



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

Michigan Memo

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God, The Seeker

— Beth Thomas

Grand Haven Communication Director

I will never set foot in an Adventist church again!” Joyce vowed. Hurt and embarrassed, guilt guided her decision.

Joyce wasn’t raised with any religious background. One day when she was eight, she was visiting her father at work. Her attention was drawn to a Salvation Army band holding a sidewalk service down the street. As she listened, Joyce’s interest grew. She began attending services with her mother and they joined the church.

Five years later, a colporteur knocked on their door. He offered personal Bible studies to Joyce’s mother. As precious truths from the Bible unfolded, Joyce’s mother was touched. She began attending the Adventist church. Joyce was angry with her mother’s decision. She was happy in the Salvation Army! The turning point came one evening when she overheard her mother’s Bible study on the Second Coming. The closeness of Christ’s return touched her and she knew that she was not ready. In August 1964, at the age of 13 Joyce was baptized as a Seventh-day Adventist.

She became involved in Sabbath School, teaching Cradle Roll. Then, Joyce learned she was pregnant. Sixteen and unmarried,

her own feelings of guilt were reinforced by some of her church family. Her office was removed, and as she learned the process of church discipline, she asked the board to remove her name from membership. She wanted to spare her mother the embarrassment of appearing before the church. Frustrated and resentful, she swore she would never set foot in an Adventist church again.



Pastor Jarod Thomas and Jocye Bocek

For twenty-eight years, Joyce lived life on her terms but God never abandoned her. Ezekiel 34:11,16a says that the Lord Himself will search for His sheep. He will seek the lost and bring back what was driven away.

With the 1990 birth of her granddaughter, something began to change. Joyce had not raised her daughter with any religious foundation. She felt her granddaughter, who lived with her, needed more. She began searching for a church. However she couldn’t find contentment in any she attended. A phrase kept coming to her mind. “Get back to basics.” Back to basics? What could be more basic than the Ten Commandments? She felt she was doing all right with most of them... But what about the fourth? She was strongly convicted that she should be keeping the Sabbath.

(Continued on page 6)



President's Perspective

Christ In You the Hope of Glory

— Jay Gallimore
Conference President

Does this powerful declaration from Colossians 1:27 hold the key to being ready for Jesus to come? For some time now, there has been an intense focus on justification alone as a legal transaction. Consequently, some very interesting concepts are being promoted. So we ask the following: Does Christ's atonement fix our record in heaven and as a result, can we sin and not worry too much? Will Jesus repair your character when He comes or before He comes? Will we be sinning right up to the time that Jesus comes, but have nothing to worry about because we are covered?

The Apostle John's sober declaration, "Let him that is holy be holy still and he that is filthy be filthy still," is not talked much about these days. The first angel's message to "Fear God and give glory to Him," is about being ready when the "hour of His judgment" shall be finished. With all the signs of the end gathering around us, we desperately need a revival of the seriousness of this message! Our world will not want to hear this proclamation any more than Noah's world wanted to hear his call to repentance. Nevertheless, their unbelief didn't change the arrival of the Flood.

Just because people don't want to believe in the close of human probation before Jesus comes, doesn't mean it won't happen. The Seventh-day Adventist Church exists to give those Three Angels' messages. We are God's alarm bell declaring "with a loud voice" to fear God and give glory to Him by forsaking our sins and putting on righteousness.

In contrast, secular Christianity has substituted a new soundtrack for the Gospel message. That soundtrack sings to the world that the Gospel is good

news because they can be saved while clinging to their sins. Nothing could be further from the truth. Are we in danger of listening to this "peace and safety" soundtrack rather than our own alarm bell? That brings me back to the issue of justification.

Justification is much more than the legal work of writing our name in the book of life and forgiving us of our sins. It is also an experience. To experience justification, we must experience the death of Christ through heartfelt repentance for our sins. Then and only then will we feel the power of His resurrection in a new life. It is "being born again." It is "Christ in you, the hope of glory." Justification forms a new union with Christ and sanctification preserves it.

