

2024 • **QUARTER 4** • NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION



# youth & adult **mission**





**Eternal  
Buddy  
System**



# Contents

**On the Cover:** At 11, Micah heard a mission story from Camp Polaris in Alaska and wondered what it would be like to work there. Six years later, he found out. Story, page 24.

## HOLBROOK, ARIZONA

- 4 Silencing Skin-Walkers | Oct. 5 
- 6 Time to Quit? | Oct. 12
- 8 Wake-Up Call | Oct. 19
- 10 Standing for the Sabbath | Oct. 26 





## PAGE, ARIZONA

- 12 Perfect Property | Nov. 2
- 14 Waiting for Communion | Nov. 9
- 16 It Was Jesus | Nov. 16 

## ALASKA

- 18 An Evil Encounter | Nov. 23 
- 20 The Why Boy | Nov. 30



- 22 Why Caleb Is Smiling | Dec. 7 
- 24 Eternal Buddy System | Dec. 14 
- 26 Watch and Pray | Dec. 21 
- 28 Thirteenth Sabbath:  
Blackmailed! | Dec. 28 
- 30 Future Thirteenth Sabbath Projects
- 31 Leader's Resources
- 32 Map



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12501 Old Columbia Pike,  
Silver Spring, MD 20904-6601  
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 = stories of special interest to teens

## Dear Sabbath School Leader,

Andrew McChesney  
Editor



This quarter we feature the North American Division, which oversees the Seventh-day Adventist Church's work in the United States, Canada, the French possessions of St. Pierre and Miquelon, the British overseas territory of Bermuda, the U.S. territories of Guam, Wake Island, and Northern Mariana Islands in the Pacific Ocean, and three nearby states in free association with the United States— Palau, the Marshall Islands, and the Federated States of Micronesia. The region is home to 372 million people, including 1,224,769 Adventists. That's a ratio of one Adventist for every 304 people.

### Opportunities

This quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will support three projects in the North American Division:

- Center of influence for Alaska Natives, Bethel, Alaska, U.S.A.
- Mission outreach for 2025 General Conference Session, St. Louis, Missouri, U.S.A.
- Urban life center and church plant, Baltimore, Maryland, U.S.A.

You may wonder if the North American Division really remains a mission field in the 21st century. As I traveled around the division to collect mission stories for this quarter, I was reminded in a powerful way that a huge work remains to proclaim the everlasting gospel among Native populations. In Alaska, for example, there are more than 200 Native communities but the Adventist Church only has a presence in 11. "We need mission-minded workers to work and serve in Alaska," said Tandi Perkins, director of development for the Alaska Conference, who helped coordinate my visit.

In this *Mission* quarterly, you will find stories from several places in Alaska. You also will find stories connected to previous Thirteenth Sabbath projects in the towns of Holbrook and Page, Arizona. Information about this quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering projects is in the sidebar below.

If you want to make your Sabbath School class come alive, we offer photos and other materials to accompany each mission story. More information is provided in the sidebar with each story. You also can download the PDF version of the *Mission* magazine at [bit.ly/adultmission](https://bit.ly/adultmission), and *Mission Spotlight* videos at [bit.ly/missionspotlight](https://bit.ly/missionspotlight).

Thank you for encouraging others to be mission-minded!

# Silencing Skin-Walkers



ARIZONA | October 5

Allison

Allison, a horsemanship teacher at Holbrook Seventh-day Adventist Indian School, first heard about skin-walkers when a student sharply told her to stop whistling in the dark.

“Stop right now!” said the girl, Kai.

“Why?” said Allison, who enjoyed whistling both in the dark and in the light.

Kai fearfully explained that whistling in the dark was an invitation for skin-walkers to visit. In her Navajo culture, a skin-walker is an evil witch who has powers to transform into an animal, to possess an animal, or to masquerade as an animal.

Allison reassured the girl that God was more powerful than any skin-walker and that if she joined God’s team, she would have nothing to fear. “I think I’ll keep on whistling,” she said, kindly. “I’m sorry, but I’m not part of any other team.”

When Kai saw Allison wasn’t alarmed and realized that she also could be part of God’s team, she stopped being scared.

Kai wasn’t the only girl scared of skin-walkers at Holbrook.

Fifteen-year-old Enola took a friend with her every night when she went to the school barn to feed and water her horse as part of her horsemanship lessons. She had asked for permission first and, Allison, seeing that she was afraid of the dark, had consented, saying, “That’s fine as long as it doesn’t take you longer to do your work.”

Then one morning, Enola announced that she had gone to the barn the previous night without her friend.

“I went to the barn to do my horse by myself for the very first time,” she said.

Allison expressed surprise. “You didn’t take anyone with you?” she said.

“No,” Enola said.

“Weren’t you scared of the dark?”

Allison said.

Enola replied rather sassily, “Well, yeah. Why do you think that I always take someone with me?”





“Well, were you scared?” Allison asked.  
 “Yes, of course I was,” the girl said.  
 “But I kind of wanted to see if anything would happen.”

“What do you mean?”

“Well, being in the dark around here is not safe. That’s when the skin-walkers can get you.”

Then Allison understood Enola’s fear of the dark. She said, “And ... ?”

“And ... nothing happened!” Enola exclaimed.

“Of course not!” Allison said.

“No, you don’t understand,” the girl said.  
 “They almost got me before. But then I realized that I’m so stupid. Why would they get me here?”

“Tell me more,” Allison said.

“Well, it’s like nothing can ever get me when I’m on the school campus,” the girl said. “I sometimes wonder, ‘If I put a foot on one side of the main gate and the other on the other side, can they get half of me?’”

She laughed.

Allison smiled. She was glad that Enola was witnessing the power of the God of heaven on the Holbrook school campus in Arizona. Enola’s decision to go alone to the barn in the dark had been an opportunity for God to prove that He indeed was worthy of trust. It was good to be on His team!

The experience reminded Allison that Holbrook is a real mission school in the United States. “This is a mission field for sure,” she said. 🌐

Thank you for your Thirteenth Sabbath Offerings that have supported Holbrook Seventh-day Adventist Indian School. The two most recent Thirteenth Sabbath Offerings for the North American Division, collected in 2018 and 2021, are helping to construct a new Student Life Center on the campus where God lives and students do not need to fear skin-walkers.

## Story Tips

- Show Holbrook, Arizona, on the map.
- Know that the girls’ names have been changed to protect their privacy.
- Download photos for this story from Facebook: [bit.ly/fb-mq](https://bit.ly/fb-mq).
- Share Mission Posts and Fast Facts from the North American Division: [bit.ly/nad-2024](https://bit.ly/nad-2024).
- Know that this mission story illustrates the following objectives of the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s “I Will Go” strategic plan: Mission Objective No. 2, “To strengthen and diversify Adventist outreach ... among unreached and under-reached people groups”; Spiritual Growth Objective No. 5, “To disciple individuals and families into Spirit-filled lives”; Spiritual Growth Objective No. 6, “To increase accession, retention, reclamation, and participation of children, youth, and young adults”; and Spiritual Growth Objective No. 7, “To help youth and young adults place God first and exemplify a biblical worldview.” For more information, go online to: [IWillGo2020.org](https://IWillGo2020.org).

## Mission Post

- The United States is in the North American Division (NAD) and is made up of eight union conferences. It has 5,262 churches, 799 companies, and 1,089,385 members. In a population of 332,903,000, that’s one Seventh-day Adventist for every 306 people.
- The NAD was founded in 1913 and shared the same building as the General Conference until 2017, when it moved to a new location in Columbia, Maryland.
- The NAD oversees the church’s work in the United States, Canada, St. Pierre and Miquelon, Bermuda, Guam, Wake Island, Northern Mariana Islands, Palau, the Marshall Islands, and the Federated States of Micronesia.



# Time to Quit?

ARIZONA | October 12

Pedro

It was a tough day. Pedro decided that it was time to resign as principal of Holbrook Seventh-day Adventist Indian School in Arizona.

"I think this is it," he told his wife. "I think it's time for me to find another job."

It was the beginning of Pedro's 12<sup>th</sup> year as principal. He had just finished difficult conversations with several staff members. He had just reflected on the challenges of the school year. The burden seemed overwhelming.

But then Pedro remembered that he had made a promise to God on his first day as principal. He had prayed, "God, You have a big job to do to help me with this job. I'm going to stay here until You say otherwise."

Now, on the tough day, Pedro had another chat with God.

"I remember my promise," he said. "I don't want to be a liar. So, is it You who is telling me that it is time to go?"

He didn't receive an immediate answer. So, he did what he often told Holbrook teachers and students to do. He waited for God to be God.

A week passed.

Then Pedro heard that a girl who had

finished first grade at Holbrook two years earlier wanted to return. The girl, Raine, was precious and very smart. Her mother had kept her out of school for two years amid the Covid scare. Many Native American parents kept their children out of school for those two years. Pedro had been sad to see her leave, and he now wished that she would return. But he was skeptical about the news that she wanted to come back. Two times already he had heard that she might return, and she hadn't.

A short time later, Pedro heard that Raine's mother was ready to schedule an interview with him. Pedro interviewed all returning students who had been gone for a long time.

He felt a flicker of excitement. But he didn't get too excited because he wasn't sure that she would show up.

