without a puncture at all. Don was able to turn and "patch" up the wounds of the two fallen comrades. "A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee." (Psalm 91:7, KJV) On another occasion, Don and his platoon were out on patrol. Stopping for a rest, they were huddled up against a

mountainside before setting out again to finish the patrol. All of a sudden, one of the other members of the platoon yelled, "Let's run!" at which point everyone started running. After about 100 yards, the men looked back to see a mortar shell land in the exact spot where they had been resting a short time before.

As the time of Don's tour was about to end, a new captain called him into the office. By this time Don had earned back his lost rank because of exceptional performance to duty. The captain told him that he knew what he had been through previously. He told him of how well he had done on the front lines and that if he was willing to sign up for another portion of time, he would give him the rank of sergeant. Don declined because he said he wanted to go home and start back to school.

I'm personally grateful that he didn't sign back up for another tour of duty in Korea because Dr. Donald Vixie eventually become my father-in-law! After leaving the Army, Dr. Vixie went on to complete medical school and practiced as an internist for over

30 years in Flint, Michigan where he and his wife Lee retired and are currently living. They attend the South Flint Seventh-day Adventist Church where Dr. Vixie teaches Sabbath School class and Lee is a deaconess.

Dr. Vixie's example of faithfulness and dedication to his heavenly Captain is an encouragement to all of us as we seek, by God's grace and power, to be faithful, even as the needle is to the pole.



*Pictured is Donna Hall, her brother Keith and parents Don and Lee Vixie*

# MICHIGAN CONFERENCE OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

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## July

- 9-13 RAD Outpost/RAD Backpack/  
RAD Canoe (Ages 13-16) -  
Camp Au Sable
- 9-13 Father/Son Backpacking  
Outpost/ Father/Son Canoe  
Outpost - Camp Au Sable
- 9-13 Mini Family Camp - Camp Au  
Sable
- 13-19 Family Camp 1 - Camp Au  
Sable
- 20-26 Family Camp 2 - Camp Au  
Sable
- 23- 25 Campus L.E.A.D.S.
- 27-Aug 2 Family Camp 3 - Camp Au  
Sable
- 31-Aug 2 UP Camp Meeting

## August

- 3-4 New Teachers Orientation -  
Camp Au Sable
- 4-6 K-12 Teachers Convention -  
Camp Au Sable
- 6-7 Teacher 1-8 Science In-Service -  
Camp Au Sable
- 6-9 ASI - Grand Rapids
- 12-16 Camporee - Osh Kosh
- 18-20 Ministerial Retreat
- 21 School Starts
- 22-24 Adventurer Workshop -  
Camp Au Sable
- 26 MI Conference Executive  
Committee - Conference Room
- 28 MI Conference Board of Ed
- 31 Lay Advisory

## Pastor, I Am Ready.

—E. J. Wolf

*Pastor of the Carp Lake, Central Lake, and Gaylord Churches*

A young 40-something male walked into church one Sabbath and said, “Hi pastor! I have been listening to Strong Tower Radio and I want to get baptized.” I was a little overwhelmed. It usually takes several months of studying with people to get them ready for baptism. I asked him to have a seat so that we could talk.

Dennis drives a FedEx truck five days a week to the Upper Peninsula. He was scanning the radio one day last July and came across a station discussing creation and evolution. The speaker’s message so griped him that he tuned in everyday. Dennis looked forward to going to work every day so that he could listen to *Bible Answers* by Doug Batchelor and *Revelation Seminars* by Kenneth Cox. He was convicted of keeping the

Sabbath. Looking for an Adventist church online, he found us.

What Dennis didn’t know was that he came as an answer to our prayers. Our church in Gaylord will be building an addition for a new multipurpose room that will be a fellowship hall and a one-room school. We have been praying for the Lord to lead young parents to us, so that we can offer a first-class Christian education and fill the classroom. In its first year, Dennis came in with his two children, Zac (8) and Patience (6.)

When I studied with him, it was clear that he had studied and loved the Word of God. Dennis Smith was baptized on April 19<sup>th</sup> over Easter weekend. His wife and two children were there exclaiming “Amen!” after each of the baptismal vows he took.

We were so moved by Dennis that our little church decided to dig deep into our pockets to help Strong Tower Radio so that God can broaden their footprint in Northern Michigan. We look forward to hearing 93.9 FM in a few short weeks/ months ahead. May God continue to move people to hear and respond to the Word of God!