"Our union with our all-powerful Christ means everything to us."

While this new union with Christ cannot be separated from the truth, it is not just a theory. It is a real living union with Christ which is dynamic and powerful within you. "Christ in you" purifies everything He touches. Yes, it is true that Jesus is in heaven and is literally sitting at the right hand of the Father as our High Priest. But He is also "in us the hope of glory." How can this be?

Just before Jesus went to Calvary, He told us that He would not leave us orphans. He promised that the Spirit of truth, who was Someone like Himself, would come and be our teacher and helper. It is by

means of the Holy Spirit that the living Christ can be in Heaven and still form a union with each of us on earth. It is by this union with Christ that we subdue our carnal nature, resist the temptations of the world, and cause Satan to flee from us.

This union with Christ means everything to us! "Christ became one flesh with us, in order that we might become one spirit with Him. It is by virtue of this union that we are to come forth from the grave, not merely as manifestation of the power of Christ, but because, through faith, His life has become ours. Those who see Christ in His true character, and receive Him into the heart, have everlasting life. It is through the Spirit that Christ dwells in us; and the Spirit of God, received into the heart by faith, is the beginning of the life eternal." (*Desire of Ages*, p. 388)

But what does that have to do with the close of probation? One of the great teachings of the Seventh-day Adventist church is that Jesus is in the Holy of Holies finishing His great work of redemption. This ministry of Jesus was symbolized in the earthly Sanctuary as the Day of Atonement or Yom Kippur. It is also known as the "hour of God's Judgment" in Revelation 14:7. It pointed forward to the time of the end just before Jesus would come. During this time, Jesus would purify His people so they would be ready for His glorious appearing.

The Day of Atonement was spent as a time of special purification for each Israelite. That cleansing was done by searching the heart and repenting of any cherished sin. It is only in repentance that the blood of Christ will protect you. Unrepentant sin will leave you exposed to the "hour of judgment" without protection. The Day of Judgment fixes

our destiny forever. Hence the words: “he that is holy let him be holy still and he that is filthy let him be filthy still.” Since Jesus comes with His reward, it is obvious that this judgment must take place *before* Jesus comes.

This final work which our High Priest is doing in the Heavenly Sanctuary *for us* - He also must do *in us!* The two are tied together. However, this “cleansing of the Sanctuary” is not for us alone. For centuries, God has forgiven us and has taken on Himself the liability for our sins before the universe. Our sins and His forgiveness have been faithfully recorded in the book of life. But now in the “hour of God’s Judgment” with “ten thousand times ten thousand” gathered in special session around the throne, our High Priest will show the universe two things. First, that even though God is the Creator He is not to blame for the sin. And secondly, even though He is not to blame, He gave His only begotten Son as a “ransom” and paid the penalty for our sins.

In addition to being satisfied that God is not responsible for our sins, the Universe also wants to be satisfied that those who are saved will never ever sin again. And therefore, they will be no threat to the security of the universe. That is why the work that our High Priest *does for us* must also be done *in us*.

As Jesus cleanses and removes our sins from the record, He must simultaneously cleanse them from our hearts forever. He will show the universe that His sacrifice

not only pays for our penalty, but cleanses us while living in the midst of planet Earth’s final rebellion. By wiping sin out of our affections, He wipes its power out of our lives. Thus He prepares us to live after the close of probation when there is no more intercession for sin.

That’s why, as our Heavenly High Priest, He appeals to us to “open the door.” If we open that door, He will form a union with us. By virtue of that union, He prepares us for the close of human probation. The glory of His constant presence in our minds and hearts will cause us to love Him more than anything on earth. The carnal nature’s pleas for sinful pleasure, the world’s offer for security, and the Devil’s appeals to doubt God’s love in the midst of trouble will be overcome. Christ Jesus, by means of the Holy Spirit, will form a union so powerful that when probation closes, we will not sin - not because we cannot, but because we will not!

