



YOUTH & ADULT MISSION

2015 • **QUARTER 1** • NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION



www.AdventistMission.org

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On the Cover: Mr. Roland Moody has profoundly impacted the lives of generations of native Alaskans through the mission school and camp he established.

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 = stories of special interest to teens

Your Offerings at Work



The South-Pacific Division (SPD) received the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering for the First Quarter, 2013. One of the projects was to provide solar-

powered "Godpods" containing the Bible and other religious literature for people in Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu. Here is a letter of thanks:

"The Godpods have been a huge blessing for the church to use as a tool to reach the people in the SPD. For many, this is the first time they have heard the gospel message. The Godpods are

freely distributed to those who are poor, illiterate and are in isolated areas. We are making good progress in distributing 5,750 Godpods . . . [and] would like to express our deep gratitude to the General Conference and the church for their support to bring the everlasting gospel to all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues through the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering for the Godpods.

Geraldine Przybylko,
Adventist Media Network,
Wahroonga, N.S.W.,
Australia



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Dear Sabbath School Leader,

Welcome to a new year, a new quarter, and a new division on which to focus our attention and our prayers.

North American Division

The North American Division includes Canada, the United States of America and its territories of Guam and Wake Island, the Federated States of Micronesia, the island nation of Bermuda, and several island possessions.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church was born and nurtured in North America, where it was officially organized in 1863. Today the Adventist Church has more than 18 million members, and ministers in 216 countries around the world in more than 900 languages.

But growth of the church in North America, like much of Europe and Australia, has slowed. Today the North

American Division (NAD) has a little more than one million members, comprising less than 7 percent of the church's worldwide membership.

This quarter we're featuring exciting stories coming from some of the most remote parts of this division—from the warm tropical islands of Guam and Micronesia to the cool and beautiful state of Alaska and the rolling mountains and rivers of Appalachia, you will see God's hand moving in mighty ways through His people in NAD.

In addition to the stories and information provided in this quarterly magazine, we would like to also remind you that many excellent mission stories are available to you completely free on our new Mission Spotlight/Mission 360 DVD. Your church should receive one free each quarter. In addition, you may also download the video stories (and quarterly magazines) at www.adventistmission.org/resources.

Please remind people that in addition to giving their Thirteenth Sabbath Offering on the last Sabbath of the quarter, they are also welcome to give to this and other Adventist Mission offerings at any time on our secure website: www.adventistmission.org/give

Thank you for all you do to promote mission—the heartbeat of Adventism! May the Lord richly bless you!

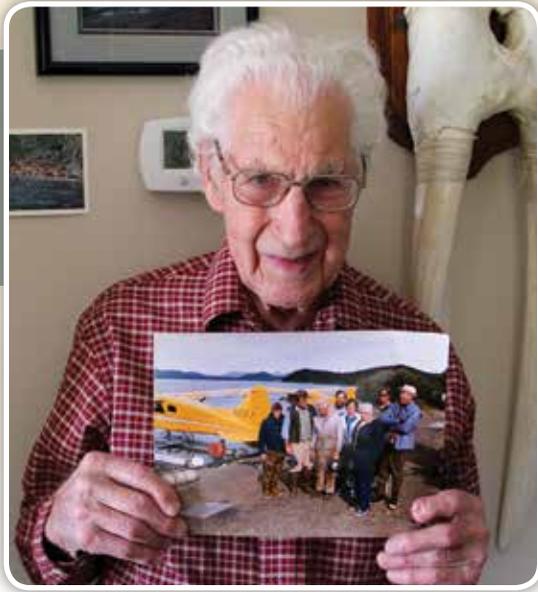
Gina Wahlen, *Editor*

Opportunities

The Thirteenth Sabbath Offering this quarter will help:

- build bathhouses with showers and toilets at Camp Polaris, near Dillingham, Alaska;
- hold 35 evangelistic meetings simultaneously across the Mountain View Conference, West Virginia;
- provide gymnasiums for Adventist schools in the Guam-Micronesia Mission.

A Guiding Star



Roland

Life was hard in the western Washington town of Humptulips during the 1930s. Located on the Humptulips River on the Olympic peninsula, the town had seen better days for the commercial fishermen trying to earn a living.

One family, the Moodys, found life so difficult in Humptulips that they decided to follow Mrs. Moody's brother to Alaska, where, according to the brother, the fishing was good and there was money to be made. The family of six packed up and traveled the 2,500 miles (4,023 km.) from Humptulips, to the Canadian border, then on through British Columbia and the Yukon before heading west to the frontier town of Dillingham, Alaska. From Dillingham they headed up the Wood River, finally arriving on the remote shores of Lake Aleknagik.

Although Aleknagik is a Yupik word meaning "wrong way home," the Moody family found a good place to settle beside the lake, where they built a small log

cabin. Mr. Moody and the eldest son took their large fishing boat down into Bristol Bay, home of the world's largest source of red salmon, while Mrs. Moody cared for the three younger children at home.

Sadly, just a few months after settling into their new home, tragedy struck the Moody family. As father and eldest son headed up the river from Dillingham, somehow both men ended up in the fast current and drowned, leaving the mother to raise the two younger sons and a daughter.

A Family of Faith

Being a family of faith, the mother continued to gather the children for worship and on Sabbath they met with Mrs. Moody's brother and his family. During the week, Mrs. Moody carried out the family fishing business, with the help of her two sons, Lloyd, 14, and Roland, 13.

"We grew up fast," remembers Roland. "We had a mother and little sister to help."

To help their family survive, Lloyd and Roland had little time for school as they worked as commercial fisherman near their home. By the time they were no longer teens, the young men had not yet finished at the rural public school. Early each morning Roland, who was now 20, built a fire in the school's wood stove so that the place would be warm. During those early mornings, Roland not only warmed up the

classroom—he also took the opportunity to get to know the school’s beautiful young teacher, Miss Jackie. By the end of the year, they were married and set up a home beside Lake Aleknagik.

Camp Polaris—a Guiding Star

After they married, Roland and Jackie started talking about ways to reach out to the native Alaskan community around them, and decided to build a Seventh-day Adventist school on their property by the lake. They called it the “Mission School” and offered grades 1 through 8. Students and parents were delighted, and kids came from as far away as Nome just to attend the mission school. In order to accommodate the students, two dormitories were built. Additionally, the Moodys started an Adventist congregation and built the first Aleknagik Seventh-day Adventist Church.

As the school grew, Roland and Jackie wanted to provide more for their students, so they started a camp. “We just didn’t

have any place to take the young kids for activities and stuff,” recalled Roland, “and kids like to go someplace.” They named the new place “Camp Polaris”—after the guiding light of the North Star.

Roland Moody purchased several old buildings from Crick Cannery, which had gone out of business. He barged these buildings across Bristol Bay to Aleknagik, and then 12 miles up the lake to Camp Polaris. More than 60 years later these old cannery buildings are still in use each summer by the children of western Alaska.

Continuing the Camp Ministry

For decades Roland and Jackie Moody enjoyed hosting the children and ferrying them up the lake by barge to the camp. Each year on the last Sabbath of camp, the entire Aleknagik Adventist Church prepared a feast for the kids and made the 90-minute boat trip up the lake to Camp Polaris, where they enjoyed a special Sabbath by the lake with the campers. After Jackie passed away, Roland married Beverly, who helped continue the Camp Polaris traditions.

