
FRIENDS HELPING FRIENDS



Merrimack Valley Seventh-day Adventist Church Newsletter
November/December 2004

Casting Vision

The Purpose Driven Life

By Pastor Dan Martella



The story is told of a wealthy man who was determined to give his elderly mother a birthday gift that would outshine all others. He had read of a bird that had a vocabulary of 4,000 words, could speak numerous languages, and could sing three operatic arias. He promptly purchased the bird for \$50,000 and had it delivered to his mother on her birthday. The next day he called and asked, "What did you think of the bird?" She replied, "It was delicious!"

Life is a gift and when we fail to live it with understanding and purpose, something wonderful is lost. "We are here for a purpose. God has given us His plan for our life, and He desires us to reach the highest standard of development."
Ministry of Healing 397

The Merrimack Valley Church is sponsoring a spiritual renewal campaign in the early months of next year to help us discover and implement our purpose in life. The Forty Days of Purpose campaign will help us understand God's purposes for us in worship, fellowship, Christian growth, ministry, and evangelism. In our Sabbath worship services, sermons, small groups, and personal devotions we will experience renewed spiritual vitality. Our church and its ministries will become focused and energized. Our lives will be filled with meaning and purpose.

As we prepare for this special opportunity I have four requests to make of you: (1) Clear your calendar as much as possible for this January 8 - March 5, 2005 event. (2) Attend each of the Sabbath Worship Services during this series. When you are absent, be sure to get a taped copy of the service and listen to it. (3) Engage in the daily devotional reading program that will be provided for you. Study these Bible messages for yourself.

(4) Plan to become an active member of one of the small groups that will meet over a six-week period.

In the average life span there are 25,550 days. I invite you to take 40 days to discover God's purpose for the rest of your life ahead. Knowing God's purpose for your life will enable you to understand the big picture -- how all the pieces of your life fit together. Having this perspective will reduce your stress, simplify your decisions, increase your satisfaction, and most important--prepare you for eternity.

Confession-Forgiveness

By Gustav Mergenthaler

In the last issue we talked that there is a Savior who is eagerly waiting, not only for us to feel regret for our sins, but also for us to experience a fundamental change in our thinking that will result in restored purpose and changed perspective. It is God's kindness that leads us towards repentance (Rom. 2:4). But before we talk about revival as I had planned, the Lord impressed me to explore the avenue of forgiveness.

Repentance includes sorrow for sin, and a turning away from it. We will not renounce sin unless we see its sinfulness. Until we turn away from it in heart, there will be no real change in life. Sincere confession is essential. If you have given offense to your friend or neighbor, you are to acknowledge your wrong, and it is his duty freely to forgive you. Then you are to seek forgiveness of God, because the brother you have wounded is the property of God, and in injuring him you have sinned against his Creator. True confession is always of a specific character, and acknowledges particular sins. They may be of such in nature as to be brought before God only, they may be wrongs that should be confessed to individuals who have suffered injury through them, or they may be of a public character, and should then be publicly confessed. But all

(continued on page 2)

Confession-Forgiveness

(continued from page 1)

confession should be definite and to the point, acknowledging the very sins of which you are guilty. Many, many confessions should never be spoken in the hearing of humans, for the result is that which the limited judgment of finite beings does not anticipate. God will be better glorified if we confess the secret, inbred corruption of the heart to Jesus alone than if we open its recesses to finite, erring man, who cannot judge righteously unless his heart is constantly imbued with the spirit of God. Do not pour into human ears a story that God alone should hear. Your sins may be as mountains before you, but if you humble your heart, and confess your sins, trusting in the merits of a crucified and risen Savior, He will forgive, and will cleanse you from all unrighteousness. (FLB- 128, The Faith I Live By)

He who is unforgiving cuts off the very channel through which he alone can receive mercy from God. We should not think that unless those who have injured us confess the wrong, we are justified in withholding from them our forgiveness. It is their part, no doubt, to humble their hearts by repentance and confession, but we are to have a spirit of compassion toward those who have trespassed against us, whether or not, they confess their faults. However sorely they may have wounded us, we are not to cherish our grievances and sympathize with ourselves over our injuries, but as we hope to be pardoned for our offenses against God, we are to pardon all who have done evil to us (MB 113).

