

New Conference Office

Cross and Bible motif is artist's conception only

— Jay Gallimore Conference President

he present Michigan Conference Office was built in 1955. At that time Interstate 496 did not exist. It now runs in front of the conference office through the heart of Lansing. This changed the character of the office by pushing the busy St. Joseph Avenue right up next to the building. The loss of the parking in front made the front entrance virtually useless. Most now enter through the shipping door, which has become the de facto entrance. The roar of the trucks, buses, and traffic makes for an interesting background to our committees and conversations. In addition, after 60 years the building is in need of major renovation. The conference has also grown. We are now, out of necessity, operating out of four buildings on this campus. The windows, which are a major part of the exterior, are very energy inefficient. For many years we have had blocking screens covering the windows on the front side (southside) to hide the unsightly windows and to provide some shade from the sun.

At the 2013 constituency I shared with the delegates that we really needed to do something about the conference office building in the near future.

The following gives you an overall view of what it would take to bring this building up to where it should be if we stayed here:

- 1. Install new energy efficient windows
- 2. Install a new parking lot to city landscape requirements

- 3. Repair, clean, and refinish the exterior
- 4. Build a new sign
- 5. Install a new roof
- 6. Replace the antiquated heating and air conditioning system: It takes about two to three days to switch the building back and forth between heat and air conditioning. Depending on the weather you can have several weeks in the spring and fall where you freeze or swelter.
- 7. Upgrade the interior
- 8. Build a new three-story addition with a new entrance, including handicap accessible restrooms and a new elevator: There are no public restrooms on the main floor. You must either go up or down the stairs to get to the restrooms. This addition would be expensive square footage and could potentially trigger code upgrades for other parts of the building.

Our architect did some calculations and suggested the dollar amount might be between \$3-4 million depending on the cost of the addition, repairs, and upgrades.

Even if we did all of that, we would not solve our problems. We are still operating out of four buildings. We are still located in an area where the ladies don't feel safe in the parking lot, particularly in the dark evenings of winter. Two

(Continued on page 4)



Guest Editorial Your Minister – A Gift from Your Savior

- Royce Snyman Ministerial Director

♥ he Call of God to Ministry At a recent retreat, some Michigan Conference ministers were asked to share their personal testimony. Their stories were amazing and inspiring.

One pastor shared how despite his Christian upbringing, he first worked as a professional ballroom dancer. Eventually, God called him to choose between the dance floor and walking with Jesus. Soon after he made the decision to follow the Lord, he recognized the Lord's call to pastoral ministry.

Another pastor was called from nursing to ministry. Looking for a financially "successful" career he became a

nurse, then realized that wasn't God's plan. He went to serve as a nurse and Bible worker in the mission field, but then was called to full-time gospel ministry. Interestingly, as

soon as he accepted the call to Michigan he started receiving tempting and financially lucrative offers to go back to nursing. He turned them down.

The call to pastoral ministry can be as dramatic as it was with the apostle Paul, or as simple, yet profound, as Samuel's call at an early age. Either way the call from God is so distinct, the recipients know they cannot do anything else but ministry and still be happy, obedient, and faithful to God.

When God calls a person to ministry, it is a gift to the person who was called and to the people the minister serves. Although all of us are called to serve Jesus and share Him with others, a minister is privileged to do this work fulltime and dedicates his life to this task. A pastor's greatest joy is to serve Jesus and lead people to the foot of the cross, seeing lives transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Gift and Challenge of Ministry

When you receive a gift, how you treat that gift is a reflection

of your relationship with the giver, isn't it? As a child, I once received a Christmas gift of \$100 (probably the equivalent of \$1,000 today). It was from a millionaire friend of my parents. Though I was very happy with the \$100, it didn't have any emotional meaning to me because I didn't even know the giver. On the other hand, when, as a child, my daughter gave me a drawing that was her best effort (one that was never going to hang in an art museum) it meant a lot more to me than the millionaire's \$100 because of the relationship I had with her.