Over the years the camp has been a vital ministry to the young people of western Alaska. Many of the children who attend camp come from less-than-ideal homes where poverty, alcoholism, and abuse are too often the norm. They often exclaim that coming to the camp is the highlight of their year, because it is a place where they feel loved, accepted, and cared for. 🌍

Note about picture on p. 4: Mr. Moody owned a fuel station. He is in the center of the picture, wearing whitish overalls. To the left is the late U.S. Senator Ted Kennedy, and his son, Patrick, who stopped by to refuel while visiting Alaska many years ago.

Fast Facts

- The term Alaska native refers to Alaska’s original inhabitants including Aleut, Eskimo and Indian groups.
- Alaska officially became the 49th state on January 3, 1959.
- Alaska is the United States largest state and is over twice the size of Texas. Measuring from north to south the state is approximately 1,400 miles long and measuring from east to west it is 2,700 miles wide.
- Nearly one-third of Alaska lies within the Arctic Circle.

Finding Jesus at Camp

ALASKA | January 10

Heather and Travis



Travis didn't know what to do with his camper. At age 12 Logan* was the toughest kid in the cabin and wanted to be in charge of everyone and everything. One night Logan decided he wasn't going to bed, so Travis and his co-counselor came up with a plan.

"OK," they told the obstinate camper. "You can stay up—as long as you read the Bible." Logan agreed, except he didn't have a Bible; in fact, he had never read one. So the co-counselor lent Logan his Bible, and by the light of the moon and a flashlight the boy met the heroes of Genesis for the very first time.

The next morning Logan confided to his counselors, "I actually found some cool stories in there." He was especially interested in the story of Joseph, and

asked many questions, wondering how Joseph was able to do all that he did.

"Although Logan still acted tough, you could see the gears starting to turn as he wondered what we were all about," remembered Travis. "It was kind of cool to see the change that took place over the week."

It Takes a Lot of Prayer

Most of the kids who come to Camp Polaris don't know the Bible. Travis remembers a time when only one camper knew the story of David and Goliath. "We're ministering to kids who don't grow up in Christian homes, who don't read the Bible. It takes a lot of prayer to help reach these kids . . . to know how to reach them."

Travis, a senior mechanical engineering student at Walla Walla University, started working at Camp Polaris in 2011. In addition to being a counselor, he has taught a variety of classes, including wakeboarding and model rocketry.

"I've loved it every summer, that's why I keep coming back," he says. "I've learned a lot about trusting in God, because you get situations where you don't know how

* Not his real name.

to make it through the week, but you always do. Then in hindsight, you see that even the tough things were a positive. It definitely is about learning to trust God.

“I think I’m a little more comfortable now with just being thrown into a situation. I’ve learned to be flexible and go with the flow, and to be ready for whatever—because you don’t know what’s going to happen next.”

A Light in the World

Heather Ueek grew up in Delta Junction, a small town at the end of the Alaska Highway. As a child, Heather loved going to camp every summer, and she kept a record of her experiences, listing her daily activities. Early on she wrote: “And of course we had to do worship, and that was dumb.”

But as the years went by, camp worships became more meaningful to Heather. One worship that made a big impression involved a candle and a balloon. “They held a balloon over a lit candle and the balloon popped right away. Then they put water into another balloon and held

it over the candle, and it didn’t pop! The presenter explained that we are like the balloon and the water represents Christ. If we have Christ in us, He calms us and gives us peace and strength—He’s a resource that we can latch on to.”

They Keep Coming Back

Heather now tries to pass on these lessons to campers as she works at Camp Polaris. “The kids aren’t Adventists, and they don’t come from the best families. They aren’t used to discipline, to structure, and people caring about them. They often act up. Sometimes it seems as if they hate camp, but they keep coming back. Even with the struggles, underneath they realize that we actually care about them.”

Heather admits that working at Camp Polaris has taught her patience. “It’s my job to lead the kids toward God. Patience and flexibility are so important. And trusting in God. It’s given me a strong tool for facing situations that will come up in my life—just learning to deal with the things that this world throws at you. It’s given me appreciation for others who have served me, and has given me the attitude that I want to help other people and be a light in the world.”

Camp Polaris is in need of updated facilities, such as “bearproof cabins,” says Heather. And now that the Moodys have left, the only way to ferry the children to camp is by making several long trips by small boat. Restroom and bathing facilities include two outhouses, a steam sauna, and the icy waters of Lake Aleknagik.

“I’ve lived in Alaska all my life,” Heather says, “and Camp Polaris is the most isolated I’ve ever been. But it’s definitely a place where you can feel very close to God. I really love it up there.”🌍

Mission Post

- The Alaska Conference of Seventh-day Adventists was established in 1901—58 years before Alaska became one of the states in the U.S.A.
- The Alaska Conference covers one of the largest territories in the world. Many areas of the conference are accessible only by boat or airplane.
- As of 2013, there were 3,842 Adventist members in Alaska, and 29 Adventist churches.

Changing People's Lives

ALASKA | January 17

Chad



I remember when I was 8 years old and I couldn't go to "junior camp" (as Camp Polaris is known to the locals), because I was too young. I went there to drop off my older sister and cousin, and when I had to get back in the boat to leave, I started crying. I wanted to stay at camp so bad with all the other kids! They were having fun, there was structure, there was this vibe . . . and I wanted to be a part of that!

When I turned 9, I finally got to go to camp, and I absolutely loved it! I went every year, all the way to age 16. While I had many experiences at junior camp, one that really stands out happened the summer I was 14.

Ghost Stories

We were all in the cabin, and some of the guys wanted to tell ghost stories. It was about 12:30 in the morning, and

I told them that I just wanted to go to sleep, but they started telling ghost stories anyway. Our counselor was asleep, so he didn't know what was going on. After a while things started getting really eerie. One of my good friends was sitting in the corner very quietly. After the last ghost story was told, he jumped up and ran to the other side of the cabin where I was. The only beam of light that was showing through the door was shining right by my bunk, and he wanted to be there beside me. "Chad," he said, "I don't know what happened, but I'm really scared—something happened to me.

I was also frightened and said, "Let's get a Bible!" I started reading the Bible to him, and another friend joined us on my bunk, saying that he was scared too. I continued reading Bible stories, but I

could see that my friends were still scared, so I asked, “Jim, do you have a Bible?” He said that he did. Not knowing what else to do at that point, I told him to open it up and place it on his chest. I continued reading Bible texts, but they were still spooked, so I suggested that we go outside.

Angels on the Mountain

By the light of the moon we could see Lake Aleknagik and the huge mountains all around us. As I looked up at those tall mountains, I remembered a Bible story that I had heard as a kid—the story about Elisha’s servant being so afraid when they were surrounded by the enemy, Elisha prayed that God would open the eyes of the servant. Remembering that story, I suddenly blurted out to my friends, “You guys, look! Look at the mountain line! All the angels are on this mountain!” You could just see my friends calming down. We went back to the cabin and fell asleep.

The next morning, I felt so humbled that God would have actually used me to help others. I was telling myself, “I

can’t believe that I was a part of that—I’m too young for this.” But looking back, I realize that’s where God started working in me, at that moment, at Camp Polaris. It was at there at Camp Polaris where, in spite of Satan trying to scare us into thinking that he had power even at a Bible camp, that God conquered that night.

