Mission Story of the Month: Daniel Safciu

Retold by Ashley Richards

Daniel Safciu tells his story in the April-June 2011 edition of the Seventh-day Adventist adult lesson quarterly. He grew up in Communist Romania. Life for Daniel and his family was not easy. Daniel's family members were Seventh-day Adventists, and his parents tried to instill in him the hope of a life with Jesus.

Despite their best efforts, Daniel decided to walk away from God and His church. He decided to believe in evolutionism. It was a hard decision, but it was his decision, in the end. He found it too hard to be around his family, when he felt he shared nothing in common with them. Out of his desperation to be free, he attempted, many times, to escape Romania. Each time he was stopped and arrested at the boarder, he was sent to jail.

This happened quite a few times. A while later, he began to steal cars, and he was caught and sent to prison again.

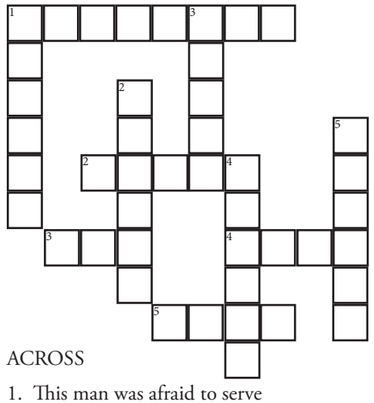
While he was in prison this time, he met a doctor, who was a political prisoner. This man was in prison for his faith in God. Daniel told the man that he didn't believe in God, and the man replied, "Why? Even Einstein believed in God." As he talked to the political prisoner, he realized that he might have been wrong. *Could God be real?* As time passed and he talked more and more with the old man, he began to doubt that such intricate scientific principles such as gravity and electromagnetic force could exist without the power of an Almighty God. He began to pray that God would help him believe.

Not much longer after that, Communism fell in Romania. Daniel was transferred to another prison without any warning or reason. A few days after he had arrived there, Daniel was asked by a prison guard if he wanted to attend a meeting for Christians.

Curious, Daniel said that he would. When he attended that meeting, he met many Christians, and, to his surprise, one of those Christians was his cousin! As he talked to his cousin, Daniel became more and more interested in the subject of God. His cousin gave him a book on creationism versus evolutionism. Slowly, God changed Daniel's heart. He gave his heart to God, and, when Daniel was released from prison, he was baptized.

Since Daniel's been baptized, he has spent his time working with current and former prisoners, spreading the news of the gospel to them.

Heroes of the Bible



ACROSS

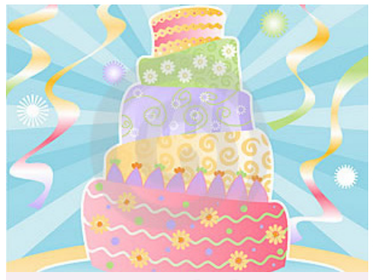
1. This man was afraid to serve God because he thought he was too young (Jeremiah 1:6, 7).
2. This man was the first prophet in the Bible (Jude 1:14).
3. This woman was created from one of her husband's ribs (Genesis 2:22).
4. This man was 500 years old when he had his sons (Genesis 5:32).
5. This man was made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26, Genesis 2:20).

http://www.ldscollection.com/content/2010.html?contentId=2010

Daniel in the lion's den.

DOWN

1. This man was a spy for God's people, sent by Moses (Numbers 13:8, 16).
2. Officials were jealous of this man, because he greatly pleased King Darius, who wanted to appoint him over all the kingdom (Daniel 6:3).
3. This man's name means "laughter" because he brought his parents much joy as they were getting old (Genesis 21:6).
4. This woman was the most loved of her husband's wives (1 Samuel 1:2, 4).
5. This woman died giving birth to her child (Genesis 35:16, 18, 19).



http://www.cutekidparties.com/girl-1st-birthday.html

May Birthdays

Kenneth Good	1
Loreta Gelsinger	2
Dr. Marion Jones	2
Ronald Misiaszek	3
A.J. Stump	5
Tennyson Woollery	5
Lori Landa	8
Mariela Cosentino	10
Bruce Hill	10
Arthur Podguski	12
David Winn	12
Dwight Edris	14
Dorothy Mae Delong	16
Patricia Misiaszek	16
David Sterner	16
Dr. Irving Jones	17
Dr. Paul Smith	17
William Reinhart	18
Edyn Ramos	19
John Richards, III	19
Teresa de Peña	22
Robert Kondracki, Jr.	22
Pastor Bernyl Mohr	24
Joel Zarska	24
Delia Cosentino	28
Ralph Taylor	29

This newsletter is a final project of Ashley Richards for WRI 226, Desktop Publishing: Writing and Editing Newsletters. In this one-semester course at Kutztown University of Pennsylvania, students use Adobe InDesign CS5 to write, edit, and design original newsletters. The contents of this publication reflect the views of the student author, not those of the instructor or of the university.