How many of you have prayed that the Lord would send your church just the right pastor? Jesus answers those prayers and gives the minister to your congregations. Ministers come with

> all their humanity, their weaknesses and their strengths, but they come as a gift from the Lord Jesus. They are given to bless us and to lead us into a stronger spiritual experience and to help us finish God's work. So how I treat my pastor is a reflection of my relationship with Jesus, the Giver. James says, "Every

good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning." (James 1:17 NKJV) Ellen White says, "The church should gratefully accept these servants of Christ, even as they would accept the Master Himself. They should seek to derive all the benefit possible from the instruction which each minister may give them from the word of God. The truths that the servants of God bring are to be accepted and appreciated in the meekness of humility." (Acts of the Apostles, p. 278)

I love to hear Mark Finley preach and probably you do too. But if your pastor does not have the same gift for preaching that Elder Finley has should you feel or speak badly of your pastor? Again Ellen White says, "The Lord sends help to His people, not always as they may choose, but as they need; for men are shortsighted and cannot discern what is for their highest good. It is seldom that one minister has all the qualifications necessary to perfect a church in all the requirements of Christianity; therefore God often sends to them other ministers, each possessing some qualifications in which the others were deficient." (Acts of the Apostles, p. 277)

"Ministers come with all their

humanity, their weaknesses and

their strengths, but they come as a

gift from the Lord Jesus."

With a gift can come challenges. My parents gave me a Bach Stradivarius trumpet. I was really excited. But then came the work of practicing so I could play it. The Bible reminds us that ministry has challenges, and there is a cost. In Jeremiah 38 the princes called for the prophet to be put to death because they did not like his God-given message. He would have died had it not been for the intervention of a eunuch named Ebed-Melech. Later, Jeremiah says, "I have become the ridicule of all my people—their taunting songs all the day. He has filled me with bitterness, He has made me drink wormwood."

Lest we assume his ministry was all gloom, he later rejoices saying, "Through the Lord's mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness." (Jeremiah 3:14, 22, 23 NKJV) Ministers may not be jailed or killed in our country at this time, but the following statistics reveal the challenge of ministry today (*New York Times*, August 1, 2010. This information is from all denominations and is NOT about Michigan Conference of Seventh-day Adventist pastors. It is only given to illustrate the stresses that ministers face.):

- 33% of pastors have felt burned-out within the first five years of ministry.
- 33% say that being in ministry is an outright hazard to their family.
- 40% of pastors and 47% of spouses are suffering from burnout, frantic schedules, and/or unrealistic expectations.
- 45% of pastors say that they've experienced depression or burnout to the extent they needed to take a leave of absence from ministry.
- 75% report severe stress causing anguish, worry, bewilderment, anger, depression, fear, and/or alienation.
- 80% of pastors say they have insufficient time with their spouse.
- 90% work more than 50 hours a week (and I would say that is closer to 60-80 hours per week).
- In the United States, considering all denominations, 1,500 pastors leave their ministries each month due to burnout, conflict, or moral failure.

Appreciating the Gift

Recognize your pastors for the gifts they bring to your congregation. Express gratitude to God for providing this gift. Many pastors live far from their extended families, and you become their family in many ways. You eat together, plan together, and win souls together. You become a team and a spiritual family to them, their spouse, and their children. Here are a few more ways to bless your pastor:

- 1. Engage in daily prayer and Bible study, and include your pastor in your prayers.
- 2. Give cheerfully and liberally of time and money to support your church and its ministries.
- 3. Be a supporter of the pastor and his family. Refuse to listen to gossip about the pastor or the pastor's family

- (or anyone else for that matter). With kind words and genuine appreciation (not flattery) uplift your pastor. Google "How can I encourage my pastor." I found some really great ideas there. (Not all are appropriate in our Seventh-day Adventist context.)
- 4. If your pastor makes a mistake or if you have a disagreement, go to them personally and treat them respectfully. Recognize the difference between sin that needs to be corrected and styles of operation that need to be accepted with grace.
- 5. Do your part to labor faithfully for souls and recognize it is the pastor's job to enlist you in outreach ministry. "The greatest help that can be given our people is to teach them to work for God, and to depend on Him, not on the ministers. Let them learn to work as Christ worked. Let them join His army of workers and do faithful service for Him." (*Testimonies*, Vol. 7, p. 19.)
- 6. Volunteer to help the pastor with tasks that you can do, so they can do the work you can't.
- 7. Some members think that pastors work just one day a week. Research what typical pastors do with their time, and it will help you be more supportive of the load they carry.

