From Sudan to Portland
A Refugee Carries Her Cross

Marriage in Christ
Seminar Spreads to 16 Branches

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Brian Weber (on the red ladder) and John Butts (on the ground) were part of a group of 13 members of the New Orleans branch who spent three days helping the Mission team in Allendale in early June. Here they are helping Joe Bulger (on the other ladder) prepare a house for demolition.
“We tried to pray together when we were dating,” Andrew said. “It felt awkward sometimes, and we just couldn’t get it to work. The Marriage in Christ seminar gave us a rubric to follow.”

“For me,” said Emily, “Marriage in Christ called out all of the lies that society is trying to tell you about marriage. Yeah, these are struggles you’re going to go through. No, they’re not reasons to be apart from your spouse. The Holy Spirit can help you get through these struggles and connect on a deeper level.”

Andrew and Emily’s story is one of the hundreds that could be told about the impact of Marriage in Christ (MIC). As of May, 2016, more than 800 couples had completed the five-week program of video talks, discussions and prayer. Bill Wacker, Joel Kibler and other Servant Branch members launched the program in 2011, and the board of governors adopted it as a work of the People of Praise in 2013.

“Because of the Holy Spirit, we have so many strong marriages in the community. Marriage in Christ is a way that we can bear witness and share with the church and the world what God has given us,” Joel said.

Bill sees a wide context for the effort. “I think one thing God wants to do in this day and age is to make Christian marriage appear more beautiful and attractive to the broader culture, and we’re playing a part in that.”

Since 2011, community host couples have put on 65 seminars in 16 branches, and have helped bring the seminar to 23 US states, Canada and the Caribbean.

In Shreveport, Bill and Mary Frances Parker’s pastor said he would allow the seminar at their parish if the local bishop approved it. The Parkers invited the bishop to dinner and showed him one of the videos. “He loved it,” Mary Frances said, and since then the Parkers, Jack and Teresa Lynch and Mark and Natalia Bendele have put on four seminars.

Gerry and Cathy Orthmann (Yakima) have focused on follow-up, inviting the participants from the seminar they hosted to come back to their home. Couples came with their families for ice cream; the
adults came for a nice dinner followed by men’s and women’s discussion groups; and the women came over for breakfast. The women are particularly hungry for fellowship, Cathy said.

Kevin and Anna-Lisa Rodriguez (Kingston) have worked for other marriage preparation and improvement programs, but found something new and helpful in Marriage in Christ. “This is what every married person needs, because it focuses on the fundamentals of life in Christ, irrespective of how long we’ve been married or how much we believe we’ve got it right,” Kevin said.

In the Twin Cities, Servant Branch members have hosted 26 seminars. In South Bend, Dan and Anne Brewer and Jim and Gerry Sgroi ran a seminar for 35 couples, the branch’s largest so far. Rick and Diane Ridenour and Dave and Maggie Temeles have put on four seminars in northern Virginia.

After three seminars in Corvallis, Terry Aman credits the MIC staff for making the seminar very easy to pull off: “The kit Sally and I received was very well-organized and included a checklist for what had to be done when.”

In the Marriage in Christ office, Bill Wacker and Lucy Cunningham are developing a new kit to make it easier for branch couples to promote the seminar in their churches and cities. Fundraising is also a priority. An anonymous couple has offered to match all gifts made to MIC before July 30, 2016, up to $25,000.

Bob Brickweg (Servant Branch), who serves with Joel and Bill on the MIC board, said, “I am so thankful for the brothers and sisters who have worked to make Marriage in Christ succeed in their branches. Like anything of value, it takes effort, but the Lord returns so much more.”

Part of that return comes when couples like Andrew and Emily Hayden are trained as host couples and begin to put on seminars. They recently hosted one for eight couples in their home.

“The seminar isn’t a magic wand,” Emily said, but it has helped the Haydens establish habits of prayer, conversation and love. It’s a slow work that starts each day at 5:00 and that they are now passing on to others. With couples helping other couples, the effort will bear fruit over the long term, one prayer time, one act of forgiveness and one seminar at a time.

