

MICHIGAN MEMO



FIELDWORK: BE THE POWER TOOL



“The most powerful thing I saw about Fieldwork, however, was the power of unity.”

Taking a deep breath, I steadied the power tool in my hand and reluctantly began to saw away at the drywall in front of me. My fellow Fieldwork volunteers gave me an encouraging smile and I smiled back nervously. Never in my life had I used a power tool, let alone measured and cut drywall.

On Sunday, October 27, sixty-three volunteers from all over the state gathered together to show people in the community of Lansing God’s love, no strings attached.

Groups of five to eight people were assigned a house and several jobs to accomplish within the house, whether it be painting, replacing drywall, or putting in a new ceiling.

The process of Fieldwork was simple. Each volunteer paid \$100 to cover the cost of the materials needed and showed up ready to work and make a significant

difference in the lives of those in need.

And what a difference it was! Eleven homes all over the Lansing area were repaired and the homeowners got a taste of the love of Christ.

The blessing extended much farther than the homeowners. The volunteers were blessed too. For me, watching everyone work together to accomplish huge tasks was amazing. It reminded me of what our church could do if we would but put aside our differences and work together to spread the gospel.

The spirit at the work site was extraordinary. No complaints were heard, only laughter as we worked together doing tasks we’d never dreamed we would do.

Sixty-three people, a four person media team, and five runners, in addition to Chad Bernard, is not a lot of people. But the Lord blessed.

One homeowner was an atheist and by
(continued on page 6)



JIM MICHEFF

THE MASTER MECHANIC

When Gail and I got married I was introduced to her grandfather, Henry VanderWaal. I was told by several family members that he was a master mechanic. Several years later I had an experience that helped me understand and appreciate just what a master mechanic is.

It started when my father-in-law asked me if I would be willing to assist grandpa on a special project. My father-in-law wanted to build a new barn but needed to have a considerable amount of site preparation done before building could begin. He had a customer who owned a 350 John Deere bulldozer that needed to be overhauled. The customer had agreed to let the bulldozer be used to complete the project if grandpa would rebuild the engine. Grandpa was 75+ and not as agile as he once was. It would be helpful to have someone to assist.

I had some experience in mechanics. I had successfully completed some engine work in the past. With the help of masking tape, a marker and a few plastic baggies, along with a polaroid camera, I had developed a simple process that seemed to work. I would remove one part at a time placing all the pieces in the baggie and carefully label it with a number. At various stages I would include a picture. Then all that was needed was to reverse the order. Since I had never worked with a master mechanic, I assumed the process was similar, perhaps with larger baggies.

When we pulled the bulldozer into the shop I was surprised when grandpa started taking it apart. I asked him where the baggies were, and he looked

at me with a puzzled look. "You know, what we put the parts in so we can put it back together," I said. He nodded, "Get a 5-gallon bucket." I set the bucket down by him and asked what he wanted it for. "Put all the parts in the bucket." The thought of trying to figure out how to put all those parts back where they belonged overwhelmed me. In horror I expressed my concern at not being able to keep track of so many pieces. "Put them in the bucket!" he said, with an authoritative look. One thing I had learned early on was that when grandpa told you to do something, with that special look, the discussion was over.

By the time the engine was all apart we had filled several buckets. Grandpa replaced a broken gear and then began the process of putting everything back together. I couldn't imagine anyone being able to know where all those parts should go. Grandpa picked up a part and asked me to hand him some bolts. I reached in the bucket and handed him a bolt. "No... not that one, that goes..." and then he proceeded to tell me where it went. "How could he know that?" I thought. I reached back in the bucket and pulled out another one. "Yes, that one and there are four more just like it."

As the engine took shape my understanding and appreciation of working with a master mechanic grew. After the last part was assembled the buckets were empty. Grandpa looked at me with a smile and asked if I thought it would start. I knew it would... and it did. I asked him how he became a master mechanic. He said from experience and studying engine manuals.

"Remember we have a life manual and a master Mechanic who knows every part and where it goes."

