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Adventist Journey

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My Journey

As I reflect on my journey, I recognize that God doesn't promise that it's going to be an easy path or an enjoyable path. Sometimes there are struggles and trials and hardships. But looking back, I realize that each one of those has strengthened my faith, strengthened my resolve, to trust in Him more and more every day. Visit vimeo.com/nadadventist/ajrandygriffin for more of Griffin's story.

RANDY GRIFFIN, Cicero Indiana dentist and missionar

More Than 15,000 Baptisms

Dear Reader: The publication in your hands represents the collaborative efforts of the North American Division and Adventist World magazine, which follows Adventist Journey (after page 16). Please enjoy both magazines!

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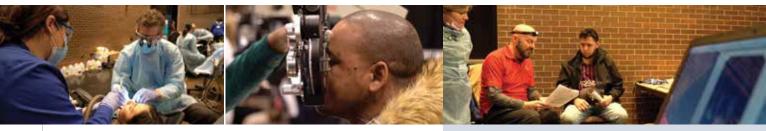


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ullet A few of the five dentists, three dental hygienists, three opticians, one dermatologist, and several other volunteers help to provide \$135,000 in donated medical services and supplies at the March clinic. (Right) Randy Griffin talks with a patient.



In It Together

There's more to these clinics than simply serving the community. ACHI has brought together groups of people within the church as well. In one instance a state conference church and a regional conference church decided to cohost a clinic. At their first planning meeting, the room was full of people introducing themselves and shaking hands.

"These Adventist individuals had lived in the same town for years and years, yet they had never met," Griffin says. "The clinic bridged a gap."

Since then, these two churches have come together on a regular basis, worshipping together on Sabbath, and calling each other brother and sister.

"Praise the Lord that we're not only serving the needs of other people," Griffin adds. "We're also reaching into ourselves and recognizing that we share a common bond in our love for Jesus Christ."

Griffin finds it a blessing to work alongside people who may be of different faiths, different nationalities, who have a serving heart. His heart is warmed to see these volunteers stopping and praying with guests and the patients that they work with.

"I praise the Lord for being able to reach out to the community, and that the community is willing to come in and help as well," says Griffin. "One thing that I found with these clinics that we do is that we are as Seventh-day Adventist Christian people—wanting to reach out and help someone. We want to impact their lives, touch their lives, and benefit them. But we also find that volunteers get a blessing, not only to serve but also to work with people within their churches who may not have had the opportunity to do anything like this."

Relationships between churches and their communities are about more than baptisms. Griffin says their approach is more in line with Jesus' ministry of healing. "Jesus met their needs, then said, 'Follow Me,'" Griffin explains. "It's not pulling a tooth in the baptismal tank; it's taking care of their physical needs, then asking how we can help with their spiritual needs."

Beyond the pleasure of doing dental work again, Griffin notes that he has found "joy two- or threefold" in being able to use his skills to serve and help others who need it. He has been humbled by the number of hugs and thank-yous he and others have received from overwhelmed and grateful people.

"When they ask why we do this, that's our chance," Griffin says. "That's our opportunity to say we do it because we care for them, and because we love Jesus. If that's the only contact we ever have with them, at least they know that someone cared about them, and that Jesus was the reason."

Loving PEOPLE:

Christ's Ministry of Healing in the Lake Union Conference

BY BECKY ST. CLAIR

FEATURE

n 2010 Randy Griffin fell from a ladder and broke his wrist. This relatively simple injury altered the course of his career and changed the lives of more than 11,000 people. For nearly 20 years Griffin had practiced dentistry. When he broke his wrist, however, it affected the nerves in his hand, and he was unable to do regular dental work any longer. He became a stay-at-home dad, and though he felt keenly the loss of his practice, he enjoyed the extra time with his children.

While helping with the 2014 Pathfinder Camporee, Griffin got to know Don Livesay, then Lake Union Conference president, and Gary Thurber, then Lake Union Conference executive secretary, who served as prayer and baptism coordinators for the camporee. After the event they approached Griffin with an idea.

"They asked if I would be willing to put together a health ministry in the Lake Union that would directly impact the immediate needs of its people," Griffin recalls. "They were specifically interested in dental and vision care."