Changing Lives

The staff at Camp Polaris influenced me too. One day a staff member named Monica said, “Chad, you have a nice voice. You should sing.” Nobody had ever told me that in my life. It’s because of her affirmation that I sing today.

And it’s because of the event that night with angels on the mountain that I believe I’m a minister today. Junior camp seriously changed my life.

Camp Polaris is really worn-down now, but I know that people are trying hard to get funds to build that camp back up again. That place has changed so many people’s lives here in Alaska—local lives! Just recently, when I was fishing 100 miles away, I still heard good things about Camp Polaris. I believe that if we keep on building it up, making it better for kids, it will keep on changing lives, like mine was. And who knows? Maybe another local person here in Alaska will become a Seventh-day Adventist minister or a missionary—whatever God wants them to be. All I know for sure is that God’s work at Camp Polaris isn’t done yet. 🌍

Fast Facts

- At 20,320 feet above sea level, Mt. McKinley, located in Alaska’s interior, is the highest point in North America.
- The Alaskan malamute sled dog is strong and heavily coated. It was developed as a breed by a group of Eskimos named the Malemiuts.
- Alaska’s name is based on the Eskimo word Alakshak meaning great lands or peninsula.

Chad Angasan, a native Inuit/Aleut, is a Global Mission Pioneer pastoring in the village of Togiak, Alaska.

The Camp Lady & The Camp Man

ALASKA | January 24

Ken and Debbie



Most locals in Aleknagik, Alaska, don't know Debbie and Ken Reiswig by their actual names. Known as the "Camp Lady" and the "Camp Man," the Reiswigs have been looking after Camp Polaris, and its campers, for the past 20 years.

Originally from Washington State, Debbie and Ken went to the northern part of Alaska as self-supporting missionaries several years ago. Sometime later the conference asked them to help at the Aleknagik church, and that was when they became involved with the camp.

"Ken and I can be called the caretakers," says Debbie. "Ken is also the treasurer for the camp, and

I'm the [camp] committee chairman." But the Reiswigs are much more than this, as they provide a continual, year-round caring presence for the kids who get to enjoy Camp Polaris just one week out of the year.

When camp isn't in session, local kids often come to the Reiswigs' home and camp out. "Those are 'our' kids," Debbie affirms. "They've all been in our home. Some officially, some not officially. But they've always been there—emergency care or just because they can, they always have an open home."

Many of the children

These kids are just like little sponges; they soak up every little bit of love.

view Ken and Debbie as the adults in their lives who are stable, and they turn to them when there's a crisis—big or small—knowing that the “Camp Lady” and the “Camp Man” will do all they can to help.

Finding a Way

“There was a kid who came to me,” remembers Debbie, “who couldn't afford his camp fees—and back then it was \$200 a week. He came every week with pennies and quarters that he had raised from washing cars. Sometimes he would buy a couple of candy bars and resell them to his friends. Then he'd come up to my desk and pull out the coins (never dollar bills) from his pockets and put them on my desk. I got a ledger sheet for him, and he earned every penny until he got his camp fees.”

The camp also has a limited scholarship fund, started with seed money from the Anchorage Seventh-day Adventist Church. In order to receive scholarship funds, the child must write a letter explaining why he or she wants to go to camp. In addition, they must have two letters from their community stating why the child should come to camp.

One day several months before camp Debbie looked out the window of her office and noticed a boy hiding in the bushes by the fence. He stayed there for a couple of hours until Debbie went out to see what he was doing. Very shyly he pulled a little paper packet out of his pocket. Handing the packet to Debbie, the boy quickly turned and ran away.

Unfolding the packet, Debbie found a handwritten letter. The boy desperately wanted to come to camp, but he had no money, and his parents had no money.

In four pages of notebook paper the boy poured out his heart to the “Camp Lady,” explaining why he wanted to come to camp that year. “He went on and on about the songs, the campfires, the people who cared about him,” said Debbie, and “that ‘the girls were the cutest!’” Debbie found a way, and the boy got to go to camp.

“Every April or so kids start trooping into my office, asking if there's going to be camp. They ask if they can have an application. They ask what they need to do and if I'll help them get to camp. . . . And that's just the moment for me—every year, every kid—it's just reinforcing into me that it's not always fun, but that it's always really rewarding. There's never been anything in my life so rewarding. These kids are just like little sponges; they just soak up every little bit of love.”

Camp Needs

Camp Polaris will be receiving a portion of this quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering to build a bath house with showers and toilets. The Reiswigs think that this will definitely “infuse enthusiasm” because the current facilities have been in use since the camp began many decades ago. Regarding future projects, the camp is hoping to one day build a larger lodge. “It doesn't have to be fancy, but just a little bit bigger so that it will be easier to accommodate everyone (see pictures of the current lodge on our website at www.adventistmission.org/resources). “If we had better facilities, we could probably have more kids come to camp, and the camp could be used a few more weeks during the summer, and possibly even in the wintertime.

Thank you for your generous support. 🌍

Something Deeper

Sherilyn



As the nurse at Camp Polaris, one of my favorite things to do at camp is to just mingle with the kids, listening to the stories they tell, the questions they ask, and seeing the excitement on their faces when they're learning new things that they might not get to do anywhere else. It's wonderful to just see them enjoying their camp experience. Outside of camp they don't have a lot of opportunity to be creative, other than drawing on their own. So we do a lot of crafts here, giving the kids opportunities to make things with their hands. And most don't have the opportunity for water sports—so they really enjoy swimming, wakeboarding, and canoeing on Lake Aleknagik.

During the school year many of the kids don't have much that they do outside of school. From the things I hear them say,

"I don't want to go home. I wish I could stay here forever."

they don't have a lot they can do at home. They don't play in groups. If they have a bicycle, they ride alone. Many of them just sit at home and don't do much of anything.

But at camp, I think one of the biggest impacts for the kids, even greater than the activities, is knowing that there are people here whom they can trust, people who will love them and are willing to talk with them about Jesus and present Him as their Friend who will always be there, even when we can't be with them. That's something that seems to really resonate with a lot of these kids—learning that Jesus can be their Friend, that He is somebody they can turn to, that they can talk to, who can help them when they are happy or sad, or when they have a problem.

Need for Warmth

Of course as the camp nurse I'm also

Mission Post

- The Alaska Conference operates three camps—Camp Lorraine (on Vank Island), Camp Tukuskoya, and Camp Polaris.
- Visit the Alaska Camps website at www.alaskacamps.org to see photos taken at the camps.
- Watch stories from Camp Polaris on our Mission Spotlight/Mission 360° DVD at www.adventistmission.org/dvd

concerned about the children’s physical well-being. The camp has been here a long time, and the doors of the lodge and many of the cabins have big gaps underneath and above them. The wind comes through, so the kids are often cold. Many times it’s raining, and the kids are wet. The only way to get them warm is to get them huddled around the stove, but you can only get so many kids around the stove. Sometimes you don’t really stop and think about how warmth can have such an effect on kids, but when they are really cold, the first thing we need to do is get them warmed up. Currently we don’t have any shower or bathroom facilities (other than the makai* and outhouses), so having a bath house with hot showers and indoor bathrooms will make a huge difference.