When the mother scheduled an interview for 10'clock on a Friday morning, the emotions hit. Pedro thought, "This is actually happening!"

On Friday morning, Pedro saw a car pull into the parking lot. He kept looking until someone got out of the car. It was Raine and her mother. They were walking toward the administration building.





Pedro went to the glass front doors of the administrative building to greet them. He crouched down, pressed his face and nose against the glass, and he peered out.

Raine saw him and ran excitedly toward him. As she approached, Pedro opened the doors, and she ran into his arms. It was pure love. At that moment, Pedro knew that he had his answer. It was not time to leave Holbrook. God still had a plan for him at the school.

"I missed you," he told Raine.

"I missed you, too," she said.

"It's good to see you."

"It's good to see you, too."

After the interview, Raine asked if she could play on the playground. She had missed the swings, the slide, and the other playground equipment.

"Yes, but please tell me before you leave so I can say goodbye," Pedro said.

A little while later, Raine returned to his office.

"OK, we are going to leave now," she said.

"I can't wait to see you on registration day on the 13th," he said.

"Can you make that sooner?" she said.

"What? You want to come back here sooner?"

"Yeah."

"I wish I could do that."

"Aren't you the principal? You can do anything!"

It was true. Pedro could do anything — with God.

"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13, NKJV). 🌍

Thank you for your Thirteenth Sabbath Offerings that have supported Holbrook Seventh-day Adventist Indian School. The two most recent Thirteenth Sabbath Offerings for the North American Division, collected in 2018 and 2021, are helping to construct a new gym and multipurpose building on the campus.

By Andrew McChesney

## Story Tips

- Show Holbrook, Arizona, on the map.
- Know that the principal's full name is Pedro Ojeda.
- Download photos for this story from Facebook: [bit.ly/fb-mq](https://bit.ly/fb-mq).
- Share Mission Posts and Fast Facts from the North American Division: [bit.ly/nad-2024](https://bit.ly/nad-2024).
- Know that this mission story illustrates the following objectives of the Seventh-day Adventist Church's "I Will Go" strategic plan: Mission Objective No. 2, "To strengthen and diversify Adventist outreach ... among unreached and under-reached people groups"; Spiritual Growth Objective No. 5, "To disciple individuals and families into Spirit-filled lives"; and Spiritual Growth Objective No. 6, "To increase accession, retention, reclamation, and participation of children, youth, and young adults." For more information, go online to: [IWillGo2020.org](https://IWillGo2020.org).

## Mission Post

- In May 1863, a meeting of Adventists gathered in Battle Creek, Michigan, to form what is now called the Seventh-day Adventist Church.
- The first Adventist missionary was J.N. Andrews, who was sent to England and Switzerland in 1874 to assist Adventist church leaders there.
- Desmond Doss joined the U.S. Army in World War II, but because of his personal beliefs as a Seventh-day Adventist he refused to purposely kill others or carry a weapon, and he became a combat medic. During the Battle of Okinawa, he saved the lives of at least 75 soldiers, which earned him the Medal of Honor. He was the only noncombatant to receive this honor.
- Dr. Ben Carson is a renowned American Seventh-day Adventist neurosurgeon who, in 1987, was the first to successfully surgically separate twins conjoined at the head.

# Wake-Up Call

ARIZONA | October 19

Marisa



**M**arisa woke up suddenly at 2:30 in the morning. There was no reason for her to wake up. She had been sound asleep in her third-floor apartment in Spokane, Washington. She wondered if she needed to go to the bathroom.

A few minutes later, she was walking back to the bedroom from the bathroom when she noticed an unusual yellow glow outside the window. Looking out the window, she saw hot flames shooting up outside her bedroom wall. Her apartment building was on fire.

Marisa called out to her two dogs, Maggie and Daisey.

“Girls, come!” she commanded.

The dogs were cowering in a corner. They knew something was wrong.

At Marisa’s command, the dogs followed her to the living room. She opened the front door, and black smoke billowed in. She slammed the door shut.

“Girls, come!” she said.

Marisa and the dogs went to the balcony. Looking down from the third floor, Marisa saw people running around. The apartment building was across the street from a park where homeless people slept. Now homeless people were banging frantically on windows

and doors, urging people to get out of their beds and apartments. One homeless man seemed to be in charge, and Marisa called down to him.

“Help!” she cried. “I don’t know what to do. I can’t get out my front door.”

The man looked up and grew very serious. “If you want to live, you have to jump,” he said.

“But I have two dogs.”

“You have to throw them down.”

Marisa scooped up one dog and dropped it. Then the other. After that, she climbed over the railing and fell to the second-floor balcony. From there, she dropped to the ground.

She sustained bruises and a sprained ankle, but she didn’t notice them. Her only worry was for her dogs.

“Maggie!” she cried. “Daisey!”

A neighbor said she had seen the dogs land safely and run toward the park.

That was a huge relief to Marisa, and she headed to the park, calling for them.

There was no sign of the dogs.

Marisa remembered that her cell phone was in the apartment. The only phone number that she had memorized was her brother’s. Marisa borrowed someone’s phone and called him. He answered on the second ring. Marisa was surprised. He slept soundly and was hard to wake up.

Marisa told him what was happening. “I need you to come get me and help look for my dogs,” she said.

Her brother came over, and the two





drove around, looking for the dogs.

Fire trucks arrived.

“I’m impressed that we need to go back to the park,” Marisa said.

At the park, she called for the dogs, and Maggie came running up. Marisa was so happy! She fell to the ground, crying and hugging the dog.

It took 17 hours to find Daisey. Strangers combed the street. A social media page for missing pets posted a notice. A local television channel interviewed Marisa about the dog, and the police even put out a bulletin.

That night, Marisa’s brother called to say that Daisey had been found. He had been calling for Daisey on the street, and the dog had recognized his voice and run to him. Bystanders pulled out their cellphones to record Marisa’s joyful reunion with the dog.

For Marisa, it was a night of miracles. She lost everything in the fire. But God saved her life and the lives of her dogs.

But why?

As Marisa prayed for answers, she sensed God reply, “Because I am not finished with you yet.” The words were balm to her soul.

Marisa worked in adolescent and child mental health. She had been employed by the U.S. government as a juvenile correctional officer and by the Seventh-day Adventist Church. But when Covid hit, she found herself unemployed. Normally upbeat, she found herself in a dark period that she couldn’t seem to escape.

The fire snapped her out of the deep sadness. Realizing that God wasn’t finished with her yet, she remembered her calling to work with children, and she decided to return to it.

Months later, she moved to Arizona to work as the head girls’ dean at Holbrook Seventh-day Adventist Indian School. In the girls’ dormitory, she oversees several dozen girls with the help of Maggie and Daisey, who the girls love.

She couldn’t be happier.

“I can’t imagine doing anything else,” she said. 🌍

## Story Tips

- Show Holbrook, Arizona, on the map.
- Watch a YouTube video of Marisa with Maggie and Daisey at: [bit.ly/NAD-Marisa](https://bit.ly/NAD-Marisa).
- Download photos for this story from Facebook: [bit.ly/fb-mq](https://bit.ly/fb-mq).
- Share Mission Posts and Fast Facts from the North American Division: [bit.ly/nad-2024](https://bit.ly/nad-2024).
- Know that Holbrook Seventh-day Adventist Indian School illustrates the following objectives of the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s “I Will Go” strategic plan: Mission Objective No. 2, “To strengthen and diversify Adventist outreach ... among unreached and under-reached people groups”; Spiritual Growth Objective No. 5, “To disciple individuals and families into Spirit-filled lives”; and Spiritual Growth Objective No. 6, “To increase accession, retention, reclamation, and participation of children, youth, and young adults.” For more information, go to the website: [IWillGo2020.org](https://IWillGo2020.org).

## Fast Facts

- The national flag of the United States has 13 stripes, representing the 13 British colonies, and 50 white stars on a dark blue background, representing the 50 U.S. states.
- The U.S. national animal is the American bison, the national tree is the oak, the national bird is the bald eagle, and the national flower is the rose.

This mission story offers an inside look at a face behind the scenes at Holbrook Seventh-day Adventist Indian School, which received part of the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering in 2018 and 2021 to construct a Student Life Center. Thank you for your Thirteenth Sabbath Offering this quarter that will help spread the gospel in the North American Division.

By Andrew McChesney

# Standing for the Sabbath



ARIZONA | October 26

Ana

Ana didn't want to become a Seventh-day Adventist. She loved the church of her childhood in the Philippines, and she didn't want to worship on Saturday instead of Sunday. She cried and cried. But as she studied the Bible, she grew convinced about the seventh day. She became an Adventist.

Then trouble flared up at work.

Ana was teaching math to special needs students at a public high school. It was her first year of teaching, and she was required to take Saturday classes to earn a master's degree in special education. Ana spoke to the superintendent of public schools for the city.

"I can't take those classes because I am a Seventh-day Adventist," she said.

"If you don't want to take those classes, then you will lose your job," the superintendent said.

Ana was scared. She was the family breadwinner. For a semester, she attended Saturday classes. But her conscience bothered her, and she finally stopped going.

"I can't do it," she told the superintendent.

To her surprise, the superintendent replied, "That's your decision."