During the South Bend, Indiana, Adventist Community Health Initiative clinic in March 2020, a medical professional prays with one of more than 100 people who received treatment. All photos on this feature by Dan Weber

So Adventist Community Health Initiative (ACHI) was born. Since its inception in 2015, ACHI has held approximately 80 free dental and vision clinics around the Lake Union, serving more than 12,000 people, with a service value of \$4 million.

"The impact of what has been done through this ministry has been a tremendous blessing to many churches," Griffin says, "and to many people who probably would not have been able to afford or get the help otherwise."

Typically, these clinics take place on a single day, but in a city like Detroit, Michigan, where the need is so great, one day would not be enough. They served more than 2,500 people over a three-day period.

It's not a one-size-fits-all program; Griffin encourages churches to identify what they can offer in particular. For example, one congregation had a trained chef. Other churches have medical professionals trained in fields other than dentistry and vision. These unique resources enhance an ACHI event.

After hosting a clinic, many churches have decided to make it an annual event. As church members spend time with community members more regularly, they begin to identify needs beyond dental and vision care.

"One heartwarming story is of a church that bought one family a new microwave," Griffin remembers. "The family was so touched that they came back the following year and asked how they could help at the clinic."

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More than **Dentistry**

Randy Griffin talks about his life and passion for mission service.

Mylon Medley, North American Division assistant communication director, spoke with Randy Griffin in March 2020.

Where did you grow up?

I was born in Texas. Within a few months my parents moved to South America as missionaries, where we spent the next six or seven years. Then we moved to Berrien Springs, Michigan, for a year, then back to Texas. All my elementary school days were in Keene, Texas.

I don't regret being overseas, or being away from the U.S. I'm glad I had the opportunity to be in different countries. It has shaped my vision and the rest of my life. Being a missionary's kid, I have that desire to go back and impact others who are in need, those who are underserved—not only on mission trips I take now, but also with what I do here in the U.S.-taking care of people, loving on people.

Service is clearly important to you.

Growing up Adventist, seeing the mission field, seeing the need, then, through academy, wondering what I was going to do with my life, then

Becky St. Clair writes from Angwin, California.

More than Dentistry An interview with Randy Griffin continued

winding up in college with a roommate who was going to be a dentist-these were defining moments. I had lots of discussions with that college roommate, and I felt that dentistry was something I'd enjoy as a profession. But it's also something I would be able to do to serve those who aren't well-served.

The first mission trip I took, outside of being a missionary's kid, was soon after I finished dental school. I thought, There's no way I can afford this. There's no way I can be out of my job for three or four *weeks to go on a trip*. But the Lord provided and took care of me.

From that point on I thought, I'm not going to worry about the finances, because God will make sure that that part is taken care of if I'm willing to go out and serve Him in this capac*ity*. I've gone on dozens of trips through the years.

Where and when did your Adventist journey begin?

My Adventist journey began when my parents started taking me to cradle roll and kindergarten Sabbath School, but it continued to grow and develop as I got into elementary school, academy, and college. The desire to be a dentist that's where the journey intersected with the reality of my career.

Early on, through elementary school and academy, I enjoyed building little model cars, little model airplanes, painting little, delicate parts of these models that I built. One day my father said, "Randy, you ought to be a dentist someday."

I looked at him and said, "Gross, Dad. The worst thing I could ever think of is being in people's mouths all day long."

He said, "You're good with your hands." He's the one who put the thought of being a dentist in my mind. But it took a few years from academy until college, when I had that roommate who is also now a dentist, for me to put two and two together.

Four years after graduating from dental school I went to work for another dentist for a year and a half. I gained valuable insight into how to manage and operate a den-



tal practice. In dental school you might see two people a day. In the dental practice you might see 10 to 20 people a day, learning this was invaluable. After that experience, I purchased a practice and owned that for the next 16 years.

But that all changed when you had an accident.

In 2010 I was on the roof of my home cleaning some leaves out of a gutter. I fell and broke a wrist. I also developed problems with the other hand's losing some sensation and was not able to practice as I had been accustomed.

I endured multiple surgeries and therapy and treatments. After two years I came to the realization that I would not be able to practice the same way. I sold my dental practice and, for a while, became a happy stay-at-home dad.

After I fell from the roof, the first thought that came to mind when I landed on the deck and looked at my wrist was Will I be able to continue to go on mission trips?