Highlight of the Year

But in spite of the hardships and difficulties, their one week at camp is really a highlight of the year for these

* A makai is a steam sauna fueled by burning wood.

kids. I’m sure that at many camps kids say they don’t want to leave, but we really do hear it a lot at Camp Polaris. We often hear comments such as, “I don’t want to go home. I wish I could stay here forever.” “This is the most fun I’ve ever had. I don’t want to go home.”

You can see this look in their eyes that just kind of tugs at your heart. It’s a look that says there’s something behind their words. It’s a look that tells you that they’re not just saying, “I’m having fun, I don’t want to quit having fun”; there’s something deeper that you can see in their eyes.

Recently, when asked what I would say to someone coming to Camp Polaris for the first time, I told them that they are going to be meeting a fantastic group of kids who are probably as needy or more needy than anyone they have ever met. They should come with an open mind and open heart, knowing that they’re not going to be enjoying any of the luxuries of life, but that the reward is going to be in their hearts. They should know that they may be faced with questions that they’ve never had to answer before, and it’s going to make them evaluate their own personal walk with Christ.

Camp Polaris is a special ministry, and it would be wonderful if people outside of this area could see and appreciate what’s here—the mission outreach for the kids.🌍

One of the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering projects this quarter is to provide a bathhouse with showers and restrooms at Camp Polaris. You can make a real difference in this special mission outreach by giving generously to the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering.

Opening More Doors

WEST VIRGINIA | February 7

Angela, Heather, and Lee



In Bridgeport, West Virginia, the only Adventist church in Harrison County meets each Sabbath in the local Presbyterian church. Although they don't yet have their own building, members of the Central Hills Seventh-day Adventist Church are certainly building relationships.

In response to the Discover Bible School mailings, the Central Hills church has received more than 300 requests for Bible studies—just from within Harrison County. Pastor James Volpe and his 30 church members are doing their best to keep up. Some of the most active members include Angela, 21, Heather, 20, and Lee, 22.

“We were driving from house to house,”

**We could actually
be a part of
something and watch
the church grow.**

remembers Heather, “handing out the first two lessons, and asking people if they wanted to have personal visits or continue the lessons through the mail. One of the ladies we met requested that we return, so Angela and I

decided that we would do it. We studied with her every week.

“That winter her son committed suicide. We quit doing Bible studies, but we'd still visit her. We helped her around Thanksgiving and Christmas. Sometimes she comes to church.” Heather and Angela have since resumed the Bible studies with this student.

While Lee doesn't give personal Bible studies, he jumped in and organized the mailings. “I make sure the completed

lessons get graded and sent back so that person can start on their next lesson. If a month goes by and we haven't heard from the Bible student, then we follow-up and make sure that we keep in contact with them."

While the members of the Central Hills church have been supportive, the church's young people have especially enjoyed being involved.

"Our youth group has gotten a lot stronger," says Angela. "I've always liked to be involved in some way—I just didn't know how."

"I think this is one of the first times we could put into practice all of the stuff we hear every week; we could actually be a part of something and watch the church grow," adds Lee.

Heather believes that giving personal Bible studies is one of the best methods for church growth and spiritual commitment. "All of the youth were together, delivering the lessons. Then once Angela and I started giving Bible studies, I enjoyed it. It made me grow spiritually.

"We had an [evangelistic] seminar

Mission Post

- Over the course of three years (2012, 2013, 2014), every home in West Virginia received a mailing with an invitation card for requesting Bible studies.
- By 2014 the churches in the Mountain View Conference (MVC) had received more than 10,000 requests for Bible studies.
- The pastors, Bible workers, and members of MVC appreciate your prayers and support through the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering to help them in reaching out to the thousands in their territory who are longing to know God through His Word.

coming to the area, but by us doing the Bible studies and getting out—that helped our church to grow. It opens a lot more doors."🌍

MVC President Larry Boggess, and Secretary/Treasurer Victor Zill are grateful for your support of mission.



They Deserve a Chance



WEST VIRGINIA | February 14

Paul Brown with his “kids”

When Dan Jacko isn't busy helping people learn to walk again, he's assisting his church members with their spiritual walk. Pastor Dan, a professional physical therapist, is also serving as lay pastor for the Mountain View Conference in the two-church district of Elkins and Parsons, West Virginia. He also teaches biology and chemistry to the academy-level students at the Highland Adventist School in Elkins. His wife, Cheryl, is an educator and registered nurse, and serves as the principal of the K-12 school. Their son, Jeremy, teaches Bible, math, and history.

Believing mission is important, Pastor Dan leads the students and church members on a mission trip every other year. So far, they've been to Mexico, Panama, Honduras, and, in 2014, Costa Rica.

While in Costa Rica they built a church during the day, and presented evangelistic meetings and Vacation Bible Schools in four different churches in the evenings. In spite of his own full schedule Pastor Dan was impressed with the dedication of the pastor in Costa Rica who shepherds six churches—and doesn't have a car.

Not only does Pastor Dan and his members build churches abroad—they also build them at home, where they recently completed their own church and school, located on five and a half acres (2.2 hectares), all are completely debt-free.

Overwhelmed with Requests

The most recent challenge for Pastor Dan and the 80-member Elkins church is keeping up with the many Bible study requests coming from their community. Over the course of three mailings in 2013 and 2014, everyone in the state of West Virginia received an invitation for the Voice of Prophecy's Discover Bible course. The response was overwhelming—with 10,000 people indicating that they would like to have Bible studies. Of that number, more than 200 came from the Elkins/Parsons area.

“Some are face-to-face Bible studies,” explains Pastor Dan, “and others prefer to take them by correspondence, which are then graded by our local church members.” The local churches are responsible for purchasing the lessons and providing postage for correspondence students.

“What makes this area even more of a mission field,” says Pastor Dan, “is that you’ll get a lot of people who say, ‘I believe this,’ but if their family isn’t in favor of it, a lot of them just won’t make the commitment.”

Nevertheless, Pastor Dan and the small churches he leads see reaching people for Jesus in their territory as an important mission and are willing to give the time, effort, and funds needed to help it succeed.

There Are Rules

Two members of the Elkins church who have already made a positive impact in their neighborhood are Paul and Christie Brown. When the Browns moved into a less than desirable area of Elkins, they didn’t know that their home would become a magnet for young people.

“I’ve always been youth-focused,” says Paul, “so when the neighborhood kids wanted to hang out with our kids at the house, we said, ‘OK, but there are rules:

1. Respect. You will treat yourself and others respectfully, with no swearing and no name calling.

2. No lying. You lie to me, and it’s done—you are out the door.

3. Health/dietary issues—no drugs, no alcohol, no unclean meat.’ ”

Once the young people understood about clean and unclean foods, they tried sharing what they had learned with their families. “The grandfather would be cooking a groundhog,” says Paul, “but the

kids would tell him, ‘No! We’re not going to eat that!’ ”

Moving In

Before long the visitors were asking to move in with the Browns. “Brayden* spends every weekend at our house,” says Paul. “It’s his Sabbath retreat, and gets him away from his house.” During the week Brayden tries to avoid his abusive alcoholic stepfather as much as possible.