Then she learned that she couldn't be fired. When she had first asked not to study on Saturdays, she had been on probation at work. But the probation period had ended, and she couldn't be fired. She promised herself never to break the Sabbath again.

Ana taught at the school for nine years.

While there, she faced a new Sabbath test when she applied through a job recruitment agency for a teaching job in the United States. A California school was interested in hiring her, but it wanted to conduct the job interview on Saturday.

"I can't do the interview on Saturday," Ana told the recruiter. "I need to go to church."

Ana decided that God must not want her to work in the United States. She told the recruiter, "I don't want a job anymore. Remove my application from your database."

A month passed, and the job recruitment agency called again. A school in Arizona was interested in hiring her.

"Can I have the interview on a day other than Saturday?" Ana asked.

"You can have the interview on any day of the week," the recruiter said.

Ana did the interview on a Friday, and the school offered her the job four days later.

Ana was astonished, and she praised God.

The superintendent was surprised when Ana came with her resignation letter. Ana later learned that the superintendent had applied many times to teach in the United States but had never been offered a job.





Ana sensed that God had honored her for honoring His Sabbath.

The Sabbath tests did not end in the United States. Shortly after she arrived in Arizona, the new principal told her and the rest of the teachers that they needed to attend special training sessions on Saturdays. Ana prayed, “Lord, I’m here because I kept the Sabbath, and I know You will help me now.”

She went to the principal. “I cannot do the training,” she said. “I believe that Saturday is holy, and I need to keep it holy.”

The principal refused to compromise. “If you do not go to the training on Saturday, I will fire you for insubordination,” he said.

Ana stood her ground. “In America, we have religious freedom,” she said. “I’m here because I have stood for the Sabbath.”

Then she shared her story and gave the principal a short Bible study on the Sabbath.

The principal was upset. But he offered to excuse her from the training if the superintendent of public schools for their town gave his permission.

Ana spoke with the superintendent, and he signed a letter, granting his permission. “You can worship God on any day,” he said.

Ana gave the letter to the principal.

“You’re excused,” he said. “But find a way to do the Saturday training on your own.”

Ana didn’t know what to study, so she prayed. The next day, at the school, she saw the instructional coach responsible for the training at her school. “I cannot come to the training because I am Seventh-day Adventist and keep the Sabbath holy,” she said.

“Let’s go to the principal,” the instructional coach replied. “I want to tell him something.”

At the principal’s office, instructional coach said, “I will have a training on Sundays just for Ana.”

“OK, problem solved,” the principal said. Turning to Ana, his face softened. “You are blessed because you are faithful,” he said.

After that, something amazing happened. A warm relationship blossomed between the principal and Ana. He became like a father to her. He was sad to see Ana leave a few

## Story Tips

- Show Holbrook, Arizona, on the map.
- Download photos for this story from Facebook: [bit.ly/fb-mq](https://bit.ly/fb-mq).
- Share Mission Posts and Fast Facts from the North American Division: [bit.ly/nad-2024](https://bit.ly/nad-2024).
- Know that Holbrook Seventh-day Adventist Indian School illustrates the following objectives of the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s “I Will Go” strategic plan: Mission Objective No. 2, “To strengthen and diversify Adventist outreach ... among unreached and under-reached people groups”; Spiritual Growth Objective No. 5, “To disciple individuals and families into Spirit-filled lives”; and Spiritual Growth Objective No. 6, “To increase accession, retention, reclamation, and participation of children, youth, and young adults.” For more information, go online to: [IWillGo2020.org](https://IWillGo2020.org).

## Fast Facts

- The border between the United States and Canada is the longest international border in the world at 5,525 miles (8,891 km).

years later when she sensed God calling her to teach at Holbrook Seventh-day Adventist Indian School, located an hour’s drive away.

Today, Ana is a special-education math teacher at Holbrook. She is happy to be a Seventh-day Adventist, and she loves teaching students about math and the Sabbath. “I stood for the Sabbath, and God has helped me,” she said. 🌍

This mission story offers an inside look at a teacher at Holbrook Seventh-day Adventist Indian School, which received part of the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering in 2018 and 2021. Thank you for your offering this quarter that also will help spread the gospel.

By Andrew McChesney

# Perfect Property

ARIZONA | November 2

Page All Nations SDA Church



**S**eventh-day Adventists wanted to plant a church on the Navajo Reservation in the U.S. state of Arizona. Church members from around the world contributed to the project when the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering was collected in 2011. But there was a big problem: where to open the church.

The city of Page, located on the border of the Navajo Reservation, was chosen as the ideal location. However, the church couldn't simply be constructed. City authorities had a rule that all churches had to be located on a certain street. That street was so well-known for its houses of worship that it was nicknamed "Church Row" and "Holy Curve."

But there was no space left on the street to build a new church. So, the only option left was to buy an existing church building if the owners were willing to sell.

There was one church on the street that wasn't being used. The Southern Baptist church had fallen into disrepair after members had grown old and passed away. The elderly deacon responsible for the church decided to put the property up for sale.

An appraiser was summoned to determine the value of the property. He said it was worth U.S.\$850,000.

But the Adventists didn't have \$850,000. The portion of the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering that had been collected for the new church was less. Even with contributions from the North American Division and other church entities that are usually added to the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering, there wasn't that much money for the property. Adventist leaders spoke with the deacon and prayed.

The Adventists, however, weren't the only people interested in the property.

The land occupied a prime spot on the main road coming into town. It was also right across the street from a public school. A popular fast-food chain thought the land would be the perfect place to open a restaurant. Contacting the church deacon, the fast-food chain offered \$2 million.

The deacon faced a serious decision. What should he do? The land was worth \$850,000, the Adventists were interested, and the fast-food chain had offered \$2 million.

The deacon prayed earnestly. As he prayed, he sensed that people needed a church more than a fast-food restaurant. He asked church leaders at the South Baptist Convention to sell the property to the Adventists for \$250,000. Then, with





*Nancy Crosby in a garden at the Page church.*

the leaders' blessing, he offered it for that amount to the Adventists. The Thirteenth Sabbath Offering and other contributions were enough to buy the property.

"It was unbelievable," said Nancy Crosby, who oversees Adventist outreach to Native Americans on the Navajo Reservation as well as in Utah and Nevada. "There is no question that God opened the door."

Normally, when planting a new church, a congregation starts with a handful of people meeting in a home. When the group grows too big, it moves to a bigger meeting place. In Page, the congregation started in a building that was much larger than it needed.

"It seemed like the cart was being placed before the horse," Nancy said. "But God knew what He was doing." 🌍

Thank you for your Thirteenth Sabbath Offering in 2011 that helped plant the Page All Nations Seventh-day Adventist Church in Arizona. Pray for those sharing the gospel with Native Americans, including Nancy and her husband, James, who is the pastor of the church.

## Story Tips

- Show Page, Arizona, on the map.
- Read more about Pastor James and Nancy Crosby's work at the Page church next week.
- Download photos for this story from Facebook: [bit.ly/fb-mq](https://bit.ly/fb-mq).
- Share Mission Posts and Fast Facts from the North American Division: [bit.ly/nad-2024](https://bit.ly/nad-2024).
- Know that the church plant in Page, Arizona, seeks to fulfill the following objectives of the Seventh-day Adventist Church's "I Will Go" strategic plan: Mission Objective No. 2, "To strengthen and diversify Adventist outreach ... among unreached and under-reached people groups"; Spiritual Growth Objective No. 5, "To disciple individuals and families into Spirit-filled lives"; and Spiritual Growth Objective No. 6, "To increase accession, retention, reclamation, and participation of children, youth, and young adults." For more information, go to the website: [IWillGo2020.org](https://IWillGo2020.org).

## Fast Facts

- The United States does not have an official language. More than 350 languages are spoken in the country, with the most common being English (245 million/78.5%) and Spanish (41.3 million/13.2%).
- The Missouri River is the longest river in the United States and is 2,341 miles (3,767 km) long. It flows through seven states: Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Iowa, Kansas, and Missouri.
- The hottest place in the United States is Death Valley, and the lowest point on the North American continent is the Badwater Basin, a massive salt flat with an elevation of 282 ft (86 m) below sea level.

By Andrew McChesney

# Waiting for Communion



ARIZONA | November 9

Katrina

**K**atrina was overjoyed when she heard that a Seventh-day Adventist church was opening in Page, Arizona. There were no Adventist churches near her home on the Navajo Reservation, and she had not taken part in communion for 20 years.

On the first Sabbath, the elderly woman sought out the church pastor after the sermon. “I have not had communion for more than 20 years,” she said. “When can we have communion?”

Pastor James raised his hands helplessly. “We don’t have the equipment for it now right,” he said.

In reality, the church didn’t have much of anything. It was a miracle that the church even had a building. If a denomination wants a church in Page, it has to buy an existing church building. All churches stand on the same street in Page, and there is no place to build a new church. The Adventist Church managed to buy the Page church building from another denomination with the help of a Thirteenth Sabbath Offering. When

Pastor James arrived, however, he found that the church needed major repairs and lacked basic equipment, including items for communion.

But Katrina was determined to participate in communion. “I’ll see what I can do about it,” she said. “What do we need?”

The pastor said the church needed basins for foot-washing.

“When I get my next Social Security check, I’ll go to the store and buy basins,” Katrina said.