### PRAISE ACADEMY

**A Look Back at Year One**

by Sean Connolly

School let out at Praise Academy in Shreveport on May 20. Students, teachers and Mission team members celebrated the completion of their first year with hymns and brownies (prepared by the pre-K class) before capping off the day with a water balloon launch. For Joan Pingel, the principal, a favorite moment came when several students ran to get their final projects—ABC booklets featuring letters, words and pictures—so they could show them off. The students expressed sadness at the close of the year, and one told Joan he planned to wear his uniform every day during the summer.

During the final month of the school year, the students took a field trip to the zoo in Tyler, Texas. Seven of the eight students had never been outside the city limits before, and none had ever seen a zoo. Once there, Joan divided them into groups and sent them off with worksheets so they could check off animals as they saw them. After spotting a red fox or a lion or a giraffe, the children returned to “Miss Jones” squealing with delight. Joan wanted the students to get to see the white tiger’s graceful walk but, each time they went by, the tiger was asleep. Thirty minutes before they had to leave, they went by one last time, and they prayed that the tiger would get up and move. The tiger “lifted his head, looked right at us and walked down into another part of his cage,” Joan said.

Kevin McShane, one of the teachers, recalled the first few weeks of school, when one of the youngest students would always cry or scream after being dropped off in the morning, missing his mother. Others struggled to learn the daily routine, a rhythmic succession of short lessons punctuated by free play, exercise, lunch and recess. “One student was resisting learning until Nano Farabaugh and Joan came up with a format called train station. It allowed students to move around the classroom, choosing games and other educational activities at various stations.” At first, one of the boys could only put together five pieces of a 25-piece puzzle during a 20-minute segment of train station. It allowed students to move around the classroom, choosing games and other educational activities at various stations. At first, one of the boys could only put together five pieces of a 25-piece puzzle during a 20-minute segment of train station. A few months later he could complete a 48-piece puzzle.

Libby Grondin, a Suzuki violin teacher and occasional violinist with the Shreveport symphony, volunteered to teach twice-weekly music lessons. She taught students the basics on a variety of instruments:
tambourines, triangles, drums, maracas, violins and xylophones, and introduced classical pieces by showing performances on YouTube. “They really liked Rhapsody in Blue by George Gershwin,” she said. Libby also took two fifth grade girls to a symphony performance for schoolchildren. “Their favorite part? Every time the orchestra played! They wanted it to go on forever,” and even got annoyed when nearby students made noise during the performance.

Pat Malone, a former Greenlawn math teacher who lives next door to the school, came over each day to take care of the youngest children during naptime. By the end of the year, the students were saying, “I love you, Mr. Pat,” when he left for the day. Also, if a student was misbehaving, Pat would sit with that student on the school’s front porch. “I used to go over every two or three days to sit with a student, but by the end of the year it was once a week at most.” During these times, Pat often had the students work on their counting, and he saw a student who couldn’t count to 10 last September confidently count to 30. “He was very proud of it.”

Colleen Bowar, another teacher, noted that the students’ ability to play improved as the year progressed. At the beginning, during their half-hour of free play, they would often fight, and their play lacked imagination. “One day late in the year, they created a new game, loosely based on Power Rangers, where they would fight the bad guys, then race off to save somebody, then come back and fight more bad guys. They kept the game going for several days.”

Joe Bulger ran a shop class for the boys two times each week. They made coat racks for the school and a stand for a bike that they can now pedal on the back porch. The shop class also designed, built and raced Pinewood Derby cars. “The boys were proud of their cars, and it was fun for them to create their own unique designs.”

Jeanette Duddy, who volunteered at the school each morning, appreciated small moments of success: “The kids did one project that involved picking up beans with tweezers. It was a difficult task, and they grew frustrated and were tempted to cheat. But they persisted and were finally able to do it after a few days of effort. They learned to keep at it.”

Joan noted that the many gifts the school received from all over the community gave her a chance to teach geography. A youth group from Oahu sent books they bought with money raised from a garage sale. Youth groups in northern Virginia and Colorado Springs sent notebooks, paper, pencils, letters and more books. Servant Branch members hosted a shower for the school and others sent money around Christmastime that Joan used to buy a Nativity set. She also received text messages from all over the community, offering prayers, encouragement and words from the Lord. “When you’re in the trenches, sometimes you can feel like it’s just you there, on your own, but I didn’t feel that way. We had our needs met pretty quickly by the body of Christ.”