Hunter and Wyatt are two others who spend much time with the Browns. Both coming from difficult situations, the boys feel safe with Paul and Cindy, whom they consider to be their surrogate parents.

“I try to treat all the kids as if they’re my kids,” says Paul, “because they deserve a chance too.” That includes providing clothing, bicycles, and various other items. “Even the vehicle I drive—an extended-cab truck—is based on how many kids we’re looking after, so we can take them to and from school.”

With parental permission, the Browns have taken Brayden and Hunter with them to Pathfinders and to church, and are even paying for them to attend the local Adventist church school. Unfortunately Wyatt’s mother will not give permission for him to join in these activities, but for Brayden and Hunter, their experience has been life changing. On November 2, 2013, both boys, along with the Browns’ son, Payton, were baptized at the Elkins Seventh-day Adventist Church.

“We’ve been living here for three years now,” Paul says, “and my wife really feels that the Lord put us in this neighborhood. It’s not where we would have chosen, but we are sure that the Lord led us here.” 

* All names of neighborhood children have been changed.

A Big Heart

Payton



My dog's been shot!" Brayden* blurted out in tears to his friend Payton. "Would you speak at his funeral?"

Twelve-year-old Payton had never conducted a funeral, but wanting to help his friend, he agreed to do what he could. "I planned the whole thing out," he said. "The dog is buried in my yard—Brayden and I dug his grave." After Payton did the eulogy, the boys added the dog's dish, collar, and squeaky toy before filling the grave.

When Payton and his family first moved into the neighborhood, Payton befriended Brayden and learned about the struggles he was facing at home. "I told him that I was a Christian, and shared my beliefs with him," said Payton, "and then he told me, 'I want to try that out!'"

Brayden began spending more time at Payton's house and often spent the night—especially on Fridays, so he could go with Payton and his family to church the next day. Before long Brayden's cousin Hunter

* All names of neighborhood children have been changed.

wanted to stay with Payton, too. "So I was housing three people in my room," Payton explained.

While Payton's bedroom may be small, his heart is big. He befriended another neighbor, Wyatt, whose father committed suicide. At age 13 Wyatt had been kicked out of several public schools, and his mother didn't know what to do with him. Payton spent time with Wyatt and invited him to come with him to Pathfinders and to church, along with the other boys, but Wyatt's mother would not allow her son to join in.

Over the next three years Payton often shared his faith with Wyatt, and one day after hearing that they might be moving, Wyatt handed Payton and his sister, Stormy, a note. The note is so precious that Payton keeps it in the family safe.

"Dear Payton and Stormy,

Before you move I want to thank you. When you first came I had lost my way. I stopped going to church and didn't plan on coming back. When we became friends I

was trying to act tough, but on the inside, I wanted to be more like you, Payton. When the hard times came and I lost my father, talking to you was a comfort. I learned about God through you. You were and still are a hero, inspiration, and role model to me. Your parents should be very proud of you, knowing that you helped me find Jesus.”

Brayden's Testimony

The Brown family had such an impact on Brayden that he too wanted to share his testimony:

“Paul Brown and his family are a true blessing to me. A few years ago when they moved in, my stepgrandfather asked Paul if I could mow his yard. Paul agreed, and soon a connection grew between me and his family, and I found out what nice people they are. His kids, Payton and Stormy, are very upbeat and friendly. Their mother, Christie, is really nice and is always there to help me.

“One day I asked Payton why they were always away on Saturdays. I thought it was weird that I couldn't do any work for them on that day. Payton invited me to come to church with them. I liked it, but after a while started slacking off. Six months later I was back—this time to stay.

“I joined the Pathfinder Club. As we were coming back from a campout, Payton, my cousin Hunter, and I were talking about school. Hunter and I didn't like our school because there were so many fights. Hunter said that he hoped someday to go to a Christian college. Payton asked, “Why don't you just go to a Christian school?” Our parents agreed to let us go to Highland Adventist School here in Elkins, and Paul found sponsors for us. I like the school a lot. The teachers

Mission Post

- The Mountain View Conference (MVC) encompasses nearly the entire U.S. state of West Virginia, along with two western counties of the state of Maryland.
- The MVC is the smallest conference in the North American Division, with 33 churches, 3 companies, and 7 schools.
- As of 2013, there were 2,380 members in the conference, with a population of 1,808,030.

and staff are really nice, and the students are friendly, not fighting.

“One day as we were going to church, Payton said he wanted to get baptized. Hunter and I said that we wanted to get baptized with him. So we all took Bible studies together and were baptized on November 2, 2013.

“The church members are the nicest people I've ever met. They are always there for you. And the pastor, Don—there's something about his preaching that just sticks with me. I like the people here a lot—they are like my second family that I've always wanted.

“Being able to come here and know about the Seventh-day Adventist Church has been a real blessing to me. No one else in my family is Adventist. They don't understand why I don't do some things I used to do. My stepdad can't understand why I don't eat pork—all my life I've eaten it, and at first it was hard not to eat it. But I'm glad I went off of it. I've seen a change in my weight and my personality. Everything is better since I was baptized.” 🌍

The Kindness Experiment

WEST VIRGINIA | February 28

Miranda



Miranda Starr, principal and teacher at Parkersburg Academy in West Virginia, wanted to do an experiment with her first- and second-grade students.

"In Bible class we were studying about kindness, and how it is contagious," she says. "We wanted to see if it really works."

Then Miranda had an idea—why not go to Eagle Pointe, a local nursing home, where the students could practice their reading skills and make friends with the residents? "This was something I had always wanted to do," she admits. "We like to sing, but [I wondered]

what else could we do for them, to make relationships?" Then another idea struck—the students could practice their reading skills by reading aloud to the Eagle Pointe residents.



Fast Facts

- Nearly 75% of West Virginia is covered by forests.
- One of the first suspension bridges in the world was completed in Wheeling, WV in November, 1849.
- The first electric railroad in the world was constructed between Huntington and Guyandotte, WV.
- Mrs. Minnie Buckingham Harper, a member of the state's House of Delegates by appointment in 1928, was the first African American woman to become a member of a legislative body in the United States.

Miranda shared her idea with her class, and all of the children were excited and motivated to read. By January the students were reading well enough to read on their own.

Happy to Share

“We go to Eagle Pointe every other Friday,” explains 8-year-old Ben. “We sing to the whole group, and we read to our partners.”

“It wasn't hard to pick our partners,” chimes in Reagan, 7. “We saw them, looked at their faces, and then chose one because we liked them!”

The students also get to choose the book or books that they want to read to their partner, and they are welcome to exchange books with other students if they finish their own.

As the students read, they are also developing friendships. “My partner's name is Miss Jane,” says Sophia, 6. “I was reading about animal tracks, and I read

about a red fox. She told me that she once had a red fox as a pet!”

The residents clearly enjoy the visits, as do the young readers. “I like seeing my partner smile,” Ben said.

The students in grades 3 to 8 also participate in the ministry at Eagle Pointe. “I really like going there,” says Ryleigh, 9. “There's one man I read to—Mark. He's always happy to see me, and says, ‘God loves you.’ I really like him and wish we could go more often.”

In appreciation of the students' visits, Eagle Pointe held a banquet in their honor, and presented Miranda Starr with an award plaque: “Junior Volunteers of the Year—Parkersburg Academy. You've warmed the hearts of many by the caring that you show. Volunteers are Shining Stars.”