God's forgiveness is not merely a judicial act by which He sets us free from condemnation. It is not only forgiveness for sin, but reclaiming from sin. It is the outflow of redeeming love that transforms the heart. David had the true conception of forgiveness when he prayed, "Create in me a clean heart, Oh God, and renew a right spirit within me". (Ps. 51:10) And again he says, "As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgression from sin". (Ps. 103:12) God in Christ gave Himself for our sins. He suffered the cruel death of the cross, bore for us the burden of guilt, "the just for the unjust" that He might reveal to us His love and draw us to Himself. And He says, "be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ also forgave you". (Eph. 4:32)

Let Christ, the divine Life, dwell in you and through you reveal the heaven-born love that will inspire hope in the hopeless and bring heaven's peace to the sin-stricken heart. As we come to God, this is the condition that meets us at the threshold, that,

receiving mercy from Him, we yield ourselves to reveal His grace to others. Satan is working by every deception he can command in order that we may not discern that love. He will lead us to think that our mistakes and transgressions have been so grievous, that the Lord will not hear our prayers and will not bless and save us. In ourselves we see nothing but weakness, nothing to recommend us to God, and Satan tells us that it is of no use, we cannot remedy our defects of character. When we try to come to God, the enemy will whisper, it is of no use for you to pray, did you not do that evil thing? Have you not sinned against God and violated your own conscience? But we may tell the enemy that "the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin". (1John 1:7) When we feel that we have sinned and cannot pray, then is the time to pray. We must pray and believe. Paul says in 1 Tim. 1:15 that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief". Forgiveness, reconciliation with God, comes to us not as a reward for our works, it is not bestowed because of the merit of sinful man, but it is a gift to us.

Next issue: Forgiveness part 2

Baby dedication

Julianna DeSilva



Pictured from left: Pastor Dan & Linda Martella and Monica, Racquel, Julianna, Dewey and Dewey DeSilva



Jesus was there

By Louise Ford

On Sunday, January 14, 2001, just as we were leaving the convenience store parking lot a dark-haired woman in her fifties, dressed rather 'housewifely', knocked on our car window. As the woman, wrapping her arms protectively around herself spoke; my companion opened his door and stepped out to listen. I couldn't hear the conversation, but I could sense his air of uncertainty, and her apprehension. What was going on? We weren't in a great neighborhood. Maybe she was scamming him. Curiosity pulled me, but even more so, the anxiety I saw on her face. I opened the window and intruded on their conversation. She volunteered that she was locked out of her car, and had walked to the gas station only to be turned away. She was not from this area, and didn't know what to do. I asked if there was someone we could call for her. No, she said, she lived more than an hour away. Her obvious tenseness led me to remember times when I've been alone, needed help, and felt a bit panicky.

My companion appeared perplexed as to what we could do to help. Suddenly I remembered, "don't you have one of those jimmy sticks, or whatever they call them, to break into cars?" He said he used to but wasn't sure if he still had it. After searching the car he found it, a bit bent but still serviceable. They crossed the street together and within eight minutes he returned to our car. He told me she'd thanked him profusely

and had repeated several times, in a slightly accented voice, "God bless you, sir; God bless you".

We started driving away, feeling glad we could help, and I saw her exiting McDonald's. Seeing us, she waved and mouthed 'thank you', with a man, probably in his eighties, leaning on her arm. It was then my companion told me the 'rest of the story'. She'd told him she lived in Worcester and had driven to Lawrence to take her father to a church event he wanted to attend. While helping him from the car to enter the restaurant, she'd securely locked both doors. It was only as she prepared to leave McDonald's that she realized her keys were still in the ignition. The few church folk, who'd joined them there, had already left and she knew no one in the area. Truly, she'd found herself in a precarious situation. Desperate, not really knowing what to do, she ventured across the street and that's when she met us. Yet, of **ALL** the cars in that store's parking lot, she stopped at **OURS** to ask for help. I remarked on that "seeming" coincidence, and the fact that her last words to him were, "God bless you, sir". Beyond doubt, we'd been in the presence of God's Holy Spirit. Truly, God that day was watching over his children who'd just left His House!