Our union with our all-powerful Christ means everything to us! This union can become unbreakable by the Holy Spirit leading us into the practice of constant prayer, unselfish love, and the study of the Word. So when probation closes, nothing, not our carnal nature, not the world, not the Devil, nor his evil angels will be able to make us transgress the law of God. And during that time, between the close of probation and the coming of Jesus, all that the Judge of the universe will see when He looks at us is, Christ *in us*, the hope of Glory!”



Michigan’s 1 Million GLOW Challenge

On February 28, 2015, the 1 Million GLOW Challenge was kicked off in over 100 churches across Michigan as part of the “Plant” phase of the Grow Michigan evangelism initiative!

The goal of the 1 Million GLOW Challenge is for every member to share 1 GLOW tract per day or 30 tracts per month. GLOW packets of 30 tracts that were prepared by the Literature Ministries Department for the February 28 Kick-Off were purchased by churches to be given to each member to reach their month’s goal.

For each successive month in the challenge, churches will make their own GLOW packets of 30 for each member. Additionally, GLOW tracts can be purchased from the Literature Ministries Department at a discounted rate during the entire challenge (March 1, 2015 - February 29, 2016). Small Ziploc bags will also be provided free of charge that were used for the Kick-Off packets.

Included are also explanatory cards, which list the challenge dates, the website where tracts distributed can be reported (growmichiganchurches.com), and the Michigan GLOW Facebook page (fb.com/michianglow), where pictures or experiences of members planting tracts may be shared! It also lists ideas to share GLOW tracts, with many and very easy ways to distribute them. Let’s get GLOWing!

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

March 30 - April 3

Detroit Spanish Cavalry/Spanish
Ebenezer/Pontiac Spanish
Pastor Mariano Arrua

Michelle Odinma, Laura Ritter
Community Services - John Ledl

April 20-24

Grand Rapids Central/Lowell
Pastors Bob Stewart/
Young Deug Kim
Bible Worker - Sandi Stewart
Grand Rapids Adventist Academy -
Phil Engelman, principal,
Plus 11 teachers and staff

April 6-10

Stevensville
Pastor Dave Gotshall

April 13-17

Detroit Romanian/Oakwood
Pastor Ariel Roldan
Bible Worker - Rodney MacCallum
Oakwood Academy -
Nicki Grimsley, principal,

April 27 - May 1

Monroe/Tecumseh
Pastor Rodney Thompson



Helping the Homeless in Hastings

— Terri Yochum
Special Correspondent

Is homelessness a problem in Barry County? Gordon Barker can't speak for the whole county, but his passion for the issue in the city of Hastings burns hotter than the steaming cups of soup he brings to men sleeping under the nearby pedestrian bridge spanning the Thornapple River.

After affiliating with the local Seventh-day Adventist Church, Barker learned of the work of the Adventist Community Center, located at 502 E. Green St., which, since 1974, has provided individuals with clothing, shoes, bedding and other necessities, free of charge. After a little research, Barker learned that two-story house was zoned properly for both the store and a shelter, thus allowing the downstairs clothing area and upstairs apartments to co-exist and function together.

With approval from the city and the church, Barker started first by approaching the men he found living in tents under the pedestrian bridge, offering hot soup on cold nights. He listened to their stories and explained his new program. "The goal is to take in homeless men and equip them to find jobs and secure their own housing," he explained. He provides transportation, interview clothing and tips, job leads, and moral support. When appropriate, he also serves as a reference.

In exchange for the assistance from Barker and the church, unemployed residents are required to work 32 hours per week, either in the Adventist Community Center store or at Habitat for Humanity. Store duties include checking in donated merchandise, sorting, washing, hanging, and storing it. In addition, each person is assigned a household chore to be completed on a daily basis, such as cooking, washing dishes, and sweeping the floor. Television and internet privileges are suspended if responsibilities are not met. "In addition, I work with the Michigan State Housing Development Authority to help the residents qualify for housing vouchers through a program called 'Rapid Re-Housing,'" Barker said. "One resident will soon obtain partial custody of his children as a direct result of the program."