Reflecting on their “kindness experiment,” Miranda and the students know it was a success. “Kindness did come back. We tried to give them joy, but they gave more to us.” 🌍



Students and Eagle Pointe residents look forward to their time together.

From Despair to Hope, Part 1

GUAM | March 7

Jesse



photo: BigStock.com

I was only 4 years old when my mother died; I was too young to understand death, but I knew something was wrong. My childhood was unhappy. No matter how hard I tried, I could not please my father. He paid little attention to me. When I was 9 years old, I left home and stayed with friends and relatives until I was placed in a series of foster homes.

I lived in a boys home for three years when I was a teenager. While there I met a really tall boy who was a good basketball player. We started talking, and when I told him my name, he looked surprised. Then he told me that we were cousins.

“Your mother and my father were brother and sister,” he assured me. I could hardly believe it. I had never known my mother’s family, and I did not know I had

aunts, uncles, and cousins on her side.

My cousin took me to his house to meet my family. The house filled with more and more relatives who wanted to take a look at me. As we talked, I learned that my mother had died of complications from the beatings my father had showered on her.

I was released from the boys home and went to live with my uncle. I sometimes went to my father’s house to see my younger brother and sister. Once as I approached the house, I saw my father pick up my little brother and throw him against the wall. When I ran up and tried to stop him, he picked up a two-by-four board and hit me with it.

My anger against my father festered and grew. He was well liked and respected on

Fast Facts

- Together with Guam, Micronesia includes the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia and Palau.
- Guam, a U.S. territory, is the largest and most populous island, considered the “gateway” to Micronesia and a hub for the region.
- The Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) is a U.S. Commonwealth consisting of 14 islands just to the north of Guam, and along with Guam, forms the Mariana Islands archipelago.
- The Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) and Palau are both independent island nations and together make up the nations in the Caroline Islands archipelago.
- The Republic of the Marshall Islands is also an independent island, located approximately 1500 miles to the east of Guam, and is comprised of many small low lying islands and atolls.

the island of Guam. Nobody outside our family knew what he was like at home.

I refused to rely on anyone. I paid my way through high school and worked to buy my own clothes. When I graduated, I joined the Air National Guard to get away from the island. Two years later I transferred to the Marines. I worked my way up through the ranks to sergeant.

I married, and my wife and I had three children. My work kept me away from home a lot, and it was difficult keeping a

marriage together with my temper and my absences. Eventually we divorced. I felt hurt and empty inside; once more I had no family and felt completely alone.

Unfulfilled

Though I had a successful career in the Marines, I still felt unfulfilled. Nothing mattered to me anymore, and I decided that life was not worth living. I took my rifle and ammunition down to the beach to end my life.

I waded out to a rock in the water and sat down with my gun. I thought about my failed life. I had been sitting there for a while when a police officer approached. He saw that I was contemplating suicide, and waded into the water toward me. I raised the rifle and warned him to stay back.

The police officer backed away. Soon my colonel from the Marine base arrived and ordered me to put the gun down. I refused. Then my father arrived. When I saw him walking toward me, I put the gun into my mouth and pulled the trigger. There was an explosion, and I fell backward off the rock.

The people standing around rushed in and pulled me out of the water. I was alive. They examined the gun and found that the bullet had jammed halfway through the barrel.

When my dad saw what had happened, he walked away.

After this I received a discharge from the Marines. Now I really had nothing. I had no job, no family, and I hated my father. My life was a big fat zero. 🌐

To be continued next week.

From Despair to Hope, Part 2

GUAM | March 14

Jesse



One day I tried to commit suicide again. In the hospital emergency room I met Dr. Nozaki. The nurses told the doctor that I was suicidal. “There is no hope for this guy,” they said. “One of these days he will succeed in killing himself.”

“Don’t say that,” I heard Dr. Nozaki say. “We are going to save his life.”

Dr. Nozaki operated on my wounds, and I awoke in a hospital room. I looked around and saw a Bible lying on the stand. I put it out of sight and tried to go back to sleep. When I awoke again, I saw another Bible on the stand. I put that one away too. By the time I left the hospital a week later, I had stashed away six Bibles in

For the first time in my life I felt peace.

the bedside stand. As I was leaving, Dr. Nozaki urged me to read them, but I told him I wasn’t interested.

“Just read the book of John,” he said. Finally, I agreed to read just John, I don’t know why, but I took all six Bibles home. And I read John. I had to admit it was interesting.

Care and Trust

Dr. Nozaki did not forget me when I left the hospital. He called me every day, visited me, and made sure I had food and clothes. I wondered why someone would take so much interest in me when even my own family did not care about me.

I realized that Dr. Nozaki really

Mission Post

- The Guam-Micronesia Mission (GMM) was organized in 1948 and reorganized in 2012 when it was transferred from the Southern Asia-Pacific Division to the North American Division.
- The GMM has 20 churches and a membership of 4,773. The population of its territory is 410,000 (2013 figures).
- GMM has two health clinics—one on Guam, the other in Saipan. The Mission also operates schools located on the islands of Chuuk, Majuro, Ebeye, Guam, Palau, Pohnpei, and Yap.
- The Mission owns and operates two radio stations, known as JOY FM (KSDA-FM and KORU-FM) broadcasting from Guam.

The GMM owns and operates “Simply Food”—a successful vegetarian restaurant/grocery store on Guam.

care, and in time I learned to trust him too. I started attending Bible studies with him, and my life started to turn around. He invited me to his church, and I learned that Jesus really does love me. It took awhile, but I surrendered my life to Him. One day I went back to the rock where I had tried to kill myself and thanked God for saving my life. I continued to study, was baptized, and became a Seventh-day Adventist.

Peace

I still felt lonely, but now I knew that I was not truly alone—God was with me. For the first time in my life I felt peace.

I started spending more time with my daughters, and when Dr. Nozaki urged me to reconcile with their mother, I agreed to

give it a try. When she saw the changes in my life, she said she would give it another chance, and we remarried in Dr. Nozaki’s home. I was so happy that I had been given another chance with my family.

But things were not always perfect, and my walk with God was far from smooth. I needed work, and I struggled with temptation to play softball on Sabbath. In fact, for a while I stopped attending church to play. Then I realized that God was more important to me than softball. God worked it all out for me, though, and I was asked to coach the new softball team of the Adventist clinic.

My life was coming together. But one piece was still missing. I had never reconciled with my father. Dr. Nozaki urged me to speak to him before it was too late. It was tough, but I made peace with him before he died. At his funeral I was able to share how my faith in God had saved my relationship with my earthly father. I know that if God can save me, He can save anyone. 🌍

Jesse Laguña teaches middle school and high school physical education at Guam Adventist Academy.



photo: BigStock.com

The Sabbath Shoes

Dwight McKeever



photo: BigStock.com

A young woman entered the shoe shop where I worked. Something seemed different about her, but it took me a while to figure out that she was wearing no makeup or jewelry. Still, she seemed to glow with a wholesome attractiveness.

I brought out shoes for her to try on, but we didn't have her size. No problem, I assured her. We could order them and have them within three days. Becky ordered the shoes, and I told her to expect them in by Wednesday afternoon. "That's great," she said. "I don't need them until Saturday."