For You, O Lord, will bless the righteous; with favor You will surround him as with a shield." Psalm 5:12



Have you ever wondered, "What on earth am I here for?" Do you think you may have missed God's will for your life? Join us for the *40 Days of Purpose Campaign* to learn God's 5 purposes for your life, then put the purposes into practice through the personal disciplines, group connections, and church-wide events that will take place during the six weeks of the Campaign. Imagine the impact on our community if all of us at Merrimack Valley Seventh-day Adventist Church were committed to living out God's purposes for our lives! Bring a friend along with you, and start living a purpose-driven life.

BIRTHDAYS

NOVEMBER

- 1 Richard Farley
- 1 Dean Hodson
- 3 Carmen Guevara
- 3 Elizabeth De Jesus
- 9 Jessica Masotta
- 13 Agnes Walker
- 20 Sharon Stuart
- 21 David Esmeal
- 24 David Masotta
- 25 Richard Campbell
- 28 Sary Neang
- 29 Stan McKillop
- 30 Jessica Grant

DECEMBER

- 1 Vivianne Lewandowski
- 3 Frederick Clare
- 3 Brian Portillo
- 4 Jeong Sook Ahn
- 6 Elizabeth Bryner
- 10 Florence Asomugha
- 10 Rutendo Gomwe
- 11 Tim McClendon
- 12 Sarah Moynihan
- 25 Thouncy Sing

abbath choo Division Picture a ery

BEGINNERS



JUNIORS



KINDERGARTEN



TEEN



PRIMARY



YOUNG ADULT



Picture gallery

PRAYER TRAIL



Pictured from left: Rita McCall, and friends

SALISBURY BEACH PICNIC PAVILLION



INDIAN PIPE ALONG PRAYER TRAIL



CHURCH YARD SALE



SALISBURY BEACH PICNIC



CHURCH YARD SALE



In the Kitchen - Cookies

Fruit and Spice Rounds

Ingredients:

2 cups flour	1 cup dried figs
1 tsp. baking soda	1 cup pitted whole dates
1 tsp. Salt	½ cup broken walnuts
1 tsp. ground cinnamon	1 cup butter or margarine
¾ tsp. ground cloves	1 ½ cups sugar
½ tsp. ground nutmeg	3 eggs
1 cup raisins	Vanilla icing

Directions:

Combine 1st six ingredients in the left hand column. In a food processor, grind the raisins, figs, dates and walnuts. In a large mixing bowl beat the butter or margarine and sugar until fluffy. Add eggs one at a time until mixed well. Add flour until mixed well. Stir in fruit mixture. Divide dough in half. Cover and chill several hours or overnight.

On a well-floured surface roll dough ¼ inch thick. Cut into rounds with a 2 ½-inch cookie cutter. Place on a greased cookie sheet. Bake in a 375-degree oven for 10 to 12 minutes or till done. Cool on cookie sheet for 2 to 3 minutes, then remove and cool thoroughly before drizzling with Vanilla Icing.

Yield = approximately 60 cookies

Sour Cream Spice Knots

Ingredients:

2 ¾ cups flour	½ cup butter or margarine
½ tsp. Baking soda	1 cup sugar
¼ tsp. salt	1 egg
¼ tsp. Ground nutmeg	1 tsp vanilla
2 tbsp sugar	½ cup sour cream
½ tsp ground cinnamon	

Directions:

Combine 1st 4 ingredients in the left hand column. In a small bowl combine 2 tbsp sugar and the cinnamon and set aside. In a large mixing bowl beat butter or margarine and sugar until fluffy. Add egg and vanilla and beat well. Add flour mixture and sour cream alternately, beating till well mixed. Divide dough in half. Cover and chill at least 2 hours or till easy to handle.