"There is no kick-out policy here, people can choose to walk away if they choose not to meet their responsibilities," said Barker of the regimen he maintains. "But when they live here, they're going to work and learn to be servants because that's how they'll turn their lives around and dig themselves out of the homeless hole. "Not everyone succeeds, but, if they fall, I pick them up and we start over."

Chris (last name withheld), another resident, was facing financial and legal issues pertaining to what he referred to as, "insane child support." He had a job but could not afford a place of his own. He was staying with a friend, but, after a few months, the friendship became strained and Chris thought it best to leave. "I was sleeping in my vehicle and didn't know about the center," said Chris. "When I heard about it, I was a little leery because I wasn't a Seventh-day Adventist. I came anyway and have been blessed ever since. "Gordon has helped me a great deal, and others, too. He's been able to pull some miraculous strings. I go to church more often than I used to and appreciate every opportunity I'm given."



Another man, also wishing to remain anonymous, had been in the foster care system for several years. "I lived in 27 foster homes," he said. "I'm grateful to be here." Residents also receive medical, dental, and vision exams. Barker wants to make sure they are healthy and able to embark on their life-changing journeys. "I honestly believe that God has put me in this spot to do what we're doing," said Barker. "We always seem to have what we need, when we need it."

"This problem is not going away by itself," he summed up for a visitor. "When we all work together, our efforts have a significant impact on the entire community. The Seventh-day Adventist Community Center is open to all who have a genuine need.

Editorial Note: This story is reprinted with permission and excerpted from its original publication in the Hastings Reminder, entitled Homeless Men Finding Refuge at Local Church Shelter on January 24, 2015. With full support from the local church, the Hastings Adventist Community Service Center has been a powerful witness in that community to have been highlighted in their community newsletter.



Become invaluable! Join us in Chen Shun Hall on the campus of Andrews University on April 25 for a spontaneous Volunteer Seminar and be certified as a Disaster Response Volunteer in one day! This free training gives you knowledge in the many facets of disaster response, empowering you to volunteer in any situation. Registration starts at 8:30 AM with lunch and dinner provided. To RSVP, visit misda.org or call 517-316-1565.

Cleanly and Clearly Caring for Communités

—Justin Kim

Communication Director

About smack in the middle of Lower Michigan lies an unassuming agricultural region called Gratiot County. Surrounded with wind turbines nearby, its county seat, Ithaca, is home not only to the Ithaca Seventh-day Adventist Church, but to its corresponding partner in ministry, the Gratiot County Adventist Community Services (ACS).

In the middle of the week, while children are studying and playing at the neighboring Ithaca Seventh-day Adventist Elementary School, the ACS building, recently built in 2008, is rupturing with activity. At the helm of this ministry is Virginia Pfeifle, a retired ACS director for the Michigan Conference, who has been doing this ministry for more than 40 years. She leads a pack of volunteer staff from the church and community from various backgrounds.

What makes this center stand out from any other social service organization is frankly the smell. While other community depositories have the odor of old feet and hand-me-downs, Virginia leads her diverse crew to wash and launder everything as needed, from jackets to sneakers, using a couple of their in-house laundry machines. In addition, everything is well-organized and displayed in a thoughtful manner. From jeans to baby clothes, every article of clothing is clean, inventoried, and ready to be of service. Virginia suggests that the test of “if you’d wear it, then we’ll take it” doesn’t always apply, for “we all have our ideas of what that would be, but we all want nothing but the best so those that receive the clothing feel we cared about them.”