Hampden Happenings

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http://www.randallscherer.com/home.html

Easter at Hampden Heights

By Ashley Richards

Hampden Heights celebrated the life and resurrection of Jesus Sabbath, April 23, 2011, with an intimate, family-centered ceremony.

Like many church services, the program began with the song service, singing familiar Easter hymns like "Because He Lives," "Christ the Lord Is Risen Today," and an older favorite, "Victory in Jesus." The worship was led by Arleen Johns and Enil Hubbard.

Following the song service, Elder Shelton Stanley welcomed the visitors and members alike, sharing announcements and reflecting on the value of Easter weekend. "Death, hallelujah, has passed us by!" he proclaimed.

Lisa Hill and Arthur Podguski provided the special music, with a touching rendition of "Via Dolorosa." With the hints of Easter and Jesus' life on earth all around us, the emotional, vivid reminder was a welcome one.

Then the lights were dimmed, and a short video, sharing several verses from scripture, played, accompanied by soft, invoking music. The video slowly dimmed to black, and the light behind the white sheet spread across a good portion of the stage flooded the sheet with light. Two shadowed figures appeared, and they began to talk.

Photo taken by Ashley Richards

Josias de Peña, Jared Eckert, and Jacob Stahl perform during Easter Sabbath.

It quickly became apparent that the two figures were God (voiced by Elder Wayne Johns; acted by Jacob Stahl) and the Holy Spirit (voiced by Matt Wlasniewski; performed by Josias de Peña), discussing the horror of Jesus' death.

Gabriel (voiced by Michael Reese; performed by Jared Eckert), the archangel, soon joined them, pleading to organize a legion of angels to rescue their Lord from His misery and loneliness.

Much of the play continued in this way, providing the point of view of the Trinity before the earth was created and as Jesus was dying.

Heath Eckert was the voice of Jesus, and Jared Eckert acted the part of Jesus.

In between acts, Pastor Brian Cassell spoke about what Jesus' death means, what the weekend of Easter means. "The pinnacle [of the world's events] takes place here, at the foot of the cross," he explained.

After the play concluded, Starla Overton sang a concluding song.

Easter at Hampden, this year, was intimate and reflective. Whether you celebrated with us or not, I hope you took time to reflect on what Jesus' death means for all of us.

Photo taken by Ashley Richards

The children collected the children's offering.

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Meet a Member: Toni Wlasniewski

By Ashley Richards

We are the body of Christ. It's a phrase we hear all the time. How much do we know, do we care, about our body of believers?

Meet Toni Wlasniewski. She and her husband have been a member of Hampden Heights since 1983. Her favorite part of Hampden, she says, is that "it feels like home—like family." She loves the "thought-provoking, Biblical sermons; an attitude for tolerance for differing viewpoints and styles; and balance."

Toni currently works as a teacher at Reading Junior Academy, teaching Bible, English, reading, art, and social studies to the seventh through tenth grade students.

She and her husband, Matt, attend Hampden together. They have a son, Andy, who is married to Heather. Andy and Heather welcomed their daughter, Natalie, this spring. "[It's] just my husband and I [at Hampden] since Andy is grown and has his own church family." She explains that Matt loves bird watching and bluegrass music.

In her free time, which is mainly during the summer, she says, she enjoys reading, various types of crafts, and taking walks. Her favorite Bible story is David, because there is "so much detail and psychological interest."

Photo taken by Andrew Wlasniewski

Toni relaxing at home.

Currently, Toni serves as a deaconess and a substitute teacher for an adult Sabbath School class at the church. Her favorite part about the body of Christ, she says, is that "everyone is important. Each one can make a significant contribution, regardless of how visible he or she may be."

Much as she loves her church, Toni would love to see the thirteenth Sabbath program broken up over several weeks. "I'd suggest spreading it out—featuring a different children's division during the worship service every few weeks. This could still have the effect of attracting relatives and they would probably stay for the rest of the service instead of leaving before church." She adds that she does not think this would take too much time out of the service, either.

How much do you know the members of your church? We are all the members of one body, the children of God. When was the last time you took time out of your busy week—or even weekend—to meet part of God's family, outside of the weekly church service?

Worship and the Church

By Ashley Richards

In a world with a million varying opinions, what does it mean to truly worship God? In Pastor Doug Batchelor's sermon, "The Purpose of Worship, Part 1," he says, "Worship God with your life." People worshiped God differently during Bible times. David danced before the Lord in his loincloth. Batchelor explains that in the Bible, worship includes the whole body. People prostrated themselves. They bowed down before the Lord. They knelt in humility. Speaking of which, why don't some people, Batchelor wonders, kneel when they're praising God?

"We've got this distorted, puny idea… of what worship is." Most Christians get dressed for church, sing a few songs, pray, endure special music and the sermon, and leave. "[Worship] is so much bigger than that," he says. "The reason you were created is for worship."