Years later my son, Jamie, came to me and expressed a desire to own a mini-bike. I told him we probably couldn't buy a new one but if he looked in the paper and found a used one, we might be able to get it. Every night when he came home, he searched the want ads in the paper. A couple of weeks later I heard a shout of excitement coming from the dining room area followed by the sound of footsteps racing to where I was. He had found an ad that simply read, Honda Minibike for sale - \$25. I was sure that the price was a misprint and suggested that he call and ask about it. A few minutes later he returned and excitedly told me the price was \$25. Together we went and called again. I asked the lady who had placed the ad why the asking price was so low. "Well the minibike stopped working and my husband...the master mechanic that he is...decided to take it apart and repair it himself. He took it apart but couldn't get in back together. He put the parts in a box, and it will cost you \$25 to know if they are all there." A picture of me working with grandpa crossed my mind. What a great project for a father and son to work on together.

As Jamie and I drove away with the box of parts I sensed that our time together was going to be special. "Can we start putting it together tonight?" he asked. We could lay out the parts, but I explained that we needed to buy a repair manual so we would be able to know how to put it together and also determine if any parts were missing.

The next day I bought a manual from the Honda dealer and we started reading it together. After a while Jamie blurted out,

PRAYER FOCUS

Every Monday morning, the Michigan Conference staff meets for worship and prayer. Here is the list for January. Please join with us as we pray for these churches and ministries.

DECEMBER 30 - JANUARY 3

Big Rapids/Bristol/Reed City
Pastor Garhett Morgan
Big Rapids Community Services

JANUARY 6 - 10

Saginaw/St. Charles
Pastor Ben Garcia
Tri-City Elementary
Saginaw Community Services
St. Charles Community Services
Teen Snow Outing - Camp Au Sable

JANUARY 13 - 17

Lansing
Pastors Phil Mills/Jerico Batista
Greater Lansing Adventist School
Lansing Community Services
CAMPUS Staff Retreat

JANUARY 20 - 24

New Haven/Port Huron
Pastor Kevin Sears
New Haven Center Community
Service
Father-Son Retreat/Man Camp

JANUARY 27 - 31

Dowagiac/Eau Claire
Pastor Ted Toms
Eau Claire Elementary
Ministerial Retreat - Camp Au Sable

“This is boring! Can we skip reading and just start working on it?” I shared with him importance of learning how the minibike was put together and operated. “Well, you read the manual and when you’re ready I’ll help you put it together.

For the next several days every spare moment was spent studying the manual. Finally, I was ready to apply what I had been learning. As we worked on it, I kept referring back to the manual. We would put it together and then realize something wasn’t right so we would take it apart and start all over. “I thought you studied the manual,” Jamie said in frustration. “I did, but now I’m trying to apply what I read. That’s how you get experience,” I assured him. “Well, I wish getting experience didn’t take so long!” he said with a sigh.

At last all the parts were in place and to our delight it started on the first try. What joy he had riding it – for about two weeks, then something happened, and the motor seized up. “Well, we’ll just have to take it apart again and see if we can fix it.” I said. “Oh no, that will take so long!” Jamie groaned. “Yes, but this time we have more experience.” I consoled. Between studying the manual and the experience gained from taking the motor apart so many times, I knew every nut, bolt, or screw in that motor.

As we headed for our shop, I asked Jamie to get a bucket. “What do you want a bucket for?” he asked placing it next to the bike. “We can put all the parts in it.” I responded. In horror he expressed his concern at not being able to keep track of so many pieces. “Put them in the bucket!” I said, with an authoritative look. It wasn’t long before the bucket was full, and we had discovered the problem. I picked up a part as I started to reassemble the motor and asked Jamie to hand me some screws. He reached in the bucket and handed me a screw. “No... not that one, that goes...” and then I preceded to tell him where it went. The expression on his face read, “How could you know that?” He reached back in the bucket and pulled out another one. “Yes,

that one and there are three more just like it.”

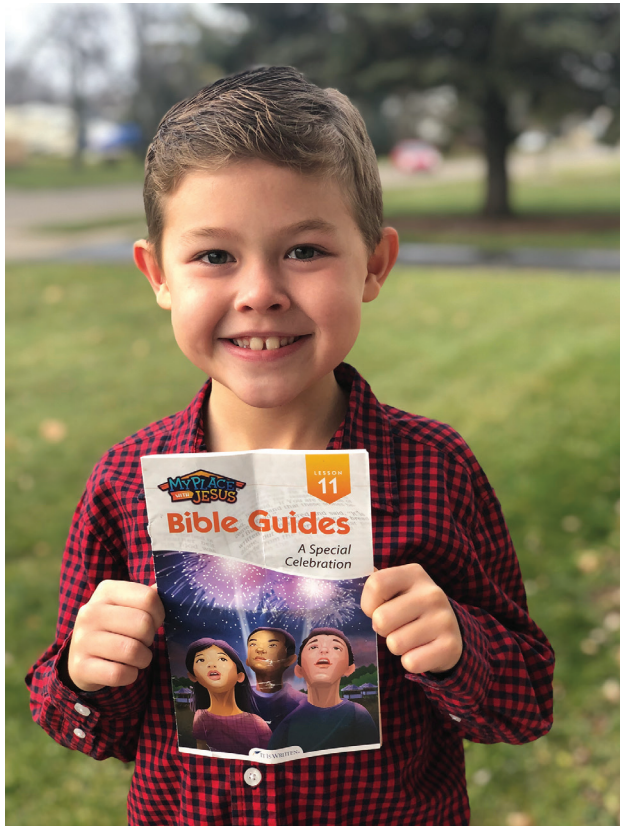
As the motor took shape his confidence in my ability grew. After the last part was assembled the bucket was empty. I looked at him with a smile and asked if he thought it would start. With a look of confidence, he said, “I know it will.” Later he asked me how I was able to put it back together so quickly. I told him it was from experience and studying the engine manual.

Every night for the next few weeks, Jamie read the manual. He would come to me every now and then and show me what he was learning. Several weeks later Jamie and his little brother, Jason, came into my office. “Dad, the motor seized up again. Do you think it could be the same problem we had last time?” “It’s possible,” I said, “but I’m sorry I won’t be able to help you with it now. I think you can take it apart and put it back together by yourself.” “Do you really think I can?” he said with a look of surprise on his face. “I know you can. We have spent hours working together and you have been studying the manual. But instead of working by yourself, take Jason and have him help you. You can teach him how to fix it just like I showed you.”

As the boys left my office Jason expressed his delight at being able to help. “What shall we do first?” he asked his brother. Then I heard Jamie say, “Go get a bucket.” “What do you want a bucket for?” “We’ll put all the parts in it.” “Oh no, we can’t do that. Without dad we will never be able to put it back together.” “Just go get a bucket!”

Sometimes the challenges in our lives may seem to be overwhelming just like trying to figure out the parts in the bucket. But remember we have a life manual and a master mechanic who knows every part and where it goes. So today, if you are staring at your bucket and wondering how you can possibly fit all the parts together, pick up your engine manual (Bible) and as you read the master Mechanic is waiting to help you.





NEVER TOO YOUNG TO WITNESS

the gym he was excited and begged me to get a *GLOW* tract about the Sabbath for him to give to her. I gave him “Why I Go to Church on Saturday,” and decided to also send him with a DVD documentary on the subject of the Law and the Sabbath from Anchor Point Films. What I didn’t realize was that he took something else with him. When we picked him up from childcare and asked him how it went and if he had given her the tract and the DVD, he affirmed that it had gone well and that he had given it to her. He expressed that she agreed to watch it and even told him exactly when she would have time to watch it this week. Then, he pulled out his “My Place with Jesus” Bible study guide about the Sabbath that was folded up in his pocket. I asked him why he brought that and he said that he had read it to her. In shock, or amazement, or disbelief, (not sure exactly, maybe a little bit of each) I said to him, “I didn’t know you were bringing that too. So you said you read the whole thing to her?” To which he responded, “No I just read her the Bible verses out of there.”

So, as I recounted what had just taken place, it was more than just giving her a *GLOW* tract and a DVD. I also realized that my eight-year-old son had just given his first Bible study on the Sabbath, on his own. If an eight-year-old can witness to someone, so can you! If an eight-year-old can let Jesus use him, so can you!

Basically, when it comes to sharing Jesus with others, it may not be perfect, but it’s so easy, even an eight-year-old can do it!

We’re reminded to “Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season.” (2 Timothy 4:2) If God can use an eight-year-old to spread the gospel in this way, He can use each of us as well. This is Total Member Involvement!

Nathaniel Oregon, pastor, Belleville and Tecumseh churches

When my wife and I go to the gym and take our kids, we leave them in childcare while we exercise. My eight-year-old son, Caleb, uses this place and time as his little mission field. Sometimes we hear stories, either from him or the staff, that he has tried witnessing (our word not theirs) to the kids there by telling them that Santa isn’t real, or that Halloween is not good to celebrate. This of course frightens us as parents because we feel like he might get kicked out for making some kids upset, so we try to coach him on not only what is appropriate but also how to be tactful. With his very direct personality, being subtle is difficult for him. This is a strength but it also can be a weakness.

Since everything was decorated for Halloween, instead of trying to witness to another kid, he tried telling one of the staff members that Halloween is bad and that it is Satan’s holiday. (Which reminds me to be more tactful in how I explain things to him myself.) Somehow

he brought up the Sabbath with her. She started asking him questions about it (she was a Catholic, he said), and even started looking up Bible verses about the Sabbath on her phone with him there. She couldn’t find Saturday in the Bible and he said, “Well, it’s in there! It’s Sabbath! The seventh day!” She said she wasn’t sure about it all, and that maybe her sabbath was on Sunday and his was on Saturday.

Caleb wasn’t satisfied and so when he got home he timidly shared his experience with her, hoping that he had done okay in his efforts. He asked for a *GLOW* tract or a Bible study guide to take to her next time. I also reminded him of his Bible study from the children’s program from our *Jesus on Prophecy* children’s program where they went through the “My Place with Jesus” children’s Bible studies. Caleb was pleased to remember the study on the Sabbath that I had him go through and read again.

So when we told him we were going to



A SUMMER TO REMEMBER

Dino was thinking of going home. He had a heavy burden on his heart and found he couldn't focus completely on the ministry before him. While considering this course of action, he received a text message completely out of the blue from one of his former Youth Rush canvassing leaders.

The text had an attached image of a magabook receipt survey from the previous summer, all filled out, with Dino's name on the bottom (as the canvasser). It indicated that the individual he had visited had requested Bible studies. The former leader asked if he remembered that Bible study contact. Having met many people that summer that signed up for Bible studies, there was nothing unique about the name that triggered a memory for Dino.

Daniel, Dino's Bible study contact from last summer, had gone through a series of Bible studies and was now quite active in his local Michigan church! He went door-to-door by himself, inviting people to come and join him at church. This news and the vision of what his ministry really meant in the lives of people really

encouraged Dino. He rededicated his life to God and continued canvassing till the end of the summer program.

At the summer-end iShare Conference, surrounded by the entire Youth Rush canvassing family, Daniel gave his life to Christ in baptism. Daniel remarked, "The Lord has been doing great things in my life. I'm going to go to a Bible school so I can learn to be an evangelist, so I can serve Him for the rest of my life, because He is my life!" What precious encouragement this change was for both the soul won for Christ and the soul winner!

Michelle, a freshman at Great Lakes Adventist Academy (GLAA), was working in a small town in the "thumb" of Michigan with her team. While at a grocery store, she met a couple that was on vacation and quickly connected with them. As she was sharing with them about the summer ministry she was involved in, she looked over and saw her former foster parents and went over to greet them! She hadn't seen them in years and was moved in seeing them just then! While she talked with them, the vacationers

quietly observed this startling scene, impressed with the Christ-like attitude of the young lady.

After awhile, Michelle returned to the couple on vacation. They shared with her that she had made their day. Everything that could possibly go wrong on their trip had gone wrong, but meeting her, with her sweet, caring disposition, had really touched them in a special way. They decided to support her Christian education, while also accepting some of her books.

However, the story does not end there. After they parted ways that day, the couple continued to talk about the girl they had met and how they wanted to do even more for her. So, after returning home, they reached out to our literature ministries department and made arrangements to come to the conference office.

Once again, they shared with us how impressed they were with Michelle, how meeting her made their ruined vacation more bearable. And that day they made yet another generous donation toward her education, with plans to continue helping—to ensure she got the education she needed! Praise the Lord!