Not only in attention to small details, but even in larger plans, Virginia was involved in the building plans of the ACS center, creating the layout “the way she wanted it to be,” says one of her fellow volunteers. This layout causes a friendly, open, and clean environment to service their community. Although walk-ins are not turned away, people are usually seen by appointment with a short interview conducted to better understand their needs. Clients are then able to select seasonal clothing for men, women, children, and infants off the prearranged and well thought-out clothing racks. The busiest time is right before school when needy parents are seeking a little more support and resources for their student children.

Volunteers spend their time doing meticulous inventory, ensuring the cleanliness of used, laundered footwear and baby

clothes, folding jeans and blankets with precision, and even saving and accumulating funds to purchase newer articles of clothing from sales at local businesses such as Walmart, Kmart, etc. “We need to get the most for our money!” says Virginia, epitomizing frugality for the Lord’s service. Bedding, linens, and limited kitchenware are additionally given based on need.

Some of the volunteer ladies also make quilt tops, and the finished quilts are then given to those who have experienced loss by fire, are victims of domestic problems, or have other extenuating circumstances.

Already they have about 40 quilts made with the same care and precision exemplified at the center. Some of the funding for new material has come from memorials left for the ministry.

The team has donated about 3,000 articles of clothing to other areas in North America, namely the Appalachian regions. They have also been known to assist prison communities with clothes. With at least 350 plus clients last year, this ministry has put in about 1,800 volunteer hours, distributed over 3,000 articles of clothing locally, and purchased more than 80 pairs of children’s shoes.



Virginia Pfeifle, Director of Gratiot County CS Center



Virginia and her ministry team are clearly a larger witness in the community. Since the opening of the new ACS building, they have received over \$25,000 in grant money from the Gratiot County Community Foundation as well as many new items and financial help from donors. A local high school teacher has

connected with the center to bring students to volunteer for their service class. Local agencies such as the Red Cross, Mid-Michigan Health Department, Department of Human Services, Community Mental Health, other churches, fire departments, and food banks also provide referrals for people to come.

Following Christ’s method, this efficient operation seeks to meet the needs of their local neighborhood, not only material needs, but also spiritual needs. They distribute GLOW tracts, Bibles, Balance Magazines (the health periodical published by the Michigan Conference), and non-smoking, stress, weight, and exercise pamphlets upon request when the clients check out. More than a used clothing donation store, this tidy and neat ministry is cleanly and clearly caring for Christ’s communities.

City Mayor Welcomes New Pastor

— Charlotte Erickson
Battle Creek Tabernacle Communication Director

Deb Owens, the mayor of Battle Creek, Michigan, welcomed Pastor Rob Benardo to the Battle Creek Tabernacle on Sabbath, January 24. The mayor spoke to the congregation at the special dedication service for the new pastor.



Mayor Deb Owens welcomes Pastor Benardo to Battle Creek

Benardo had already met with some of the city leaders, and when he invited the mayor to the church, she readily accepted.

In her remarks to the congregation, Mayor Owens referred to the history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Battle Creek and commended the church for its positive influence over the years. “We are

a city who cares,” she said, “and we are a city who continues to achieve great things through our faith.” She said she was happy to welcome Benardo to Battle Creek and commended him for his commitment to his church and its people and also for his untiring dedication and service to the community. Owens stayed for the church service and visited with church members when the service was over.

Benardo, who is originally from southern Florida, fills the vacancy left by Pastor Bruce Moore, who retired in June 2014. Benardo graduated from Andrews University in 1991 and spent the next nine years as a real estate broker in North Carolina. In 2000 he entered full-time pastoral ministry. He pastored in Michigan for six years before moving to California and says he

is happy to return to Michigan to work in the city of Battle Creek.

Benardo’s wife, Olga, grew up in former Yugoslavia and is a licensed physical therapist. She is active in her husband’s ministry and has a special interest in refugee ministries. They have two daughters, Amaris, who is studying physical therapy in California, and Alexia, a high school student.

Highlights of Benardo’s 23 years in ministry include Kids Club, a ministry for elementary school children; a church plant in Grand Rapids, Michigan; and “the many wonderful people we have been privileged to serve over the years,” says Benardo.

