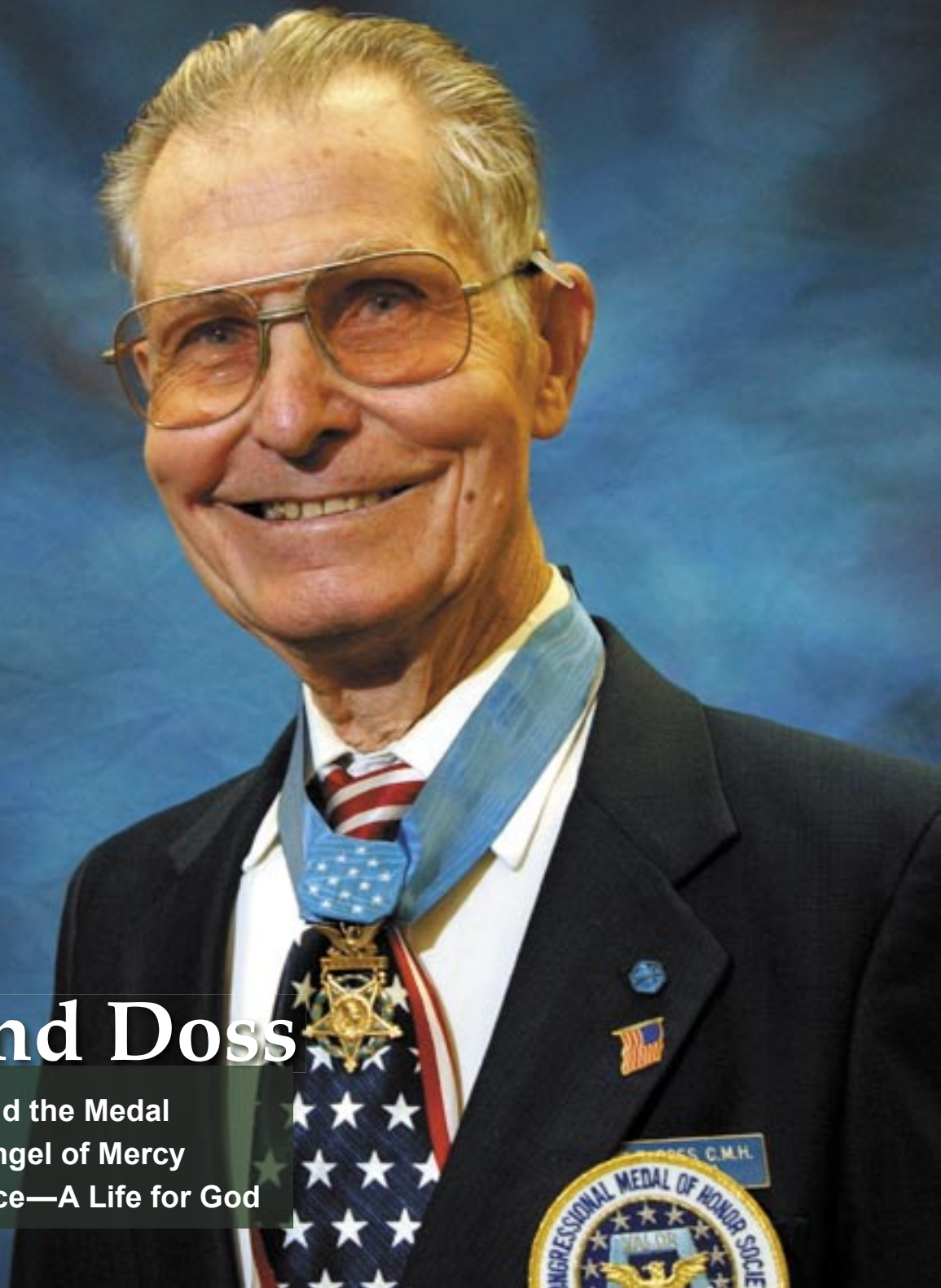




T SOUTHERN

TIDINGS

Spreading Tidings of the Southern Union Adventist Family



Desmond Doss

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Statement on the Ten Commandments Commission

Christian leaders have designated Sunday, May 7, as Ten Commandments Day, in an effort to bring a revival of interest in the Ten Commandments. Many are preparing to show their support through public demonstrations, church events, literature distribution, and even the wearing of a Ten Commandments pin. Meanwhile, Seventh-day Adventists see this as an opportunity to demonstrate that the Ten Commandments are a reflection of God's perfect, loving character, and that all of the Commandments are still relevant and applicable today. The North American Division Religious Liberty Association (NARLA) is urging churches and schools to observe May 6, as "Written In the Heart Sabbath." All churches and schools are urged to plan special programs to honor God's law.



Don Schneider
*President of the North
American Division of
Seventh-day Adventists*

Guest Editorial

When I first heard about the coming emphasis on the Ten Commandments, I was filled with two emotions. Initially, I was happy to see that people were recognizing the importance of God's law in enhancing individuals' lives and in providing for the stability of our society. However, I was also a little embarrassed that it was necessary for others to do what we as a Church should have accomplished. From its inception, the Seventh-day Adventist Church placed great significance on the importance of keeping all of the laws of God. So much so, in fact, that the first part of our name speaks of the importance of keeping all of the Ten Commandments, including the fourth—the seventh-day Sabbath—which is often ignored. I feared the Lord was finding it necessary to use others because we had not done our work adequately.

But, I am also concerned that when the law is emphasized, the grace of God must be clearly seen as well. I believe that the Bible teaches that it is only through a Holy Spirit-filled life that we can have the law of God placed within our hearts. By myself I cannot keep the Commandments any more than, as the Bible says, a "leopard can change its spots." But, with Christ's Spirit, I can be for God what I could not be otherwise.

Thus, I hope that everyone who recognizes the importance of the Ten Commandments will also recognize that obedience to them requires a loving, Spirit-filled experience. Obedience cannot be compelled. It is a loving response to a God that "so loved *us* that He gave His only begotten-Son."

While I am grateful for the coming emphasis on the Ten Commandments, I certainly hope that no one feels that an appropriate course of action would be to require people to keep all of God's laws against their will. God gave us the power of choice. We must never take away any individual's right to this God-given principle.

It is my prayer that the balance between God's law and religious liberty will be maintained as Seventh-day Adventists join others in proclaiming the righteous requirements of God, as reflected in His Ten Commandments.

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Cover: Under constant enemy fire, April, 1945, Pfc. Desmond T. Doss dragged more than 75 wounded to the edge of a cliff and lowered the injured one-by-one, to safety. Doss died March 23, 2006, in Piedmont, Alabama.

The Man Behind the Medal

BY REBECCA BAERG

Memories of Desmond T. Doss rose in the minds of many people as the news of his death spread during the last week of March, 2006. Doss was the only conscientious objector to receive the Congressional Medal of Honor during World War II, and the only Seventh-day Adventist to ever receive the highest military honor offered by the United States.

“As a chaplain in the military, I’ve always looked up to Desmond Doss as a hero,” said Chaplain George Torres, a Seventh-day Adventist who is based at Fort Bragg in North Carolina. “In



everything he did he truly modeled what it means to be an ‘army of one,’ and yet he understood what it meant to truly give sacrificially and give it all for his country.”

Walter Joseph Marm, a Medal of Honor recipient from the Vietnam War, remembered, “He was a tremendous role model and mentor for all the young Medal of Honor recipients from the Vietnam War,” Marm said. “He was a legend in his own time and just a very devout Christian and a great mentor for the young folks of America.”

Renee Honeycutt of McDonald, Tennessee, noted that Doss' courageous actions during World War II were made possible "by the grace of God, the protection of God. He was very impressive, but very humble. He was a warrior for God."

Hero. Role model. Warrior for God. All of these qualities made Desmond T. Doss, Sr., stand out. What impacted people the most wasn't the Medal of Honor. It was his Christ-like character. He was courageous for Christ, yet he remained humble. His life was centered on love—for God and his country.

After coping with failing health for a number of months, Desmond T. Doss passed away on March 23, 2006, in Piedmont, Alabama, where he and his wife, Frances, had moved to be closer to family. Doss had spent most of his post-war years in the small town of Rising Fawn, Georgia, until moving to Piedmont approximately two years ago.

In his 87 years of life, Desmond Doss influenced thousands of people, spanning multiple generations. A funeral service for Desmond Doss was held at the Collegedale Seventh-

day Adventist Church on April 1, 2006, which approximately 1,600 people attended. Another 1,200 people viewed the funeral service through a live web cast on the Georgia-Cumberland Conference website at www.gccsda.com. More than 500 people attended the burial service on April 3, 2006, when Doss was laid to rest at the Chattanooga National Cemetery with full military honors.

In his life, Desmond Doss brought glory to God. As Patti Parks, director of the Medal of Honor Museum and Retired Navy Commander, said at Doss' burial service on April 3, "He remained true to his convictions, even when it wasn't the most popular thing to do. He always kept God close, asking for guidance when times were hard, and offering thanks when times were good."

Even in his death, Doss brought glory to God. According to Google News, more than 200 news stories about Doss' death were circulated nationwide, with stories being shared

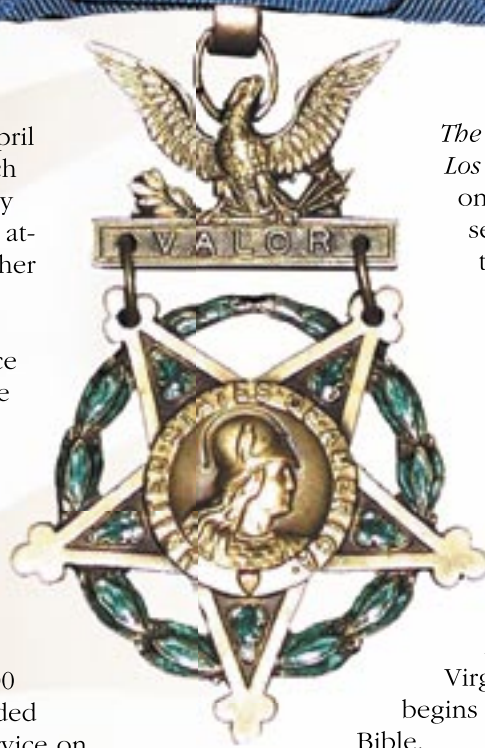
in outlets like *The Washington Post*, *The Los Angeles Times*, and on CNN. Each of these secular news stories told not only that Doss received the Congressional Medal of Honor, but also how he held to his convictions and leaned on his faith in God during his service in the military.

Born February 7, 1919, into a poor family in Lynchburg, Virginia, Doss' story begins with his belief in the Bible.

A long-time family friend, Les Speer, described Doss' childhood, saying, "His mother, Bertha Doss, joined the Seventh-day Adventist Church and prayerfully tried to raise her two boys and one girl in a proper, Bible-believing manner." However, Speer also shared that Doss' father, W. Thomas Doss, was an alcoholic for many years.

"One night when Desmond's father was drunk, he nearly killed his brother in an argument," shared Speer. "Bertha Doss stepped between the arguing brothers and demanded that Thomas give his pistol to her before the police arrived. He handed the gun to her, and she sent Desmond to hide it. Soon, the police arrived to carry Thomas in the police wagon to sober up in jail."

This experience reinforced Desmond's belief in the sixth





Doss ultimately received the Congressional Medal of Honor from President Truman on October 12, 1945.