Roll dough 1/8 inch thick. Cut into rings with a 2 ½ inch doughnut cutter. Twist rings once to form figure eights. Place 2 inches apart on an ungreased cookie sheet. Sprinkle with cinnamon-sugar mixture. Bake in a 350-degree oven for 6 to 8 minutes or till done. Remove and cool.

Yield: 60 cookies

Apricot Twists

Ingredients:

2 cups flour	¾ cup butter or margarine
1/3 cup sugar	5 to 7 tbsp ice water
½ tsp. Salt	¼ tsp. Lemon extract
½ tsp. Ground mace	¼ cup apricot preserves
¼ tsp. Baking powder	Milk

Directions:

Combine 1st five ingredients in the left hand column. Cut in butter or margarine till mixture resembles coarse crumbs. Combine 1 tbsp of the ice water and the lemon extract and sprinkle over part of the mixture. Gently toss with a fork and push to side of bowl. Repeat with remaining ice water, a tbsp at a time, till all is moistened. Form into a ball. Cover and chill about 30 minutes or till easy to handle. Divide dough into quarters. Roll quarters into 12x4 inch rectangles. Spread two with preserves, and cover with remaining 2 rolled quarters. Trim edges. Cut each rectangle into twelve 4x1 inch strips. Twist each strip twice. Place on an ungreased cookie sheet. Bake in a 375-degree oven for 15 minutes. Remove and brush with milk, then sprinkle with additional sugar. Return to oven and bake 5 to 8 minutes more or till done. Remove and cool. Yield: 24 cookies

Old-Fashioned Sugar Cookies

Ingredients:

4 ½ cups flour	2 cups sugar
2 tsp. Baking powder	2 eggs
1 tsp. Baking soda	1 tsp vanilla
½ tsp. salt	½ tsp lemon extract
½ tsp. Ground nutmeg	1 cup buttermilk
1¼ cups shortening	

Directions:

Combine 1st five ingredients in the left hand column. In a large mixing bowl beat shortening for 30 seconds. Add sugar and beat till fluffy. Add eggs, vanilla and lemon extract and beat well. Add flour mixture and buttermilk alternately to shortening mixture, beating till well mixed. Divide in half. Cover and chill at least 3 hours or till easy to handle.

Roll dough ½ inch thick. Cut into rounds with a 3-inch cookie cutter. Place 2 ½ inches apart on an ungreased cookie sheet. Sprinkle with additional sugar. Bake in a 375-degree oven for 10 to 12 minutes or till done. Remove and cool.

Yield: 24 cookies

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Beginners abbath choo
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Pictured from left: Carine Garozzo and Pastor Dan Martella



Pictured from back left: Ilsa Camacho, Alexander Dovich, Sherri Dovich, Monica DeSilva, Julianna DeSilva, Vivianne Lewandowski From front left: Linda Martella, Karl Michael Camacho, Elizabeth Dovich, and Tyler Lewandowski

Merrimack Valley's Kids present *Sing a Song of Christmas*, a at ecem er

SING A SONG OF
CHRISTMAS





Fall Fun Day

3:30 p.m. Sunday, November 7 at Smolak Farm, North Andover, MA, there will be a hay ride, bonfire, hot cider and donuts for all. It's fun for the whole family and free. Please reserve your spot with Karen McClendon no later than October 30th.

Body by God

Peak Performance health workshop with Dr. Gerard Cassista

7 p.m. Thursday, November 18

www.creatingmylife.com



Dracut Community Thanksgiving Service

Time
7:00 p.m. Sunday, November 21
Place
Christ Church United, Dracut, MA

Adult Christmas Party

Sabbath evening, December 4
Watch for more details about the Yankee Swap and food menu in your bulletin



Live Nativity

With hot chocolate and cookies.
6-9 p.m. Friday, December 10
5-9 p.m. Sabbath, December 11

Please contact Karen McClendon if you would like to help with this event.