One summer day, Olivia was ministering in the industrial businesses of the Detroit suburbs. It was there that she met Terri in a mechanic shop. Terri's face told it all—she needed encouragement. In trying to meet her needs, Olivia shared with her our health books, and later also our spiritual books.

It was quite all-at-once when the lady asked a pointed question: "What religion are you?"

Olivia cautiously replied, "We are Seventh-day Adventist Christians. Have you heard of us?"

The lady paused, and with a big smile on her face, replied, "You are a Seventh-day Adventist? I want to be a Seventh-day Adventist!"

She shared with Olivia how over the

(continued on page 6)

(SUMMER)

past 15 – 20 years she'd been discovering various truths, such as the Bible Sabbath, what happens when you die, and how God wants us to live healthfully! Excited, Olivia extended an invitation to Terri to come and worship with the Youth Rush missionaries in a local church. Two weeks later, Terri did just that!

Finally, we are thrilled to share that this summer we had a group of six young people that were specially trained on how to minister to people in the large Dearborn Arabic community. They were taught some Arabic phrases, as well as how to share our health message and bridge it to our spiritual books with a special emphasis on the coming judgment. We are happy to report that this team did quite well, and we are excited to see how those seeds spring up in the coming years!

Sometimes we have to wait long for seeds to sprout, but we praise God that they will do just that, and just at the time we need the encouragement—as Dino discovered this past summer!

After the youth received the training and were furnished with Arabic magabooks, they went to the predominately Muslim communities. Initially our young people were nervous, but soon they found people at the homes that were very friendly



and also receptive to our books. Soon this team of six young people distributed more magabooks than any other team in the entire Lake Union. God was doing something special and the young people knew it.

Each summer our young people participate in this frontline evangelistic work. There are two take aways from this summer:

1. Believe in your young people. Believe that our young people can be active participants of spreading of the Gospel. I praise God that our conference believes in our young people enough to give them opportunities to in engage in a meaningful

evangelistic work.

2. Invest in your young people. If you believe in your young people, you will invest in your young people—invest with time in mentoring them, with money to fund the missionary work. When we invest in our young people, they will in turn invest in the church and the mission of our church.

To watch Youth Rush testimonies, search in YouTube: “Michigan Youth Rush.”

Kamil Metz, Publishing Director

(FIELD WORK)

helping her, we must have surely given a positive impression of God.

That’s why I had the courage to pick up a power tool, because I knew God would bless my efforts, and the efforts of those around me.

The most powerful thing I saw about Fieldwork, however, was the power of unity. When we united as a church, putting our efforts together, we were able to do something powerful, something that will leave a lasting impact for the truth.

Ellen White says, “Unity existing among the followers of Christ is an evidence that the Father has sent His Son to save

sinners. It is a witness to His power; for nothing short of the miraculous power of God can bring human beings with their different temperaments together in harmonious action, their one aim being to speak the truth in love.” *Testimonies for the Church*, Volume 9, p. 188

If we would but keep the same harmony experienced during Fieldwork, how much faster the gospel would spread, which would hasten the soon coming of Jesus.

Judy Klein, Lansing church member

November/December Corrections

The dates for the Golden Years Retreat are September 13-17, 2020.

The nature nugget entitled “Kirtland’s Warbler” was written by Bethany Nietling, Camp Au Sable Nature Center taskforce worker.

Please accept our apologies for the misprint.

FROM THE PRESIDENT



Last year during the Michigan Conference constituency, I reported that we had received a letter of intent to purchase the old conference building. Unfortunately, that offer along with two previous offers fell through.

The property is currently listed, and we have had additional showings since that time but with no serious interest or recent offers. In the short-term, we have winterized the building and addressed other maintenance items, in order to minimize cost while maintaining the building.

Through this process, we are reminded of our need to depend more upon God, and less upon human strength. The pen of inspiration states, "He invites us to present to Him our perplexities and necessities, and our need of divine help. . . As soon as difficulties arise, we are to offer to Him our sincere, earnest petitions. . . The sense of our need leads us to pray earnestly, and our heavenly Father is moved by our supplications" (*Christ Object Lessons*, p. 172).

With this in mind, the Michigan Conference leadership invites you to join the conference family in prayer and fasting on Thursday, January 16, as we seek the Lord for His will and blessing in the sale of the old conference building.

