

Letter from Pastor Wolcott and Nancy

Dear Dick, and dear Midland Church family,

Congratulations on 100 years of Adventist witness in Midland! Nancy and I wish we could be with you but schedules don't permit it. We were blessed to spend about four years with you (1999-2003), right on the heels of our ten years in ministry on Native American Indian reservations. And now we are back on the Navajo Reservation, in Chinle, Arizona. We've been delighted that Norman Moll has been able to visit us here a couple of times since we arrived about 18 months ago.

Our memories of Midland are many and precious. We came to you somewhat emotionally battered after those very stressful years of mission ministry. You embraced us and affirmed our value as a pastoral couple at a time when we were frankly uncertain whether we could "cut it" back in White America. We enjoyed the intellectual stimulation of interacting with well-educated, dedicated, knowledgeable folks – you were a sharp contrast to the previous years of focused ministry among some of the most needy communities in America (as deeply rewarding as it had been). And organ music! What a treat after ten years where we rarely had even an accomplished pianist.

We remember Midland for its very intentional commitment to openness, inclusiveness and love for all classes of people, even though it was instinctively "high church" in worship style and faithfully conservative in theology. I remember Dorothy Moll welcoming a young woman into the ladies' choir even though she was often off key; Dorothy never once even hinted that that dear young pre-Adventist was anything but welcome in the group. We were also amazed at the ministry of the Community Services Center and Reid Tait's dedication to excellence in managing it. And we remember launching out in faith to do innovative evangelism with Steve & Connie Vail, despite considerable advance trepidation about it in our board meetings. We also especially remember the large group of young people just coming to baptismal age not long after we arrived, and the celebration we shared on that baptismal Sabbath. It has been a joy to follow the maturing journeys of several of those now-grown-up kids.

The Midland church was amazingly creative. You embraced and enabled some of our dreamings about ways to make my preaching more memorable. We remember Sharon Moll working with Nancy to create beautiful worship banners (which we still have) illustrating the "pillar stories" of the Great Controversy. And I vividly remember Wilbur Rickel climbing to dangerous heights to hang them in the sanctuary. Later, Wilbur created a "skeleton" that we used for a whole year to support visual props for my monthly sermon series about "Revelation in Overalls." And then Mary Bukowiec painstakingly transcribed my sermons from notes into manuscripts to post on the church website. Mary (with her brother over at the Mt. Pleasant Church) were a special blessing because they were Native American – a link to our previous ministry. I also remember that Midland had one of the most impressive church libraries I had ever seen, with a librarian who forced me to think deeply about many important things. Thank you, Carol Lanfear!

In summary, we are eternally grateful for the huge blessing that both Midland and Mt. Pleasant were to us at a critical transition time in our lives. As I write this, I am even tearing up a bit. You loved us! And we will love you forever. With our very best wishes for a Spirit-filled future and an early reunion in heaven where even Midland's music will pale by comparison, we are

Your dear friends,
Dale and Nancy Wolcott