Christmas Worship Celebration

During the worship service on Sabbath December 18 the children will present a simple musical using familiar



carols and narration to tell the Christmas story. Be sure to invite your friends and family to join you for this wonderful worship experience.

Agape Supper and Communion Celebration

Merrimack Valley Seventh-day Adventist Church

Friday evening
December 31, 2004

Start the New Year by renewing your commitment to Jesus



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

October

- 22-24 SNEC - Youth spiritual retreat
- 23 Nursing Home Ministry
- 28 7:30 p.m. Elder meeting
- Oct 30 –
- Nov 6 Week of Prayer
- 30 Nursing home ministry
Canned food drive – pass out bags
- 31 2 a.m. Daylight Savings time ends
Canned food drive – pick up bags
GBA/EW Fall festival

November

- 7 3:30 p.m. Fall fun day – Smolak Farm
- 9 7 p.m. Praise & thanksgiving service for
MVC's 8th anniversary
Church business meeting
- 12-14 SNEC - Women's Ministry retreat
- 12-14 AU academy prayer conference, Camp Victory Lk
- 18 7 p.m. Health Lecture
- 19-21 SNEC - Family enrichment weekend
- 20 Fellowship dinner
Thanksgiving basket distribution
Nursing home ministry
- 21 Dracut community thanksgiving service
10 am - 4 pm ABC & SNEC Open House
- 27 Nursing home ministry

December

- 2 7:30 p.m. Elders meeting
- 4 Communion celebration
Newsletter submissions due
Christmas wish tree
Adult Christmas party
- 10 6-9 p.m. Live nativity
- 11 Christmas Cantata
5-9 p.m. Live nativity
- 12 SNEC Women's ministry tea
7 p.m. Christmas Cantata, Christ Church United
- 14 7 p.m. Church board mtg
- 16 GBA/EW Christmas concert
- 18 Kids Christmas worship service
Nursing home ministry
- 25 Family Christmas worship service
Nursing home ministry
- 31 New Year's Eve agape feast

****Watch the MVC bulletin or MVSDA.org for further information regarding up coming events****

C L P P

By Ingrid Mergenthaler

What is Schoolpop? Last spring the Schoolpop fund raising organization bought SCRIP. Since the merger, orders are processed much quicker and so far there has not been such a thing as back orders.

I have written many articles in the newsletter concerning the advantages of using SCRIP gift cards. It doesn't get much easier than this! We can shop at our favorite stores, eat at our favorite restaurants, order online, and while we are doing all these everyday normal things, we can be earning funds for our BUILDING FUND! As mentioned before, there is a credit card that can be applied for. Many of us don't want another credit card—and that is fine. If you don't want another credit card, please take the time to go to the website www.schoolpopscrip.com and see all the merchants that are in the program. Many of these merchants give up to 8% back to the organization. There is a lot of information on this site that will help you understand the program.

At the present time I am trying to set up our organization so that each member can go online and order his/her own gift cards. Whatever % a particular merchant gives will then be reimbursed by a check to our church building fund.

I know that the poor economy has hit many of us and we have not been able to meet our building fund pledges. This is an easy way for us to still do that by just shopping at the stores we normally do. This information can be shared with family and friends, who in turn will be helping us with this important project.

Please take a few minutes, go to the website www.schoolpopscrip.com and get your information. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to give me a call. 603-894-7295. Thank you in advance for your support!



Nature's Whey

Merrimack Valley SDA
Church health food store is
open for business. The order forms are located on the
Community Service cabinet in the fellowship hall, and should
be returned to Joan Reiss with your payment. Payment for
bulk orders of herbs and grains may be paid after delivery.
**Don't forget, the church building fund receives a percent of
your purchases.**

Bible Word Search – Christmas Traditions

All the words listed below are in the puzzle. Circle each word as you find it. After you have found all the words, put the leftover letters in the correct order to reveal the mystery word. Mystery word answer on page 12.