According to his Medal of Honor citation, time after time, Doss' fellow soldiers witnessed how unafraid he was for his own safety. He was always willing to help a wounded man, no matter how great the danger. On one occasion in Okinawa, he refused to take cover from enemy fire as he rescued approximately 75 wounded soldiers, carrying them one by one, and lowering them 40 feet over the edge of the 400-foot Maeda Escarpment to fellow soldiers below. He did not stop until he had brought everyone to safety nearly 12 hours later.

When Doss received the Medal of Honor, President Truman told him, "I'm proud of you, you really deserve this.

I consider this a greater honor than being President."

Doss' exemplary devotion to God and his country has influenced people nationwide. On July 4, 2004, a statue of Doss was placed in the National Museum of Patriotism in Atlanta, Georgia, along with statues of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., President Jimmy Carter, and retired Marine Corps General Gray Davis, also a Medal of Honor recipient. Also in 2004, a feature-length documentary titled "The Conscientious Objector," telling Doss' story of faith, heroism, and bravery, was released. A feature movie describing

Doss' story is also being planned.

Master Sergeant Robert S. Clark, (Ret.) U.S. Marine Corps, said of Doss' bravery, "His actions in World War II were more than commendable for the honor President Truman bestowed on him. I wish that they would have had a higher award to give him, but the Medal of Honor is the highest that we had. He earned that, and he earned more."

Yet, true to his character, Doss remained humble. "He was a very humble person who has impacted history, and yet he didn't take any credit for it," said Gordon Retzer, president of the Southern Union. Doss gave all the glory for his actions to God.

Major James Polly, who attended the burial service of Doss, was impressed by Doss' humble character. "The only time I saw him wear his medal, he put it on for the little seminar that he had, and immediately after he sat down, he took it off, folded it up, and gave it back to his wife." Polly continued. "I had a friend ask me one time, 'Where did all our heroes go? They go home, like Mr. Doss. He was a real fine fellow...He showed that it doesn't take someone who has a weapon in his hand to be a hero. Anybody can

commandment, which says, "Thou shall not kill" (Exodus 20:13). He believed this and was determined to obey God's law, so he resolved that he would never use a gun.

During World War II, instead of accepting a deferment, Doss voluntarily joined the Army, but because he refused to carry a weapon, he was labeled a conscientious objector. Doss preferred to be called a "conscientious cooperater." He wanted to serve his country; he just wanted to save lives instead of taking them.

Assigned to the 307th Infantry Regiment of the 77th Division as a company medic, he was harassed and ridiculed for his beliefs, yet he served with distinction. He loved the other soldiers and would do anything he could to help them.





be a hero. Sometimes simple kindness shines a lot brighter than going out and attacking the enemy.”

Congressman Zack Wamp attended Doss’ funeral service, representing the members of Congress and the President of the United States of America. He said that Doss was a great man and a great example of service. “His life is truly one of the greatest stories ever told,” he said.

But, the real story isn’t about the Medal of Honor, it’s about the man who wore it. Doss was a shining example of living for Christ. He reached out to others. He stayed true to his convictions. He trusted God with his life. He acted boldly, but remained humble. He gave glory to God.

“The medal deserves honor. However, these people aren’t here for the medal, they’re here for the man who wore it,” said Sergeant Jody Howell, district leader for the Chattanooga Military Funeral Honors Unit, at Doss’ funeral service. “He was a fascinating individual, and there’s not a military man, to my knowledge, who didn’t think he was a hero.”

According to Elder Don Schneider, president of the North American Division, Doss “is considered to be a role model—especially to many of our members. His decision to not bear arms in the most dangerous of times was a courageous and heroic decision that has, in turn, affected

many lives. We are proud to have had Desmond as a member of our Church.”

Kristiana Wrate, a member of the Standifer Gap Pathfinder Club, said she was influenced by Doss’ example. “I just thought it was really cool what he did and how he honored God and his country with his convictions,” she said. “It pushes [us] to be better people and stand up for what [we] believe in.”

“I think it would be almost impossible to count the number of people that Desmond Doss had an impact on,” said Thomas Schutte, Sr., brother-in-law to Doss. “When you read the name of ‘Doss,’ you know that he stood for something. It’s an amazing thing. It’s awesome really. It’s a great legacy that he leaves to the Seventh-day Adventist Church.”



Georgia-Cumberland Conference President Ed Wright summed up what makes Doss’ legacy spe-

cial: “What made Desmond truly special was not the Congressional Medal of Honor. What made him special was his character. That is what compelled him to stand firm for principle, trusting God with the outcome. It was Desmond’s character that prompted him to risk his own life to save the lives of people who had harassed, threatened, and ridiculed him. It was his character that motivated him to give generously of his time and energy after the war to young people, and specifically to Pathfinders.”

Wright continued, “Character matters. A good character is shaped through one-on-one time with Jesus. Desmond is special because he serves as a reminder of what we all can become when we make Jesus our best friend and reflect His character.”

Doss was the only conscientious objector to receive the Congressional Medal of Honor during World War II, and the only Seventh-day Adventist to receive the military’s highest honor for valor in combat. It can truly be said that his Christ-like character made him a hero, not only for his country, but also for God.

Rebecca Baerg is the assistant communication director for the Georgia-Cumberland Conference.

Lumberton Clinic Celebrates 2nd Anniversary

The Native American Clinic in Lumberton, N.C., held a two-year anniversary service on March 11. They invited some of the first patients for this special Sabbath service.

The invited patients shared what a tremendous service and blessing this clinic is for the Native American community. They shared how even the patients pray for the success of this clinic.

The clinic specializes in serving patients who cannot afford to see a doctor. They treat about 50 patients a week. Even their prescriptions are subsidized.

At a Southern Union meeting in 2002, Fred Rogers, the Native American

Ministries department director, wanted to plant a church in Lumberton, N.C.

Finding a place to start a new church presented many obstacles, so Rogers took a different approach. He found a place to start a health clinic for Native Americans.

On March 29, 2004, Indian Health Care opened its doors. Even before the clinic opened for patient care, the waiting room opened on Saturdays



Tom Kapusta (right), Southern Union trust services director, and his wife, Gail, shared their unique conversion experience for the second anniversary service at the Native American clinic. Fred Rogers (left), founder of the clinic, is pictured with Darlene Locklear and Barbara Jacobs, both among the first patients treated there.

for worship services. Since the waiting room only seats 50, the new congregation

is already outgrowing the clinic.

Adventist Christian Academy Visits Belize



Does it seem as though there is no place where good is happening? The students of Adventist Christian Academy in Charlotte felt that way. They

searched the scriptures for relief, and found real evidence of what they read on their mission trip to Belize.

Visiting the King's Children Home, an orphan-

age in Belmopan, Belize, where 61 children and six staff members reside, it was incredible to see each child being valued and protected in such a loving way. Most of the orphaned children were abuse victims, drug babies, or abandoned. When the group arrived, the students were drawn to these children as they gravitated to them. Enough hugs, kisses, and play time were supplied to last the year.

Responsibilities included preparing meals, painting, and building an outhouse at the church. ACA students also conduct-

ed a ShareHim evangelism series nightly at the church. Two young people gave their hearts to Jesus.

"Even though I'm so tired, I have never felt happier than I do right now because of the response of these children. They are so loving. I hate to leave them," said Melanie Bethancourt, an ACA student.

The ACA students left Belize with renewed spirits, commitments, and hope after witnessing the people express gratitude, joy, and hope.

—BY LAWANNA MCCOY

Purity Weekend Conducted at Fletcher Academy



Karalee Rosburg and Sara Grissom

Friday night, January 20, found 70 girls in the auditorium of Fletcher Academy. They were gathered for one reason: to discover what God's plan is when it comes to purity. The young ladies came from churches all over the Conference for two days of challenge and discovery.

The presenters were Sylvia Rosburg, Carolyn Kendall, and Beth Grissom, all from the Charlotte area. They spoke about sexual integrity, offering a challenge to remain sexually

pure until marriage.

The weekend began with introductions, followed by an awesome song service led by Sara and Anna Grissom and their mother, Beth. Rosburg then gave a presentation centered around the importance of having our fathers in our lives.

The next morning found everyone back in the auditorium for the Sabbath services. Beth Grissom shared how all the things told by others, and ourselves, can damage self-

images. Through examples in her own life, she gave a picture of how a focus on God can revitalize self-worth. The church service was presented by all three women and centered on the myths and truths about premarital sex.

The weekend ended with a question and answer period, and with the commitment ceremony Sabbath evening.

The women gave a

final challenge to pledge to themselves and God to guard the purity of hearts, minds, and bodies, sharing those special gifts only in marriage.

—BY SARAH CHISUM,
STUDENT

Carolina Conference Session

Notice is hereby given that the 40th regular session of the Carolina Conference of Seventh-day Adventists will be held in the auditorium at Nosoca Pines Ranch Liberty Hill, South Carolina. The first meeting is called for 6:30 p.m., Thursday, August 24, 2006. The session will continue through Sunday, August 27, 2006. The session is called for the purpose of electing officers and formulating plans for the next quinquennium, and

for the transaction of such other business as may properly come before the session. Each church may appoint two delegates to the session provided their membership exceeds fifty (50). Those churches having fifty (50) or less may appoint one delegate as outlined in the Carolina Conference By-Laws.

James R. Davidson, President

Carolina Conference Association of Seventh-day Adventists

Notice is hereby given that there will be a legal meeting of the Carolina Conference Association of Seventh-day Adventists, Incorporated, under the laws of the state of North Carolina, in connection with the regular session of the Carolina Conference, which will be held in the auditorium at Nosoca Pines Ranch, Liberty Hill, South Carolina. The first meeting is called for 6:30 p.m., Thursday, August 24, 2006. The session

will continue through Sunday, August 27, 2006. The purpose of the meeting is to elect officers and trustees and to transact any other business that may come before the association at that time. The delegates of the 40th session of the Carolina Conference of Seventh-day Adventists are the delegates of the association meeting.

James R. Davidson, President
Randall Terry, Secretary

Orlando Junior Academy Celebrates 100 Years



JAY FACUNDUS

Orlando Junior Academy (OJA) celebrated its 100th anniversary, February 18–19, during a homecoming weekend. Alumni worshiped together, held class reunions, played basketball, and participated in a golf tournament Sunday morning.

Sabbath morning found alumni featured in several constituent churches, including Randall Fox, former OJA teacher, who presented the sermon at Kress Memorial church in Winter Park; and Steven Molloy, class of '02, who spoke at Orlando Central church.

Class reunions and campus tours drew approximately 300 alumni back to OJA on Sabbath afternoon. In the evening, the group met at Florida Hospital church in Orlando for dinner. The tables were decorated with original poetry and artwork by current OJA students.

A 100-year celebration program followed where former student—now, U.S. Congressman—Ric Keller shared memories of his school days at OJA. Former second-grade teacher, Mary Alice Castonia (1974–1995), and eighth-grade teacher,

Gary Fowler (1968–2000), shared their memories as well. More than 50 teachers, past and present, were honored for their years of dedicated service to quality Christian education at OJA.

Among those recognized during Saturday evening's Parade of Principals were Harry Mayden (1969–1979), from Hagerstown, Md., and Bill Arnold (1987–1992), from Loma Linda, Calif. Representing the earliest class (1929) in attendance were Ercel Bradley-Bennett, Leona Sheffield-Barfield, and Mary Touten-Edenfield.

Several musical numbers were performed in the evening program that was emceed by alumnus Ken Bradley, chief executive officer of Florida Hospital Winter Park.

The 100th anniversary homecoming celebration was the first of several events to mark this centennial. Other plans include a 100th birthday party for current students and families and a development campaign, celebrating 100 years by raising \$100,000 for classroom improvements.