The Benardos were also welcomed to the church by Pastor Jim Micheff from the Michigan Conference. Micheff led the congregation and the Benardos in a special dedication charge.



Pictured here are Olga, daughters Amaris and Alexia, with Pastor Rob Benardo.

Pastor Benardo says his dream for Battle Creek is that it be a “vibrant, Christ-centered, friendly church that is active and visible in the community – a place where people are growing closer to God and infecting others with their Christ-like spirit.”

(Continued from front page)

Putting aside her previous experience, Joyce visited her local Adventist church. It was Sabbath before Mother’s Day in 2012. She was greeted warmly as they asked, “What brings you to visit with us today?” Thinking carefully, Joyce replied, “God.” What began with that initial visit turned into two years of weekly Bible studies. She had strong reservations, however, with certain biblical truths such as clean and unclean foods. She would never be baptized without resolving the issue.

One Sabbath morning, right before Mother’s Day in 2014, Joyce was having her own personal study. As she connected verse with verse, she came upon Revelation 18:2. “Babylon...has become

a...cage for every unclean bird.” The Holy Spirit cut through her doubts. If some birds are unclean at the Second Coming, they must be unclean now. There was her answer! She texted the pastor and said she was ready. She wanted to be baptized.

Fifty years after first joining the Adventist church, Joyce was re-baptized in August of 2014. But this time, it’s different. “I have a passion for the Word of God,” she says. “I’m not sitting in church adhering to ‘do’s and don’t’s’. I have a relationship with God. I’m an Adventist in my heart.” She is now actively involved in community service and giving personal Bible studies.

Transitions in Mission

Previously a school teacher at Loma Linda Academy, Bryan Choi's rediscovery of the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy led to his reconversion. He attended the Amazing Facts Center of Evangelism and the Seminary. He and his wife Miae have one daughter Chloe. He will be leading the Buchanan Church, previously pastored by Willie Iwankiw, who moved to the Washington Conference.



Daniel Ferraz will be pastoring the Holly and Grand Blanc churches and serve as the District 8 Supervisor. He replaces David Salazar who has taken a call in the Central California Conference.

Jonathan Flores will pastor the Battle Creek and Kalamazoo Spanish churches.

David Garcia is the new pastor of the Lansing Spanish Church.

Jorge Mata adds the Lawrence Spanish Church to his local district of churches.

Bayani Pastrana is the pastor of the Delton Church as well as the associate pastor of the Battle Creek Tabernacle.

Wes Peppers serves as the District seven supervisor

William Richardson adds the Hartford Church to his responsibilities at the Covert and Pullman churches.

Harry Rogers will be pastoring the Glenwood and Edwardsburg churches. He steps in as Isaiah Santos has retired.

Don Sparks will pastor the Estey and Gladwin churches.

Mariano Arrua will pastor the Detroit Calvary, Detroit Ebenezer, and Pontiac Spanish churches. Victor Debiase has moved to Argentina.

Rob Benardo will be the District 11 Supervisor.

Darryl Bentley will be the pastor of the Detroit Metropolitan Church early May.

(Continued from back page)

The funeral was held at the Buchanan Seventh-day Adventist Church. His Amish family and friends also came to attend from Goshen, Indiana, filling the church with bonnets. We shared a meal with them for which they were very appreciative.

Wayne's sister had a born-again experience through his death, as she shared with me at that meal. As a result, my husband Pastor Lee Tripp and I have been continuing dialoguing with her, visiting her, and even receiving a very nice Christmas card from her. I even called our pastor friend from Goshen, who attended the funeral and introduced them together. He is currently setting up Bible studies with Wayne's niece and her husband.

It was God's providence that I met Wayne. And through his life and death, we have had an great opportunity to witness to our Amish brothers and sisters. Please join us in prayer for these wonderful people that God would make a breakthrough with the Three Angels' messages.