God bless you as you take care of the gift your church has been sent.

Prayer Focus

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

April 4-8

Iron Mountain, Iron River, Menominee Pastor Jim Nephew

April 11-15

Escanaba, Munising, Riverside Pastor Jacob Gibbs Escanaba - Melissa Boryca, Principal/Teacher Community Services - Millie Hahn, Paula Solomon

April 18-23

Kalkaska, Traverse City Pastor Jeff Akenberger Traverse City - JanElla Schnepp, Principal/Teacher Community Services - Traverse City, Brenda Brown

April 25-29

Battle Creek Tabernacle Pastors Robert Benardo and Bayani Pastrana Battle Creek Academy - James Davis, Jr. - Principal + 12 teachers/staff Community Services - Shirley Finnerman

(Continued from front page)

of our employees were held up in the parking lot. The traffic noise would be unchanged, although new windows could help some. The other buildings would also need attention. At least one of them should be torn down altogether and have its current operations built into the new addition.

You are being served by some very fine people on the Michigan Conference Executive Committee (MCEC). Several of the lay members on the committee (particularly the ladies) have felt a strong need to find solutions for the conference office. With the permission of the MCEC and the officers, they started looking for property. I was not too optimistic because we had done some earnest looking before. But they found a beautiful 3.75-acre parcel with a very nice office building (about 20,000 square feet) on West Michigan Ave. Taking one of the officers with them they went to look. They came back quite positive. So I, along with some others, went and looked.

While the building was very nice and we could partially shoehorn ourselves into it temporarily, it would not work as a permanent solution. However, if we built an addition, the facility would be outstanding for our needs. You can take a look at the property using Google Earth. It is located at: 5801, W. Michigan Ave., Lansing, Michigan.

So we asked David Shull, an Adventist architect with Progressive AE out of Grand Rapids to give us his evaluation. He was pleased with what he saw and thought the new property had a lot of possibilities. So we started the process.

Michigan Conference has two constituencies. The large one of about 500 delegates meets for its session every five years and elects officers, departmental directors, the executive committee, and bylaws committee. The otheris called the Michigan Conference Association Constituency. It is the Association Constituency that legally holds all of the properties of the conference. The Association Constituency

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PRESCRETARY

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must legally meet at least once a year and is comprised of three groups: the Lay Advisory Coordinating Committee comprised of 15 laypeople elected by the Annual Lay Advisory; the Michigan Conference Executive Committee elected by the large Constituency; and the District Superintendants.



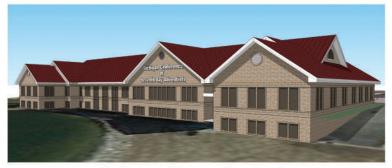
Conference Office view from the northwest

These three groups make up the Association Constituency. It is fairly evenly divided between laypeople and pastors. The bylaws of the Association allow only the Association Constituency, not the trustees or MCEC to make decisions regarding the properties of the office, academy, or camps. The trustees can make decisions about small parcels, such as parsonages, etc.

Here is the overview and the process that was followed in the decision to move forward with the property:

- In September of 2013 I informed the large Constituency that the issues we faced with the current office building would need to be addressed.
- As mentioned earlier we had some ladies on MCEC who felt, for very good reasons, that we should do something about this sooner rather than later. So with the MCEC's permission they began to look around.
- They found a 3.75-acre property with an excellent building. They, along with one of the conference officers went to look. They all came back feeling positive.
 - We took the MCEC to look, and they were very optimistic about the possibilities.
 - We had the architect examine the building and advise us. His report was very encouraging.
 - The MCEC then decided to call the Association Constituency into session.
 - We also talked to Delta Township (West Lansing) officials. They were very familiar with the property including its builder. They were exceptionally positive about the property and builder. They were also helpful with the zoning codes by allowing us to put the ABC in the new building.
 - The Association Constituency was very supportive and voted almost

- unanimously (one "no" vote) to purchase the property, develop the plan for renovations and the new addition, and authorized the financing.
- After securing the property, the MCEC advised that we proceed deliberately and not in haste to develop the plans thoughtfully. We have followed



Conference Office view from Northeast

this sound advice. The last half of 2015 was spent working with the architect and our staff on the plans. The architect visited with each department individually, in addition to working with the officers.

- In October 2015 we shared the progress with the Annual Lay Advisory made up of representatives from the churches. Again we received strong encouragement that we were on the right track with this project.
- In January of this year I called the Association Constituency back into session. We shared the matured plans, the financing, and two building plan options. The first option was smaller in scale and about seven hundred and fifty thousand dollars less expensive. Once again they gave us very enthusiastic support. They voted, almost unanimously (one "no" vote) to affirm the recommendation of the MCEC for the larger option, believing that the smaller one would not meet the needs of the conference.

Here is the layout of the cost, financing, and plans for moving forward:

- 1. Cost of new property: \$980,000
- 2. Cost of refit for our needs: \$500,000
- 3. Cost of addition: \$2 million
- 4. Contingency: \$500,000
- Total Cost of Project: \$4 million (approximate)
- 6. Minus sale of present property amounts to: \$1.3-1.9 million (based on appraisals from four realtor companies)
- 7. This leaves us with about \$2.5 million to finance with the revolving fund.
- 8. Our yearly payment to the Lake Union Revolving Fund on a 20-year mortgage

- amortization would be: \$172,000
- Our average yearly utility and maintenance costs at our present property: \$168,000. Maintenance costs at the present location would continue to increase.
- 10. Projected yearly utility and maintenance costs at the new property: less than \$50,000
- 11. You can do the math. A large portion of the payment would be offset through sub-stantial savings on utilities and maintenance. Given the facts it really made sense to make the move forward.
- 12. The target is to be in by Christmas this year.
- 13. We have advertised our present property. We have not listed with a realtor although we have talked to four. Because we are coming out of a recession, there was some thought that the appraisals might be on the low side. With the MCEC support we decided to test the market ourselves before listing it.

While none of us like debt, the new property will be more valuable in contrast to the one we have now. In addition, there is enough land for future building needs. Interest rates are very low, and it doesn't make sense to reduce our liquidity/ reserves to pay for the building. We are very pleased and excited as to what this will mean to the operations of the Michigan Conference. Having all of our enterprises under one roof will bring real efficiency to the work. This building will be a sacred place because caring for the ministers, teachers, churches, and schools is a sacred and blessed work. And to have this beautiful tranquil setting with a lovely pond in the backyard is something we could have hardly imagined possible. We know and believe the Lord is coming soon and that we are living in the "time of the end" for planet earth. We are working to that end! This world is not our home. Yet, it was the Lord Jesus who told us "to occupy till I come." When this building is completed, I think you will be pleased that it is not in any way ostentatious, but rather nicely representative of the Lord's work. We hope, most of all, that it will be an advantage to all the churches and schools on whose behalf, the work there, will be carried out.



Super Bowl Mission Trip

Literature Ministries Team
 Michigan Conference

or eight days 30 missionaries from various parts of the United States joined a mission trip to distribute one million *GLOW* tracts at the Super Bowl held in Santa Clara, California. Among other tracts shared at this event, was a special Super Bowl edition entitled "Sunday Is For Football, Saturday Is For ____."

On the last day of the mission trip, "Super Bowl Sunday," the first vans left at around 10:30 am for Levi's Stadium. Earlier that morning, the Lord had answered the prayer of the director of the mission trip by providing a church member who had knowledge of the area to suggest where the young people should hand out the tracts. Every entrance was covered by *GLOW* missionaries, ready to share the truth of the real weekly celebration—the Sabbath! There were SWAT teams, policemen, traffic patrol, and all sorts of advertisers on the streets. The youth plugged themselves into the various

stadium entrances distributing thousands of tracts by the hour! They distributed about 165,000 *GLOW* tracts by the end of that final day for a grand total exceeding one million tracts!

Among the masses flocking the stadium entrances, stood the missionaries with canvassing bags full of *GLOW* tracts. Some found themselves aiding the stadium workers by instructing individuals where to have their tickets checked, and the stadium workers found themselves encouraging the multitudes to accept our tracts!

The week was filled with testimonies! Erica Modesto, one of the missionaries, was close to being finished with the tracts in her bag (or so she thought) as they were reaching the end of the night. It was then she noticed about 75 to 100 *GLOW* tracts remaining in her bag. They were Chinese tracts. She was startled to find that many tracts leftover and wondered where she could go to distribute them. Realizing that everywhere around her had been *GLOWed*, she didn't know where to go.

Moments later she noticed a tour bus full of Chinese people,

but didn't think anything of it. She began to leave, and then she heard God telling her to go back and *GLOW* the bus. After wrestling with the idea, she ran back as the bus was getting ready to leave. From about 20 feet away she waved the bus down, signaling to ask if she could get on. The bus stopped, she entered the bus, and shared that she had tracts for them. One of the men accepted her offer to distribute them, and she recognized that the whole experience was totally God. "I'm bold, but not that bold." This story, among others, illustrates a work

that God wants to partner with us in—the kind of work that took place at Super Bowl 50—for the salvation of souls.

The challenge is for each of us: "To every one who becomes a partaker of His grace, the Lord appoints a work for others. Individually we are to stand in our lot and place, saying, 'Here I am; send me.' Upon the minister of the word, the missionary nurse, the Christian physician, the individual Christian, whether he be merchant or farmer, professional man, or mechanic—the responsibility rests upon all. It is our work to reveal to men the gospel of their salvation. Every enterprise in which we engage should be a means to this end." —*The Ministry of Healing*, 148



LAKE UNION DISASTER RESPONSE TRAINING WEEKEND

Get certified in three different areas in one weekend!

Dates: April 15-17, 2016

Place: Chan Shun Hall, Andrews University, Berrien

Springs, Michigan

Classes offered: Donation Operations*, Forklift Certification, Chainsaw Team Training, Mobile Kitchen Certification, Communications Trailer with HAM radio, Crisis Care Part 1 Make-up Classes, Crisis Care Part 2

Meals: Provided on Sabbath

For more information and/or registration, visit www.misda.org. *There is a \$25 fee for this class only. All others are free.

CAMP MEETING JANITORS

Janitors are needed to clean the restrooms during camp meeting, June 10-18. The deadline for applications is **April 20, 2016**.

To be eligible, applicants must: 1) be 14 years or older; 2) have confirmed lodging; 3) complete an Employment Application and mail it to the Camp Meeting Employment/Volunteer Committee at the Conference address. Applications are available at www. misda.org. **PLEASE NOTE:** It is the applicant's responsibility to submit a fully completed application with three references. An incomplete application may affect an applicant's hire. All applications will be reviewed by the committee and notification will be sent regarding their decision. Additional required employment documents will be sent to those who are hired. For detailed requirements and a job descripion, please visit www. misda.org. When positions are filled, there will be a waiting list.

Transitions in Mission



Andy Im is the new Communications Director. He holds a degree in Political Science and a Master's degree in Religion. He has served as an associate pastor and co-chaired the religion department at Weimar Institute before joining CAMPUS here in Michigan. He is a suberb photographer with excellent writing and editing skills.





Richard Espinal will be the new Assistant Director of Food Services at Camp Au Sable. Shenee will work with Housekeeping. Previously they served at Wildwood Lifestyle Center and Hospital for 10 years. Richard is originally from New York, and Shenee was born in the Philippines. They have three children.

The Sticky Invitation

— Wes Peppers Pastor, Lansing Church

very moment of every day, God is working. He's working all around us to draw people's hearts to Himself and reveal present truth. Sometimes, we don't always sense His movement, but it's visible when our spiritual eyes are opened.

In Lansing, we've been praying for God to open our eyes, and He's been answering. We've also prayed He would give us more boldness when we encounter those who need the gospel. We want to be like the church of Acts that actually "acts." He doesn't want to work around us, but in and through us! We've been praying for surrendered hearts, and amazing things are happening as we approach *Unlock Revelation*.

Last year the Lansing church hosted *Heroes of Faith* with *Amazing Facts*. John (not his real name) received an invitation in the mail and considered attending. However, with an upcoming trip to Florida, he wasn't sure he could make it. As he was cleaning his home prior to his departure, he decided to throw away the handbill. But, when he tried to throw it away, it wouldn't come out of his hand! He tried several times, but the handbill continued to stick. He took it as a sign that he should strive to make it to the meeting when he returned.