Sure enough, when she received her next Social Security check, she went to the store and found white plastic basins. There were six on the shelf, and she bought them all. The next Sabbath, she brought them to church and gave them to the pastor’s wife, Nancy.

“Here’s some, and I’ll be getting you some more when I receive my next check,” she said.

Nancy was touched, and she exclaimed, “Thank you!”

Pastor James and Nancy also wanted to celebrate communion at the church. But with a need for urgent repairs and basic





equipment, it was challenging for them to know how to prioritize their limited funds.

Every time Katrina received a Social Security check, she bought all the white plastic basins that were on the store shelf. Usually, there were six. Then she brought them to church and gave them to the pastor's wife. Sometimes she took money from her husband's pension payments to help buy the basins. He was Navajo and didn't go to church, but he didn't mind helping out.

It took three months for Katrina to buy enough basins.

When she brought the last basins to church, she said to the pastor, "I've brought enough basins. So can we now have communion?"

Pastor James thanked her for her generosity. "But," he said, "we don't have towels." Towels were needed to dry feet after washing them in the basins.

"I'll see what we can do about that," Katrina said.

When her next Social Security check arrived, she bought enough white towels for everyone to participate in communion.

Then she went to the pastor.

"Here are the towels," she said. "Now can we have communion?"

The pastor again thanked her for her generosity. "But we have to get communion trays," he said.

Katrina didn't know how to find those. So, she said, "When can we get some? I can donate more money."

Shortly afterward, another Adventist church donated a communion set, and the Page All Nations Seventh-day Adventist Church had everything needed for communion. The pastor's wife made communion bread, and Katrina and other church-goers celebrated communion for the first time at the Page All Nations Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Katrina was delighted! She thanked the Lord profusely.

"I have always loved communion," she told Adventist Mission. "When you participate, you let Jesus know how much

## Story Tips

- Show Page, Arizona, on the map.
- Download photos for this story from Facebook: [bit.ly/fb-mq](https://bit.ly/fb-mq).
- Share Mission Posts and Fast Facts from the North American Division: [bit.ly/nad-2024](https://bit.ly/nad-2024).
- Know that this mission story illustrates Spiritual Growth Objective No. 5 of the Seventh-day Adventist Church's "I Will Go" strategic plan: "To disciple individuals and families into Spirit-filled lives." For more information, go to the website: [IWillGo2020.org](https://IWillGo2020.org).

## Fast Facts

- Arizona's nickname is the "Grand Canyon State."
- In 1912, Arizona became the 48th state of the United States.
- The state flower of Arizona is the saguaro cactus blossom, and the state bird is the cactus wren.
- The capital and biggest city of Arizona is Phoenix.

you love Him and appreciate the help that He has given you." 🌍

Thank you for your 2011 Thirteenth Sabbath Offering that helped plant the Page All Nations Seventh-day Adventist Church, where this story took place. Thank you for planning a generous Thirteenth Sabbath Offering this quarter to further the spread of the gospel in the North American Division.

By Andrew McChesney

# It Was Jesus

ARIZONA | November 16

James



**R***ap! Rap! Rap!*

It was Saturday night, and the sharp rapping of knuckles brought Pastor James to the door of his house in Page, a city located beside the Navajo Reservation in Arizona.

A Native American man stood outside.

"I need help for my daughter," he said.

"Her stomach hurts."

James looked beyond the man and saw the daughter and her mother in the car. "Does she need to go to the hospital?" he asked.

"No, no," the father said. "Just pray."

James invited her into the house, but the father shook his head.

"Would you like to bring her into the church?" James said, motioning to the Seventh-day Adventist church next door. He had moved to Page only two months earlier to serve as the church's pastor.

"Yes, we'll do that," the father said.

He drove the car up to the church's back entrance, and the mother got out first.

"Do you have holy water?" she asked.

She said the family had just come from another church where they had asked the priest to sprinkle holy water on the daughter. The priest had refused and sent them away.

"We don't use holy water," James said. "We have the Bible."

"She's possessed," the mother said.

Puzzled, James thought, "What's going on? The mother says she's possessed, but the father says she needs prayer for a hurting stomach."

The father opened the car door and helped his daughter out. She was bent over, clutching her stomach. She appeared to be in her late 20s.

James had never dealt with demon possession, and he thought, "If she is possessed, she won't want to go into the church."

He watched as the young woman followed her father into the church. But as she walked through the back door, she started foaming at the mouth. Then she crouched down on the floor and grunted like an animal.

Her father, who was considerably larger than her, said, "I'm not scared of you."

Turning to James, he said impatiently, "Just say the prayer and get this over with."

The mother, however, was scared, and she backed away from her daughter. With a quavering voice, she said, "In the name of Jesus, in the name of Jesus."

James picked up a Bible, and it fell open to Mark 9. It was the story of Jesus casting a spirit out of a boy. Echoing the question that Jesus asked the boy's father, James asked, "How long has this been happening to her?"

The father was annoyed by the question. He didn't want to admit that his daughter was possessed. He just wanted James to pray.

The mother, meanwhile, kept repeating, "In the name of Jesus, in the name of Jesus."





Then the daughter attacked. She caught her father in a stronghold from behind and began strangling him.

The father, who moments before had claimed not to be scared of her, cried out, "Help me! Help me!"

Terrified, the mother ran out of the church.

James went up behind the daughter and lightly touched her shoulder. Immediately, she released her father, and he ran out.

James wasn't sure what to do, but he wasn't afraid. He had perfect peace that God would take care of him.

Feeling his touch, the daughter turned around slowly and stared at James. Then she raised a hand. James backed away until he hit a wall. She followed until she was standing right in front of him. Her hand remained raised, as if ready to strike. But she didn't touch him. James looked into her eyes. They were empty. It was as if her person was gone. She was not there. James prayed silently for Jesus to deliver her.

A moment later, she collapsed to the floor in a crumpled heap.

Then James prayed for Jesus to restore her.

She got up and sat on a chair. She was a completely different person. Speaking in a normal voice, she asked, "Who helped me?"

It was Jesus.

Her father came back to the room. He looked relieved and said, "Wow, that's my girl, that's my girl."

Then the mother returned, and James led the family in a prayer of thanksgiving. He spoke to them about the power of Jesus.

"It's very important to turn to the Lord in these kinds of situations," he said.

As they left, he gave them a copy of *Ellen White's Steps to Christ*.

James has never seen the family again. He doesn't know what happened to them. But from that night he understood that the great controversy between Christ and Satan is very real on the Navajo Reservation. 🌐

Pray for the Navajo people. Pray for the work of Pastor James Crosby and his

## Story Tips

- Show Page, Arizona, on the map.
- Know that Pastor James and his wife, Nancy, are fully dedicated to sharing the gospel with Native Americans. James is pastor of the church in Page, and Nancy oversees the Seventh-day Adventist Church's work with Native Americans in the U.S. states of Arizona, Nevada, and Utah.
- Download photos for this story from Facebook: [bit.ly/fb-mq](https://bit.ly/fb-mq).
- Share Mission Posts and Fast Facts from the North American Division: [bit.ly/nad-2024](https://bit.ly/nad-2024).
- Know that this mission story illustrates the following objectives of the Seventh-day Adventist Church's "I Will Go" strategic plan: Mission Objective No. 2, "To strengthen and diversify Adventist outreach ... among unreached and under-reached people groups"; Spiritual Growth Objective No. 5, "To disciple individuals and families into Spirit-filled lives"; and Spiritual Growth Objective No. 6, "To increase accession, retention, reclamation, and participation of children, youth, and young adults." For more information, go to the website: [IWillGo2020.org](https://IWillGo2020.org).

## Fast Facts

- Arizona is home of a major portion of the largest Indian Reservation in North America, the Navajo Nation, covering more than 25,000 square miles (40,000 sq km).

Today, 22 tribes live on reservations in Arizona, and a total of more than 425,000 Native American people live there — 6 percent of the state's population, occupying a quarter of its land area.

family. Thank you for your 2011 Thirteenth Sabbath Offering that helped plant the Page All Nations Seventh-day Adventist Church, where this story took place, in Arizona.

By Andrew McChesney

# An Evil Encounter



ALASKA | November 23

Adiv

A strange heaviness settled on the house as Father reproached his pregnant 15-year-old daughter, Lusa.

“You could have hurt the baby,” he said.

Lusa, who had been smoking traditional herbs, reacted defiantly to Father in the living room of their house in Alaska.

Watching the scene in the living room was Adiv, a Michigan native who was working at a children’s home. He had dropped by Lusa’s house for a visit. He and everyone else in the house were Seventh-day Adventist.

Abruptly, Lusa and Father moved to a bedroom, and the girl’s mother joined them there.

They shut the door.

In the living room, Adiv sensed the strange heaviness grow more oppressive. He wasn’t sure what was going on, but he decided that it would be a good time to pray.

As he prayed, loud cursing erupted from behind the bedroom door.

Then Mother came out. “The girl is possessed,” she said. “You need to pray.”

Adiv prayed more earnestly. He asked God for wisdom. Taking his Bible, he knelt outside the closed bedroom door.

“Lord, guide me through this process,” he prayed. “Forgive all my sins. Make sure all my sins are gone.”

Then his prayer turned to the girl and her parents.

Shrieks rang out from behind the door.

Father came out.

“Did you call me?” he said.