Nano Farabaugh, the president of Praise Academy, made four visits to the school and spoke about the spirit of this year’s efforts. “Paul DeCelles told us from the beginning that we should not be trying to teach in a programmatic way like many schools do. Our goal is to teach to the children, tailoring everything to their specific needs. That’s why we have a high ratio of teachers to students, which we intend to maintain as the school grows. We’re dealing with an extreme situation in the neighborhood and we are very glad to be able to help our neighbors meet their needs for education.”

“In the next few months, Praise Academy expects to receive recognition of its status as a nonprofit corporation in the state of Louisiana,” added Paul DeCelles, the chairman of the school’s board.
"I NOT DIE"

From Sudan to Oregon, a Refugee Carries Her Cross

by Elizabeth Grams

MY NAME DEBORAH. I love my name. I try to be strong lady like Deborah in Bible. I go five days no food, I not die. Too many bullets coming, they didn’t hit me. I drink urine, I not die. I think my name is very, very strong.

Deborah Mayom is a mother of eight children, a survivor of the long and brutal civil war in the African nation of Sudan, an immigrant to the US and, most importantly to her, a woman of prayer. Last year, through circumstances that can only be attributed to the Holy Spirit, she became something else, something she never expected to be growing up in a war zone—a Trinity Academy parent.

Walking out of Little Caesar’s Pizza in North Portland in August, 2015, she spotted a sign for Trinity Academy, a school sponsored by the Vancouver-Portland branch. She went inside, met Jo Clark, the head of school, and explained that her daughter Nyibol (NEE-ih-bull) was bright and ready for eighth grade. Deborah, who has a large gap between her front teeth, saw Addie’s braces and said, “I like your smile!” Later that day, Jo shared what she knew of Deborah’s story with Charlie Fraga, who leads the school’s board. Though Trinity Academy had already given out all of the financial aid money in their budget for the year, they agreed to admit Nyibol. A few months later, a benefactor heard the story and decided to make a donation that more than paid for her tuition.

Deborah speaks five languages: Dinka, Nuer, Swahili, Arabic and English. Her English is rudimentary, but her speech has an unmistakable rhythm and her words are lyrical. Like the psalmists of old, she tells of being poor, threatened and on the run, of facing death while surrounded by enemies on every side, of deliverance at the hands of the living God. “I shall not die, but live to proclaim what the Lord has done”—these ancient words are as real for her as they were for King David and his men.

In telling Deborah’s story, I have tried to include many of her own words. As with the Psalms, they reveal her soul and the soul of her people.
The country of Sudan, located in northeast Africa near Egypt and Ethiopia, has a history not unlike that of Palestine, the homeland of Deborah’s biblical namesake. After centuries of domination by one empire or another, including Egypt and Great Britain, Sudan achieved independence in 1956, then plunged into civil war. The war pitted the heavily Arab and Muslim northerners, who dominated the government, against the people of the agricultural and pastoral south, where much of the country’s rich oil resources lay. In the south, where Deborah grew up, the population includes Christians and followers of traditional African religions.

Deborah was born in 1974 to a Christian family in the village of Duk, during a temporary and tenuous peace.

Duk is small village. We take care of animals like cow, like goat, like lamb. We don’t have clothes, no shoes. We don’t know what shoes mean! When I’m a child, I don’t know nothing. I learn by soil. I learn by animal. I don’t learn by pen—write something down—never! I learn by hand.

I grew up going to church: my father and my mother, they brought me. We pray.

In 1983, the government imposed Islamic Sharia law on the entire country, including the non-Muslim south. The government ordered the transfer of southern Sudanese soldiers to the north, far from their families. The soldiers rebelled and war once again swept through Sudan.

In Deborah’s home area, government soldiers burned down villages and dropped bombs from the air. Deborah told me that her father was killed by gunfire from a helicopter during a raid. Later, when her village was attacked, she became separated from her mother and the rest of her family.

Muslim people shoot my church. Those people kill my dad immediately. They take our house. And then we run away. I separate from my mom. They shoot at us, and then we run away. Tomorrow, another place. Tomorrow, another place. Walk, walk, walk.

Not knowing whether her mother, brother and sister were still alive, Deborah headed east along with

Right, top: Deborah and two of her daughters: Nyibol, who just completed the eighth grade at Trinity Academy, and Abul, who will start in sixth grade this fall. Map: When Deborah fled Sudan, she went from Duk (now part of the new country of South Sudan) to the Gambela Region of Ethiopia. Later, she came to a refugee camp in Kakuma, Kenya, the closest thing to a home her children ever had before coming to the US.
many other refugees, hiding alone or with small groups in the bushes to avoid getting caught by the soldiers. She trekked through river wetlands and across deserts, eventually reaching Ethiopia. There, she took up residence with thousands of other Sudanese in a camp with minimal shelter, poor sanitation and barely enough food for survival. Cholera and other diseases were rampant.

While in Ethiopia, she met a soldier with the Sudan People’s Liberation Army, which had formed after the imposition of Sharia in 1983 and had established training camps in Ethiopia. She married him in 1990. Deborah was 16—a normal age for a woman to marry in Sudan.

A year later the Ethiopian government was taken over by a new party which was friendly to the government of Sudan. The new Ethiopian regime expelled the Sudanese refugees and soldiers from the camps. At the Gilo River, while a group of refugees waited to be ferried across, Ethiopian soldiers trained their fire on the crowd, many of them children.

Ethiopia people, they shooting us. Yes, they shooting us! We die. We go to river, they shoot at us in the river. They shoot us, they shoot us. In river there is too much water, but we don’t know swim. And then, people go in the water, and then drown.

John Bul Dau, an eyewitness, said in a memoir, Lost Boy, Lost Girl, that hundreds died while trying to cross the Gilo, from bullets, crocodiles or drowning. But Deborah, carrying her oldest daughter, had made it over on a ferry before the shooting started. She reentered Sudan, where the war raged on. For many months, she travelled in and out of southern Sudan, moving on when fighting or air raids came close, walking sometimes for months at a time in and through a broad border region that includes parts of Uganda, Ethiopia and Kenya. Sometimes she ate food from trash heaps.

In 1992 Deborah came to Kakuma, a United Nations camp in northern Kenya which hosted tens of thousands of Sudanese refugees. Though she continued to make journeys to visit her husband, who was still fighting in southern Sudan, she and her growing number of children were based in Kakuma for almost 18 years. For the Mayom family and most inhabitants of the camp in the ’90s and early 2000s, food, clothing, medical provisions and jobs were scarce. The refugees were not allowed to seek employment outside of the camp. Deborah used to bake little donuts that she would sell to other refugees, using the profits to buy clothes for her children. Nyibol remembers going to school, learning to read and write primarily in Swahili rather than in her native Dinka language.

While at Kakuma, one of Deborah’s children died suddenly from a mysterious illness. My son David, he got fever, and then after two day, no energy. My son die.

He’s a big boy, 13 years. After that, I pray. I pray God to make me come to America.

By 2005, much of the war in Sudan had ended, and a peace process had begun which ultimately led to the creation of the new independent country of South Sudan. But the prospect of returning to Sudan from Kenya did not look good for Deborah and her children. There was still scattered fighting in the south, primarily among tribes who had been stripped of much of the cattle and farmlands they had depended on for their livelihoods. Also, Deborah’s husband had taken several other wives by this time (a common practice in South Sudan), and she says he did not provide financial support for her and her children. She petitioned the US government for asylum.

While she waited, her brother James came to see her. He had left Sudan at age seven, one of thousands known as “lost boys,” too young to fight but old enough to run. Like Deborah, he had made his way to Ethiopia, but had already been given asylum by the US in the early 2000s. He had been trained as an X-ray technician and in 2005 had returned to Sudan to help rebuild the south. James tracked down his sister and went to see her at Kakuma, their first visit since the mid-1980s. He told her he’d been to Duk, where there was nothing left. “You can’t even find the foundation of the houses. The war burnt down everything.”

In 2010, after four years of waiting, the US granted Deborah’s petition for asylum.
She flew to a new world in Portland with her seven children. When they arrived, none of them knew the language. Catholic Charities gave them a few months of financial support and an orientation.

Sue Edwards, a veteran volunteer with World Relief Services who befriended Deborah in Portland, spoke about the challenges refugees like the Mayoms face: “They usually have a day or two to get ready, then hop onto a plane. The government of their new country connects them with an organization like Catholic Charities or World Relief or Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, which takes care of them for about a week. They set them up in an apartment for three months and then they’re kind of on their own. The kids often get bullied—other kids don’t understand why they are so dark and don’t speak the language.”

“I got here. It’s a good place. And in the morning, I’m looking at my window. I saw church. I say, yes. I’m going now. My kids say, you don’t know English! I say, not about language. We go to pray. And then, we go to church. And that pastor welcome us.”

Nyibol remembers being surprised at how similar Portland seemed to Nairobi, Kenya, where she’d been before. “I was confused—I thought it would be different. People in Africa thought that robots do everything for you in the US. We thought we weren’t going to need our clothes because every day we’d wake up and find something new that the robots made for us.”

Deborah had to learn how to lock a door, drive a car, use a shower and a refrigerator. Members of Glenfair Evangelical Church, who had first welcomed her and where she became a member, helped her with laundry and childcare in those first few months. Sue helped her learn how to drive and showed her how to cook a turkey, but Deborah is still leery of the oven.

Six years after coming to the US, Deborah is more settled, but her life is not easy. She works all afternoon and half the night in a low-paying job packaging food and cleaning at a bakery, regularly sending money back to relatives in Africa, including her mother, whom Deborah had learned was still alive. After only a few hours’ sleep, she gets her children ready and out the door for school. Before Deborah heads to work, she studies and goes to a local community college to continue learning English. She spends much of her day off cooking food for the family to last the week.

“I’m working now. It’s a good job. Because before, I pray, I say, God, give me a good place. Because I love communicate. I love people. When some people look us, maybe they say, I look like someone not take shower. We strangers, you know. When we come here, and someone do that, I’m not
sad, because they don’t know how to do. Right now I been for four years in that place; they know Deborah is a human being.

Nyibol has taken quickly to life at Trinity Academy. Perhaps unsurprisingly, she is an especially quick study in Latin, her sixth language. She played on the school’s first junior high basketball team. Pat and Jo Clark often drive her home from school, since she lives near their home and Deborah works a late shift at her bakery job. Deborah often visits the school early in the day, bringing huge bags of day-old bread and pastries from the bakery, delivering them to students and faculty. She has registered her 11-year-old daughter Abul to enter Trinity Academy’s sixth grade in the fall of 2016.

“Nyibol is really bright and hardworking,” says Jo. “Students were learning calligraphy in their art class and taking Latin at the beginning of the year. Nyibol loves both of those things. At one point she wrote a poem, and she went to her Latin teacher and asked if she would help her translate it into Latin. Then she wrote it out in calligraphy, and came to show me and her art teacher.”

Nyibol, she love Trinity. She love teachers, she love students. Trinity is very, very, very good to Nyibol. Me, too, I love Trinity. They pray first, and then they go to class. I love that. Dr. Clark is very, very good lady. She put her life to Bible. God first, and things second. Dr. Clark works for God. She don’t work for things. Dr. Clark comes to clean all the tables, after the students are gone. She have a good family.

Deborah lives with five of her children in a simple Portland townhouse. (Two of the children have grown and moved out.) A clay cross decorated with beads and purple paint hangs over their door. Her neat sitting room has a display of family photos from Africa and plaques bearing Christian poems and old-fashioned pictures of Jesus. Lower on the wall hangs the handwritten poem Nyibol wrote at Trinity. Each seat on the sofas is covered with doilies Deborah embroidered with flowers. A framed photo of Deborah’s husband dressed in army fatigues stands in a prominent spot on the credenza.

She talks to me about prayer:

To my kid, I say to pray, to ask God everything. You don’t have nothing? Ask God to give to you. God, there is big hand. God, there is big eye. God, there is big ear. Before, my father and my mom told me, don’t forget to pray. I didn’t forget to pray up to now. Because God hearing good. God looking good. God listening good.

At one point, she pulled down the purple cross from above the doorway and held it in her hand, showing how she would carry it high in front of her in Africa when she walked through the bush or when she prayed at church.

Because we don’t, we don’t forgot a cross. Because we die about a cross.
We die forever about that cross. That song . . . It say, we die about Jesus. They say, you die, Jesus, about us. You go to cross about us.

She showed me how she kneels in front of a statue of Joseph and Mary and Jesus in the manger every day in the morning to pray. She kissed them all several times with affection and reverence. Here was another poor family who had to run for their lives into a foreign land. Here was another mother who lost a child. Here was another child in whom the parents placed their hope for a greater future.

I’m poor. But I’m not thinking about it. I have food today, because God change life. Right now, I thank God. Because God working at night, working in the morning, every day. I know Jesus live with me. Lives with everybody. I go to backyard, he’s there. I walking in the street, he’s there. Everywhere.
This quick and easy bread has the buttery sweetness of scones. The recipe Charlene Olson (Servant Branch) developed is based on an Irish soda bread recipe which began to circulate among community households over 40 years ago. Variants of that recipe have been used for decades at Lord’s Days, seders and household dinners in Servant Branch and beyond.
Charlene got the recipe from Terry Fasbender when she was a newlywed in the 1980s. Dianne Cunningham has handwritten notes on her recipe dating it to 1975, when she, Terry and Nancy Caneff all lived in household together. Families in the east area of the branch, where Terry and Nancy introduced the recipe, know it simply as “Lord’s Day bread,” and made it for Lord’s Day meals every week. Other families have traditionally made it for seders.

“In household [as single women], we usually did yeast breads and fancy braided breads for Lord’s Day. This quick bread got more popular when we were all busy with kids: you could just mix it and throw it in the oven,” remembers Patricia Ficker.

The original recipe had only ¼ cup sugar (or honey) and ⅓ cup butter, ½ teaspoon baking powder, 1 teaspoon baking soda and ¾ teaspoon salt. Nancy uses all or part whole wheat flour.

Charlene says the recipe is easy to split and also freezes well. When Abe Olson and his wife Trish (both Indianapolis South Side) were married in 2014, Charlene made 20 loaves and froze them to serve at the wedding reception in South Bend. If she forgets to add the sugar, which her children say is an essential ingredient, she sprinkles some on top.

QUICK LORD’S DAY BREAD
SERVES 8

Ingredients
3 cups all-purpose flour
½ cup sugar
1 teaspoon baking powder
½ teaspoon baking soda
¼ teaspoon cream of tartar
¼ teaspoon salt
7-8 tablespoons unsalted butter
1 ½ cup buttermilk.

Directions
1. Preheat oven to 325 and grease and flour a baking sheet. Set aside.
2. In a medium bowl, whisk together flour, sugar, baking powder, baking soda, salt and cream of tartar.
3. Cut in the butter with a pastry blender or two knives until the dough is in pea-sized chunks (you may need to add a little more butter).
4. Add the milk and stir until the dough holds together well. Add a little more flour if the dough is too sticky.
5. Invert dough onto the baking sheet and flatten to about 1/2 to 1 inch thick.

MARY BILBY
By Celeste O’Korn

Behind Mary’s demure smile, quiet demeanor and small stature was a woman who was rock-solid in her faith and devoted to serving her Lord.

She grew up on a farm in a devout Christian family. When she came to the Muncie area she met her future husband, and they moved to a small farmstead. Mary settled into maintaining the farm, becoming a homemaker and raising six children.

Her love of God became evident to those around her. A devoted member of the Oakville First Brethren Church, she taught Sunday school, was a member of a missionary group, sang in the church choir (into her 90s!) and attended Bible Study Fellowship International.

In her advanced years, Mary would drive herself into Muncie (over 10 miles) for community meetings. She enjoyed cross-stitching and creating tree ornaments for her grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Jan Connor (Jan’s daughter married Mary’s grandson) often sat by Mary at family parties. “She was so very kind and sweet. She had a real sense of humor, and everyone in the family loved her laugh.”

Sandy Mixell remembers: “She refused to worry. One time I asked her if she worried about one of her children’s health. She looked me straight in the eye. ‘Worrying is worthless and I refuse to do it.’”

Mary was our little sister with the pleasant smile. She loved Scripture and was energetic in serving the Father and his people.
MIKE SEIDLE
By Henry Peresie
I was in men’s group with Mike, and we always celebrated birthdays with dinner and affirmations. Mike was good at picking out humorous gifts. On one of my over-60 birthdays he gave me a clock inside a miniature automobile tire. The sentiment was: “It’s time to retire.”