While on his flight back to Lansing, he and his wife sat beside a young man and struck up a conversation. They soon discovered that Wayne worked for a TV ministry that was doing a short series in Lansing. John asked, "It wouldn't happen to be *Amazing Facts* and *Heroes of Faith*, would it?" Wayne responded, "That's exactly it. It will be a dynamic series, and you should come!" John was convinced this was from the Lord, so he decided to

attend. He came for most of the nights, and he's been attending our *Landmarks of Prophecy* class on Tuesday's. He's been amazed at the truth he's learning.

Once during a visit, we talked about the history of the Christian church. We journeyed from the early church to our day. He already knew much of what Adventists understand simply through his own research. When we finished, I told him about the book *The Great Controversy*. I asked him if he would like one, and he gave an enthusiastic, "Yes!" It was so abrupt and sudden that I asked him why he was so eager.

He said he'd recently been to a gas station. While pumping gas, a "little paper" fell out (*GLOW* tract). The tract title was, *The Right Book at the Right Time*, and he knew then he wanted the book. I let him know that we had a free one upstairs with his name on it. "You mean to tell me *The Great Controversy* is published by your church? I know I am in the right place!" The same week at prayer meeting, I shared the story. One church member said she had placed that *GLOW* tract at that exact gas station! He is currently registered for *Unlock Revelation* and looking forward to attending the meetings.

Jesus said in John 5:19 that He only does what the Father does. The Father is working for the salvation of the lost, so naturally, Jesus is doing the same. As a disciple of Jesus, are you also following His example in seeking the lost? Or, is your life consumed with temporary things that have no eternal significance? Your divine appointment is waiting so pray, share, and watch God do something powerful through your life. Be a part of the Adventist movement that tells the world about Jesus!

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April

- 1-3 Women's Ministries Retreat I
 Camp Au Sable
- 8-10 Women's Ministries Retreat II
 Camp Au Sable
- 15-17 Women's Ministries Retreat III Camp Au Sable
- 15-17 LUC ASI Spring Fellowship
- 16 Pathfinder Bible Expreience -Division Level, Phoeniz, AZ
- 19 MI Conference Executive Committee Conf. Room
- 20 Camp Meeting Directors
- 21 K-12 Board of Education
- 25-May 1 GLAA Home Leave

May

- 2-6 Camp Work Week -Camp Au Sable
- 6-7 VBS Workshop -Camp Au Sable
- 8 Mother's Day
- 8-15 Health Camp Camp Au Sable
- 13-15 Pathfinder Fair -
 - Au Sable Northwoods
- 15 LUC Constituency Meeting
- 18 Camp Meeting Directors GLAA
- 19 K-12 Board of Education
- 24 MI Conference Executive Committee - Conf. Room
- 27-29 Memorial Day Weekend
- 27-29 Hispanic Camp Meeting -Camp Au Sable
- 27-29 GLAA Graduation Weekend

30-June 3 Camp Certification -Camp Au Sable

Nature Nugget: White Trilliums Are Not White!

— Gordon Atkins Camp Au Sable Nature Director

he White Trillium is symbolic of late spring in many of the northern forests of Michigan.

In early spring, before the leaves of hardwood trees create too much shade, Trillium plants grow up from a "corm" root structure similar to tulips. Neighbors in a blanket of white blossoms are often genetically identical clones of each other.

But, the blossoms are not white to all animals in the forest. Insects and birds have detectors in their eyes that respond to ultraviolet light, which we are insensitive to. We see plain white. But they see white with dark (probably purplish) stripes, which point down towards the reward of nectar in the center of the flower!



This reminds us of God. We see the world around us and circumstances of life through human eyes. However, like the bees in the Trillium patch, God views the world and our lives through a different perspective.

He can even see our thoughts. Since He sees and understands a bigger picture, we should remember to put our trust in Him and His vision for us!

Attention Seniors

r. Gordon Atkins is planning
a Senior Tour (55+) to Rock
Mountain National Park in
Colorado. The date for the event is August
17-23 and includes a pre-tour at Pawnee
National Grasslands if interested. The goal
of the trip is to explore God's nature in
Colorado. There is a \$100 non-refundable

deposit. If there are insufficient registrations the trip may be cancelled and your deposit will be returned. If you would like more information please call Gordon Atkins at 269-277-2017 or email him at gatkins@misda.org.

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