“No,” Adiv said. “I never called you.”

“OK, do you want to come in?” Father said.

Adiv didn’t want to go into the bedroom, but he said, “Sure.”

Inside the room, he saw Lusa lying on her back near a wall and screaming.

Father joined Mother in standing near the girl.

Adiv knelt with his Bible near the door. He wanted to be as close as possible to the door if he needed to run out.

Father and Mother opened their mouths and began singing the children’s song, “Jesus Loves Me.”

From the door, Adiv joined them.

As they sang about Jesus’ love for children, Lusa stopped screaming. She began to cry.

“Daddy, I need your help,” she said.

Adiv saw anguish flash in Father’s face.

“I can’t help you,” Father said. “You need to call on Jesus.”

Then Lusa shrieked. “She’s not your daughter anymore,” a low voice said through her mouth.

Adiv looked at the Bible in his hand. He didn’t





know what to do next, but he was sure that God's Word contained power. Opening to the book of Psalms, he began to read out loud.

A moment later, he glanced up. The girl had stopped screaming and was crawling across the floor toward him.

Adiv prayed for faith and kept reading.

When Lusa reached him, she raised a hand and knocked the Bible to the floor.

"I hate this Book," she snarled. "I hate this Book."

Adiv picked up the Bible and resumed reading from Psalms.

Lusa knocked the Bible out of his hand two more times.

The struggle between Christ and Satan lasted for another 90 minutes. Adiv and the parents sang, prayed, and read the Bible until the heaviness left the house. The evil spirit had departed.

Adiv found it hard to kneel for 90 minutes, but when he stood up he felt energized and refreshed. In contrast, Lusa was exhausted. She was weak and could hardly speak.

Adiv learned that day that the great controversy between God and Satan is real. "For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places" (Ephesians 6:12, NKJV).

Lusa's situation is not unique among Alaska Natives and even some who are Adventists. Adiv, who works in children's homes and Adventist summer camps, has not met an Alaska Native who has not had an encounter with spirits or knows someone who has.

Adiv prays with all his heart for the everlasting gospel to be proclaimed throughout Alaska.

"I want to stay here as long as possible," he said. "There is a work that needs to be done. People need to know Christ." 🌍

A huge work remains to proclaim the everlasting gospel in Alaska, where there are more than 200 Native communities but

## Story Tips

- On a map, show the location of Bethel, Alaska, where part of this quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help open a center of influence.
- Pronounce Adiv as: ah-DEEV.
- Lusa is a pseudonym.
- Download photos for this story from Facebook: [bit.ly/fb-mq](https://bit.ly/fb-mq).
- Share Mission Posts and Fast Facts from the North American Division: [bit.ly/nad-2024](https://bit.ly/nad-2024).
- Know that this mission story illustrates the following objectives of the Seventh-day Adventist Church's "I Will Go" strategic plan: Mission Objective No. 1, "To revive the concept of worldwide mission and sacrifice for mission as a way of life involving not only pastors but every church member, young and old, in the joy of witnessing for Christ and making disciples," and Mission Objective No. 2, "To strengthen and diversify Adventist outreach ... among unreached and under-reached people groups." For more information, go to the website: [IWillGo2020.org](https://IWillGo2020.org).

## Fast Facts

- As Europeans settled North America, they pushed the indigenous peoples farther and farther west, meeting resistance with violence, and forcing them onto reservations, often in the most inhospitable areas of the country and hundreds of miles (kilometers) from their ancestral lands.

the Seventh-day Adventist Church only has a presence in 11 of them. Part of this quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help share the love of Jesus in Bethel, Alaska. Thank you for planning a generous offering on December 28.

By Andrew McChesney



# The Why Boy

ALASKA | November 30

Adiv

James was a “Why Boy.” Whenever he was asked to do something at summer camp, he asked, “Why?” “Why do I have to do this?” he said. “Why do I have to do that?”

James was an orphan. His father and mother had died, and he lived with relatives in a small Native village in Alaska. Those relatives sent him to summer camp. So, James got onto an airplane and flew to the city of Dillingham. Alaska doesn’t have many roads, so people often have to fly in airplanes to travel from one place to another.

After arriving in Dillingham, James rode on a bus for about 30 minutes to a lake. Then he boarded a boat and traveled another 15 minutes to Camp Polaris, a Seventh-day Adventist summer camp for Alaska Native children just like him.

James immediately loved the camp, and he especially enjoyed water sports on the lake. He smiled from ear to ear when he hopped onto an inflatable orange-and-blue raft to be pulled behind a boat for a brisk ride on the lake. He tried not to fall into the water. Even though it was summer, the water was icy cold.

James’ smile turned into a frown at

evening worship. When it was time to pray, all the children stood. The seven boys who slept in the same cabin as James stood. Their camp counselor, Adiv, stood. But James remained seated.

Adiv whispered to James, “You need to stand up.” One of the camp rules was that everyone needed to stand during prayer to show respect to God.

James silently rose to his feet. But he was frowning.

The next day, James remained seated during prayer at morning worship. He sat during prayer at evening worship. Then he turned to the boy beside him and began to talk during the prayer. Adiv spoke to him every time, but he refused to listen.

On the third day, when James remained seated, Adiv invited him to step outside the lodge to talk.

Outside, Adiv reminded James about the camp rules. “If this is what you are going to do, there will be consequences,” he said. “Out of respect to God, you need to stand up when we pray and not talk. Why don’t you stand up?”

“Why should I stand up? Why can’t I talk?” James said. “I have never seen God. I don’t





even know if there is a God.”

Adiv saw an opportunity to teach James about God. He spoke about the wind that often blew through the camp.

“Even though you don’t see the wind, you know it exists because you can feel it on your skin and see the rustling of the leaves in the trees,” he said. “In the same way, I can’t see God, but I can sense His presence around me.”

He spoke about the stars at night.

“When there are clouds in the night sky, you can’t see the stars, but you know that they are there,” he said. “In the same way, I can’t see God, but I can sense His presence around me.”

Tears formed in James’ eyes.

“How do I know that?” he blurted out.

“If God exists, why do bad things happen? Where was God when my mother died? Where was God when my father died?”

Adiv said death was not part of God’s plan. But the first humans, Adam and Eve, sinned against God, and the result is pain and death. So, God sent His Son, Jesus, to die for everyone’s sins. Those who believe in Jesus will live with Him forever in a world without pain and death. “Even though you cannot see Him, God is still there,” Adiv said.

James listened quietly. “Is God really up there?” he mused.

After that, James stood silently during prayers. He never said what he was thinking, but Adiv hoped that he was thinking about God. 🌍

Camp Polaris, located on a lake near Dillingham, Alaska, is the only Seventh-day Adventist summer camp that caters to Alaska Native children. Part of your Thirteenth Sabbath Offering in 2016 helped to renovate the camp with new cabins and bathrooms. Thank you for sharing the love of Jesus with this quarter’s Thirteenth Sabbath Offering, which will go to Bethel, Alaska.

By Andrew McChesney

## Story Tips

- Show the location of Dillingham, Alaska, on the map. Also show the location of Bethel, which will receive part of this quarter’s Thirteenth Sabbath Offering to open a center of influence.
  - Know that the Seventh-day Adventist Church and generous donors cover the cost of Alaska Native children going to summer camp.
  - Pronounce Adiv as: ah-DEEV.
  - James is a pseudonym to protect the privacy of a minor.
- Download photos for this story from Facebook: [bit.ly/fb-mq](https://bit.ly/fb-mq).
- Share Mission Posts and Fast Facts from the North American Division: [bit.ly/nad-2024](https://bit.ly/nad-2024).
  - Know that this mission story illustrates the following objectives of the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s “I Will Go” strategic plan: Spiritual Growth Objective No. 5, “To disciple individuals and families into Spirit-filled lives”; Spiritual Growth Objective No. 6, “To increase accession, retention, reclamation, and participation of children, youth, and young adults”; and Spiritual Growth Objective No. 7, “To help youth and young adults place God first and exemplify a biblical worldview.” For more information, go to the website: [IWillGo2020.org](https://IWillGo2020.org).

## Mission Post

- Alaska is in the North Pacific Union Conference, which has 448 churches, 61 companies, and 102,187 members. With a population of around 15,767,000, that is one Adventist for every 158 people.
- The church in Barrow, Alaska, is the farthest north of any Adventist church in the world.
- Jasper N. Sylvester, grandfather of H.M.S. Richards, Sr. (founder of the Voice of Prophecy), was a blacksmith in Skagway, Alaska, and one of the first Adventists in the territory.

# Why Caleb Is Smiling



ALASKA | December 7

Caleb

Caleb decided to lead a short worship in his cabin at Camp Polaris in Alaska. It was the second day of camp, and the six boys under his watch as camp counselor were tired after a full day of activities.

Before Caleb could start, one of the boys fell asleep. He was suffering from withdrawal symptoms from chewing tobacco. A number of Alaska Native children at the Seventh-day Adventist summer camp are addicted to chewing tobacco, and they suffer from nicotine withdrawal during the first few days of camp.

As the boy slept, Caleb lit a fire in the cabin's small furnace. Although it was summertime, Alaskan nights got chilly.

Although the other five boys were tired, they didn't want to go to bed yet. "Can we come over by the fire?" one boy asked.