But the Lord has allowed certain parts of my hand to still function, and I can still provide some services and go on mission trips and take care of people.

What are you doing now?

Here in Cicero, Indiana, we're blessed to have a church that's very mission-minded. Once a year our church takes a mission trip to different parts of Central or South America. We either provide dental services, or a physician would go along and we'd provide medical services and Vacation Bible School.

My entire family have some hands-on part of the mission trip. My boys might help with construction. My wife helps me in the dental department and cooks food for the mission group. Outside of



After I fell from the roof, the first thought that came to mind when I landed on the deck and looked at my wrist was Will I be able to continue to go on mission trips?

church trips, we go on different trips two or three times a year, joining different groups to either Africa or India. Some were evangelism trips. Some were medical trips.

Explain how you started the localized dental clinics.

After the 2014 International Pathfinder Camporee was over, Don Livesay, then Lake Union Conference president, and Gary Thurber, then Lake Union Conference executive secretary, approached me and asked, "Would you be willing to run a free dental/vision/medical service clinic in the Lake Union that congregations can provide through their local churches? Church members would volunteer their time with the program."

After much prayer and discussion with my wife, Kathy, to see what the next phase of our lives would be, we decided that January 2015 would be the starting point of this initiative. Adventist Community Health Initiative has been operating for five years now.

How many people have you served since 2015?

A little more than 12,000 people have come through the doors, whether it's for dental, for vision, for medi-

Your family has always been part of your mission work.

My wife and I had three sons. All of us were involved in mission work. Our oldest is 27; and the youngest is 16. Our middle son was 22 when he died in a car accident four days before Christmas in 2018. One of the ways that we are able to remember our son and his legacy of being a vibrant young man was

that time.

keeps us going.

keep going." But I'm saving, "No."



As I reflect on my journey, I recognize that God doesn't promise that it's going to be an easy path or an enjoyable path. Sometimes there are struggles and trials and hardships. But looking back, I realize that each one of those has strengthened my faith, strengthened my resolve, to trust Him more and more every day.

cal, dermatology, blood testing, all the different things that churches provide. The dollar figure of services provided would be more than US\$4 million.

to provide funding for a specific church in El Salvador where they are now building a sanctuary structure from some of the life insurance money.

The foundation is complete, and walls are starting to go up on the "Nick Memorial Church." We hope that by the time I go back in November 2020, the church will be completed, and we can dedicate it at

Without the blessed hope that we have, I'd want to stop and just close up and not move forward. But since we have the hope of seeing Nick again, that's what

Even something like this, as tragic as it is, Satan may be throwing that in my path to say, "Hey, give up. Don't

Breath of Life Evangelistic Revival Leads to More Than 15,000 Baptisms in Tanzania

BY CHRISTOPHER C. THOMPSON



Photography provided by Breath of Life

he Seventh-day Adventist Church in Tanzania welcomed more than 15,000 new members after a recent revival conducted by Carlton Byrd, speaker/director of the Breath of Life television ministry.

"This revival is another testament to God's miraculous power!" remarked Byrd. "The Spirit of God knows no limits and reaches far beyond our ability and imagination. This revival far exceeded what I could've ever imagined was possible. I am very grateful for what God has done."

The evangelistic effort was a joint venture between the North Tanzanian Union, Hope Channel, Morning Star Radio, lay organizations such as the Association of Tanzanian Adventist Professionals and Entrepreneurs (ATAPE), and the Tanzanian Adventists in the United States (TAUS).

The collaboration in Tanzania began in 2019 with camp meetings and revivals on the site designated for the Breath of Life revival. In the week leading up to

The first Breath of Life church on the continent of Africa was established.

← Carlton Byrd offers an appeal at a Breath of Life revival location in Chato, Tanzania, in early 2020.

the revival, a health clinic provided free health services to Chato and surrounding area residents.

The Breath of Life nightly meetings were broadcast via Internet livestream, TV, and radio to more than 3,000 satellite locations across the country. The ministry team included sign language interpreters and Swahili translators. French was available for listeners with audio devices.

Miracles at the Lake

At the first baptism ceremony 256 people were baptized at the Chato location. Anxious new believers walked to a nearby lake that was home to alligators. Safety nets had been placed in the water and lookouts stationed alongside. Undeterred by the danger, new believers lined up and waited to be baptized.