Mike contracted multiple sclerosis in 1981. As the disease progressed, he experienced limited use of his hands, but he was a humble person and not embarrassed to have someone cut up food and put it on his fork, or even feed him. We often held men’s group meetings at Mike’s house because it was difficult for him to travel in his wheelchair. He always greeted us with a smile and served us flavored water and trail mix snacks.

Mike was a member of St. Mary Catholic Church, the American Medical Association, the Indiana State Medical Association and other health-related organizations. He was past president of the Indiana Chapter of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society. His many awards included the National Multiple Sclerosis Courage Award and Indiana’s highest award, Sagamore of the Wabash.

Bonnie says, “Marrying Mike was the best decision of my life. Every day with him was a joy. Even the most difficult days helped me become a better version of who I am.” Mike’s love of Jesus was evident, and he was always thinking of others. He lived Philippians 2:3-5: “Let all parties think of others as superior to themselves, each of you looking to others’ interests rather than to his own. Your attitude must be that of Christ.”

facts
• Mike, a Muncie branch member for over 35 years, died January 27, 2016, from complications of pneumonia. He was born June 1, 1946, in Bedford, IN.
• He and Bonnie Davis were married August 8, 1970, and they had four children and 10 grandchildren.
• Mike received his medical degree from Indiana University School of Medicine in 1978. For 20 years he was director of Ball State University Health Center.
• Mike was a Navy veteran of the Vietnam War.

LIFENOTES

Births:
Elyse Jeanne, born August 12, 2013, in Haiti, welcomed by her new parents Matt and Carrie Urbanski (South Bend) on June 8.
Rosalie Catherine, born March 17 to David and Vivian Orthmann (Yakima).
Gianna Rose, born March 24 to Mark and Kristen Brackins (northern Virginia).
Teresa Marie, born April 15 to John and Karen Xenakis (South Bend).
Isaiah Holloway, born May 1 to Jerome and Heather Allen (northern Virginia).
Carol Margaret, born May 21 to Sean and Gretchen Connolly (South Bend).
Jonathan Samuel, born May 25 to Jeremy and Anne Osterhouse (South Bend).
Joel Michael, born May 28 to Michael and Naomi Coney (CIM Indianapolis).

Weddings:
Congratulations to Chris Milliren (Servant Branch) and Emily Hanson, who were married April 23 at Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton Church in Hastings, MN.
Best wishes to Andy Bowar and Emily Wind (both Servant Branch) who were married May 7 at Saint Mark’s Church in St. Paul.
Congratulations to Peter Kadel and Annie Zwerneman (both northern Virginia), who were married May 21 at St. Patrick’s Church in South Bend.

Anniversaries:
Congratulations to these brothers and sisters on the occasion of their wedding anniversaries:
Wayne and Marcie Rosencrantz (Servant Branch), 60 years on May 12.
Tom and Vida Voissem (Appleton), 60 years on April 14.
Larry and Jeri Bartek (Servant Branch), 50 years on June 4.
Bob and Mandie Sternitzke (South Bend), 50 years on May 28.

Tim and Mary Jo Wagner (Corvallis), 45 years on June 28.
Pat and Patricia Ficker (Servant Branch), 35 years on May 15.
Larry and Lynette Martin (Corvallis), 35 years on May 5.
Chris and Helen Skarman (Servant Branch), 30 years on April 16.
Marty and Fran Willard (Servant Branch), 30 years on May 24.
David and Ruth Hanlon (Oahu), 30 years on June 14.
Jeff and Kathy Gleason (Servant Branch), 25 years on May 11.