Caleb invited the boys over for worship. He started worship with a question.

"Who is God to you?" he asked.

The boys took turns answering.

"He is the Savior," said one.

"He is in heaven," said another.

"He is fiercely faithful," said a third.

"Fiercely Faithful" was the camp theme for that year.

Then it was Caleb's turn to tell the boys who God was to him.

"God is loving with all the best characteristics," he said. "He is generous, very forgiving, merciful, and peaceful."

One boy exclaimed, "That's a lot of big words, man!"

Caleb smiled.

"God is like a best friend who is always there for you and even better than that," he said.

The boys silently pondered the idea of an always-present best friend for a moment. It was unusual for the boys to be quiet.

The boy who had been impressed with the big words spoke again.

"Have you ever seen an angel?" he said.

Without waiting for an answer, he





exclaimed, "I have!"

Then he told an incredible story about an angel with shiny wings. It sounded like he was making up the story as he told it.

Caleb smiled.

"Angels are pretty neat," he said.

He was glad to see that the boys wanted to talk about spiritual things. The whole purpose of Camp Polaris was to share Jesus' love with Alaska Native children.

After worship, the five boys played a lively game of hide-and-seek. The boy who was going to seek stepped out onto the porch. The other boys hid in the cabin. Two slid under bunk beds; another stood behind his coat, which was hanging on the wall; and the last sat in a crack between his bunk bed and the wall and pulled his sleeping bag over his head.

After playing hide-and-seek for about 45 minutes, the boys went to bed. Most fell asleep quickly. But one was terribly homesick.

"I'm homesick," he told Caleb. "I don't go to sleep when I'm homesick."

"You don't need to go to sleep right now," Caleb said. "But I need you to lay down."

He lay down and eventually fell asleep.

Caleb also lay down. As he drifted off to sleep, he remembered how the boys had showed an interest in God and wanted to talk about spiritual things during worship. He smiled. God was at work in the hearts of the boys. 🌍

Thank you for a previous Thirteenth Sabbath Offering that helped Camp Polaris receive new cabins and real toilets and showers. Caleb and the boys in his cabin are grateful to those who contributed to that offering in 2015. You can help spread the gospel in Alaska again with this quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering, which will help open a center of influence in Bethel. Thank you for planning a generous offering on December 28.

By Andrew McChesney

## Story Tips

- Show Dillingham, Alaska, on the map. Camp Polaris is located near Dillingham. Also show the location of Bethel, where part of this quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help open a center of influence.
- Download photos for this story from Facebook: [bit.ly/fb-mq](http://bit.ly/fb-mq).
- Share Mission Posts and Fast Facts from the North American Division: [bit.ly/nad-2024](http://bit.ly/nad-2024).
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## Fast Facts

- Seventeen of the 20 highest peaks in the United States are in Alaska. Denali (formerly called McKinley), the highest peak in North America, is 20,320 ft (6,190 m) above sea level. Denali, the Native Alaskan name for the peak, means "The Great One."
- The Aleut word *alyeska*, or *aláxsxaq*, meaning "great land," gives Alaska its name.
- Indigenous people including the Aleuts, Athabascans, Haida, Inuit, Tlingit, and Yupik still live in Alaska.
- Big mammals that can be found in Alaska include black bears, caribou, moose, musk oxen, and the world's largest brown bear, the Kodiak, as well as polar bears, beluga whales, and walrus found on the coast.
- The coldest temperature ever recorded in the United States was in northern Alaska in 1971, when it dropped to -80°F (-62°C).

# Eternal Buddy System



ALASKA | December 14

Micah

**B**eing a camp counselor to boys at a summer camp in Alaska sounded exciting to Micah.

He was 11 years old and living in Oregon. His Sabbath School teacher had read a mission story from Camp Polaris, a Seventh-day Adventist summer camp in Alaska. The story was about Alaska Native boys who were scared of ghosts until they learned that Jesus was more powerful.

The story fascinated Micah. He had never thought that there were children living in the United States who were afraid of ghosts and didn't know Jesus. When Thirteenth Sabbath arrived, he happily gave an offering to help the children at Camp Polaris.

Little did Micah know that six years later he would work at Camp Polaris. Little did he know that he would have his own opportunity to share Jesus with Alaska Native boys who didn't know Him.

But that is exactly what happened.

Micah, as a 17-year-old student from Oklahoma Academy, went to Alaska to work

for a summer as a camp counselor.

At Camp Polaris, he was placed in charge of six boys aged 10–15 in one of the cabins built with the help of the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering that he had given as a child. He prayed every day for a chance to share Jesus.

One evening, Micah opened his Bible to Romans 8:38 for the cabin worship. He read, "For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (NKJV).

Looking up, Micah said, "What do you think of that? God is always with us and is our Friend."

The boys pondered the idea for a moment. Then one boy piped up, "Jesus is our eternal buddy system."

The other boys smiled. Camp Polaris operates under a "buddy system" in which no child goes anywhere alone. If a boy wants to go somewhere, he has to go with another boy. That means that if he wants to go to the bathroom, he has to go with a buddy. If he wants to fill his water bottle from the outdoor tap, he has to go with a buddy. If he wants to go back to his cabin for something he forgot, he has to go with a buddy. The boys only practiced the buddy system at camp. But the Bible verse suggested to them that Jesus was their Eternal Buddy who went with them everywhere.

"That's right!" Micah exclaimed. "Jesus is our eternal buddy system. No matter what





*Children singing during worship at Camp Polaris.*

we do, Jesus is always with us. We sometimes forget a friend in the bathroom, but we don't have to worry about Jesus forgetting us."

The boys' smiles grew broader. They liked the idea of Jesus being their Eternal Buddy.

Micah asked if a boy would like to pray. Silence. Then a boy spoke up.

"I used to pray," he said, shyly. "But I haven't for a while. I forgot how."

Micah said, "We can pray together now. I can help you pray. Just repeat after me."

Micah bowed his head and prayed, "Dear God, thank You for the day."

"Dear God, thank You for the day," the boy repeated.

"Keep us safe tonight."

"Keep us safe tonight."

"Thank You for everything You have done for us."

"Thank You for everything You have done for us."

"And thanks for all the fun we had today."

"And thanks for all the fun we had today."

"Amen."

"Amen."

Later, when all the boys were snug in their sleeping bags on their bunk beds, Micah went over to the boy who had prayed. "You just talk to Jesus like a friend," he whispered. "Tell Him what happened during the day."

The boy nodded his head.

Micah beamed with joy as he headed to bed. He felt awesome! He had been praying every day for a chance to share Jesus. It had been an awesome evening. 🌟

## Story Tips

- Show the location of Dillingham, Alaska, on the map. Camp Polaris is located near Dillingham. Also show the location of Bethel, where part of this quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help open a center of influence.
- Read the story that touched 11-year-old Micah's heart: [bit.ly/Alaska-ghosts](http://bit.ly/Alaska-ghosts).
- Download photos for this story from Facebook: [bit.ly/fb-mq](http://bit.ly/fb-mq).
- Share Mission Posts and Fast Facts from the North American Division: [bit.ly/nad-2024](http://bit.ly/nad-2024).
- Know that this mission story illustrates the following objectives of the Seventh-day Adventist Church's "I Will Go" strategic plan: Spiritual Growth Objective No. 5, "To disciple individuals and families into Spirit-filled lives"; Spiritual Growth Objective No. 6, "To increase accession, retention, reclamation, and participation of children, youth, and young adults"; and Spiritual Growth Objective No. 7, "To help youth and young adults place God first and exemplify a biblical worldview." For more information, go to the website: [IWillGo2020.org](http://IWillGo2020.org).

## Fast Facts

- The Siberian Yupik are known for intricate carvings of walrus ivory and whale bone.
- Akutaq (pronounced "ah-goo-duck"), also known as Eskimo ice cream, is made of seal oil, animal fat, snow, and wild Alaskan berries.

Thank you for a 2015 Thirteenth Sabbath Offering that helped improve Camp Polaris with new cabins and real showers and toilets. You also can share the love with Jesus with Alaska Native children this quarter by giving to a Thirteenth Sabbath Offering that will go to Bethel, Alaska. Thank you for planning a generous offering on December 28.

By Andrew McChesney

# Watch and Pray



ALASKA | December 21

Wes

been constructed recently with the assistance of a Thirteenth Sabbath Offering.

Behind the bathroom block, he sat down and started praying for Rachel, her girls, and their cabin.

“Lord, I pray that Your angels would surround Rachel’s cabin,” he said. “Keep out any evil influence so that the campers can fully enjoy the camp and get to know You.”

Five minutes passed. Ten minutes. Fifteen minutes.

Wes had never prayed for more than 10 or 15 minutes before, but he didn’t want to stop. He was determined to watch and pray until he sensed that his prayers were no longer necessary.

“Lord, send Your angels to keep any evil powers from entering Rachel’s cabin,” he said. “Help Rachel and the kids not to have any more bad dreams. Help them to sleep peacefully. Give me wisdom on how I can help them more.”

He prayed for 20 to 30 minutes.

Then he heard a group of people walking to the main lodge. He heard strange noises. He kept praying.