The Missing Shoes

Becky returned Wednesday afternoon, but her shoes hadn't arrived. I apologized for the inconvenience and assured her that they would be in the next day. But when the shipment arrived on Thursday, Becky's shoes weren't there. I quickly telephoned the company and the manager explained that the shoes would arrive the next day.

When Becky came to get her shoes, I explained the problem, and she graciously

accepted my apology. "I don't live far," she said. "I can come tomorrow. You are sure the shoes will arrive tomorrow?" she asked. "I do need them on Saturday morning."

Late Friday afternoon when Becky arrived, I greeted her with a red face. The shipment had not yet arrived. I urged her to wait a few minutes. "Why do you need the shoes tomorrow?" I asked, trying to delay her departure.

"I'm playing the organ, and my old shoes are rather worn," she answered. Becky waited a few more minutes, then said she had to go. Although she was very polite, I knew she was disappointed. Just 15 minutes later the driver arrived with her shoes. Quickly I telephoned Becky and told her that her shoes had arrived.

To my surprise, Becky replied, "It's OK. I'll pick up them up on Saturday night."

Strange Refusal

I tried to encourage her to get the shoes that evening, but she declined. Imagine my shock when Becky entered the store a few minutes later. She said she had come to assure me that she was not at all angry that the shoes hadn't arrived in time, and she was impressed at my efforts to solve the problem. Then she turned to leave.

"But what about your shoes?" I asked. She said she hadn't come to pick up the

shoes and would return for them Saturday evening. I offered to lend her the money for the shoes, but she smiled and declined.

I stood there totally confused. *Why won't she take the shoes today?* I wondered. Suddenly I had to know the answer. I ran out of the store and caught up to Becky. "Please, just tell me why you wouldn't take the shoes today," I asked her. "It doesn't make any sense."

She hesitated, then said, "I am a Christian."

"But I'm a Christian too," I told her. "What does Christianity have to do with your not taking the shoes today?"

"If you are a Christian," she replied with a smile, "then you know that the Ten Commandments tell us to remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. That means we shouldn't buy, sell, or work on God's Sabbath day."

"But it's only Friday," I said. "The Sabbath isn't until Sunday."

"No," she smiled again. "The Sabbath is the seventh day of the week, not the first day. Check your calendar."

I invited her to return with me to the shoe store where I had a calendar on the desk. We walked back to the store, and I pointed to the calendar. "See?" I said confidently. Then I looked again. Saturday *was* the seventh day, not Sunday. *How could I have overlooked this for 25 years?* Then I told her, "But today is still Friday. You can still get your shoes."

An Invitation to Understand

"I'll still wait to buy the shoes until tomorrow night," she said. "It is a little more complicated than that, but the Bible explains it quite well. Would you be interested in learning about it? The church event that I will play for tomorrow

is a Revelation Seminar presented by a visiting evangelist. He'll be talking about Bible prophecy, which will include a complete study on the subject of the Sabbath and Sunday. If you're not afraid to learn the truth from the Bible, I'd like you to come."

"I'm not afraid," I said bravely. "As a matter of fact, the book of Revelation is totally confusing, and I've never heard anyone even attempt to explain it. Yes, I think I will go."

The next morning I rode my motorcycle to Becky's home and followed her family van to church. During the drive I asked myself, *What are you doing following strangers to a religious meeting in a church you've never even heard of? This could be a boring waste of time, or worse. They might even be a cult!* I wrestled with these thoughts for several minutes. *I could take the next exit and forget this foolishness.*

I asked God to help me decide, and suddenly an overwhelming sense of peace came over me. I decided to attend the seminar. The Bible truths I learned there shocked me, and I spent the next seven years trying to disprove them. *How could so many Sundaykeeping people be so wrong?* I reasoned. But the more I studied, the more I realized I could not argue against the truths I learned in the Adventist Church. Finally I couldn't deny the truth any longer. I stopped fighting and became an Adventist.

I praise God for a young woman who refused to compromise her faith and buy the shoes she had wanted so much. Her faith led me to Bible truths I had never heard of, truths which I hold dear today. For that young woman I am eternally grateful. 🌍

Thirteenth Sabbath Program

- **Note to Sabbath School Leader:** We invite you to choose a favorite song, followed by prayer, welcome, and the program below. Collect the mission offering, followed by a closing prayer. You might also remind people that they are always welcome to give online at our secure website: www.adventistmission.org/give. Thank you!

Participants: Five speakers—a narrator and four speakers, all young women. *[Note: participants don't need to memorize their parts, but should be familiar with the material. Practice so that participants feel comfortable.]*

Narrator/Interviewer: Our Thirteenth Sabbath Offering is going to some of the remotest parts of the North American Division—Guam/Micronesia, Alaska, and the Appalachian mountains of West Virginia. While we have heard stories from each of these areas, today we will listen to an interview at Camp Polaris in Alaska. This conversation was between Laurie Falvo, from the General Conference's Office of Adventist Mission, and four young women who are camp counselors—Katie Purvis, who has worked at the camp for the past four years, and Katie Fry, Krisi Koliadko, and Talea Shupe, who started last summer (2014).

Interviewer: How many of the children at Camp Polaris are Adventists?

Katie P.: About 5 to 10 percent.

Interviewer: How many are from some other Christian background?

Katie P.: Maybe 60 percent, but it's a

weird combination of some Christian beliefs with some traditional/supernatural beliefs mixed in.

Krisi: Shamanism is really prevalent in the native villages.

Katie F: They are very connected to the spiritual world.

Katie P.: It shocks me because these kids are so aware, from a very young age, that there's more out there than what meets the eye—that there are other beings and presences. During evening worship in our cabin, one girl said that she didn't think that she was going to be in heaven. When I asked why, she said, "Because there's a dark presence that comes and I talk with him at night. He keeps all my secrets for me and I feel like he's the only person who won't tell anything." I told her that she could talk with Jesus and that He would keep all of her secrets safe."

Interviewer: It almost sounds like she

has a friendship with this being. Like she trusts it.

Katie P: Yes. Some of the girls were talking about going into the woods at night and being confronted by what they call “the little people.” I explained that there is good and evil in the world, and that Jesus can overcome the darkness. They started to realize that Jesus really could be their friend. Ever since this conversation, all the girls in my cabin sleep easier. The whole group atmosphere is more open to Jesus.

Interviewer: Have you experienced watching the children listen to Bible stories knowing that it must be the first time they’ve heard these stories?

Katie P: Every night before we go to bed we read them stories. During my first year here I was trying to find something interesting, and then I realized that all they wanted were stories from the actual Bible. When I read them Bible stories, they would get quiet and just sit and listen. They really enjoyed hearing them.

Interviewer: Do they seem open spiritually?

Katie P: Very open. I think it’s because their situations are a lot more extreme than a lot of other kids, and they realize that life is hard. It’s not just about having fun with their friends. A lot of the time they are with people who are drinking. At home, they are hungry, they don’t have enough. But at camp they are fed, and we help where we can, so they realize that there is practical help that comes from Jesus. And they’re so sweet and so open to it. They really are.

Interviewer: So their first exposure to God’s love could be you.