The following Monday, baptism reports continued to stream in from the satellite locations around Tanzania. With approximately 3,700 locations reporting from all across the country, and many locations in underdeveloped areas, communication could be difficult. Nevertheless, people kept coming to be baptized, and kept responding to the Word of God and the good news of Jesus Christ's soon return.

"Mungu Kwanza"

The revival utilized the theme "Mungu Kwanza," which means "God First" in Swahili. That theme served as a reminder for even the revival organizers that, when God is first, nothing is impossible.

The God First revival also marked another "first." Revival organizers established the twentieth Breath of Life Seventh-day Adven-

"The Spirit of God knows no limits and reaches far beyond our ability and imagination."



↑ Left: Carlton Byrd thanks his Swahili language translator at the Chato evangelistic event. Right: At a lake in Chato, Tanzania, 256 were baptized after the God First revival.

tist Church in the world, and the first Breath of Life church on the continent of Africa.

Final results are still pouring in, but as of March 9, the total baptisms from this evangelistic effort is 15,124.

Continuing Efforts

In addition to the revival and health clinic, the Huntsville, Alabama-based Global Vessels Inc. came to visit the orphanage they had helped establish. Global Vessels has conducted numerous mission projects in Tanzania in recent years, and plans to return this summer to renovate the orphanag and help build the new Breath of Life church building.

Michael Mwasumbi, president of the TAUS, reflected on the entire effort, saying, "The fact that this was done in a small town proves

,	that technology works. It also shows that the people are ready and willing to respond to the Word I've never seen anything like this before." The response of this many thousands of new believers serves as a stark reminder of the day of Pentecost, when Peter stood before the people and reminded them that "it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh" (Acts 2:17).
- s je	Christopher C. Thompson is the communications and marketing director for Breath of Life Minis- tries in Huntsville, Alabama.

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NAD NEWS BRIEFS

COVID-19 Setback Catapults a Refugee/ Immigrant Church's Reach Forward

wen before his state issued a stayat-home order to curb the spread of COVID-19, Desta Gelgelu, an economics professor, church planter, and pastor of the Oromo Seventh-day Adventist Church in Minneapolis, Minnesota, called his conference executive secretary for advice. Something had to be done to protect the Oromo-speaking church members from the potential spread of the virus.

On Friday afternoon, March 13, 2020, Gelgelu, or Pastor Desta, as he is known by his congregation, called his core elders together on a teleconference. They decided not to worship in the church for the March 14 Sabbath services.

For a congregation that loves to spend all day every Sabbath fellowshipping together at the church, this would leave a huge void. Leaders scrambled to put together an alter-



Kerry Allen, associate professor of nursing and undergraduate skills coordinator (left), and Holly Gadd, dean of the School of Nursing, prepare medical supplies for donation to local hospitals. Ryan Pierce

Southern Adventist University Nursing Program Donates Supplies to Area Hospitals

T n response to the national shortage of medical supplies because ▲ of the spread of COVID-19, on March 23, 2020, the Southern Adventist University School of Nursing donated personal protective equipment to two local hospitals, CHI Memorial Hospital in Chattanooga, Tennessee, and Advent-Health Gordon in Calhoun, Georgia.

The supplies included N95 and surgical masks, gowns, and gloves, which would ordinarily be used in simulation exercises in the university's nursing skills lab. With Southern's transition to distance learning for the remainder of the

semester, the School of Nursing wanted to put the supplies to good use and reached out to some of their local health-care partners.

"Even though the resources we have to offer are limited, we know that every little bit helps," said Holly Gadd, School of Nursing dean. "We value all the partnerships we have with health-care agencies, and we want to do our part. We are a team, all trying to pull together during difficult times and meet needs when and where we can."

-Janell Hullquist, Southern Adventist University editorial manager

nate plan. They turned to teleconference and livestreaming on Facebook.

"Now we are reaching out to five times the number we were reaching before!" Pastor Desta explains. He shares that their church building accommodates only approximately 250 people, but on that first Sabbath of livestreaming, the reach grew to more than 1.000 viewers from around the world. Viewers from Australia, Africa, Canada, and states across the U.S., chimed in with spontaneous, affirming comments. When the service finished, people from around the world joined with a hearty "Amen!"