Worship should be about who we're worshiping, not the instruments we use to worship.

"Does it matter how you worship?" Batchelor asks. Not when it comes down to it. People will always prefer their style of music. It's impossible for everyone to be satisfied, no matter which songs the congregation sings.

Worship should be about *who* we're worshiping, not the instruments we use to worship. In the end, none of that matters. What matters is who is worshiping. When Ashley Richards, or Carlos Serrano, or Delilah Romyn sings each song, are we singing it because we like the song, or are we singing it because we just can't *live* without giving God the glory?

http://thechiefest.wordpress.com/

To love the Lord our God.

Psalm 150 talks a lot about praising God—which instruments to use, where to praise God, *why* to praise God, who should praise God. When it comes down to it, though, Psalm 150 has it right. Framing the beginning and the end are the words, "Praise the Lord." In the end, it doesn't matter *how* you worship God. All that matters, in the end, is that you are worshiping God.

What Do You Have to Say: Heaven

By Ashley Richards

I spent a (fairly lengthy) evening talking to church members, finding out what you (we) are most looking forward to about heaven. Here are a sampling of the answers!

The most anxious I am to see is Jesus. And then to see my mother. After that, I wanna look for Chris, and Karen, and Debbie [my children]… Then I want to see the beauties of heaven. I'd like to meet Joseph.
– Arlene Smith

Besides meeting Jesus and people out of the Bible… I am most looking forward to learning how to do things I'm scared to do on this earth.
– Starla Overton

Being reunited with my loved ones who have passed away… of course, after I see Jesus.
– Lorraine Edris

First and foremost I want to sit at Jesus' feet and then let him tell me all about the animals and especially to swim with the dolphins.
– Arleen Johns

Having a family reunion with loved ones.
– Lisa Larrabee

To spend eternity with our Savior.
– Joe Saadi

I think probably holding Jesus' hand.
– Delilah Romyn

Sitting at Jesus' feet and meeting the people I wish I could have known here.
– Toni Wlasniewski

Being able to go with Jesus where ever he goes. [It's] just awesome to always be with some one who loves you unconditionally.
– Esther Wolcott

To see Jesus, face-to-face. There are a million things I'd like to do in my lifetime, but to be with Jesus, to see His face, will be enough joy to last a lifetime. Of course, I can't wait to fly, and speak a thousand languages, and meet Joseph and Esther, but for now, seeing Jesus is enough.
– Ashley Richards

As for me, I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last He will take his stand on the earth. Even after my skin is destroyed, yet from my flesh I shall see God; whom I myself shall behold, and whom my eyes will see and not another. My heart faints within me!

– Job 19:25-27, NASB

The Bridegroom

By Ashley Richards

Picture a bridegroom. I'm neither a man nor about to be married, but I have always loved the image of a bridegroom, standing at the front of church, waiting for his bride. Nervously. Excitedly.

I like to think that the thoughts going through his head are exactly in sync with the dreamer-thoughts that most often fill my own head. He can't imagine anything mattering more in his life. He can't imagine loving anyone more than his wife. He wants everything to be perfect for her. Just the thought of her, appearing between those double doors, makes him weak at the knees. That's his girl. The thought of spending the rest of his life with her seems almost too good to be true, but he's unwilling to give up the dream, because life without her is no life at all.

Yes, I know. I'm a crazy dreamer. You don't have to remind me.

Let's call our bridegroom Joshua Christopher. He is the perfect guy—kind, selfless, loving, helpful, doting. His world revolves around his bride. He comes alive at the thought of her. When she appears on her father's arm, the smile on his face threatens to spill out into the congregation. Two people could not be more in love.

Let's move our wedding out of the church and onto the countryside. Joshua is sitting on the clouds, surrounded by the angels and His holiness. Sitting at His Father's side. He stares down at His people with joyous tears in His eyes.

http://www.sxc.hu/ photo/370021/?forcedownload=1

Love is foreer.

He has waited for this day for millennia.

(You knew Joshua Christopher and Jesus Christ were just too close for coincidence, didn't you?)

After growing up in the church, I've come to realize how easy it is for Christians to forget that following Jesus is all about love. I even think we forget that Jesus loves us, sometimes. So much of what we do sometimes becomes focused around tradition and ritual—go to church every weekend, play the piano, help out with Sabbath School, prepare a meal for potluck, whatever we do to get involved. Do we forget that all of this is about loving God?

What would it be like if we lived every moment, helplessly, hopelessly in love with the God who created us?

Jesus loves *me*. With a deep, abiding, unending, all-encompassing love. He will never leave or forsake me. He doesn't need a reason to love me, but He has a million reasons, anyway.

Why don't we explore that more?

Jeremiah 31:3 says, "The LORD appeared to him from afar, saying, 'I have loved you with an everlasting love; Therefore I have drawn you with lovingkindness.'"

That's a love I want to know.