—BY JANICE BANKS

Teachers, past and present, were honored at the Orlando Junior Academy 100th anniversary homecoming celebration.



RUSTY LITTEN

OJA alumni reminisce with Elizabeth Hudak, former OJA teacher and Florida Conference superintendent of education (1981–86).



RUSTY LITTEN

Ken Bradley introduces the Class of 2006 officers—representing Orlando Junior Academy's newest alumni.



Orlando Junior Academy is the site of the Maranatha Volunteers International Summer Family Project, June 8–18. Sign-up information: www.maranatha.org or www.orlandojunioracademy.net

Adventurer Club Adopts Local Fire Station



LISA FREEMAN

Rudy Prado, a lieutenant at Orlando's Station 66 and a Forest Lake, Apopka, church member, told the children's story before presenting the Sabbath sermon at South Orlando church.

Firefighter Awareness Day at the South Orlando, Fla., church was organized to honor emergency rescue workers for the protective services they provide in the community. The program for the premier event was

planned by South Orlando members Cheri and Holly Isaac, with assistance from Dan Forbes, pastor.

Firefighters, dressed in uniform, were invited to introduce themselves and identify their work location.

Attendees came from Orange, Seminole, Polk, and Hillsborough counties.

Rudy Prado, a lieutenant at Orlando's Station 66 and a member of the Forest Lake, Apopka, church, told the children's story and presented the Sabbath sermon. He was also asked to help present a plaque to an honored guest. Prado was surprised to find his own name on the plaque as South Orlando church's firefighter of the year.

After a special luncheon, even while children were admiring the big red fire truck parked outside, Station 51 crew members received a radio call to respond to an emergency.

As the children waved good-bye, they agreed to visit Orlando's Station 51. Since then, the informal visits have turned into a

closer relationship—one of adoption.

The Adventurer club now visits Station 51 on a regular basis. Often, the children break from their Sunday morning meetings to bring gifts and snacks to the crew. Women in the church have also caught the spirit of appreciation and, on any given day, they will surprise the crew with baked goodies.

"After the events of September 11, 2001, the eyes of the world were opened to the duties of our emergency workers," says Lisa Freeman, South Orlando church member. "That's why our church has chosen to give special recognition to firefighters. We truly appreciate the work they do and the risks they take every day for us."

—BY LISA FREEMAN

Walker Memorial Academy Principal Honored

Special tribute was given to William Farmer at the Walker Memorial Academy alumni weekend, March 25 and 26, for 20 years of service as principal of the Avon Park, Fla., school.

"Mr. Farmer always has the students' best interest at heart, no matter what the situation," said one alumnus. "His commitment to creating enjoyable learning experiences for students is unprecedented."

During Farmer's tenure, Walker has doubled in enrollment and staffing, gone through a major

building project, adopted a successful block schedule, and grown from a junior academy to a K-12 school. Technology in the classrooms has increased from a few isolated computers to a network of 150.

Farmer moves through each day with a consistency reflected in students' comments of respect and admiration. "His friendship is such a blessing to the kids," says a recent graduate, "because everyone knows he will take time out from his busy schedule to talk and listen."



TONY CHEN

Lenora McDowall (left), Walker Memorial Academy board chair, expressed appreciation to Bill and Walda Farmer.

Woven into his tribute were the thoughts, "What transforms education is not another theory, another book, or another formula. It is educators who seek a transformed way of being

in the world, while teaching in a way that is illuminated by the Spirit and infused with love. Mr. Farmer is transforming education through a spirit of love."

—BY CHIP DAVIS

GCA Helps AIDS Orphans in Swaziland

In early February, I was corresponding with Brenda Walsh, Georgia-Cumberland Academy (GCA) alumnus and producer/host of "Kid's Time" with 3ABN. She told me about an upcoming trip to Swaziland, Africa. I was very curious, so I asked her to tell me more about the project.

As she talked to me about the devastation caused by the AIDS crisis in that country, and of the thousands of orphans left behind when their parents died of AIDS, my heart was touched. She said she and some other lay people were going to Swaziland to minister to the orphans, that there was a huge need for clothing for the children, and that the Church leadership in that country

had begged for them to come and help. She also said that they were looking for help with the clothing part of the project.

As Brenda continued talking, it seemed that the Lord was saying, "GCA should help with this. You need to get involved." Even though I believed the Holy Spirit was speaking to my heart, I told her I would get back to her. The next day I called Brenda to let her know we would help with the clothing part of the project. "Now exactly what does that mean?" I innocently asked. What I found out was that we needed to fill a shipping container with clothing for 7,000 orphans.

On March 6, Georgia-Cumberland Academy sent off the supplies it

collected for the Swaziland AIDS Orphans project. Bags and boxes filled with everything from medical supplies to more than 26,000 articles of clothing.

Was the project a success? I think the answer to that would be a resounding "Yes." Even if we were never able to find out how this clothing blessed the orphans of Swaziland, we know that those who got involved with this project were blessed in many ways. We saw God at work in our lives, and our faith was strengthened. We saw the many answers to



Georgia-Cumberland Academy students sort and fill boxes with clothes for AIDS orphans in Swaziland.

prayer, and we were witnesses to the great generosity of God's people all over the country whose hearts were touched by the needs. What a blessing it has been to have a front row seat, so to speak, to witness the mighty work of God on behalf of "the least of these."

—BY NANCY GERARD

Reaching Out with Radio in Nicaragua

The Halverson family from the Ogden Road, Tenn., church felt impressed to start a radio station in the Miskito area of Nicaragua, and on January 2,

2006, they set to work to make it happen.

Diana says, "By telling the story about what I felt in my heart, God has impressed others to get involved. We received the

money for all the equipment needed to get on the air with local broadcasting."

"Our biggest challenge was getting the license for the radio and the frequency," says Diana. "We were told that because we were not citizens, it would probably take months and to not count on getting the license this trip."

"I was praying all the time we were in the office, and within minutes we were approved with no charge. A free license and frequency—we walked out of the office full of joy," shares Diana.

Next, the Halversons

went to see about the land. "We were given land inside the city limits. There is a power pole right on the property. There is also a well. All we could do was praise the Lord for his goodness," said Diana.

Then the Halverson's talked to some people about the equipment they would need. "We had a list and the information needed so it could be checked against the equipment and expertise needed," says Diana. "The cost came very close to what God had provided with the donors in the area. We were only about \$500 off. That was

wonderful. The really awesome part was that when we arrived back in the United States, there was a check waiting for us for exactly \$500."

"The only things left are the buildings that need to be built. That is our next focus."

The radio station will reach whole villages up and down the Rio Coco who never heard the name of Jesus.

—BY MARGARET FISHER &
DIANA HALVERSON



Miskito Leaders in Waspam show us the land and sign papers for the radio station.

Mi Casa es Tu Casa: Mission to Cuba

Warm tropical breezes carry the sound of MiG-29 jets rumbling overhead. Sharp modern-suited men eagerly chauffer mission teams in a car that makes up part of the country's "rolling museum" of 1950-era Fords and Chevrolets. Narrow, pot-holed streets trail through a repetition of homes that are virtually impossible to distinguish from each other except for the face peeking out from each doorway. This is Cuba—a country stuck in the past and longing for a heavenly future.

"Why Cuba?" was a comment heard often by our 26-person team from the Collegedale, Tenn., church before its departure for Cuba on February 23. The United States embargo on Cuba and a long history of poor political relations between the two countries made Cuba a unique location to conduct an evangelistic campaign led by teenagers. After completing their three-week mission to spread the gospel of Christ in communist Cuba, 17 Collegedale church youth



The speakers for the meetings pause for a picture before they leave to speak at their locations.

and their nine mentors now have an answer to an often-asked question, "Why Cuba?"

The answer lies less in what our group did to evangelize Cuba than in what Cuba had to teach us. The lessons were many. Do you cry with joy at being able to read the *Desire of Ages*? We met Cubans that do. Do you greet your Father in prayer each time you enter His house? We met Cubans that do. Do you choose to diligently keep the Sabbath even though it costs you your job, your degree, or even time in jail? We met Cubans that do.

Site speaker Matt Tinkham says, "The [Cubans] made me realize that there is more out there than just the American dream of success. They made me realize that Jesus is the most important thing in life, and that being in love with Him is worth everything. They inspired a new passion for Christ in my heart and made me realize how important evangelism and mission work is."

Team heart strings were plucked by the passionate display of faith by attendees. Several team members were inspired to see Ethan White's translator grasp the full impact of the free grace of Christ during the team's drive to their church site, and to see the translator, in turn, spread his newfound knowledge by excitedly translating the good news of grace into

Spanish for Ethan's driver.

By the end of the series, many church sites had experienced multiple testimonies from both visitors and members on how they had been touched by the young team members.

A pastor of one church said that before the meetings began, his church had been nervous about what to expect. He then shared how much it had meant to both the visitors and members that Americans had taken the time to really get to know and love the Cuban people rather than merely coming to vacation in their country.

As our Collegedale team learned from Cuba, the Cubans also needed our young people. "To see us as young people preaching the gospel with so much faith gives them, the Cuban people, the inspiration to learn more. They were all very shocked that [the speakers, musicians, and support staff] were in high school and had such a love for God. I think that they were impressed, especially the younger generation in that church," voices musician Janelle Junn.

The final Sabbath was certainly an emotional one. A total from all sites of 45 baptisms were witnessed by our group that morning. Another 45 were scheduled for the Sabbath after the group left Cuba.

The decisions for Christ were heartwarming, making farewells hard and bonds difficult to break.



Gabrielle Trujillo speaks in Alquizar.

"When I said my final goodbyes with the people, they all said something that I will never forge: 'If I never see you again on this earth, I will see you in Heaven.' That statement just stuck to me. The realization that I might never see these people again saddened me. But, the hope and faith they had in Jesus just makes me want to try harder to make it into Heaven," professes Janelle.

So, why Cuba? Though most freedoms for Cubans are highly restricted and their lives are poor and simple, our team has fallen in love with a people whose homes are filled with an adoration for each other and for God that makes them rich beyond compare. The warm phrase "mi casa es tu casa" ("my home is your home") was heard repeatedly as our team members departed the homes of newly discovered family.

As our team longs to reunite with our newfound Cuban family, there are 26 Collegedale church members who can't wait for the day when we can reach out to our Cuban brothers and sisters and say, "my mansion is your mansion."

—BY INGRID SKANTZ

Piedmont Company Celebrates Church Status



Charter members gather in the front of their sanctuary. Desmond Doss was one of the 59 charter members. This was the last Sabbath he would attend church before his death.

Piedmont, Ala., now has an official Seventh-day Adventist church. March 18 was a high Sabbath, with Conference officials presiding and 59 charter members signing the books. More than 150 attended the service and shared a fellowship lunch.

Mel Eisele, Conference president, challenged those

present to make the church a house of prayer. Dennis Millburn, Conference treasurer, officiated over the organization.

Attending the service were honorary members Desmond Doss, WWII Congressional Medal of Honor recipient; Clifford Eads, WWII POW; and retired pastors Bob Kurth

and Don Baer.

Musicians from the community and the church provided an abundance of music.

The church began as a dream of Pastor Rick Blythe and his wife, Ginger, to one day start a church in their hometown of Piedmont. In 2001, they made the move back home from

Indiana to care for their elderly parents. A short time later they began Bible studies in their home with Mike and Tracy Duman. The two couples decided they wanted to plant a church together.

As Bible studies grew, they rented an auto parts store in downtown Piedmont. In 2004, they purchased land and began building the fellowship hall. The sanctuary was speedily built in 2005

after Desmond Doss gave a substantial donation and hoped to see the building finished in his lifetime.

The members are looking forward to reaching their community with the love of Christ, and to hasten His soon return.

—BY LINDA FREEMAN

BMA Cafeteria Completed



Smiles light the faces of Theresa Southard, food services director, and staff, including volunteers Art and Avis Barnaby.

On March 13, meals were served for the first time in the newly renovated cafeteria at Bass

Memorial Academy. Since Hurricane Katrina ripped the roof off the building, meals had been prepared

in a portable kitchen and served in the sometimes cold and drafty gymnasium.

The smiles on the students' faces belied their delight.

"It's great not to have to walk all the way to the gym," several students explained. They agreed they liked the improvements that had been made to the cafeteria. More space was created in the dining area by relocating the bathrooms. A pitched roof replaces the previous flat one, and the kitchen area has been

enlarged.

"I don't know what we would have done without volunteers like Art and Avis Barnaby," states Theresa Southard, food services director, as she greets them with smiles. They arrived on campus in their motor home in January. Since then, they have pitched in and worked on many jobs. "They put up shelves, assembled the new tables, and did all of the time-consuming tasks that no one else had time to do," Southard explains.

—BY REBECCA GRICE

Five Schools Join for Mission to Mexico



The group of 26, including sponsors and students, represented five different schools in the Conference.

For the second year, the Conference's education office coordinated its annual Education Mission Adventure during spring break. This year the participants traveled to a children's orphanage in Baja, Mexico. El Oasis Children's Village is operated for homeless and abandoned children in Mexico by International Children's Care (ICC).

The group of 26 included sponsors and students from five differ-

ent schools. The mission team flew to San Diego, Calif., where they rented three vans. After making food purchases, they made their way south across the Mexican border and arrived at El Oasis late at night.

The next morning, six work teams were organized with sponsors serving as leaders. The primary task was to prepare the inside and outside walls in the houses for painting. Using hoses, brushes, sponges, mops, and cleaning agents, everyone put their best efforts to the task.

With the students assisting, Jeff Milowitz, a member of the mission team who is a contractor, installed 27 windows and three doors



The goal was to prepare the walls for painting.

in the new primary school. This saved the orphanage an estimated \$7,000. Another job included the assembly of 22 steel beam frames that are going to be used in the building for a vehicle shelter.

On the first Sabbath, the mission team hosted the church service. A puppet show, performed by students from Mobile Junior Academy,

captivated the attention of the children—especially since the script had been translated and recorded in Spanish on a CD. A combined choir from Big Cove Christian Academy and Floral Crest blessed the group with their special music. Aaron Raines, principal at Floral Crest, presented the Sabbath message, while Philip Mitchell, a teacher from Big Cove, translated.

"The times shared with the children will be among our most treasured memories," states Leslie Louis, Conference education superintendent and trip coordinator. "We wanted to capitalize every moment we could have with them," he explains. Sabbath afternoon the team

took the children on a hike through the rugged, desert terrain. In the evenings, Viki Blanks, a teacher from Pensacola, Fla., made sure she got involved with the soccer game, while other team members enjoyed interacting with the children on the playground.

Before returning home, the mission team joined the El Oasis family in a dedication service filled with music and messages of appreciation and hope. Tearfully, the children clung to their new friends. "It was difficult for them to say farewell. We had shared in an experience that gave us one more reason to long for Heaven," says Louis.

Joining hands, the group sang "Side by Side We Stand" in a beautiful blend of English and Spanish. Then they were invited to meet their new friends again beside the Tree of Life.

—BY LESLIE LOUIS



Getting to know the children was important.

Madison Food Aid Remembered in Tokyo



Kiyoshi Fujita (left) gets a tour of the old Madison College campus from Bob Sutherland, grandson of E. A. Sutherland, who helped found the school in 1904.

A Japanese visitor said he had never gone to school at old Madison College, but felt its influence as a small boy growing up in Japan at the end of World War II.

Kiyoshi Fujita is now a vice president for development at Saniku Gakuin Junior College, an Adventist school of higher education in Japan. He visited the campus of old Madison College while on a fund-raising trip to the United States.

Fujita said that he was ten years old when World War II ended. The city of Tokyo was bombed out

and destroyed, but school reopened. The first year went fine, but they started their second year with no food. Madison College sent large quantities of powdered eggs, flour, powdered milk, and burger from its food factory. He said that Madison knew about the Adventist community in Japan through Perry Webber, a teacher at old Madison College who had taught there before the war.

“That was new food to us and very interesting,” Fujita said. “We kept it in a warehouse and were excited, because it met our

needs. In my memory, that Madison gift was most appreciated because the U.S. Government sent us mostly milk. It was good to know that somebody across the Pacific Ocean cared about us.”

The food shipments continued for one or two years, along with a supply of used clothing. “Much of it was too big for us, but we still used it,” he said. While a new generation has come along since, this gift from Madison has never been forgotten.

—BY ALBERT DITTES

MTSA Opens New Teaching Theatre

Administrators and members of the board of Middle Tennessee School of Anesthesia celebrated the opening of the school's new, state-of-the-art teaching theatre, March 23, 2006. The school's founder, Bernard Bowen, also participated in the ribbon cutting ceremony.

William O. T. Smith, faculty member and former president of MTSA, in his remarks remembered when the first classroom used to train students was about the same size as the projection screen in the new classroom.

Because of a shortage of nurse anesthetists, the operating board of MTSA encouraged administrators to expand their capacity from 50 students to 70 students. The new facility al-

lows for this growth. Three years ago there were just 40 students. Area hospitals have granted an additional 22 slots to provide clinical anesthesia.

The new classroom facility is digitally equipped. Adjacent to the new classroom there is an electronic operating room with a human patient simulator. As some students are learning in the operating room, other students are able to watch the entire procedure in the classroom.

The administrators of MTSA are all Seventh-day Adventists. The curriculum includes 44 hours of religion. Lynn Schlisner, our local pastor, teaches one hour each week for the first full year. By the end of the year, students have heard the complete Adven-

tist message,” says Ikey DeVasher, dean of MTSA. There are only a few Seventh-day Adventists in the student body. “We don't want to have all Adventist students,” says DeVasher. “I believe while Madison College sent missionaries out, we have the ability to bring people to us, let them live with us and find out what we believe. I believe that MTSA is a part of Ellen White's vision for Madison College that continues to live on.”

MTSA is unique among schools teaching anesthesia in that it is the only free-standing, single-purpose, anesthesia-specific institution that offers a master's degree that is regionally accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS).



Ikey DeVasher (left); Nevin Downs, M.D., chairman of the board; Chris Gustin, business manager; Bernard Bowen; Jane Pennington, associate vice president for alumni and student finance; Rob Taylor; Phil Hunt; and William O. T. Smith cut the ribbon, officially opening the new classroom for use.

This is the same accrediting body that accredits Vanderbilt and Belmont universities in Nashville.

—BY MARVIN LOWMAN

Reunion Concert After Ten Years

The Hendersonville church hosted the first reunion concert in 10 years by Marvin Ponder, Herman Harp, and Gene and Marie Jennings on Sabbath, February 4. Gene took his place at the piano, Marie at the organ, and Marvin and Herman took the microphones to welcome everyone. Then Gene's hands hit the piano keys and Marie's beautiful organ music filled the church.

For 20 years this group had shared its music with audiences all over, selling thousands of recordings. The music had stopped for 10 years, but listening to them you would never know they had not sung or played together in so long.



Marie Jennings (left), Gene Jennings, Herman Harp, and Marvin Ponder gather following the Hendersonville concert.

Twenty-five people came from a non-Adventist church in Mobile, Ala., who became friends of the Harps and have followed their music for years. Oth-

ers who had known and enjoyed their music came from Tennessee, Kentucky, and Ohio. Members of the Nashville First church came because they remem-

bered when Gene and Marie were the pianist and organist for that church in the 70s.

For nearly two hours they sang, praised, and glorified God in a concert that ended with a standing ovation. Evangelist Kenneth Cox offered the benediction.

After the concert, tapes and CDs were sold to a new generation of Adventists who had never heard them in person before. This was just the first of many concerts to be held in the future.

—BY THELMA CALDWELL

John Baker Ordained to the Gospel Ministry

John Baker was ordained to the gospel ministry, March 4, 2006. The ordination address was given by John van Zyl, ministerial director of the Conference. Richard Hallock, president, and Marvin Lowman, executive secretary, also officiated at the ordination service. Jack Baker, John's father and also an ordained minister, offered the ordination prayer.

The ordination service was conducted as part of the Eastern Kentucky-Tennessee Camp Meeting held each year in Prestonsburg, Ky., Baker's district.

John attended Atlantic Union College and Southwestern Adventist University. While at SWAU, John

met LeAnne Smith. They were married in 1984.

With degrees in both religion and communication, John initially chose a career in broadcasting.

However, during the next 16 years, John also gained experience in food service management, health care, hospital chaplaincy, long-term care administration,

and nursing home administration.

During the same period, John received three calls to the ministry. Having resisted those calls, when the fourth call came from the Kentucky-Tennessee Conference in 2001, John asked the Lord for a sign. The sign came that same afternoon when his corporate office called to announce his nursing home had been sold. Following the leading of the Lord, John and LeAnne accepted the district pastorate in Prestonsburg, Ky.

John and LeAnne Baker have three children: Chris, Toni, and Jesse.

—BY MARVIN LOWMAN



Richard Hallock, Conference president, presents the ordination certificate to John Baker as his wife, LeAnne looks on.

God Hears a Five-Year-Old's Prayer

Donavan Hanna, a member of the Oakland Avenue church in Florence, S.C., was five years old when the Lord impressed upon him the desire to go on a mission trip to Africa. Even then, he felt that God was calling him to go and preach the gospel. Periodically through the years he would mention it to his mom, but each time it was dismissed.

In January, 2005, Matt Wilson, the chaplain at Mount Pisgah Academy in Candler, N.C., informed Donovan about an upcoming mission trip to Africa in July and asked Donovan if he wanted to go. His immediate response was, "Yes." He had been waiting for this opportunity for 12 years. The next thought was how in the world he would convince his mom to let him go half-way around the world.

And, yes, Vanessa Hanna's initial response was, "What? That's all the way on the other side of the world." Other family members were hesitant about the trip as well, including his father, Silvaris Hanna, and grandfather, Jack Hanna. On the other hand, his grandmother, Dorothy Hanna, was very prayerful about the whole situation, and pointed out to his mother a quote by the servant of the Lord that says, "When children are rightly trained, they can be sent as foreign missionaries." It took some prayer, but his mother finally came



Donovan Hanna

around, and so did the rest of his family.

The next challenge Donovan and his family faced was raising the money for the trip in a short period of time. The chaplain helped to raise half the money, but Donovan would have to pay the rest.

The deadline for the balance due was four weeks later, yet after three weeks passed, they were short of their goal. Donovan and his mother prayed that if God wanted him to go, He would open up every door possible in such a way that there would not be a shadow of a doubt that it was God's will for Donovan to share the Gospel in Lome, Togo. Donovan's father is the minister

of music at Wesley United Methodist church. The members there decided to host a musical program to raise funds for the trip, and God answered their prayers.

Donovan and eight members of their team flew to Accra, Ghana, and then on to the Togolese border. They had some trials while they were there. One of their team members got sick with malaria; the areas where they preached were, of course, predominantly Muslim; and they confronted forces of voodoo. It was only through prayer and faith that they were able to conquer these hardships. Donovan shared with his family how good it felt to preach and see the Holy

Spirit work through him to lead people to Christ.

When Donovan returned home, he received the news that his grandfather, whom he had spoken with the evening before his return, had died unexpectedly. It was quite upsetting to him, but he recalled the last sermon he preached in Togo. It had been about Heaven, and it helped him to remember that, "the dead in Christ shall rise first." He knew that if he remained faithful, he would see his grandfather again in Heaven. His trip strengthened his faith and gave him the ability to give all of his pain to God.

He realized that mission work is very rewarding, and it doesn't have to be in Africa. It can be at school, work, or the biggest mission field of all, the home. Donovan thanks God every day for blessing him through his African experience.

—BY SILVARIS HANNA

Shiloh Celebrates Scholarship Successes



Pictured are Jimmie Polite (left) and her three children.

Edward L. Polite, Jr., pastor, son of the late Edward L. Polite, presented a sermon entitled, "I Believe I Can Fly," which was also the theme for the day. Johnnie

Mims sang the late Edward Polite's favorite song, "We Shall Behold Him." Karen Thrower and Anthony Spells, who are both recipients of scholarships also performed.

Aftab and Arnetta Polite Shams brought a dream to a reality with their monetary contributions. This vision continues to flourish under the leadership of Harry Williams, who is currently the pastor of Shiloh. Now the entire church, family, friends, and members of the Polite Scholarship Committee make personal sacrifices to keep the scholarship fund functioning. The Polite family thank God for each one who makes these sacrifices.

The day ended with an honoree program with Joyce Thrower, Iris Wray, and Patrick Carter, pastor of the Anderdon/Greenwood, S.C., district, presiding. This program honored 11 persons, including Harry Williams, pastor; and two scholarships were pre-

sented to Danielle Dupree and Anthony Spell.

The honorees

Deveraux T. Williams, a scholarship recipient and a graduate of Clemson University, now works at Clemson as an information resource consultant.

Eugene Preston is father of 14 children, including two sons who are ordained Seventh-day Adventist ministers, Melvin and Calvin Preston. For 21 years straight, he had a child matriculating at Oakwood College in Huntsville, Ala.

Mary Kate McNeil, one of the community mothers, has 14 children. In educating her children, the financial strain was great, with five children going to college at the same time. Two of her sons, Charles and William McNeil, Jr., are ordained Seventh-day Adventist ministers.

Pauline C. Johnson, a community and Shiloh church mother, has 13 children, all of which were baptized into the Shiloh church. She has one son, U.S. Army Chaplain Milton Johnson, who is an ordained Seventh-day Adventist minister.

Juanita B. Green, a recipient of the Polite Scholarship, graduated from USC Aiken and is a journalist and actress who now works as a reporter at the *Post and Courier*, Charleston's oldest newspaper.

Kataurah McGriff is

a retired educator who taught at Burk High School for nearly 43 years. She is currently the education leader for Shiloh.

Jonifer Q. Fashion, the musical director of the College of Charleston Gospel Choir, has numerous successes in the field of music, which include the choir's appearance on ABC television's *Good Morning America*.

Arthur Gilliard, artistic director of Art Forms and Theatre Concepts, Inc., has performed and taught all over the United States. His love for children led him to go into the inner city and teach the joy of public performance to youth who would not normally know about the stage.

Michelle Gordon is a student at Allen University majoring in social science. Being a scholarship recipient has helped her to make her dream of helping mentally challenged people a reality.

Amber Daniels, a scholarship recipient who is a student at Limestone College majoring in social work, plans to open a home for troubled teenage girls.

Aftab Shams, the major benefactor of the Polite Scholarship fund, is the co-owner of a software and consulting firm. He is greatly appreciated for his undying support to the Edward L. Polite Scholarship Fund.

—BY JUANITA GREEN

The Shiloh church in Charleston, S.C., held a day of celebration and thanksgiving to God for helping them reach their goal of \$50,000 for the Edward L. Polite Scholarship Fund.

The scholarship was established in 1997 in memory of the late Command Sergeant Major Edward L. Polite, Sr., under the leadership of Karen Thrower, the education secretary, and Dante C. Tobias, pastor of Shiloh. The fund was started to honor his outstanding contributions to education and his commitment to students, which was shown not only in the Charleston community, but throughout the world. Now his legacy lives on through the commitment of his faithful wife, Jimmie L. Polite. The scholarship fund has assisted 43 students to date.

Beginning with Sabbath school and throughout the day, recipients of the scholarship participated on the program.

First Black Adventist Author Recognized



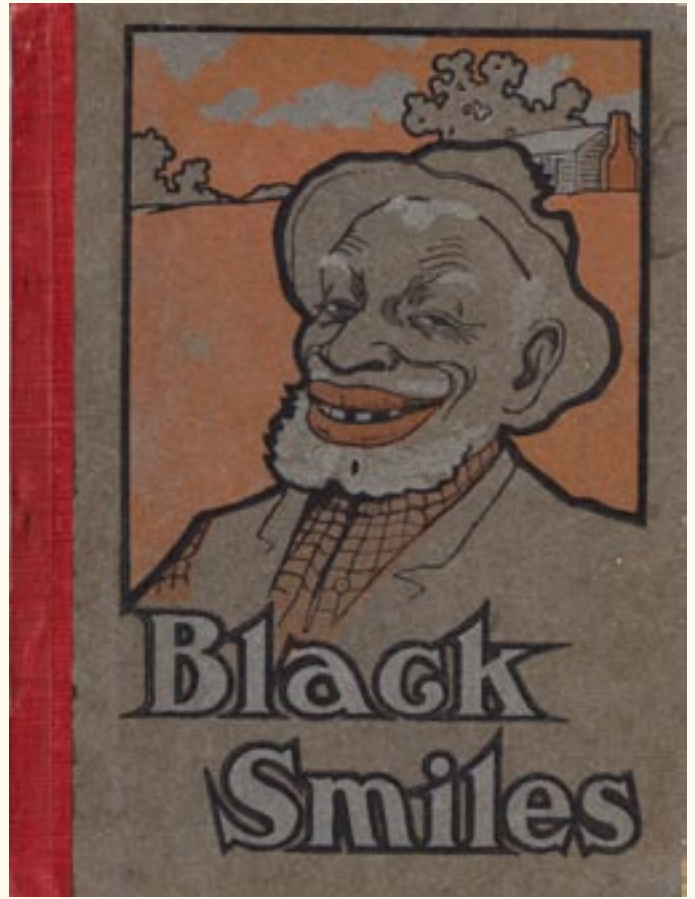
Franklin Henry Bryant

Franklin Henry Bryant, author of *Black Smiles* and member of Edson White's Morning Star Boat staff, was the first African-American Seventh-day Adventist to be published.

Bryant met Edson White in Yazoo City in August of 1898. He began working on the Morning Star and soon joined the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Edson White was impressed with his abilities, and had the following to say about Bryant's work. "He is a young man of good education and soon

learned to manipulate the typewriter. The correspondence from the boat is very large, often reaching 26 or 30 letters a day. These letters are dictated to a graphophone by the editor, and then are afterwards reproduced by the talking machine and written out by Bro. Bryant. In one-half an hour enough can be thus dictated to keep the typewriter busy half a day. Bro. Bryant also acts as a fireman on the boat when running, teaches in our night schools, and employs all spare time studying present truth so



Franklin H. Bryant published *Black Smiles on the Sunny Side of Sable Life* in 1903. It was the first book published by a Black Seventh-day Adventist.

that he can soon become an active missionary to his own people." – *Gospel Herald*, Vol. 1, No. 8.

In 1900, Bryant went to Hickory, N.C., where he opened a school about five miles from the Hildebrand School operated by Elder Shireman.

In 1903, Franklin H. Bryant published his book, *Black Smiles on the Sunny Side of Sable Life*. It is a book of eight poems, seven written in dialect and one in eloquent poetic verse, demonstrating his

mastery of both. It was published by the Southern Publishing Association, under the name Black Foot Studio. The copyright is held by Bryant and P. J. Rennings, who was the illustrator for the book.

—BY R. STEVEN NORMAN, III

Franklin Bryant's picture was featured on the cover of the February, 2006, SOUTHERN TIDINGS.
—Editor

Longview Heights Opens Church Archives

The Longview Heights church, established in 1898, has more than 108 years of rich history and service to the greater Memphis area. During the weekend of March 4-5, the church celebrated Church History Weekend and opened the Longview church archives to honor, remember, and celebrate the many years of God's faithfulness to this body of believers—both past and present.

The arts and archives ministry, under the leadership of Isaac Fordjour, Ph.D., began the process of securing and preserving Longview Heights' history during the 100-year church anniversary in 1998.

Church history weekend was a culmination

of research and planning done since 1998 by the arts and archives committee, which includes Isaac and Janet Fordjour, Herbert and Rubye Brown, Shirley Sherman, Florine and Robert Jones, Cora Reid, Ricky and Sandra Johnson, Rachel Welton, Sandra Williams, Claude Jones, Jr., and Angela Robinson-Hyde.

Because of Steven Norman's expertise in the area of Adventist Church history, he was the guest speaker for the weekend. Sabbath morning, March 4, Norman, Conference communication director, delivered a message which blessed the hearts of many. In addition, Norman has been a tremendous help and resource for the arts

and archives committee.

Later that afternoon, the AYS presentation, "I Remember When," spotlighted Mallie Thompkins, one of the oldest known living members of the church. In addition, during the AY hour, Norman gave an interesting presentation on the early days of the Black Adventist Church in the South, and Memphis in particular.

To culminate the weekend, on Sunday morning, the committee, along with Norman and Joseph Grider, pastor, officially opened and dedicated the



archives and history room. It was a brief but solemn ceremony as Norman reminded the attendees of the importance, as well as the impact, the documents and artifacts housed in this room will have on present and future generations.

—BY FLORINE BURCH

Maggie Hopper Celebrates 106th Birthday

Maggie Hopper, the oldest member of the Conference, recently celebrated her 106th birthday. Age alone makes her the oldest member, but she has also been a Seventh-day Adventist longer than any one else in the Conference—92 years.

Hopper, born January 9, 1900, began attending the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Louisville, Ky., when she was 11 years old. Three years later she was baptized in the Ohio River, near 34th Street and River, by Joseph Hermanus Laurence, and has been a member of the Church ever since.

She served as a Sab-

bath school teacher and held many other church offices until she could no longer attend church, six years ago at 100.

Alert and in good health, Hopper spends most of her time repairing quilts. Her niece, Marcella Brunson, says that Hopper still threads her own needles.

Even though she has always been a tiny woman, she speaks with authority. One of her rules is "No photos."

Her favorite verse is, "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and

He shall direct thy paths" Proverbs 3:5-6. Since she was a diligent student of the Bible and a Sabbath school teacher for many years, she is able to quote large portions of the Bible from memory.

"In the morning she sings hymns," Marcella says. "Sometimes I join her. We sing, 'Rock of Ages,' 'Jesus Keep Me Near the Cross,' 'Trust and Obey,' and old songs like that."

As Hopper reflects over her life, she is happy but wishes that she could have been an

elementary school teacher. She enjoys teaching little children. Perhaps in Heaven, her wish will be granted.

—BY R. STEVEN NORMAN, III



Maggie Hopper, at 106, is the oldest member of the Conference.

High School Student Becomes Master Guide at 17

Tabernacle's Rhy-
anne Carrington, 17, is the
youngest Master Guide in
Southeastern Conference.

Rhyanne joined the
Adventurers at age 5, and
12 years later, she has
reached the pinnacle of
Pathfinding.

On November 12, Car-
rington became the young-
est Master Guide in the
Southeastern Conference in
near-record time.

The Master Guide pro-
gram usually takes a year
to complete; Carrington
tackled it in six months.

"It's wonderful that
Tabernacle has young
people who are leaders
who finish what they start,"
Miami's Tabernacle pastor

David L. Peay Sr. said. "I'm
proud of Rhyanne and all
of our young people."

"I want to be able to
help the Pathfinder club
out in any way that I can,"
Carrington said. "I didn't
want to study to be a
Master Guide while I was
in college." Rhyanne is
currently a senior at Miami
Norland.

Baldwyn English, Sr.,
who has been Rhyanne's
Pathfinder leader since she
was an Adventurer, said, "I
have watched her progress
through the years, and her
work has been very exem-
plary. Whatever she puts
her mind to, she usually
accomplishes. I wish her
nothing but the best. Hope-

fully, one day she will be
Pathfinder leader."

Rhyanne is quick to
point out those who helped
her along the way, such
as her pastor, Pathfinder
leader, and her friends and
siblings, but she's quick to
heap praise on her mother,
Sheila Carrington.

"Mom is the one who
is always there to wipe my
tears and remind me to
keep going," Rhyanne said.

Now that she has
achieved the highest rank
there is, what's next?

"I want to be able to
help other young people
and other Pathfinders
here," Rhyanne said.

That kind of thinking
fits with part of the Path-



ROBERT HENLEY

finder pledge: "I will keep
the Pathfinder Law. I will
be a servant of God and a
friend to man."

—BY JOHN DEVINE

Perrine School Celebrates Black History

The Perrine school pre-
sented an African-American
History program, February
18, 2006.

Students took the
congregation on a musical
journey through slavery to
the Civil Rights movement.
They told of the many
inventions that the Blacks
have created.

Many were astonished
to know that practically
every gadget used in the
home, as well as hair prod-
ucts and clothing, were
invented by Black men.

God's Royal Messen-
gers, composed of Jessica,
Bohdana, Torri-Ann, Beli-
cia, Kristal, Shanice, Makay-
la, Ashley, and Javanka,
used their hands in praise

to God.

They portrayed a
slavery scene based on
the trials and experiences
of slaves, as they grace-
fully captivated everyone
through the songs, "Still I
Rise" and "More
Than I Can
Bear."

Shanice
Hixson brought
everyone to
their feet with
her rendition
of Sojourner
Truth's, "Ain't
I a Woman?"
To climax the
presentations,
Ian Carter,
with authority,
recited Martin

Luther King's, "I Have A
Dream" speech.

Kenneth Armstrong,
principal, commended
the students for a job well
done.

—BY MILLICENT TAYLOR



*Perrine elementary students perform Negro
spirituals.*

Conference Appoints New Treasurer

On Sunday, March
26, 2006, the Southeast-
ern Conference Executive
Committee appointed
Gwendolyn Turner Park-
er to serve as the fifth
treasurer of Southeastern.
She has been serving as
interim treasurer since
July 1, 2005, when Stan-
ton Reed resigned.

Parker has served
the Conference as as-
sociate treasurer since
1988. Prior to joining the
Southeastern Conference,
Parker served as the as-
sociate treasurer for the
Northeastern Conference.

Parker is the first fe-
male appointed to serve
as a conference treasurer
in the 105-year history of
the Southern Union.

—BY ROBERT HENLEY

Youth Accept Divine Design

Seventh-day Adventists often refer to themselves as a “peculiar people,” but more than 150 young people set themselves apart by “divine design.”

The second annual Pure Reality retreat came to a close on April 1.

Pure Reality, the brainchild of three dedicated mothers from Tabernacle

church in Miami, Fla., Donna Kaye Scarlett, Dominique Diambois, and Laudli Nedd, focuses on the importance of abstinence as part of God’s plan.

More than 200 teenagers from five churches—Tabernacle, Bethany, Mount Pisgah, Northwest Dade, and Faith—attended this year’s event held at Camp Kulauqa in High Springs, Fla.

The young people were divided by gender and age, between 12 and 20. They were counseled in small groups by mentors, and counseled in large groups by speakers. Eric Walsh of California, and life coach Heidi Day of Georgia talked to everyone about “Dirty Little Secrets”

in their closets, and how, with God’s forgiveness, anyone can start anew, and sins can be burned away just like the bonfire burned away the sins written down on paper that Saturday night.

The following week at AYS, the young people testified about the weekend. Many of them talked about how their lives had changed.

Closer connections to God were formed, and smiles, praise, and worship spread throughout the church.

On April 1, the Treasure Key ceremony was the culmination of Pure Reality, where the young people had a ceremony to confirm their commitments.

The young men were knighted as Gentlemen of Honor, complete with a sword, and the females were named Ladies of Virtue.

As Pure Reality continues to grow, there will be a need for more mentors to guide the young people. For more information, visit the website at www.purereality4u.org.

—BY JOHN DEVINE



ROBERT HENLEY

David Peay, pastor, performs the Gentlemen of Honor Ceremony.



ROBERT HENLEY

The pastor’s wife, Mara Peay, performs the Ladies of Virture Ceremony.

Westside Opens Community Center

On February 19, 2006, Barry Bonner, pastor, and the members of Westside Community church, in Tampa, Fla., conducted the opening ceremonies for their new community services center that will help to care for the people in their neighborhood.

C. L. Wright, community services director for the Conference, and Ella Thompson, Central West Community Services Federation president, were on hand to help launch the new service facility.

It has been said by many individuals who work in faith-based centers that the best way to

gauge a church’s worth in a community is to measure that church’s caring factor for the people who live in the shadow of the church doors.

Bonner wants the community to know that Westside Community church cares a great deal about the people who live around them. The question was asked during the opening of the center, “If your church suddenly left this community, would the people here miss you?”

This center will become a beacon light for the church. “When people realize that you love them, and are willing to help them

without regard to race, creed, color, or church affiliation, you then become a part of the fabric of that community,” said Bonner.

Some of the services that Westside will offer will be blood pressure screening, tutorial classes, referral services, counseling, community surveys, and cooking classes. After meeting some of the membership and talking with Bonner, there is

no doubt that this community services center will be in this neighborhood for a long, long time.

—BY C.L. WRIGHT



Barry Bonner (back row, left), C.L. Wright, director of community service, and members of the Westside church perform the ribbon-cutting ceremony.

Virtual Campus Starts this Fall

Southern will officially launch its virtual campus next fall.

The virtual campus is a new distance learning program offering online classes to students

abroad, students at other schools, working adults, and people who may not have considered attending Southern, says Dan Lim, Southern's dean of online learning.

"It will help a lot of people who feel more comfortable with a virtual campus," he says. "It's an option for people who can not come here physically."

The virtual campus

will also benefit teachers who needing recertification classes, and serve as a way to introduce Southern to students not familiar with the University.

—ANDY PHAM

Nursing Students Serve on Mission Trips

Southern Adventist University nursing students put their education to good use during spring break to aid people in Nicaragua and the Dominican Republic. Forty volunteers from the University and the community departed for 11 days.

"I love being able to use the nursing skills I've learned in real-life situations," says Ansley Howe, a junior nursing major who traveled to the Dominican Republic with 24 others. "People were so grateful for the simplest treatments we gave them, such as vita-

mins and worm medicine."

Shirley Spears, a nursing professor, led the group in the Dominican Republic. "I have a passion for missions and helping students catch the vision of what mission service is about," she says.

Barbara James, dean of the School of Nursing, went with 14 other volunteers to Nicaragua. "Mission trips are invaluable because they make us more aware of the worldwide need and make us appreciate our own resources more," says James.

—KATIE MINNER



Senior nursing student Danielle Slocum takes time to care for a Nicaraguan child.

Devotional Book Wins Awards

Southern has been honored with two awards for its devotional book, *Power for Mind and Soul*. The devotional was written by University President Gordon Bietz and conceptualized by Southern's marketing and university relations office.

The 21st Annual Admissions Advertising Awards recognized the devotional with the Silver Award in the category of external

publications. The Admissions Advertising Awards is the oldest, largest, and most prestigious advertising awards competition for educational institutions, with more than 3,500 entries submitted last year from every state in the country and multiple foreign countries.

The other award came from Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE). The council

recognized the book with the Special Merit Award in the category of Institutional Publications. CASE is an international association of professionals who promote and advance educational institutions.

—ANDY PHAM



To request your own copy of *Power for Mind and Soul*, please send your request to Lydia Rose, lcrose@southern.edu.

A Living Legend

Oakwood College participated in the well-deserved tribute that was paid to Huntsville-born civil rights pioneer Dr. Joseph E. Lowery on December 16-18, 2005. Sherman Cox, director of alumni relations, served on the planning committee with local and state officials, to coordinate the events that highlighted the life and legacy of Lowery, the former right-hand man of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Lowery, 84, was honored with a state historical marker that was unveiled at the site of his childhood

home, recognizing his efforts in civil and voting rights. On Saturday evening, Lowery, speaking to a rapt audience in the Oakwood College church, said it is "disgraceful" that most elections draw fewer than 50 percent of registered voters. He also noted that turnout among blacks is even lower, sometimes less than 30 percent.

Lowery urged the Oakwood audience to get behind reauthorization of the landmark Voting Rights Act of 1965. Several provisions of the law are set to expire in 2007, includ-

ing a clause that requires Alabama and other states with a history of discrimination to clear proposed voting changes with the federal government. The act passed Congress five months after "Bloody Sunday," when Alabama state troopers and local police attacked civil rights marchers on their march from Selma to Montgomery on March 7, 1964.

Lowery, a retired Methodist minister, was the driving force with King that pressed President Lyndon B. Johnson for voting rights legislation

starting in 1964. The 15th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution prohibits discrimination against voters on the basis of race, but most Southern states set up poll taxes, literacy tests, and other barriers to keep blacks from voting. The Voting Rights Act made it illegal for states to use those practices. Consequently, Lowery views this act to be the most important piece of legislation of our time, and challenged all present to make political responsibility a part of their religion.

—BY FRED PULLINS

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FOR/AAE

Carrie Oats

An Angel of Mercy for Breast Cancer Survivors

BY ALETHEA SKINNER

The Martin Luther King, Jr. Drum Major for Justice Humanitarian Award was presented to Carrie Oats, at a February 16, 2006, ceremony in Montgomery, Alabama. Rather than accepting the diagnosis and languishing, Carrie, a seven-year cancer survivor, has become a mentor and advocate for others who share her diagnosis.

On April 19, 1998, Carrie was diagnosed with breast cancer—stage 2 ductile carcinoma. “I don’t know how I got cancer,” she exclaims, “but no one is exempt from trials; the storms will come and crash. After the diagnosis, though, I became concerned about others who share my diagnosis, and I was distressed to discover that so many African-American women succumb to this disease. Once I got over the shock, I began to see my journey as a way to minister, to share medical and social resources I’ve garnered over the years.”

From a ministry that flows from her heart, crossing racial, creed, and cultural lines, her sole purpose is revealed—that God be glorified in all she does and says. She accepts speaking engagements at churches, community



Carrie Oats (center) shares a moment with Euell Singleton (left), an 11-year cancer survivor who mentored Carrie, and Martha Green (right), a four-year cancer survivor.

groups, nursing homes, and hospice meetings. She is also involved in public awareness activities such as “Bosom Buddies” and “Ride for the Cure.” She has accepted television and newspaper interviews, and even become a fashion model for this cause.

When she was diagnosed, she discovered that “no matter how well you know the Lord, and think you are prepared, you are not ready for this diagnosis (cancer).” “It has taken me all this time to get to this point of not really being afraid, especially at night—there’s something psychological about the night. Carrie spends a part of most nights encouraging those who have cancer and their families. She is a mentor, a blessing she received from other cancer survivors who mentored her.

In an especially poignant note in her journal she wrote, “Tomorrow, she (Tommie) is to have a six-to eight-hour operation, and I have rehearsed her pain.” That rehearsal is a part of her mentoring process.

Although she is daily reminded of the pain following surgery, chemotherapy, and radiation, she still rises to talk, to pray, to minister.

For Carrie, however, mentoring is more than telling; it is also showing. She tells how she met Margaret, her neighbor; how she sat under a tree in the backyard and, as they talked, lifted up her blouse so that Margaret, who was facing a mastectomy, could see the clean incision. She knew that in order to get through her chemotherapy and alleviate her fears, Margaret needed to see the end of the surgical process. Carrie was there.

There are other aspects of battling cancer that present a different type of challenge to Carrie. One of those aspects appeared when Tommie lost her battle. Unable to travel to the funeral, she went to a local store, purchased a small stuffed animal for each grandchild, and sent instructions that the animals were to be given to the children. “At that moment, when the casket is being rolled away, the children needed something soft to hold, something to ease the pain.”

Carrie refuses to allow her illness to define all that she is. She still seeks ways to minister beyond her diagnosis. People have asked her what agency she works for. When they do, her humble reply is, “The Lord, Himself.” Her life exemplifies a portion of the words on which her award is based—“I just want to leave a committed life behind.”



Carrie Oats

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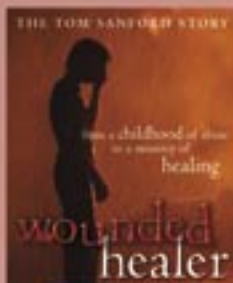
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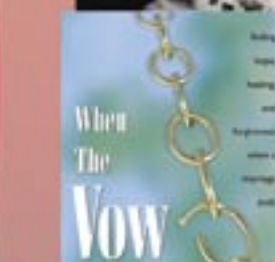
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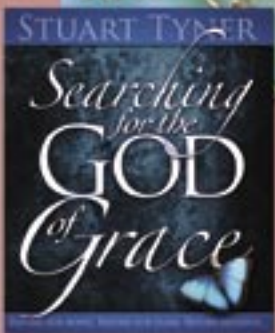
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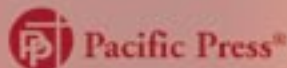
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BY SELMA CHAIJ MASTRAPA



PHOTO BY KATHY WATERS. USED BY PERMISSION OF HIGHLANDS TODAY.

Nicolas Chaij reviews the Spanish Bible, Nueva Reina Valera, in which “he updated the 1610 language to the vernacular of today’s readers,” wrote Marc Valero in the December 27, 2005, Highlands Today newspaper. “Chaij still drives, takes a daily walk, is a vegetarian, and doesn’t overeat or snack on sweets between meals,” the article also reported about the centenarian.

When I asked my father how he would like to celebrate his 100th birthday, he responded, “My pleasure would be to know that my 100 years of service have not been in vain; that I have lived to the honor of God.”

Dad’s home church, Avon Park, Florida, Spanish, set aside January 21—his 100th birthday—to honor him. The Sabbath sermon, delivered by Eliezer Melendez, Miami friend and retired pastor, celebrated the blessings of God on Dad’s life and service. Following a potluck dinner, tributes were given, and a slide show highlighted many miracles in his life.

Dad was 20 years old when he heard the Adventist message, and it brought deep joy and purpose to him. He enrolled at River Plate College in Argentina to study for the ministry and to take the nursing program.

In 1933, he married Margarita Legarda, a young teacher. Together,

they set out to lead a small congregation that, he says, “grew as I used my nursing skills to reach out in the community.”

One year later, he became publishing director for Uruguay Mission. Under his leadership, four full-time colporteurs increased to 100, and the sale of Spanish Bibles was added to the literature evangelist’s product line.

This was the beginning of a 40-year journey that took Dad into publishing leadership positions in Argentina, Antillian Union, South American Division, and Inter-American Division. He had also served as editor of the missionary magazine, *El Centinela*, at Pacific Press Publishing Association. Throughout his career, his greatest thrill was witnessing the growth of the Church and members enthusiastically sharing Christ’s love.

One day in retirement, while

praying for another place to serve, a Bible publisher asked Dad to help edit the grammar and spelling of the standard Spanish Bible, *Reina Valera*. As he began to work, Dad realized this translation desperately needed an update into modern-day language that readers could more easily understand.

Thus began his own 10-year labor of love as he carefully modernized the Spanish edition with the assistance of Bible experts from many religions and Spanish countries. In 1990, the *Nueva Reina Valera* Spanish Bible was first published. Since then, several revisions have been printed. The 2006 revised edition will soon be off the press, to which he gives “all the glory to God.”

As Dad looks back on the past 100 years, he says “God has guided in every step.”

Reflections On My Grandfather

A century ago, my grandfather, Nicolas Chaij, was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina, to Lebanese immigrants. He lived in an Arab neighborhood and only began to learn Spanish after entering school. Making the transition into a new culture while attending school was not easy.

When he was 20, two Adventist colporteurs, Braulio Pérez Marcio and Daniel Hammerly, studied the Bible with my grandfather, and he was baptized.

His fervor and testimony led to the conversion of his parents and five siblings. Through the years, this has resulted in more than a dozen members of Nicolas’ family working for the Church.

My grandfather’s 100-year-walk has set an example of humility, dedicated service, simplicity, and giving all to God. I’ve witnessed his total devotion and focus to living in the presence of God.

Without comparison, he has a deeper love for the Bible than anyone I’ve ever known. His journey truly is a reflection of Ecclesiastes 3:12: “I have come to know that there is nothing better than to rejoice and to do good during one’s life.”

—BY KEN CHAIJ

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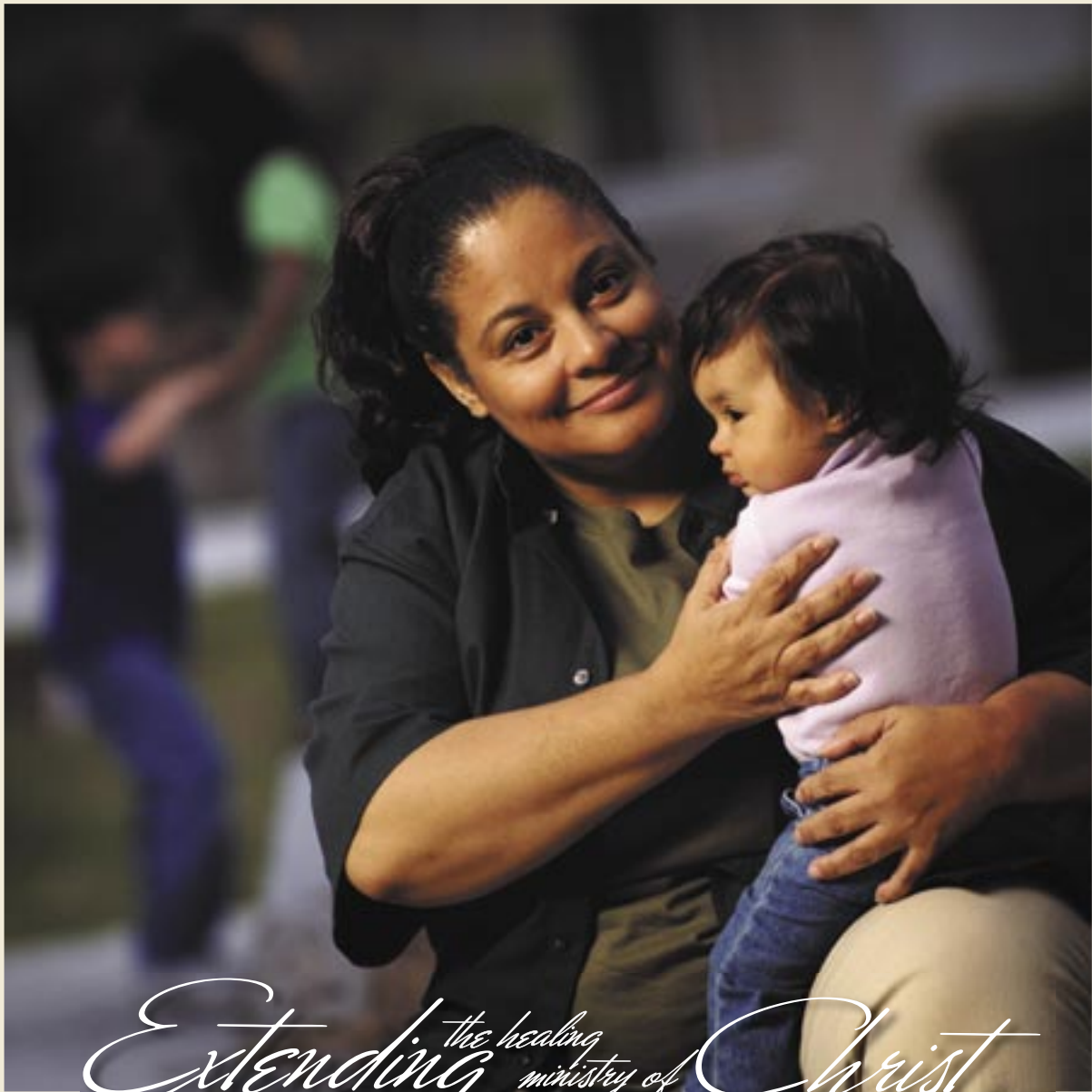
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com; or Dr. Michael Robinson, Medical Director, mrobinson@guamsda.com; Phone: 671-646-8881; Fax: 671-646-1292. (5)

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ASSOCIATE TREASURER for Southeastern California Conference, Riverside. Bachelor's degree (BA/BS) in accounting or business related required. MBA or CPA desired. Five years experience including supervision required. Call 951-509-2352. (5)

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CAVE SPRINGS HOME has openings for mentally retarded adult residents. Contact Craig or Joyce at 615-646-6962 or cshmra@yahoo.com (5-11)

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ANNOUNCING the INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION of Adventist Social Workers (IAASW), an exciting new organization for all Adventist Social Workers! We are passionate about making a difference in our Church and world. We want you to join and share this vision. To join, email Rene.Drumm@southern.edu, visit www.iaasw.com, or call 423-236-2766. (5)

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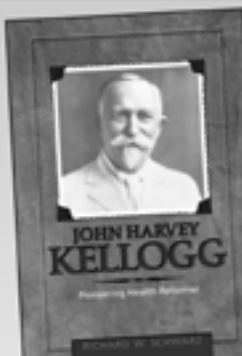
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Events Calendar

Carolina

Hispanic Young Adult Retreat
– May 5-7. Nosoca.
Mother/Daughter Banquet
– May 7. Charlotte.
Hispanic Pre-Teen Retreat
– May 19-21. Nosoca.

Florida

Complete calendar online--
<http://www.floridaconference.com/calendar.html>
Florida Pathfinder Events--<http://www.floridapathfinders.com/> or call 407-644-5000 x127.
Singles' Ministries Events--
Spiritual study groups, fellowship dinners, outings, and more.
<http://www.asamcf.org/>, melody.west@ahss.org, or 407-292-1421.
Evangelism Series
May 27-June 3. Orlando Spanish. Rolando & Rebeca de los Ríos.
July 2-Aug. 26. Kress Memorial. Bill & Sunshine Waters.
July 6-Aug. 12. Sarasota. Lester & Zula Pratt.
July 8-22. Deltona Spanish. Rolando & Rebeca de los Ríos.
Hispanic Youth Retreat--May 26-28. Camp Kulaqua. Details: 305-888-3907.
Community Bible Conference--112th Annual Florida Conference Camp Meeting. May 26-June 3. Details: <http://www.floridaconference.com/campmeeting/>
Camp Kulaqua Summer Camp--May 29-July 23. Details: <http://www.campkulaqua.com/> or 386-454-1351.
Statewide Summer Day Camps--June 5-July 28. Details: 407-644-5000 x129.
Maranatha Volunteers International Summer Family Project--June 8-18. Orlando Junior Academy. Annual Maranatha event designed to provide mission opportunities for an entire family with tasks appropriate for all ages. Details: Steve Case, <http://www.maranatha.org/volunteer/family/> or volunteer@maranatha.org.
Hispanic Camp Meetings --Details: 407-644-5000 x153.
June 9-11, Forest Lake Academy, Apopka.
June 23-25, Miami-Dade County Fair Expo Center.

Georgia-Cumberland

Communicating Christ Workshop--May 28. Collegedale, Tenn.
Festival of the Family--June 3. Lakeland, Ga.
Pathfinder Mission Challenge--June 4-18.
Women's Ministries Emphasis Day --June 10.
Regeneration Certification Training--June 14-16. South Georgia.
Health/Lay Evangelism Rally--June 17. Roan Mountain/ Mountain City, Ga.
Level 1 Women's Leadership Certification--June 23-25. Cohutta Springs.
Discover Prophecy Seminar--April 22-May 20. B.J. Boles. Alpharetta, Ga.
Hispanic Decision Meeting --May 5-13. Armando Miranda. Chattanooga, Tenn., Convention Center.
Mark Finley Meetings--May 19-June 24. Chattanooga, Tenn., Convention Center.

Gulf States

Conference Executive Committee --- May 9. Conference Office.
Bass Memorial Academy Graduation Weekend --- May 19, 9056 20.
Pathfinder Fair --- May 28. Camp Alamisco.
Pathfinder Council --- June 4. Camp Alamisco.

Kentucky-Tennessee

Conference Association Board
May 16. July 18.
Sept. 19. Nov. 7.
Conference Executive Committee
May 16. July 18.
Sept. 19. Nov. 7.
Highland/Madison Academy Boards -- May 11.
Ministers' Meeting -- July 30-Aug. 2. Indian Creek Camp.

South Atlantic

SAC Departmental Council
– May 3.
Community Service/Disaster

Retreat Training -- May 4-7. Camp Kulaqua.

Hispanic Women's Retreat
– May 12, 13.

ABC/ FHES Committee Meeting -- May 17.

SAC Quinquennial Constituency Session -- May 20, 21. Orangeburg, S.C.

SAC Graduation Weekend
– May 26-28.

Evangelism Committee Meeting -- June 5.

Southern Adventist University

1st Summer Session--May 2-27.

INSIGHT Writer's Workshop-- May 2-5.

Orchestra Guild Flea Market-- May 15.

Registration for 2nd Summer Session-- May 23-27.

2nd Summer Session Begins-- May 31.

Announcements

"Twenty-five Years: Tradition and Change" 26th Annual ASDAL Conference, June 18-24, Southern Adventist University, Collegedale, TN, USA. Sunday - School librarians pre-session. Monday - Adventist Resources pre-session. Info: www.asdal.org or Ruth Swan, President Elect/ Program Chair (ruth.swan@famuedu.org or 850.599.3370)

Granger, Washington SDA Church Celebrating 100th Anniversary -- July 28, 29. Yakima Valley Academy and Granger Jr. Academy reunion

held in conjunction. Details: www.grangersda.com; Email: pat@grangersda.com; Address: Granger SDA Church, P.O. Box 460, Granger, WA 98932; Phone: 509-854-1132 or 509-837-4092.

Oak Park Alumni Weekend

– Sept. 29, 30. Gates Hall, Nevada, IA. For more information, visit: www.opainiowa.com

Seventh-day Adventist Korean Language Institute Alumni Missionaries where are you?

If you served in South Korea as a student or regular Missionary, please send us your contact information in preparation for a reunion during summer/fall 2006. E-mail: marilynlarzus@hotmail.com or sali@puconline.org.

Spokane Junior Academy Class of 1957 ---

Anticipating a 50-year class reunion at SJA Homecoming in 2007, I would like to get in touch with the students who moved through the grades at SJA with us, whether they graduated in 1957 or not. If you have contact information for any of our classmates, please get it to Nadine Platner Dower at dickandnadine@comcast.net or call: 360-828-7146; or 13000 NW 47th Ave., Vancouver, WA 98685.

1956 Thunderbird Adventist Academy Graduates: We are trying to locate all of the Thunderbird Adventist Academy Graduates of 1956 for our 50th reunion meeting. Please write to: Eugene Wahlman, 12223 N. 39th Way, Phoenix, AZ 85032; or call 602-867-0264; or email: genenan@mailstation.com

Sunset

	April 28	May 5	May 12	May 19	May 26	June 2
Atlanta, GA	8:21	8:27	8:32	8:37	8:42	8:46
Charleston, SC	8:02	8:07	8:12	8:17	8:21	8:25
Charlotte, NC	8:09	8:15	8:21	8:26	8:31	8:35
Collegedale, TN	8:26	8:32	8:37	8:43	8:47	8:52
Huntsville, AL	7:32	7:37	7:43	7:48	7:53	7:57
Jackson, MS	7:42	7:47	7:52	7:57	8:01	8:05
Louisville, KY	8:35	8:41	8:47	8:53	8:59	9:03
Memphis, TN	7:46	7:52	7:57	8:02	8:07	8:11
Miami, FL	7:52	7:56	8:00	8:03	8:07	8:10
Montgomery, AL	7:27	7:32	7:37	7:41	7:46	7:50
Nashville, TN	7:35	7:41	7:47	7:52	7:57	8:01
Orlando, FL	8:01	8:05	8:09	8:14	8:17	8:21
Wilmington, NC	7:56	8:02	8:07	8:12	8:17	8:21

Remembering – Celebrating

BY MARVIN LOWMAN



Madison Sanitarium, 1926

Administrators, physicians, staff, and supportive friends of Tennessee Christian Medical Center (TCMC) gathered on Thursday evening, March 23, to remember and to celebrate nearly 100 years of service to the Madison, Tennessee, area. Just days before the official signing over of the hospital to Hospital Corporation of America's TriStar Health System, it was a bitter-sweet occasion—tears mixed with laughter. Although it was a sad occasion, there was much for which to be thankful and praise God.

One physician spoke of working previously at two hospitals. He stated that he had never known what their mission statement was—“something that was brought out only when the Joint Commission came to visit.” Then he added, “When I came to TCMC, I knew what this hospital's mission was. It became my mission. And, even though TCMC is closing, it will continue to be my personal mission.”

Others shared how TCMC had impacted their lives as they became part of fulfilling the mission: “We exist to reflect the life and work of Christ and to assist physical, emotional and spiritual healing.”

Hospital CEO Jimm Bunch told the group, “We have existed to touch people's lives so that some of them might come to know Him.... We know how the story ends. Some day there will be no more pain, no more suffering, no more ERs.... We cannot go back and start again, but we can start now and make a new ending.”

Julie Vega led the group in a candle lighting service, and Joyce Portella sang “Go Light Your World”:

So carry your candle, run to the darkness; seek out the lonely, the tired and worn; hold out your candle for all to see it; take your candle and go light your world.

In 1907, just three years after the establishment of the Nashville Agricultural Normal Institute (later Madison College), Madison Rural Sanitarium-Hospital was founded. The prominent and the not-so-well-to-do packed the tiny 12-bed cottage, embracing the restful environment, the healthful vegetarian meals, and the innovative methods of treatment. They came, too, because Christian doctors and nurses ministered to their spiritual, as well as physical, needs.

By 1954, the hospital had 218 beds. In 1965, the old sanitarium buildings were torn down and replaced with a new building. In 1976, Madison Hospital asked Adventist



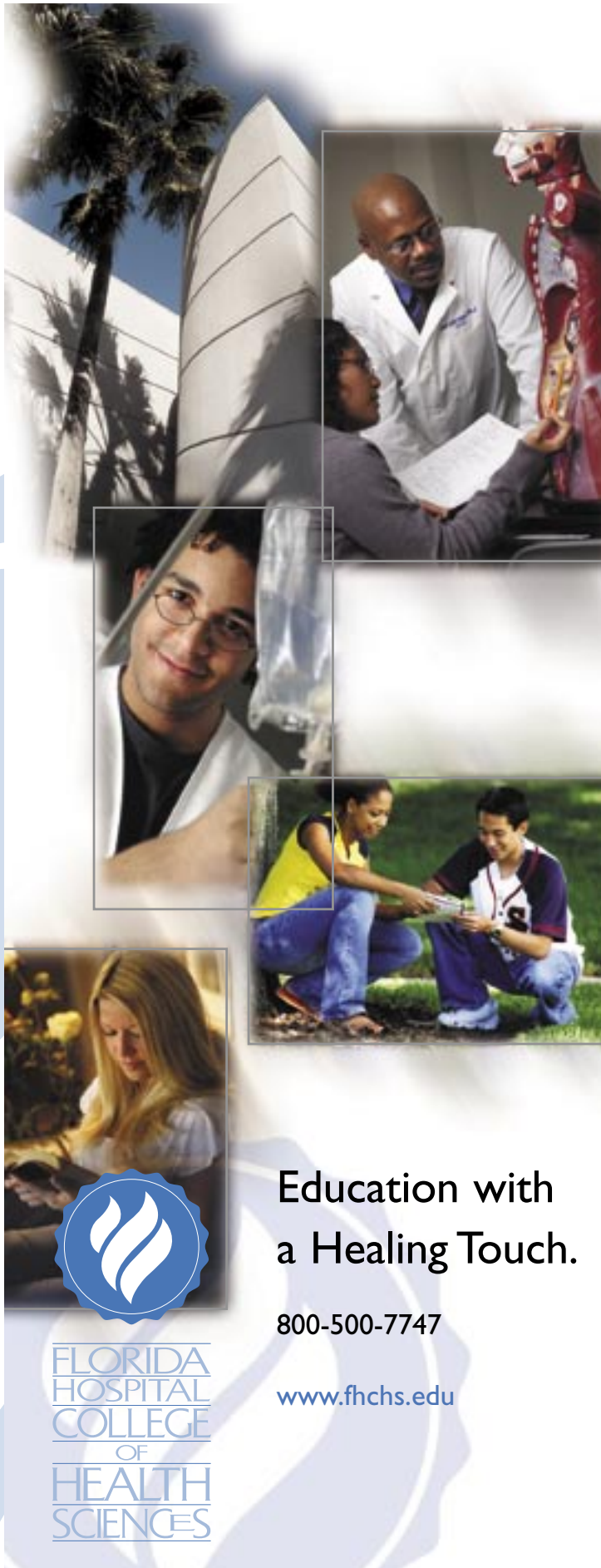
Health System (AHS) to assume full ownership. Eventually, the hospital grew to 311 beds.

TCMC has provided services for such well-known people as the Johnny and June Carter Cash family, Jerry Lewis, and Loretta Lynn. Minnie Pearl, aka Sarah Cannon, was a keynote speaker at a health fair sponsored by TCMC.

TCMC has struggled financially for some time, due to the extremely competitive market for health care services in the greater Nashville area. Late last year, AHS reached the conclusion that good stewardship of its resources called for a new direction. AHS believes that TriStar, which operates 15 hospitals in the region, has the critical mass to make the facility a success.



CEO Jimm Bunch addresses the audience during commemoration service.



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2004-

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