Krisi: Basically. It’s the practical part of God’s love like sharing warm clothes and blankets. One girl came here and the only pair of shoes she had were a ripped up pair of black flats. She wore them everywhere—even in the water. She didn’t have anything else to wear, so I gave her a pair of my flip flops. Now she’s happier and getting along with the other kids because her feet aren’t hurting her anymore.

Interviewer: Tell us a little of what you know about their home lives.

Katie P: When we talk in the cabin, we gather around in our sleeping bags and sit on the floor. They’ll tell stories, and almost every story involves alcohol. They’ll say, “When my parents were drunk, this happened.” Or, “When my uncle was drinking, we crashed the snowmobile. Or, “We were playing hide-and-seek, but we had to stop because my dad was angry and drunk.” They say these things so normally, like it’s not even a big thing.

Interviewer: Do you get the sense that the children are abused?

Katie P: Yes. My mom works for the state [of Alaska], and they deal with all the things that come with drunkenness. Suicide rates are high. Abuse rates are high, and that brings another dimension to camp—kids coming who have been molested or abused. There’s a lot of self-abuse, too. We had a camper who came year after year, but sadly she committed suicide. That was devastating for all of us. The girls in my cabin were talking about it, and they brought up the subject of cutting or hurting themselves. They said, “That’s just a way to show that you’re ready to go to heaven.”

Interviewer: So “going to heaven” was a euphemism for committing suicide?

Katie P.: Yes. I wasn’t quite sure what to say to that. It took me by surprise.

Krisi: I think it’s a domino effect. If it starts in one generation, it continues on. I’ve heard stories of teenagers drinking and then wandering out onto the tundra and dying of hypothermia.

Katie P.: A lot of these kids are raised by their grandparents because their own parents are alcoholics. Then these kids grow up very unstable and have children when they’re young. Then their parents will raise those children. But even with all their troubles they still show a sense of love toward one another. When we were talking about the girl who committed suicide, there were many tears. One girl got out of her sleeping bag and put her arm around another girl. There’s so much sadness, but they still really show strength.

Interviewer: Why are you here, and why do you think that Camp Polaris is important?

Katie F.: These kids get the light of Jesus here that they don’t get at home, or anywhere else, it seems.

Krisi: The main mission is to influence these children for Christ. I love seeing them being happy because we’re here.

Katie F.: I heard about Camp Polaris during my senior year of high school. I had worked at another camp in [my state]. At that camp, the water was cold (like here!), and the kids complained a lot. But at Camp Polaris, the kids are so positive! They just run out into the water. They’re so happy to be here. I love kids and showing them what life is like with Jesus, because so many of

them don’t have any idea.

Katie P.: Camp Polaris is such a mission camp because it’s a lot more extreme than other camps. We don’t have a lot of the facilities and nicer things, so we’re basically just out in the woods and on the beach with the kids, sharing Jesus with them. Since I know what some of the villages are like, I wanted to be here because I have a passion for Alaska and the children in Alaska. I wanted to come work here because there’s such a need.

Interviewer: Would you say that the children are hungry for love?

Katie P.: Definitely. They are so needy. They want to crawl onto your lap, and hug you. And the boys want the guy counselors to play football with them and tackle them.

Talea: I’ve always wanted to work at camp and make a positive difference in a child’s life, so that’s why I’m here. One day after class a girl hugged me and said, “Thank you so much! I had so much fun. I’ll see you tomorrow.” I thought, *Oh, my heart. If Camp Polaris weren’t here, I don’t know what these kids would do.* Here they can get away from all their troubles at home; they can actually relax, have fun, and be kids.

Narrator/Interviewer: Today we have the wonderful opportunity through the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering to help Camp Polaris in its very special ministry to the children of Alaska. In addition we can partner with our brothers and sisters in West Virginia as they bring Bible truth to the people of Appalachia. Finally, we can help the school children in Micronesia have a gymnasium where they can play during the heavy island rainfalls. Please give generously to this very special offering. Thank you!

Leader's Resources

For more information on the cultures and history of the United States (particularly on the states of Alaska and West Virginia) and the territories of Guam/Micronesia, visit your local library or a travel agency. In addition, the following websites may be helpful: www.alaskaconference.org, alaska.gov, travelalaska.com, alaska.org; www.mtviewconf.org, www.wv.gov, www.wvtourism.com; gmmsda.org, www.guampedia.com/seventh-day-adventists, www.magnificentmicronesia.com.

In addition, the Adventist Mission website contains material that can add flavor to your mission presentation. Look for native languages from Alaska and Micronesia, as well as puzzles, recipes, and games from North America on the Children's Mission site. Go to www.AdventistMission.org. Click on "Resources" and "Children's Activities" in the pop-up menu. Click on "First Quarter" and select an activity.

An offering goal device will help focus attention on world missions and increase weekly mission giving. Ask your Sabbath School council to set a quarterly mission offering goal (set the goal a little higher than last quarter and divide it by 15, one part for each of the 13 regular Sabbaths this quarter and two parts for Thirteenth Sabbath). Chart the weekly progress toward the quarter's goal on the goal device.

Enlarge photos of children and adults from around the world, including those from Alaska, Guam/Micronesia, and West Virginia. Place a picture of the earth in the center of a felt board or on heavy poster board. Each time a week's goal is reached, add a figure to the poster.

Remind members that the ongoing work of the world church depends on Sabbath School mission giving every week, and that one quarter of the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will go directly to the projects in North America. On the twelfth Sabbath, report on mission giving during the quarter. Encourage members to double or triple their normal mission giving on Thirteenth Sabbath. Count the offering and record the amount given at the end of Sabbath School. This immediate feedback will encourage members to continue their mission giving.

Future Thirteenth Sabbath Projects

Next quarter the Northern Asia-Pacific Division will be featured. Projects include a youth training center in S. Korea, centers of influence in Taiwan, church plants in China, an international evangelism center in Japan, and a library for a school in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia.

YOUTH & ADULT MISSION

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ARCTIC OCEAN

North American Division

CONFERENCE	CHURCHES	COMPANIES	MEMBERSHIP	POPULATION
Atlantic Union	572	70	113,625	34,442,859
Canada	372	73	66,789	35,256,000
Columbia Union	712	77	140,298	51,011,461
Lake Union	502	58	85,778	35,273,432
Mid-America Union	456	67	67,618	26,837,795
North Pacific Union	440	67	99,033	14,229,323
Pacific Union	699	118	225,921	51,973,265
Southern Union	1,102	185	273,855	62,801,941
Southwestern Union	574	92	109,504	39,655,924
<i>Attached Field:</i>				
Guam-Micronesia	20	11	5,068	410,000

Total: 5,450 818 1,187,514 351,892,000
 Statistics as of December 2013

PROJECTS

- 1** Harvest Time Appalachia Evangelism Program, West Virginia
- 2** Bath houses and restrooms for Camp Polaris
Youth Camp, Alaska
- 3** Gyms for Adventist schools, Micronesia
- 4** CHILDREN'S PROJECT: Mattresses for the children at Camp Polaris

CANADA

U. S. A.

ATLANTIC OCEAN

PACIFIC OCEAN

BERMUDA

THE BAHAMAS

MEXICO

Guam

Federated States of Micronesia

Papua New Guinea

MIDWAY ISLANDS

JOHNSTON ISLANDS

Ottawa *

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GREENLAND