After that, he saw the group of people go to the camp’s boat. He got up and went over to help. A girl was unwell and needed to be taken to the hospital in town. Wes was trained as an emergency medical technician, so he got in the boat with five other staff members to take the girl to the hospital. He was glad that he had been watching and praying so he was awake to help.

After delivering the girl safely to the

**T**he camp director called an emergency late-night meeting to discuss supernatural activity at Camp Polaris in Alaska.

Wes, who was working as the camp’s handyman, joined other staff members in the main lodge to talk and pray. His girlfriend, Rachel, who was working as a camp counselor, told the other staff members of strange occurrences taking place in the cabin where she was caring for eight Alaska Native girls. Whenever Jesus was mentioned before bedtime — sometimes in prayers and other times in worship talks — strange things happened after the lights were turned out. The girls were scared and having bad dreams.

At the end of the emergency meeting, staff members prayed together and went to their cabins for the night.

When Wes reached his cabin, it was close to 11 o’clock.

“This is not a time for sleeping,” he thought. “This is a time to watch and pray.”

Wes left the cabin and followed a trail to a new block of boys’ bathrooms, which had





## Story Tips

- Show Dillingham, Alaska, on the map.
- Download photos for this story from Facebook: [bit.ly/fb-mq](https://bit.ly/fb-mq).
- Share Mission Posts and Fast Facts from the North American Division: [bit.ly/nad-2024](https://bit.ly/nad-2024).
- Know that this mission story illustrates the following objectives of the Seventh-day Adventist Church's "I Will Go" strategic plan: Mission Objective No. 2, "To strengthen and diversify Adventist outreach ... among unreached and under-reached people groups"; Spiritual Growth Objective No. 5, "To disciple individuals and families into Spirit-filled lives"; and Spiritual Growth Objective No. 6, "To increase accession, retention, reclamation, and participation of children, youth, and young adults." For more information, go to the website: [IWillGo2020.org](https://IWillGo2020.org).

## Fast Facts

- In 1959, Alaska became the 49th state in the United States.



*Wes, right, canoeing with boys at Camp Polaris.*

hospital, Wes and the other staff members sailed back to camp. By now it was 2 o'clock in the morning. The night sky was dark, and the boat's sonar wasn't working. The lake was shallow in places, and the boat risked running aground or capsizing if it hit a sandbar or a rock.

Wes prayed. Everyone on the boat prayed.

With the help of GPS navigation equipment, the boat carefully made its way back toward the camp. But then it slowed down. The camp and the shore should be right ahead. But no one could see anything. It was pitch-black. They couldn't land safely.

Wes prayed. Everyone on the boat prayed.

Suddenly, a bright light appeared in the middle of the camp. The brilliant, white light cast dazzling rays over the camp. Wes and the others could see the boys' cabins. They could see the girls' cabins. They could see the main lodge. They could see the bathroom blocks. Most important, they could see the shoreline.

A staff member pointed the boat toward the light and guided it to the shore.

Once on dry land, the boat riders looked to see where the light was coming from. They wanted to thank the person who had switched it on. But the light went off, and darkness returned to the camp. Everyone at camp seemed to be asleep.

In the morning, Wes and the other boat riders tried to find out who had lit the light. No one took credit. Everyone said they had been sleeping. Wes believes an angel showed the way to the camp.

Wes, who is now Camp Polaris director and married to Rachel, learned an important

lesson about watching and praying that night.

"I was used by God to help the camper get the help that was needed," he said. "I was available because of the impression that I had to watch and pray. I helped resolve the situation — and then an angel helped to resolve our situation." 🌍

Thank you for your 2015 Thirteenth Sabbath Offering that helped improve Camp Polaris with new cabins and real showers and toilets. Please pray for the camp, which is the Seventh-day Adventist Church's only summer camp specifically for Alaska Native children.

"This camp has a way of piquing the devil's interest," Wes said. "I feel like he has a stronger focus here because of how strong we influence the kids for the good."

By Andrew McChesney

# Blackmailed!



13<sup>th</sup> SABBATH | December 28

Josephine

In the small Alaska Native village of Togiak, two sisters, Josephine and Emily, were walking down a dusty street on a lazy summer evening.

Even though it was about 7 o'clock, the sun was high in the sky. The sun wouldn't go down for many more hours; not until about midnight.

There wasn't much for children to do on long summer days in the village.

"Look!" 12-year-old Emily exclaimed as she stopped in front of the Seventh-day Adventist church. "There is a Vacation Bible School at this church. I want to go."

For her, Vacation Bible School meant interesting stories from the Bible. It meant fun activities. It meant yummy snacks. Most of all, it meant something to do in a place where there wasn't much for children to do in the summer.

Emily tugged on her 17-year-old sister's arm.

"Come on," she pleaded.

But Josephine didn't want to go. Even though there wasn't much to do, she didn't want to go to church.

"I don't want to go to Vacation Bible School," she said.

"But I want to go," Emily said.

"Well, I don't want to go," Josephine said, speaking with all the authority of an older sister. "I want to do something else."

Emily looked sad for a moment.

But only for a moment.

She was determined to win the argument, and she knew just the way.

"If we don't go, I won't share my chew," she said.

Josephine looked sharply at her little sister. She didn't have any chewing tobacco left, and she didn't know where she could get more. She looked at the church. She thought about how grumpy, irritable, and cross she would become if Emily made good on her threat not to share her chewing tobacco.

"Fine," she said. "Let's go."

And so it was that Josephine was blackmailed into entering an Adventist church for the first time.

She sat in the back row, while Emily joined about 20 children participating in activities in the front.

After a while, the church pastor came over to Josephine and introduced himself as Pastor Chad.

Seeing that Josephine was older than most of the kids, he asked if she would like to help out, perhaps by passing around snacks and





materials for Vacation Bible School activities.

Josephine agreed.

After that, she and Emily returned to the church at 7 o'clock every evening during Vacation Bible School.

Near the end of Vacation Bible School, the pastor invited Josephine to go to a children's summer camp. To get there, she would have to fly on a plane, ride in a bus, and take a boat.

She loved the idea. But she was sure that she was too old for children's camp. She was 17.

"No problem," the pastor said. "Would you like to help out at the camp?"

A big smile wrapped itself around Josephine's face. She could certainly help out.

So, she went to Camp Polaris as a counselor. She helped a regular camp counselor take care of a cabin filled with Alaska Native girls from various villages. She also learned a lot about Jesus during her week at camp.

Josephine loved summer camp so much that she went back the next year and the next. Between camps, she kept going to the Adventist church at home. A love for Jesus grew in her heart. Jesus helped her to quit using chewing tobacco. She gave her heart to Jesus and was baptized.

Today, Josephine still works at Camp Polaris — but now as a leader. Every year, she brings 7–10 children from her village to the camp. The children don't have much to do during the summer. Some of them become grumpy, irritable, and cross as they go through nicotine withdrawal without their chewing tobacco at camp.

But, like Josephine, the children also hear about Jesus at the camp and learn that He can help them kick the bad habit. They return home, knowing that life with Jesus is never boring and that they can do anything with Him.

Just like Josephine's little sister once brought her to church, Josephine is now bringing children to church. But she does not have to use blackmail to get them to come. She prays and invites them to Camp Polaris.

## Story Tips

- Before or after the story, use a map to show the places in the North American Division — Bethel, Alaska; St. Louis, Missouri; and Baltimore, Maryland — that will receive the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering. You can download a mission map with the projects on Facebook at [bit.ly/fb-mq](http://bit.ly/fb-mq).
- Also show the location of Dillingham, Alaska, on the map. Many Alaska Native children fly into Dillingham on airplanes and then take a 30-minute bus ride followed by a 15-minute boat ride to reach Camp Polaris.
- Know that in Alaska, planes are as commonly used for travel as cars in other parts of the world. Alaska has few roads, and villages are far and few between, leaving people with planes and boats as the main modes of travel. The Seventh-day Adventist Church and faithful donors cover the cost of Alaska Native children going to summer camp.
- Download photos for this story from Facebook: [bit.ly/fb-mq](http://bit.ly/fb-mq).
- Share Mission Posts and Fast Facts from the North American Division: [bit.ly/nad-2024](http://bit.ly/nad-2024).
- Know that this mission story illustrates the following objectives of the Seventh-day Adventist Church's "I Will Go" strategic plan: Spiritual Growth Objective No. 5, "To disciple individuals and families into Spirit-filled lives"; Spiritual Growth Objective No. 6, "To increase accession, retention, reclamation, and participation of children, youth, and young adults"; and Spiritual Growth Objective No. 7, "To help youth and young adults place God first and exemplify a biblical worldview." For more information, go to the website: [IWillGo2020.org](http://IWillGo2020.org).