Graduations:
Congratulations and best wishes to these recent graduates:
Thom Behrens (South Bend), B.S. in computer science, University of Notre Dame.
Gabi Bendele (Indianapolis), B.A. in tourism, conventions and event management, Indiana University-Purdue University, Indianapolis.
Amy Cramer (Indianapolis), master’s degree in social work, Indiana University-Purdue University, Indianapolis.
Jared Gonzalez (Indianapolis Triangle), B.S. in music technology, Indiana University-Purdue University, Indianapolis.
Katie-Anne Havard (Indianapolis), M.S. in physician assistant studies, University of Saint Francis.
Michael Hill (northern Virginia), B.S. in psychology, George Mason University (December).
Emily Hunt (northern Virginia), B.A. in English, George Mason University.
Jaci Lamont (South Bend), master’s degree in social work, Indiana University South Bend.
Andrée Louvierre (South Bend), bachelor of science degree in nursing, Saint Mary’s College (Notre Dame, IN).
Deirdre O’Leary (South Bend), B.A. in religious studies and global studies, Saint Mary’s College (Notre Dame, IN).
Andrew Pingel (Indianapolis Triangle), B.S. in psychology, Purdue University.

Elena Radtke (Servant Branch), A.A. in liberal arts, Normandale Community College.

Shannon Triplett (Colorado Springs), B.S. in biology, University of Colorado, Colorado Springs.

**Work and Achievements:** The Acoustical Society of America has awarded Whit Au (Oahu) its 2016 Gold Medal for his contributions to understanding underwater biosonar. The award is presented to a member of the ASA whose contributions to the field of acoustics have been unusually distinguished.

Nikaela Busekrus (Oahu) was named valedictorian of the graduating class of Sacred Hearts Academy in Honolulu, HI.

Congratulations to Trinity School at Greenlawn faculty member Dr. Pat Mooney (South Bend), the recipient of the Father Don McNeill Award for Recognition of Human Dignity, presented by the Notre Dame Center for Social Concerns. The award recognizes Pat’s work with high school students in creating particle physics coding activities at Notre Dame’s QuarkNet Center and its summer particle physics institute.

In May, Paul and Veronica Putzier, Margaret Nauth Stutzman and Charlotte Swanson (all Servant Branch) graduated from the Archbishop Harry J. Flynn Catechetical Institute, a two-year formation program for adults of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis who wish to deepen their knowledge of their faith and further their spiritual formation.

Congratulations and thanks to Linda Porto, who has retired from teaching after 46 years, which included two years when she was living in the branch in Grenada and 33 years teaching at Trinity Schools. She was one of the original faculty members at Trinity School at Greenlawn, and also taught for three years at Meadow View and three years at River Ridge.

Tim Bagiackas, son of Pete and Margaret Bagiackas, David Preuss, son of Rich and Beth Preuss, and Alex Rowland, son of Chris and Rosie Rowland (parents all South Bend) achieved the rank of Eagle Scout at a court of honor on January 9.

Paul Putzier (Servant Branch) recently accepted a new position with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources as supervisor for the state’s Hydrogeologic Atlas Program. Among other things, the program completes in-depth studies of Minnesota’s groundwater resources.

**Deaths:** We’ve received word of the deaths of these members of the People of Praise. We pray for their families and friends in this time of loss. Tribute articles will follow in an upcoming issue.

Bill Shouffer (South Bend) died May 5, 2016.

Jim Kellen (Servant Branch) died May 9, 2016.

Ted Willard (Servant Branch) died June 3, 2016.

**Executive Office Announcements:**

Mary Beckley has been transferred from the South Bend branch to the Mission program office. She will be establishing a Sisterhood house in Allendale and working at Praise Academy.

John Zwerneman has been appointed as Mission coordinator, effective July 1, 2016. Mission coordinators have an indefinite term of office.

On May 11, four men were elected to the community’s board of governors: Sean Connolly (South Bend), Phil Monaco (Corvallis), Jim Mysliwiec (northern Virginia) and Mike Zusi (South Bend). Mike, Phil and Jim were reelected and will be serving their second consecutive terms. Sean will be serving his first term. Each will serve a six-year term that begins on August 1, 2016.

Northern Virginia: Joe Maguire has been appointed to a second three-year term of office as area coordinator, effective May 11, 2016.

Rick Ridenour has been appointed to a third three-year term of office as area coordinator, effective June 19, 2016.

South Bend: Brian and Mary Couch will be living on assignment in Boston, Massachusetts, until August 1, 2017.

Tom and Karen Saverine were released from the covenant of the People of Praise on June 2, 2016.
“All creatures of our God and King, lift up your voice and with us sing, Alleluia! Alleluia!”