— Jim Micheff

NEWS BRIEF

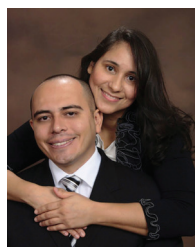


The 2019 Daniel 11 Symposium prompted and energized people from a wide variety of places and backgrounds to seek further understanding of a difficult prophetic passage. The weekend brought a dynamic blend of scholars with expertise in Biblical Hebrew and laypeople without formal training. The year's event was livestreamed to curious viewers around the world. The various presentations can be viewed at youtube.com/villagemedia ministry. Papers and resources from this year's and last year's conferences can be browsed and downloaded at www.daniel11prophecy.com.

PASTORAL TRANSITIONS



Kevin Sears is the new pastor of the New Haven and Port Huron churches and comes to us from Massachusetts, where he served as pastor of the Norwood and Braintree churches.



Ariel Roldan, previously the pastor of the Oakwood and Monroe churches, and the Detroit Romanian Company, is the new pastor for the Cadillac and Lake City churches.

Do you want to receive the weekly e-newsletter of the Michigan Conference for the latest in news and upcoming events? Subscribe now by copying the following link to your browser: <http://bit.ly/MISDA7>.

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MONTHLY CALENDAR

January

- 1 New Year's Day
- 1-6 GYC - Louisville, KY
- 10-12 Teen Snow Outing -
Camp Au Sable
- 17-19 CAMPUS Staff Retreat -
Camp Au Sable
- 20 Martin Luther King Day -
Office Closed
- 22 Camp Meeting Directors
- 24-26 Man Camp/Father-Son Retreat -
Camp Au Sable
- 24-26 Pathfinder Area Coordinators
Leadership Retreat
- 27-30 Ministerial Retreat -
Camp Au Sable

February

- 1 Pathfinder Bible Experience
Area
- 3-9 NAD Presidents' Retreat
- 5-9 GLAA Home Leave
- 11 District Superintendents
- 17 Presidents' Day - Office Closed
- 18 MI Executive Committee
- 21-23 CAMPUS Retreat
- 25 Camp Meeting Directors
- 27 MI K-12 Board of Education
- 28-Mar 1 Teen Bible Camp

SHOREBIRDS

Bethany Nietling, Camp Au Sable Nature Taskforce Worker

Shells, rocks, and frogs are not the only things you can find along the shores and shallows of North America's abundant bodies of water. Walking along a sandy beach, through a marshy wetland, or beside a flooded field you may very likely see, wading in the shallow water, a species of shorebird. Shorebirds are specially equipped with the tools necessary to harvest food from the shallow water

and mud. One of these tools is their bills. The Killdeer, probably one of the better-known shorebirds in North America, has a relatively thick, short bill. This short bill works nicely for catching earthworms, grasshoppers, beetles, insect

larvae, and other invertebrates that live above or right below the surface of the water or ground. Another shorebird with a much longer bill is the Marbled Godwit. The bill of the Marbled Godwit is designed to probe the mud and sand along beaches and mudflats. These birds are not opposed to submerging their entire bill or head into the sand in order to find a small crustacean or other small creatures. One shorebird has a bill so long that "long billed" makes up part of its name. The Long-billed Curlew has a long, slender bill with a downward curve that can reach

deep into the mud to catch deep-burrowing marine invertebrates and crustaceans. The American Avocet gives off an air of elegance with its slender, upturned bill. However, this bill has a more practical use than simply looking sophisticated. The American Avocet catches fairy shrimp, small fish, aquatic plants, etc. by moving its bill in a sweeping motion under the water. Each of these shorebirds have a

bill designed to harvest food from the shores and shallows, but each bill is designed a little differently, and is perfect for what it is made to catch. In much the same way, God created each of us with unique talents with which

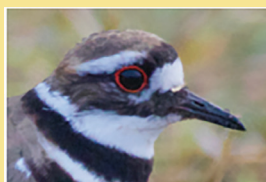


Photo: Dr. Gordon Atkins

to harvest souls for the kingdom. 1 Peter 4:10-11 says, "Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen." No matter what your talent or experience God has a work for you to do, all you have to do is let Him use you.