"I love working with kids," she said in an interview at Camp Polaris. "I have made a lot of good friends. Camp Polaris gives me something to look forward to." 🌍

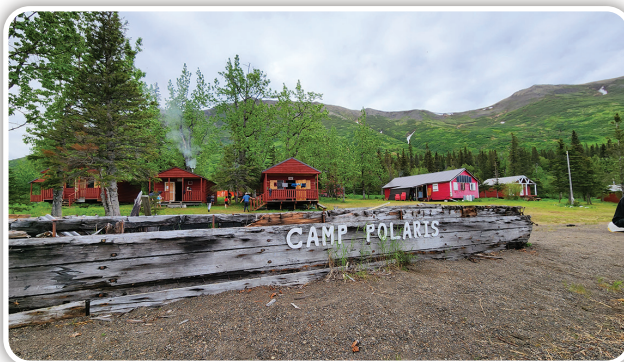
Camp Polaris, located on a lake near

Dillingham, Alaska, is the only Seventh-day Adventist summer camp that caters specifically to Alaska Native children. Part of a 2015 Thirteenth Sabbath Offering helped improve the camp with new cabins and real toilets and showers. Thank you. Today, we have a chance to share the love of Jesus in Alaska with another Thirteenth Sabbath Offering. This time, one of the Thirteenth Sabbath projects will help share the gospel through a center of influence in Bethel, Alaska. Today's offering also will support outreach projects in St. Louis, Missouri, and Baltimore, Maryland. Thank you for your generous offering.

By Andrew McChesney

## Fast Facts

- The largest carnivores in the U.S. are black bears, grizzlies, and polar bears, which live in Alaska.
- Lake Superior, on the border of the U.S. and Canada, is the largest freshwater lake in the world by surface area, covering 31,700 square miles (51,016 sq km).
- More than nine in every 10 Americans have eaten pizza in the last month. Every day, Americans eat the equivalent of about 100 acres (40 hectares) of pizza.
- There are an estimated 75.8 million dogs in the United States, more than double the number in Brazil, the country with the second-most dogs.



*Seven Alaska Native children from Bethel, Alaska, posing at the Anchorage Airport as they change planes while flying home after a week at Camp Polaris, pictured to the right, on Lake Aleknagik.*

## Future 13th Sabbath Projects

The Thirteenth Sabbath Offering next quarter will support five projects in the Northern Asia-Pacific Division:

- After-School Centers at 14 Schools in Japan
- Children's Recreation Center, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia
- Shelter for Single Mothers, Ansan, South Korea
- Gym and Missionary Training Center, Hankook Sahmyook Academy, Seoul, South Korea
- Adventist Elementary School System, Taiwan



# Leader's Resources

Be sure to download your free Mission Spotlight video, featuring video reports from around the North American Division and beyond. Download or stream from the Adventist Mission website at [bit.ly/missionspotlight](http://bit.ly/missionspotlight).

## Online Information

Following are sources of information that may be helpful in preparing for the mission segment of Sabbath School. For more information on the cultures and history of the countries featured in this quarterly, visit:

## Websites

U.S.A.: government website	<a href="http://usa.gov">usa.gov</a>
National Geographic	<a href="http://bit.ly/NatGeo_USA">bit.ly/NatGeo_USA</a>
Lonely Planet	<a href="http://bit.ly/LonelyUSA">bit.ly/LonelyUSA</a>
Alaska: state website	<a href="http://www.alaska.gov/">www.alaska.gov/</a>
Alaska Tour and Travel	<a href="http://bit.ly/Alaska_Trav">bit.ly/Alaska_Trav</a>
Travel Alaska	<a href="http://bit.ly/Travel_AK">bit.ly/Travel_AK</a>
Arizona: state website	<a href="http://az.gov">az.gov</a>
Visit Arizona	<a href="http://bit.ly/Visit_AZ">bit.ly/Visit_AZ</a>
U.S. News & World Report	<a href="http://bit.ly/USNews_AZ">bit.ly/USNews_AZ</a>

## Seventh-day Adventist

North American Division	<a href="http://bit.ly/SDANAD">bit.ly/SDANAD</a>
North Pacific Union Conference	<a href="http://npuc.org/">npuc.org/</a>
Pacific Union Conference	<a href="http://bit.ly/SDA_PUC">bit.ly/SDA_PUC</a>
Arizona Conference	<a href="http://bit.ly/SDAAriConf">bit.ly/SDAAriConf</a>
Alaska Conference	<a href="http://bit.ly/AK_Conf">bit.ly/AK_Conf</a>
Arctic Mission Adventure	<a href="http://bit.ly/MissionAdventure">bit.ly/MissionAdventure</a>

An offering goal device will help focus attention on world missions and increase weekly mission giving. Determine a goal for your class's weekly mission offering. Multiply it by 14, allowing a double goal for the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering, which will be collected on December 28. Remind church members that their regular weekly mission offerings help the missionary work of the world church, and that one-quarter of the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will go directly to the projects in the North American Division. On December 21, report on mission giving during the quarter. Encourage church members to double or triple their normal mission giving on the upcoming Thirteenth Sabbath. Count the offering and record the amount given at the end of Sabbath School.

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# youth & adult mission

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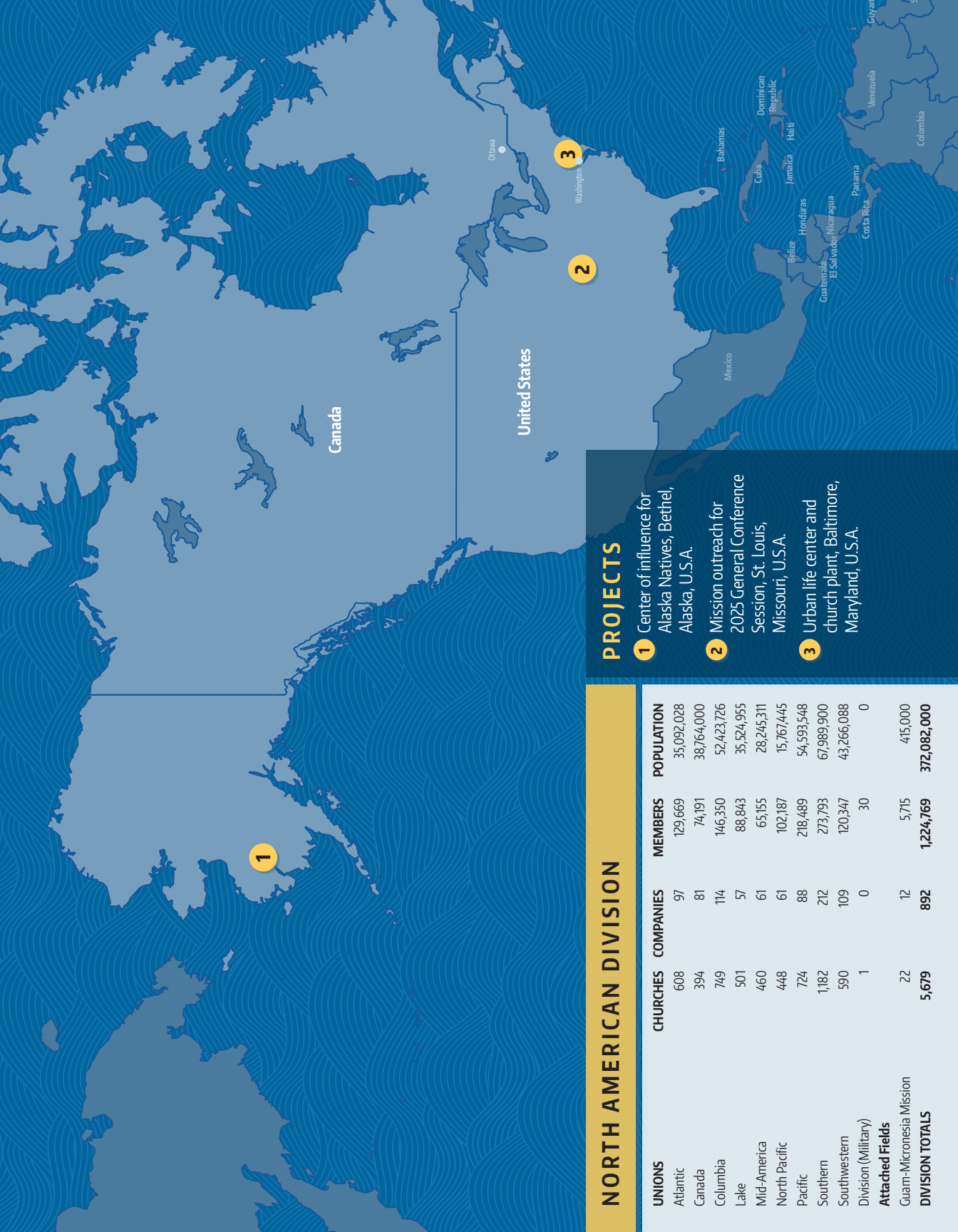
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NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION

UNIONS	CHURCHES	COMPANIES	MEMBERS	POPULATION
Atlantic	608	97	129,669	35,092,028
Canada	394	81	74,191	38,764,000
Columbia	749	114	146,350	52,423,726
Lake	501	57	88,843	35,524,955
Mid-America	460	61	65,155	28,245,311
North Pacific	448	61	102,187	15,767,445
Pacific	724	88	218,489	54,593,548
Southern	1,182	212	273,793	67,989,900
Southwestern	590	109	120,347	43,266,088
Division (Military)	1	0	30	0
Attached Fields				
Guam-Micronesia Mission	22	12	5,715	415,000
DIVISION TOTALS	5,679	892	1,224,769	372,082,000

PROJECTS

- 1 Center of influence for Alaska Natives, Bethel, Alaska, U.S.A.
- 2 Mission outreach for 2025 General Conference Session, St. Louis, Missouri, U.S.A.
- 3 Urban life center and church plant, Baltimore, Maryland, U.S.A.