"This [pandemic], which is a crisis, in one way is working for good," he adds. "The church is forced to learn something new. Financially, we will be hurt. Spiritually, we pray that we will come out richer than we were before."

Pastor Desta, who also serves as the North American Division's church planting consultant for the Oromo language group, and his team are initiating prayer chains, children's ministry trainings, and Bible studies throughout the week during this time.

"That sense of attachment and community-we don't want it to decrease," he says. "Human instruments are fragile and fail, but our God is omnipotent. When they tell us to be far away from each other, no one can tell us to be far away from God."

-Terri Saelee, coordinator of the NAD's Adventist Refugee and Immigrant Ministries

MITACICS Stillanden watch. be inspired. share.



From "Witch" to Witness awr.org/ranja Ranja was held captive by the evil spirits that possessed her . . . until the day she turned on her radio.

Trading Guns for God awr.org/rebels Why have rebels in the Philippines been laying down their machine guns and picking up Bibles? Watch to find out!

Taking a Bold Stand awr.org/wisam Wisam's own family tried to stone and stab him for his belief in God, but today he is an Adventist pastor in the Middle East! Watch these and many more miracle stories at: awr.org/videos

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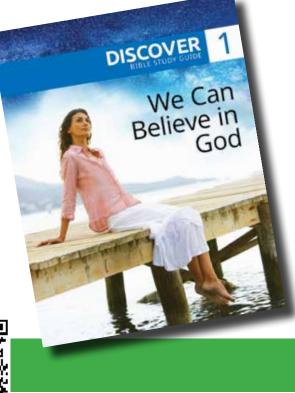
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BY VANDEON GRIFFIN

On the Same Team

ne of the things I like about the Youth and Young Adult Ministries Department is our unity. We see ourselves as one team—across the division.

That's what Jesus was trying to say to His disciples: "My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me" (John 17:20, 21, NIV).

Through His prayer Jesus was sending His disciples out with this message. The goal is for all of them to become one heart and mind so that the world will believe. He sends us out with the same message, with the same purpose.

Prayer Power

As I travel across the North American Division, it gives me joy to hear people say, "I'm praying for you." People who don't really know me are praying for me? I'm excited about that, just as I'm excited when I call my parents and my mom tells me she's praying for me.

Sometimes I'm restless at night. I'm tossing and turning. I wake up with a hand on my chest. It's the hand of my wife, who is praying for me. At some point in the night she realizes that I'm dreaming, or that something isn't going right. So she lays her hand on me.

But more exciting than finding out that people around the division are praying for me, that my mom and dad are praying for me, and even that my wife is praying for me, I'm excited to know that, as Jesus prayed for His disciples, He prays for us.

Bigger Vision

Jesus prayed for the disciples because He wanted them to be one in spirituality. You'd assume that those men were together spiritually.

They were there when Jesus walked in a crowd and a woman with an issue of blood met Him. She found Jesus, and she showed them what a real disciple does in distress: she bypassed protocol and reached out to Him. The disciples saw the power and love of God, yet they weren't together spiritually.

I'm learning that the way to fall in love with Jesus is by learning to love people. At some point we have to be the kind of people who are not thinking about Christianity, but are actually *being* Christians.

I'm also learning that to be more spiritual, I have to pray about it.

Jesus' disciples were excitedly expecting to be great. In fact, they fussed and fought about it, asking each other who would be the greatest among them.

Jesus told them He didn't care about that; rather, he cared about them loving others, those who were unloved.

We don't often know what it means to be a Seventh-day Adventist Christian. If we did, we would learn how to fall in love with people, not just those who believe, dress, eat, and look like us.

But there's a simple solution. We need to start praying for His Spirit to be in us. We need to pray for Jesus' love to be manifested in our hearts. We need to not just act like it, but really be on the same team—Jesus' team.

Where are our hearts today? Only

with those who agree with our agendas? Only with those who work in our work space? Only those who attend church with us?

We need to start praying for His Spirit to be in us.

I'm praying that we have a bigger vision; that our hearts and minds are with God and that, as His disciples, we are spiritually united.

Vandeon Griffin is an associate director of Youth and Young Adult Ministries for the North American Division.

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