Planned Giving and Trust Services



This department of the Michigan Conference was established to assist you and your family to fulfill your personal wishes of distributing a lifetime of accumulated treasures. At your invitation, we will visit you to brainstorm about your dreams of providing for family and friends while remembering the Lord's work at the same time.

We are able to help you with a *will, durable power of attorney, living wills, charitable gift annuities, various kinds of trusts*, and many other things. Basic estate planning documents are done at no cost to you.

We will also be taking appointments during Michigan camp meeting, June 13-19, 2015 (except for Sabbath hours) to assist those interested and in need. Come visit us on Sunday, June 14, at 4:30 PM in the Administration Building Chapel to hear Attorney Douglas G. Chalgian sharing the essentials of elder care.

We are here to serve you and help you be a faithful steward of all that God has entrusted to you. Please contact us for more information with any questions or concerns you may have or to schedule an appointment at (517) 316-1520.



April

- 3-5 Women's Ministries Retreat I
Camp Au Sable
- 10-12 Women's Ministries Retreat II
Camp Au Sable
- 17-19 Women's Ministries Retreat III
Camp Au Sable
- 17-19 Pathfinder Bible Experience -
Division Level, Dallas, Texas
- 17-19 LUC ASI Spring Fellowship
- 23 K-12 Board of Education
- 24-26 VBS Workshop Camp Au Sable
- 27-May 3 GLAA Home Leave
- 28 MI Conference Executive
Committee - Conference Rm
- 29 Camp Meeting Directors

May

- 1-3 Andrews University Graduation
- 3 Adventurer Fun Day - GLAA
- 4-8 Camp Au Sable Work Week
- 10 Mother's Day
- 10-17 Health Camp - Camp Au Sable
- 13 CM Leaders - GLAA
- 15-17 Pathfinder Fair -
Camp Au Sable
- 22-24 Hispanic Camp Meeting
- 22-25 Memorial Day Weekend -
Office Closed
- 26 MI Conference Executive
Committee - Conference Rm
- 29-31 GLAA Graduation Weekend
- 31 - June 7 Certification Week -
Camp Au Sable

Feeding Animals and Amish Funerals

— Justin Kim

As Told By Marjorie Kean-Tripp, Member of the Buchanan Church

While taking my walk one summer day at Niles Park, I was fascinated to see something that was going on. A man that I later learned was 53 years of age was leaning over a cat. When I asked what was wrong with it, the man replied that the stray was hungry and that he was about to buy some food for it at the store. It immediately reminded me of Jesus' concern for animals.

We continued the conversation as I walked and he got on his bicycle. I then saw his whole right side badly burned. I asked him what had happened. He reiterated that his family was Amish and that they had a wood stove. When four years old, he accidentally grabbed a can of flammable liquid and threw it into the stove, causing an explosion that marred his body. He had lots of operations throughout his life, even affecting his speech.

It was then when I asked him if he would like to have Bible studies, to which he replied he would. We began studies at my home. Wayne Miller was his name and he was very excited about every lesson. He was attending college and worked a night shift at the Epocot Center in South Bend,

Indiana. Wayne shared his Bible study papers with a co-worker and she eventually joined in with the studies.

Upon completion, Wayne had accepted everything presented to him. However around the same time, he was having some physical problems and was told that he had

an aggressive cancer involving the colon. Because he was getting weak and sick, some elders came and anointed Wayne. The next morning he was taken to the hospital and diagnosed also with terminal pneumonia. Then Pastor Willie Iwankiw came to the hospital with the elders and seminary students for a season of prayer and singing. Since Wayne was getting worse, the pastor made a video at

the hospital, took him in on profession of faith, and showed the video at church to vote in his membership to the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Wayne still insisted that he was going to get baptized later even though he had previously been baptized by immersion. However, he never received the opportunity as his Amish family pulled the plug according to his medical diagnosis and level of pain and suffering.

(Continued on page 7)