S	S	E	P	M	S	T	R	E	E	D	N	I	E	R
H	H	C	S	U	N	U	T	C	R	A	C	K	E	R
O	E	A	T	A	O	S	H	T	A	E	R	W	P	M
P	P	E	N	B	I	Y	O	H	N	R	S	S	A	I
P	H	P	E	N	T	T	S	G	G	B	L	B	R	S
I	E	G	M	E	A	I	T	I	E	R	L	J	W	T
N	R	R	A	N	R	V	O	E	L	E	E	O	S	L
G	D	E	N	N	O	I	C	L	S	G	B	Y	L	E
Y	S	E	R	A	C	T	K	S	S	N	V	R	L	T
A	E	T	O	T	E	A	I	D	L	I	I	U	A	O
D	L	I	M	N	D	N	N	I	H	G	Y	O	M	E
I	D	N	A	A	G	E	G	R	U	D	O	L	P	H
L	N	G	G	S	I	H	S	T	N	E	S	E	R	P
O	A	S	I	R	T	E	K	A	C	T	I	U	R	F
H	C	I	F	S	G	N	I	C	I	O	J	E	R	W

Angels
Bells
Blessings
Bows
Candles
Decorations
Friends
Fruitcake
Gingerbread
Greetings
Holiday
Ivy
Joy
Lights
Magi
Malls
Mistletoe
Nativity
Nutcracker
Ornaments

Peace
Poinsettias
Presents
Reindeer
Rejoicing
Rudolph
Santa
Shepherds
Shopping
Sleigh
Stockings
Tannenbaum
Tree
Wrap
Wreaths
Yule

Bible Quiz – The Christmas Story

Select one answer for each question. Correct answers can be found on page 12.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>4. What city was Jesus born in?
a. Jerusalem
b. Bethlehem
c. London</p> <p>5. How did the wise men who visited baby Jesus find him?
a. The shepherds told them Jesus had been born in Bethlehem.
b. They used an ancient map.
c. They followed a bright star.</p> | <p>1. What presents did the wise men bring to baby Jesus?
a. Gold, frankincense and myrrh.
b. Toy stuffed animals
c. Fine clothes from the East</p> <p>2. Who wanted to kill baby Jesus?
a. The Egyptian Pharaoh
b. King Herod
c. King Solomon</p> <p>3. Why was Jesus a very special baby?
a. He was the Son of God.
b. He grew up to be King of Israel.
c. He was the only son of King David.</p> |
|--|---|

You can view this newsletter on-line at
<http://www.mvsda.org/?section=newsletter>

Kids - get your crayons and color this picture



Wise Men Worship Jesus
Matthew 2

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Contacts

Sherrí Dovich, Editor..... (978) 470-3294
 Bob McCall, Photo Editor, Printing..... (978) 667-6670

****If you do NOT wish to receive this newsletter in the future, please contact Sherrí Dovich****

web resources

- <http://www.mvsda.org/> - Merrimack Valley SDA Church
- <http://www.mvsda.org/?section=newsletter> - MVC online newsletter
- <http://www.adventist.org/> - SDA World Church
- <http://www.sneonline.org/> - Southern New England Conference
- <http://www.plusline.org/> - Adventist resources
- <http://www.pathfindersonline.org/> - NAD Pathfinders
- <http://www.twopaths.com/wordsearch.htm> - Bible Word Search Puzzles
- <http://www.adventistyouth.org/> - Center for Youth Evangelism
- <http://www.christianitytodaymovies.com/> - Biblical perspectives on contemporary cinema
- <http://www.adventistbookcenter.com/> - Adventist Book Center (ABC)
- <http://www.dayspring.com/ecards/index.asp> - Christian e-cards by DaySpring
- <http://www.adventsource.org/cgi-bin/start.cgi/start.html> - AdventSource provides resources for the local church

Merrimack Valley Seventh-day Adventist Church
 408 Broadway Road
 Dracut, MA 01826

To: