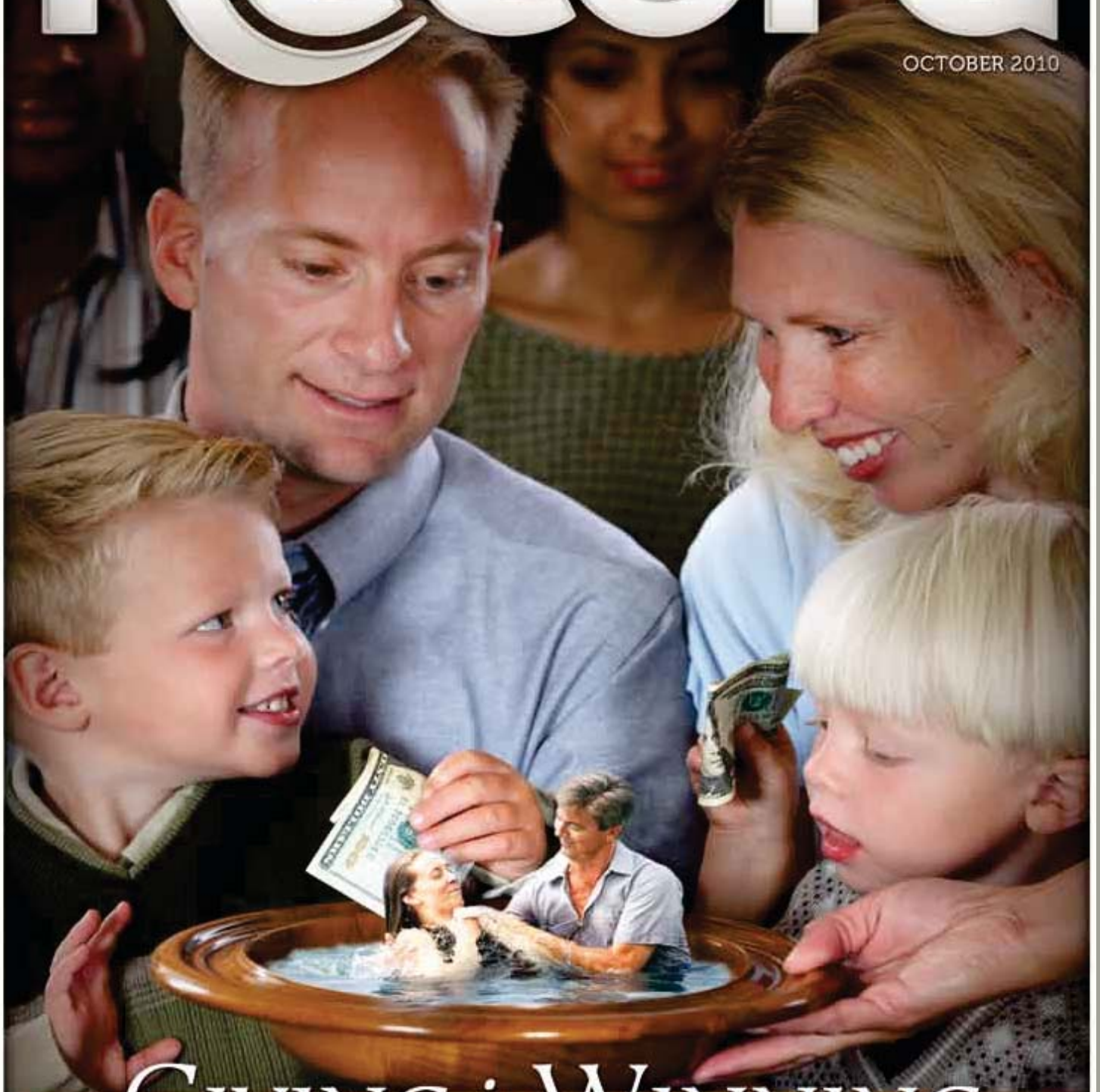


SOUTHWESTERN UNION

# Record

OCTOBER 2010



## GIVING *is* WINNING

THE STEWARDSHIP-EVANGELISM CONNECTION



# INTO ALL THE WORLD

8

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## STEWARDSHIP IN POSTMODERN CULTURE

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### On the Cover

We don't often have the opportunity to see the direct connection between our offerings and the blessings they yield. But when we give to God's cause, we can be confident that we are making an eternal difference.

# President's Perspective»

BY MAX TREVIÑO » SOUTHWESTERN UNION CONFERENCE PRESIDENT



## About Our Father's Business

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Max S. Treviño".

**If you were to visit any of the nine union offices across the North American Division,** you would discover similarities. All are keenly interested in evangelism, and all are concerned with carefully managing the funds entrusted to them. Each typically has one department that focuses on stewardship, and one that focuses on evangelism.

One department, it seems, is all about raising money, and the other one seems bent on spending it. The connection between the two isn't immediately clear, but there's a strong link between them.

The stewardship department doesn't exist simply to convince people to give money to the church. It nurtures members and helps them to make wise decisions with their time, talents, and resources. When members prosper, both spiritually and financially, the church prospers, as well.

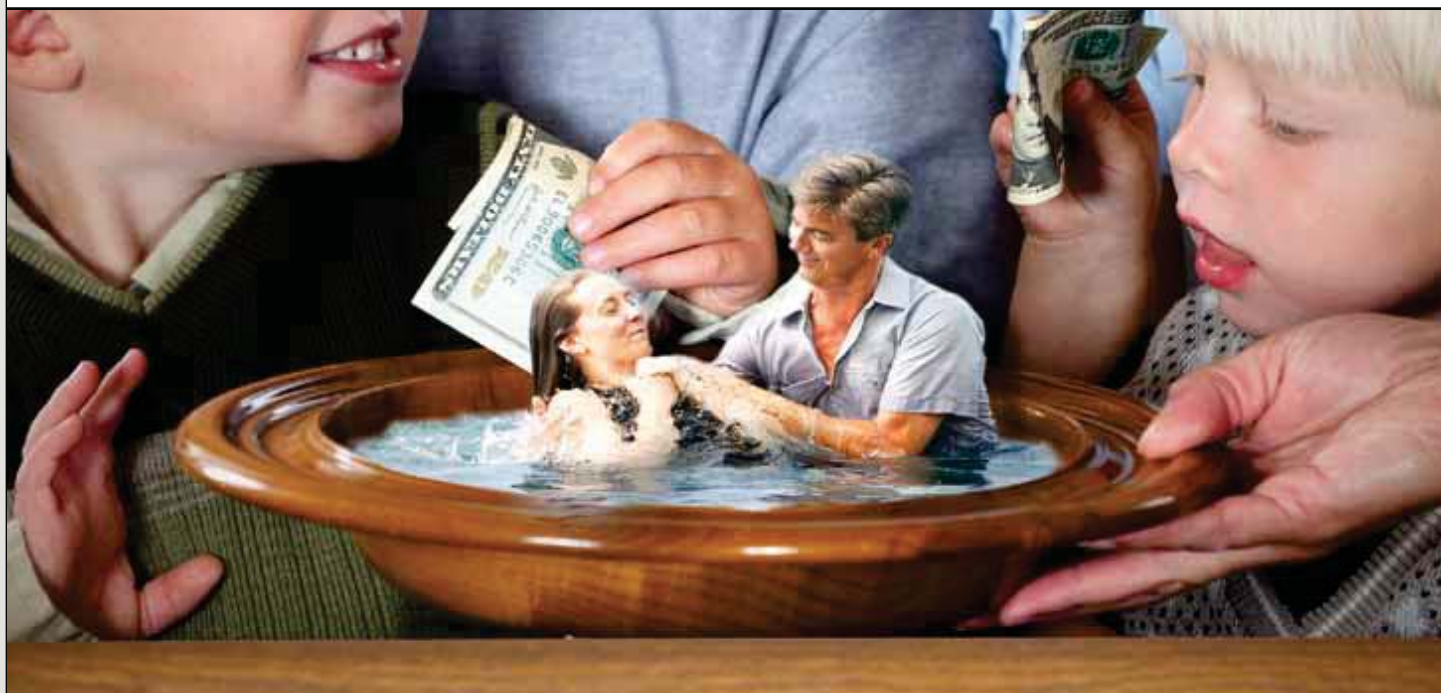
When we are financially stable, we have more to give. When we are spiritually wealthy, we are by nature focused on evangelism. We give of our time, our talents, and our resources to further Christ's kingdom. We are more concerned with others' needs than our own.

It's true that we allocate the lion's share of our financial resources to evangelism, and rightly so. At the age of 12, Jesus told his parents that He must be "about My Father's business." Our Father's business is evangelism—bringing people to Him for hope, health, and healing. Evangelism must be our top priority.

We don't often have the opportunity to see a direct connection between the money we place in the offering plate and souls that are won as a result, but there is one nonetheless. Lives are changed, and the benefits are passed from one generation to the next as we go about our Father's business.

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**Max Treviño** is the Southwestern Union president.





# CREATION Health

BY MONICA REED, M.D.

## Work. Eat. Sleep. Work. Eat. Sleep...

### 8 SIMPLE STEPS TO BREAKING THE CYCLE

**Despite advances in medical treatments and explosive technology gains,** millions of Americans suffer from preventable chronic diseases linked to lifestyle choices. Today, 60 percent of all deaths in America are tied to the top three lifestyle-related diseases: cardiovascular disease, strokes, and cancer. Forty percent of these deaths are entirely preventable by making positive choices.

#### Work. Eat. Sleep. Work. Eat. Sleep...

For many of us, our lives are so wildly out of balance we can't remember what it feels like to be calm, rested, and clear-headed. CREATION Health breaks the "never-ending cycle" because it captures God's balanced and exciting plan for enjoying whole person health. We've been exploring CREATION Health in this column this year. But for those who are new, here is a review of the eight universal principles we find embedded

within the Genesis story of Creation:

**C – Choice.** Choice is the first step toward improved health. Our destinies are shaped by our choices. Making healthy choices is the key to lifestyle improvement. Positive choices might include creating a personal mission statement, forming healthy habits, setting meaningful goals, and finding better balance. Research shows that people who believe they have more control over their lives tend to be healthier and live longer.

**R – Rest.** Rest comes with both a good night's sleep and taking time to relax. It includes a weekly day of rest and enjoying a regular vacation. The stress and pressures of life can accumulate over time and create a generalized "dis-ease" with life. Research indicates that relaxation techniques, when practiced regularly, can lower blood pressure, change one's mood and, in general, counteract the everyday effects of stress.

**E – Environment.** Environment is what lies outside of us but affects what takes place within us. Everything—sight, smell, sound, touch, and taste—influences our health. Research shows the health benefits of our larger environment (air and water quality) as well as one's immediate environment (light, sound, aroma, and touch).

**A – Activity.** Activity includes our mind and body. The goal is to be active physically, mentally, and spiritually. The best kind of physical activity (like a walk in a park with friends) also enhances the mind, spirit, and relationships. Activity should be enjoyable and a key part of our lifelong health. Research indicates that an increase in activity translates directly into improved health.

**T – Trust.** Trust in God ensures that our life is filled with purpose. It reveals the important relationship between spirituality and our well-being. Our faith, beliefs, and hopes all affect our health. Research demonstrates that people who have an active trust in God experience a host of health benefits, including a stronger immune system, less heart disease, lower blood pressure, and higher life satisfaction.

**I – Interpersonal Relationships.** Interpersonal relationships are important to our health and happiness. Social support fortifies our resolve and improves our health. Conversely, loneliness or toxic relationships can contribute to a downward spiral in overall health. Research has demonstrated the importance of family, friends, and support groups in recovery from illness.

**O – Outlook.** Outlook colors our life perspective and influences how we view our world and the people in it. It also affects the amount of hope and joy we experience. Research indicates that a positive attitude influences our health in powerful ways and can impact the progression of disease.

**N – Nutrition.** Nutrition is the fuel that drives our bodies. Research shows that a balanced diet produces energy and overall health. Of all the nutritional choices available, two are guaranteed to improve health and enable one to live longer: eating less and eating higher quality foods. Take time to evaluate your food intake and remember that even small improvements, done on a regular basis, can multiply the health benefits many times over.

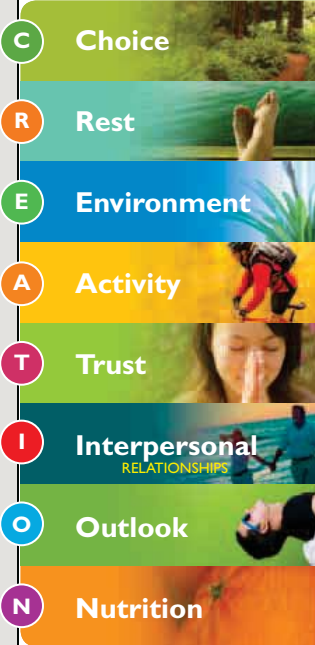
These eight universal principles form a blueprint for the health we yearn for and the life we are intended to live. As the pieces of the picture come together, you'll begin seeing a simple, yet profound unifying theme. You'll soon discover your own picture taking shape and with it, the tremendous potential to break out of the "never-ending cycle" and live life to the fullest! That's CREATION Health.

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**Monica Reed, M.D.**, is the CEO of Florida Hospital Celebration Health. She illustrates the eight revolutionary principles of CREATION Health in her new book, *The Creation Health Breakthrough*. It is available now wherever you buy books.

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*For more information about hosting a CREATION Health program at your church, contact Lynell LaMountain at 407.303.7711, ext. 32, or visit [www.CreationHealth.com](http://www.CreationHealth.com).*





# Shades of Grace

BY MIKE TUCKER » SPEAKER/DIRECTOR, FAITH FOR TODAY

## A Martyr's Faith

**Do you have a martyr's faith?** Those of us who live in the Western World are unlikely to have suffered persecution for our faith, so it would be impossible for us to know the answer to that question. However, some who track these things estimate that more Christians are being persecuted for their faith today than at almost any other time in history. Most of this persecution occurs in Muslim and Communist countries. In some of these countries, a decision to accept Jesus as Savior is tantamount to signing your own death warrant.

Smyrna was a persecuted church. Since they refused to compromise and make sacrifices to pagan gods, they were unable to work. This meant that the church in Smyrna was impoverished.

Polycarp, a beloved Christian leader who was martyred in his eighties, lived in Smyrna. Polycarp urged Christians in Smyrna to stand fast and refuse to compromise, even though it could mean that they would forfeit their lives. Members of the church said to Polycarp, "We have to make the sacrifices to the gods so we can work and earn money to buy food. After all, we have to live!"

"No you don't," Polycarp replied. "You only have to remain faithful."

Jewish leaders who opposed Christians in Smyrna were happy that the church was persecuted. They were thrilled when Polycarp received the death sentence. So anxious were some of the Jewish leaders to be rid of Polycarp that they gathered firewood for his execution on the Sabbath.

Jesus spoke comfort to those who were facing the specter of death.

Revelation 2:8-11 says: "And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write, 'These things says the First and the Last, who was dead, and came to life: 'I know your works, tribulation, and poverty (but you are rich); and I know the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death'" (NKJV).

Jesus refers to Himself as the one "who was dead, and came to life." What better comfort for people who lived every day with the possibility of forfeiting their life for the gospel? Jesus reminded them, "You may be martyred for your faith, but just as I died and

rose again, so too will you live again—forever!"

As He closes his message to Smyrna, Jesus gives one more promise. "He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death" (Rev. 2:11).

Jesus promises, "You may be martyred, but you will not die the second death. You will live forever with me."

Christians through the centuries have been emboldened by the promise Jesus made to their brothers and sisters in Smyrna. Thousands today cling to that promise as they face daily persecution.

I love the story of a young man who served as a student missionary to a Muslim country. One Sabbath when he went to church he saw a set of tattered old suitcases sitting next to the wall in the small sanctuary. He asked the pastor if he should move them before the service started.

The pastor responded, "No. Don't move them. They belong to a 14-year-old girl whose father told her that if she decided to be baptized she shouldn't bother coming home. Since she is to be baptized today, she brought her belongings with her."

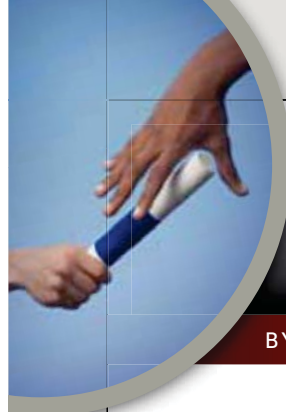
This young girl has chosen to be an "over-comer." How do we overcome? Revelation 12:11 says, "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death."

We can "overcome" the same way Smyrna overcame, by "the blood of the lamb." As we accept Jesus' sacrifice for our sins and give verbal testimony to that fact, the Holy Spirit empowers and emboldens us to obedience.

Should we ever be called on to suffer persecution, as we trust in the blood of the Lamb, Jesus will give us a martyr's faith. We, too, will be faithful.

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**Mike Tucker** is speaker/director for Faith for Today television. He writes from his home in Arlington, Tex.



# Pass it On...

A Monthly Focus on Evangelism in the Southwest

BY STEPHEN CARLILE

## To Give is to Evangelize

**W**e were ready! We had been studying, preparing, and practicing for weeks. This was our first ShareHim mission trip and we were excited to go and preach God's message to the people of the Dominican Republic. We had been fundraising and writing letters for the trip, and as I looked at our budget and the amount we had, I thought to myself, "Wow, that was easy!"

As the days got closer, we began to realize we were about to leave the comfort of our beds, hot showers, and home-cooked meals for almost an entire month. As I began to think even more about the budget, it just didn't seem to make sense as to why it was so low. So after a few phone calls, I quickly realized we were short—extremely short. I did not realize the hotel bill was not included in the budget set before us. As I sat at my desk, my mind raced a hundred miles an hour, trying to figure out where we were going to get that kind of money within that amount of time. In my mind, it was not feasible. But I knew God wanted us to go, and He would make a way for us to go.

As I was sharing the news with a few church family members, we were all brainstorming about what we could do when some-

one came up to me and asked me how much more we needed to raise. I did not share the number. I knew that they had already given a substantial amount and I did not want to place that on them. They kept asking for the amount and I kept refusing. Finally, they said to me, "Whatever you lack, consider it covered."

I had to sit down at that point. As I began to think about what God was doing through this individual, I was reminded of the prayer I had just prayed just hours before. Here I was trying to put a limit on what God was trying to do. God placed in that person's heart the desire to give, and here I was with my own agenda.

I realize that this person did something that many people do all the time, for mission trips around the world. But that does not make it insignificant. Without that donation, we would not have been able to reach hundreds in the Dominican Republic. It's not every day that we get to see our tithes and offerings go to win souls in such a direct way, but that is exactly what it does. Stewardship wins souls.

Whether it's directly or indirectly, knowing that God's money is used to reach the lost sons and daughters of this world gives me peace and joy that God is using me to win souls for His Kingdom.



▲ John Little, Jessica Oliveira, Stephen Carlile, Lindsay Mitchell, and Daniel Little, all from Adventist Fellowship, were part of the ShareHim team that traveled to the Dominican Republic in May.

◀ Pastor Stephen Carlile with some of his new friends in the Dominican Republic.



**Stephen Carlile** is the associate pastor for youth at Adventist Fellowship in South Tulsa.

## El Paso para Cristo

¿El Paso – qué cuadro viene a tu mente, botas de vaquero de Tony Lama, una canción del Oeste, instalaciones militares estadounidenses?

¡Yo no! Cuando pienso en El Paso, pienso en las casi tres millones de personas a ambos lados de la frontera en México y los Estados Unidos quiénes tienen que conocer a Jesús. Pienso en 145+ residentes de El Paso, preciosos que sólo tomaron decisiones de valor eterno para unirse con la gente de Dios en El Paso para ayudar a proclamar “la Verdad que es en Jesús” para que el trabajo del Señor pueda ser terminado, así apresurando la segunda venida de Jesús. ¡Nosotros podemos bajarnos de esta “vieja pelota de barro” e irnos a casa!

Déjame decirte como todo esto ocurrió. Hace un año el Comité Ejecutivo de la Unión del Suroeste dirigido por nuestro presidente Max Trevino fue a Livingston, Zambia para predicar 40 reuniones evangelísticas en Zambia y Zimbabue. Algunos de nosotros comenzamos a pensar, si podemos hacer esto en Livingston, por qué no en casa. Buford Griffith y Eduardo Canales, dos vicepresidentes de la Unión del Suroeste, me dijeron, tenemos que combinar nuestros esfuerzos con un poco de empuje de evangelización en el Suroeste como hicimos en África. Comenzamos a poner proyectos y a trabajar juntos para hacer una campaña de evangelización que implica todas las iglesias con las reuniones que comienzan todas en la misma fecha. Nuestro plan era usar la publicidad conjunta como prospectos, Internet, carteles publicitarios, televisión, y afiches. Jim Stevens, el presidente de la Conferencia de Texico, y Bill Wright, el presidente de la Conferencia Regional, ambos estuvieron muy entusiasmados apoyaron el empuje. Los siguientes pastores participaron en la predicación y organización de las reuniones: Eduardo Canales, Buford Griffith Hijo, Duane McKey, Nicolás Herrera, Rodel Liwanag, José Padilla, Manuel Rodríguez, Gladstone Simmons, y Fernando Villegas. Alabamos al Señor por las decisiones tomadas para Jesús.

Para todos los que participamos en la maravillosa predicación de mensajes noche tras noche, nunca seremos los mismos debido a los nuevos amigos que hemos hecho para Jesús.

► El pastor Nicolás Herrera bautiza a la Sra. Peña antes de aceptar el mensaje Adventista. Ella era una líder para otra iglesia evangélica en El Paso.



¿QUÉ SIGUE? Febrero del 2011 “Houston para Cristo” donde 100 reuniones evangelistas comenzarán todas al mismo tiempo a través de la gran metrópoli de Houston, una ciudad donde es casa a más de 100 lenguajes diferentes los cuales tienen que conocer a Jesús. ¡Ellos nos dicen que algo como esto nunca se ha hecho antes aquí en los Estados Unidos, ahora es el momento de hacerlo y sobre todo en la Unión del Suroeste y en Texas! El presidente de la Conferencia de Texas, Leighton Holly, y el presidente de la Conferencia Regional, Bill Wright, están más que regocijados por dar el paso a esta nueva empresa sin precedentes para Cristo aquí en los Estados Unidos.

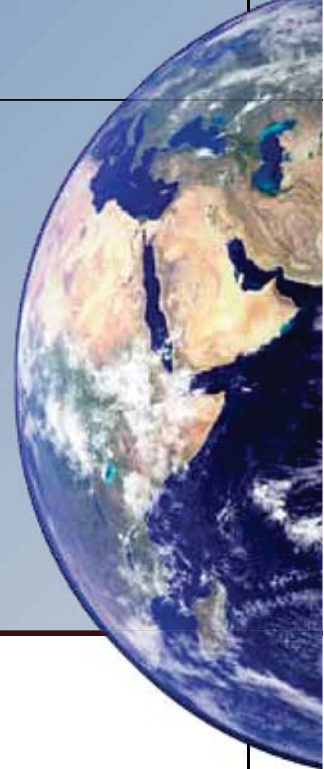
Pero esto no termina aquí porque sólo después de que tú leas este artículo 40 nuevas iglesias de un día serán construidas por constructores de la Conferencia de Oklahoma en Bulawayo, Zimbabue. En sociedad con ASI, los Ministerios de the Quiet Hour, ShareHim, la Conferencia de Iowa-Missouri y la Conferencia de la Unión del Lago, 40 reuniones evangelistas serán celebradas en aquellas 40 nuevas iglesias en octubre del 2011. También en octubre del 2011 anticipamos que Joshua, Iglesia Adventista de Texas se unirá con nosotros en Livingston, Zambia para sostener 20 reuniones evangelísticas en las 20 iglesias de un día que fueron construidas este año por ASI, Maranata y participantes de la Unión del Suroeste. Además de estos sitios de reunión ya mencionados con la mayor probabilidad tendremos unas 10 reuniones evangelísticas adicionales en Gweru, Zimbabue que serán celebradas al mismo tiempo trayendo el número total de reuniones a 70. Como una nota de interés, el desafío de la cosecha es grande en Zimbabue con casi dos millones que dicen ser Adventistas del Séptimo día pero sólo 600,000 han sido bautizados. Piense en la necesidad tremenda de iglesias y escuelas y reuniones evangelísticas para llenarlos.

Mi amigo Garwin McNeilus de ASI me dice que en sociedad con Maranata quince escuelas elementales y algunas escuelas secundarias así como 500+ iglesias de un día serán erigidas en los próximos meses. No vas a orar conmigo por estos proyectos porque Jesús dijo que la cosecha es abundante pero los trabajadores son pocos, Mateo 9:37, NASV.

**Duane McKey** es el vicepresidente de la Unión del Suroeste para evangelismo.

# INTO ALL THE WORLD

By G. Edward Reid



**T**welve times a year, usually on the second Sabbath of the month, Adventist churches promote the “World Budget Offering.” This is a regular reminder that we are about our Father’s business—seeking to fulfill the Great Commission. No individual member, no single congregation, not even a mega-church could take the gospel to all the world. But by working together as a sisterhood of churches, with God’s blessing, we have developed an infrastructure from which to work and evaluate needs and accomplishments.

The setting of the Great Commission says more than we might realize. That should give us great comfort. When Jesus said, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth... therefore... I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:18-20), He was this side of the crucifixion and the resurrection. He was standing a step away from His heavenly home. He was now the risen Savior. These words were the announcement that His sacrifice in behalf of man was full and complete. The conditions of the atonement had been fulfilled. The work for which He came to this world had been accomplished. He had won the kingdom! He had wrested it from Satan and had become the Heir of all things.

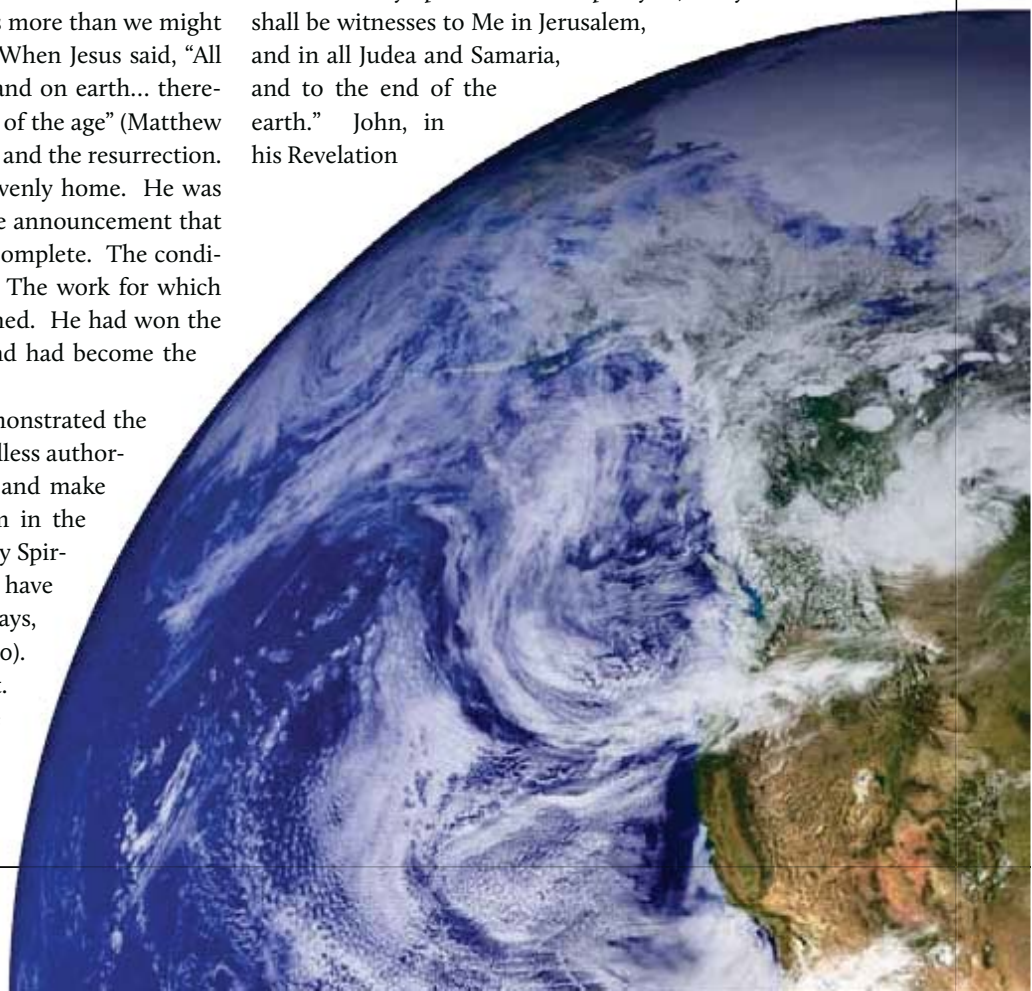
The Creator of heaven and earth had demonstrated the power of love. And now, clothed with boundless authority, He gives the command, “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matt. 28:19, 20). Then a cloud received Him out of their sight.

With this setting in mind, Ellen White noted, “Before ascending to heaven, Christ gave His disciples their commission. He told them that they were to be the execu-

tors of the will in which He bequeathed to the world the treasures of eternal life.... To you, My disciples, I commit this message of mercy” (*Acts of the Apostles*, p. 27).

## Big Picture Thinking

In Luke’s account of this Great Commission setting recorded in Acts 1:8, he records Jesus saying, “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” John, in his Revelation







of Jesus Christ, chapter 14, verse 6, in an end-time setting, speaks of the everlasting gospel being preached to those who dwell on the earth—to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people. From God’s perspective, though, not all will respond positively. Everyone must hear the good news.

In developed countries like ours, we have the privilege of helping in a strong way to fulfill this God-given commission. We do so with our financial resources, our personal involvement, and our prayer support.

## Mission Giving’s Effect on the Local Church

In their insightful book, *Behind the Stained Glass Windows*, John and Sylvia Ronsvalle reported that many have come to an incorrect conclusion about mission giving. The stewardship team discovered that many pastors believe that funds that go out of the congregation takes money out of their own baskets. They see these appeals as a great big vacuum cleaner sucking money out of the congregation. They are wrong! Pastors tend to think that if they push missions too hard, it will hurt the local operations. Studies tend to show the opposite. Pastors should know better, but they see missions as competing with local budget needs.

Pastors who take their church members on short-term mission trips have a better perspective. In fact, we are told, “To show a liberal, self-denying spirit for the success of foreign missions is a sure way to advance home missionary work; for the prosperity of the home work depends largely, under God, upon the reflex influence of the evangelical work done in countries afar off” (*Gospel Workers*, p. 465). God is doing great things all over the world—nearby and far off. I encourage you to lend your influence to our worldwide work.

This article, written by **G. Edward Reid**, stewardship director of the North American Division, was originally published in the September 2008 issue of *Pastor’s Stewardship Newsletter*.

Earth photos courtesy of NASA Goddard Space Flight Center



# STEWARDSHIP IN POSTMODERN CULTURE

By John Mathews

*In the U.S. only nine percent of born-again adults report that they give 10 percent of their income to charity. Is stewardship on thin ice in our postmodern culture? Does it really make a difference anymore?*

The following facts provide a startling picture-window glimpse of the economic landscape of postmodern America. The United States is the wealthiest nation in the history of the world. If you make \$1,500.00 per year, you earn more than 75 percent of the world's population. Americans save little. Most Americans' saving rate is negative and for those that do save, it's a little over four percent. There were over one million bankruptcy filings in 2008. Stress has a negative influence on the personal and professional lives of half of all Americans. The number-one reason for divorce is money or the handling of it. On July 20, 2009 the average credit card debt per household was \$7,861.00. Penalty fees on revolving credit cards made up almost half the industry profits. There are more Barbie dolls in the U.S. than people and more boats than harbor slips to hold them. In 2007 we spent \$9.9 billion on soft drinks. The square footage of homes is increasing while the number of occupants shrinks.

It is within this economic landscape that postmodern theory states, "Truth is not universal, is not objective or absolute, and cannot be determined by a commonly accepted method...truth is socially constructed, plural, and inaccessible to universal reason." Jill M. Hudson states, "No longer are the rules and principles that formerly governed society understood to be passed down through families, religious groups, or community norms. Morals, ethics, and values are created and re-created out of personal experience." And finally, postmodern psychologist Robert Jay Lifton states, "those who are consistent in their beliefs, who try to live according to a specific set of principles, and who imagine that they have a single core identity are mentally ill."

The stewardship of giving according to postmodern theory means that you can create your own ethics and morals about giving. It is a personal subjective experience, not an absolute belief to be governed by. Your belief may be different from others but can coexist in harmony. No one can tell you how to give, because it is your business and you make it what you want it to be. There is no

question that the stewardship of giving and postmodern theory are difficult, if not impossible, partners. It is the encroachment of postmodernism that puts stewardship on thin ice.

## Stewardship in the Church

Money is to some degree considered a taboo subject in churches. There is fear that its discussion will create guilt and anxiety, so pastors avoid preaching on the subject. Clergy do not want to offend or make members uncomfortable. Many of today's churches have an inward focus, a "keep the doors open, and let's take care of ourselves" attitude known as the "scarcity syndrome." Reports show that bank financing accounts for approximately 52% of church buildings with mortgages, and the largest portion of the congregations' budget going to pay that mortgage. Randy Alcorn states, "There is more blindness, rationalization, and unclear thinking about money than anything else." It should be of no surprise, then, that giving has declined for the past 30 years and now some think that the parachurch ministries do most of the Biblical teaching on money. Members appear to be participating in church and worship, but are doing other things with their money.

It is proposed that in postmodern culture, churches cannot expect that the old methods of giving will continue to fund the local work. Articulating vision will regain the momentum of church stewardship. If American Christians averaged 10 percent tithe to their organizations, the phrase, "it would transform the world" would be an understatement. Did you know that those Christians giving the most percentage of income earn the least amount of money? "Americans who earn less than \$10,000 gave 2.3 percent of their income to religious organizations, whereas those who earn \$70,000 or more gave only 1.2 percent." The working poor are the most generous.

## Stewardship in the Bible

The study of stewardship in the Bible reveals that first, God owns everything (Ps. 24:1). Secondly, we are stewards of His property (Ps. 8:6-8). The third principle of biblical stewardship is to be found faithful (1 Cor. 4:1, 2). It is this third principle that is the baseline and the foundation for commitment that should differentiate the Christian from postmodernism. Faithfulness involves believing in a consistent and specific set of principles called absolutes. The best evidence of faithfulness is how we give and manage money.

One day Jesus was watching people give to the temple treasury. He observed the pious Pharisees giving with obvious display and ceremony. They wanted to be noticed and seen. Yet just a few days later with murder in their minds, they were on their way to arrest Jesus. Money and power often go together along with a sense of self-worth and self-satisfaction. They held giving in high esteem but failed to understand genuine faithfulness of the heart. They practiced one thing but did another. Church statistics and research in this postmodern culture seem to indicate that members are participating in church and worship, but do not stand on the baseline of stewardship, which is faithfulness. We tend to give lip service but manage our money as secular postmoderns.

In the crowd that day was a poor widow who hesitantly approached with an offering in hand. With her decision made, the gift was given quickly and unnoticed. Hoping to remain in obscurity she hurried away, but her eyes met the eyes of Jesus. Her gift was nothing compared to that of the Pharisees, but His gaze noted the passion of her heart and that gift of faith lighted the countenance of Christ. This now penniless widow, with eyes riveted on Jesus, heard Him say to His disciples, "I tell you the truth, this poor widow has put in more than all of them." The gift she gave fearfully was returned to her in Christ's loving affirmation. Tears of joy welled up in her eyes as she left the temple. Jesus observed her active faith as she gave sacrificially. She gave all she had to support the work of the temple and to a cause she loved. Her gift was a genuine expression of her faith that has contributed "in a thousand directions to the extension of the truth and the relief of the needy." It was a conviction that held consistent beliefs in absolutes. In return, faith grew stronger, confident, and active. Only faithfulness to a vision or a Person produces this kind of gift. Could we do the same with our last fifty cents? Faithfulness will always do more than required. This kind of faithful stewardship really does make a difference.

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**John Mathews**, the Southwestern Union Planned Giving and Trust Services director, has a passion for stewardship.



# THE FOLLY OF PRESTIGE: KENOSIS, GLORY, AND EDUCATION

*Editor's note: The following article is condensed from an address given during the 2010 Convocation ceremony on the Southwestern Adventist University campus. We felt that the message was timely regarding our discussion on stewardship and evangelism, since our educational system exists to bring students to Christ. —Mark Bond*

I dislike the word “prestige.”

Prestige suggests glamour, dazzling illusion, and magical influence. There is a whiff of snobbery about the word, and advertisers love it. Driving the right car, or wearing fashionable clothes, or living in the right neighborhood is “prestigious.”

This flashy word is sneaking its way into some mighty strange places. What does it mean to say “I attend a prestigious college” or “This institution enjoys growing prestige?” Does it mean people will be envious of your privileges? Will people who never set foot on campus wear your university sweatshirts?

There are many other ways to judge a college. And by some of those standards, Southwestern Adventist University is not very impressive. This university is not richly endowed or widely known. To be brutally honest, a person does not gain prestige or status by enrolling here—or by working here.

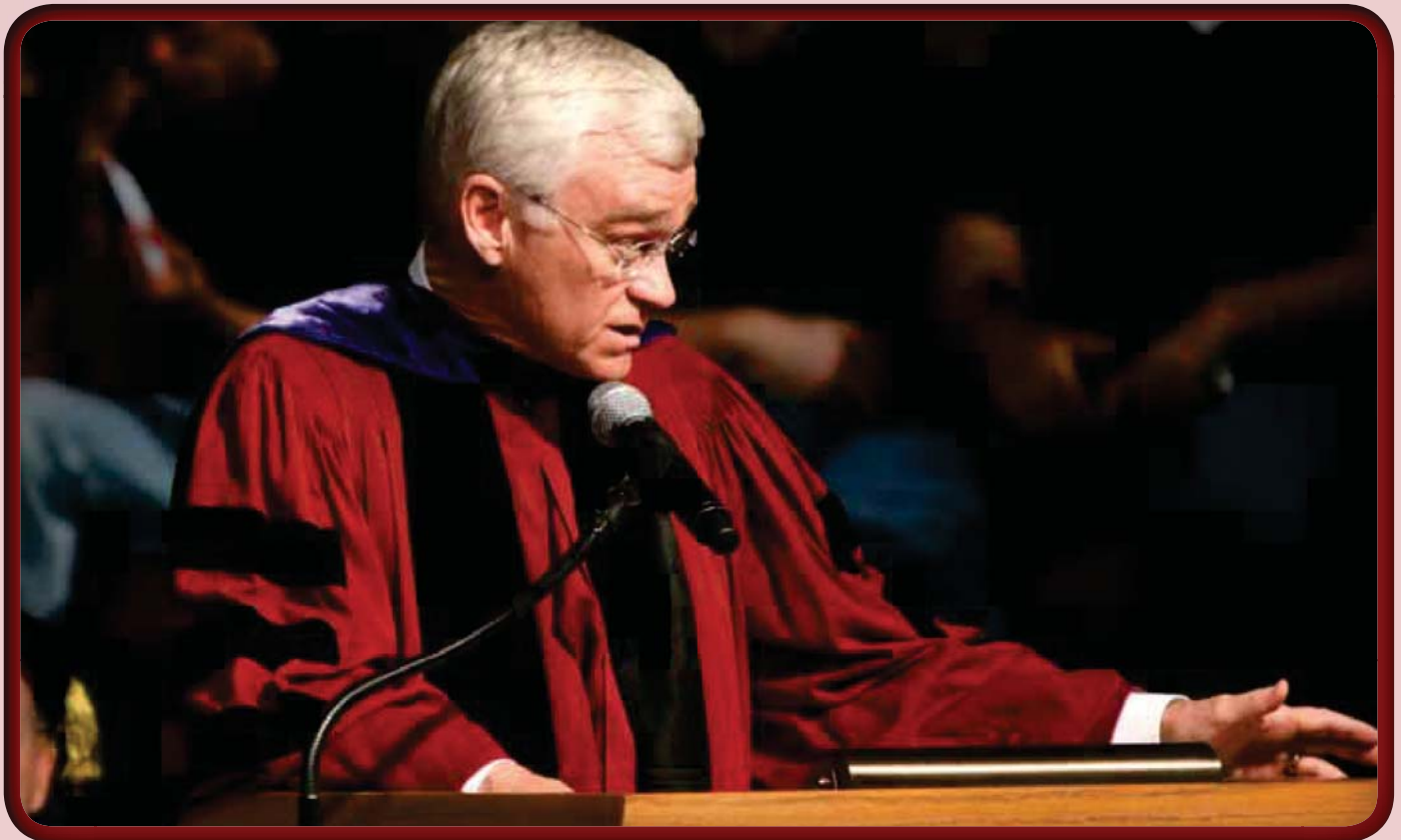
Have I uttered heresy? Let me quickly explain.

Compare Southwestern Adventist University, for example, to

Grinnell College in central Iowa. Grinnell is not at the same elevation as Harvard or Stanford or the University of Texas. It is a small school of about 1,500 students, but it has three times as many teachers as we do, and a campus adorned with exquisite buildings. Grinnell’s tuition and fees are about twice what we charge, and the school turns away about 60 percent of those who apply. Grinnell also has an endowment of \$1 billion, making it the richest four-year college in America.

Perhaps the comparison of Southwestern with Grinnell is extreme. Maybe a more reasonable benchmark for us might be the other Southwestern University, a college in Georgetown, Tex., which has Methodist origins.

The “other Southwestern” has about 1,200 students—not far from Southwestern at its peak. But it has more than double the number of faculty, and its budget is about three times bigger than ours. The last time I checked, its endowment was thirty times more than Southwestern Adventist University’s. Students at the



“other Southwestern” can choose from a remarkably rich variety of majors, ranging from art history to Chinese and philosophy.

Should it be our goal to match Grinnell or the “other Southwestern”—to expand our campus, add to our faculty, increase our academic offerings, and pursue a huge endowment so that we may be perceived as equal? If we follow the right strategy, will people someday think of us first when they hear the name “Southwestern University”?

I ask these questions to remind us of our mission.

I have a fondness for North Carolina’s Latin motto: *esse quam videri*—“To be rather than to seem.” I believe Adventist education should focus on what we are, rather than on how we wish to be perceived. We must actually deliver what we promise rather than simply polish increasingly eloquent promises. In the spirit of *Esse quam videri*, I see much about Southwestern Adventist University—past, present, and future—that is truly excellent.

In all its incarnations, from Keene Industrial Academy to our current name, this school’s claim to greatness lies in its record of changed lives. We have not restricted ourselves to students who were already coasting to success, nor have we adopted a risk-free definition of education. From the start, Southwestern has courageously aimed at “the harmonious development of the physical, the mental, and the spiritual powers,” to seek to prepare students not just for a job, but for life, even eternal life.

The most important measurements of success transcend riches or reputation. At the University of Chicago, for all its wealth and distinction, and despite the numerous Nobel laureates on the faculty, I never found a teacher superior to Harry Leonard, my history instructor at humble Newbold College in Berkshire, England. He challenged me in the classroom, demanded my best rather than “good enough,” and insisted on clarity and precision in the distinctive essays he assigned every two weeks. He also taught me by his godly example.

Likewise, no one at Chicago influenced me quite like my professors at Andrews University. Don McAdams, a brash young man only a few years older than his students, was an inspiring and demanding teacher. His essay examinations were works of art. I left the test periods still thinking about his questions. (He later agreed to become president of a struggling little college in Keene, Texas.)

There are many such Christian educators teaching here at Southwestern. They know that God has given them the duty of praying for their students, as well as correcting their grammar, challenging their logic, probing their assumptions, and testing their hypotheses.

I recently asked several of our faculty and staff members how they were changed by a Southwestern education. They described teachers, work supervisors, and deans who intervened in their lives with dramatic results. They talked about events in and out of the classroom. Their stories were filled with new demands, unexpected affirmations, and miraculous new directions. None used the word “prestige” even once.

These voices reveal that Southwestern offers excellent education, though we are not rich or famous or “prestigious.” The truth is, many of America’s elite institutions are failing, both morally and educationally. Despite their reputations, many are not deliv-

ering the “truth” or “light” that their old university mottoes promise. In reality, some of the nation’s best schools are not necessarily the best known.

If we build on our past successes, continuing to offer a Christ-centered education, we may not become rich or famous. But we will serve the rapidly-growing Adventist population in Texas, New Mexico, Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Louisiana. Our work, if we do it well, will also attract the attention of Seventh-day Adventist students and parents around the nation who will want to know more about a school that is rigorous yet open, diverse but not divided, orthodox but not narrow, and faithful without being simplistic. As we train teachers, nurses, and entrepreneurs, we will be increasingly valued contributors to our communities. Students outside our denomination may be drawn to seek their education at this distinctively Adventist institution.

I would like to see Southwestern so thoroughly integrate religious knowledge and spiritual formation into its curriculum, so clearly explicate the role of Christianity in western civilization, and so articulately challenge relativism and materialism, that Christians around the nation will sit up and take notice. If we follow God’s leading, we will be blessed beyond our greatest imagination.

And “blessed” is better than “prestigious.”

To seek prestige is to miss the point of the story of Jesus. That’s where the theological term “kenosis” comes in, which refers to Christ’s renunciation, his self-emptying obedience to His Father. The apostle Paul gave the best and most powerful description of kenosis in a challenging letter he wrote to the Philippians: “If you’ve gotten anything at all out of following Christ, if his love has made any difference in your life...then do me a favor: Agree with each other, love each other, be deep-spirited friends. Don’t push your way to the front; don’t sweet-talk your way to the top. Put yourself aside, and help others get ahead. Don’t be obsessed with getting your own advantage.”

Paul urged the Philippians to think of themselves “the way Christ Jesus thought of himself. He had equal status with God but didn’t think so much of himself that he had to cling to the advantages of that status no matter what.” Christ “set aside the privileges of deity and took on the status of a slave, became human!” He humbled himself, renounced special privileges, and “lived a selfless, obedient life and then died a selfless, obedient death.”

“Because of that obedience,” Paul concluded, “God lifted him high and honored him far beyond anyone or anything, ever, so that all created beings in heaven and on earth . . . will bow in worship before this Jesus Christ, and call out in praise that he is the Master of all, to the glorious honor of God the Father.”

Let us remember that Southwestern Adventist University is dedicated to sharing in Christ’s kenosis. The education we offer is not about self-promotion or elbowing our way to the top. It is about self-emptying and sharing in the sufferings of Jesus. If you choose to become a missionary doctor, a preacher, a Christian scholar or teacher, or merchant, you may sacrifice prestige. But you will share in Christ’s shining glory, now and forever.

**Eric Anderson** is the president of Southwestern Adventist University in Keene, Tex.

## Evangelism Update

What an amazing year this has been for evangelism in the Southwestern Union! The union office has been directly involved in organizing and conducting 111 meetings, both at home and abroad, resulting in more than 3,200 baptisms. Some of our speakers were experienced preachers. Some did not know if they could or even think they should preach, but what life changing experiences took place.

There was the young Southwestern Adventist University student who shared, "I will never be the same." And the SWUC Executive Committee member who was terrified before preaching, but who excitedly proclaimed after the event, "This has been the best experience of my life!"

What about the more than 500 churches in our union that have held evangelistic meetings? Were they blessed? Absolutely! They were blessed with more than 5,000 who have been baptized and have experienced transformations in their lives beyond belief! Yes, this has been our best year ever in soul winning in our conferences and in our churches. Praise the Lord!

What is next? Is the work finished? What can we do?

**I** We can be kind, gentle, and friendly with our new members so they will want to

remain a part of their new church family.

**2** We can encourage our new members to join the quest for souls. No one is more on fire than a new believer. And nothing solidifies faith like sharing it. Let's capture their enthusiasm for truth by continuing to share the light with our communities.

**3** We can lead by example. We must get off of the pews and get out into our neighborhoods. We can't expect new members to do something we refuse to do ourselves!

**4** We can learn from the example of a 16-year-old girl in south Texas who was not ashamed of the gospel but shared Jesus with her friends and gave them Bible studies. She surprised the church when she brought 12 baptismal candidates with their baptismal bags packed and were ready to be baptized. That church and that young lady will never be the same! And, Jesus would say, "Go thou and do likewise."

Again, is the work finished? No, but we are building momentum. I can hear Jesus saying, "Rejoice with me for the lost are found." I can almost smell the green grass of paradise. And, I can almost see the reflections of the light at the end of the tunnel.

I hear rumors of an unreached group of people numbering several hundred million (some of whom are our neighbors) actively studying the prophecies of the

second coming of Jesus from an Adventist perspective. When they come, will we be ready? I hope so. I am tired of this "old ball of mud" and I want Jesus to come.

But before He comes, somebody must go somewhere and tell someone, because Jesus said, "Go, preach, teach, and baptize." Will you say with me as did Isaiah, "Lord, here am I, send me!"?

**Duane McKey is the vice president for Evangelism at the Southwestern Union.**

## Evangelism in the Southwest

When you hear "El Paso," what picture comes to your mind? Tony Lama cowboy boots, a country western song, U.S. military installations? Not me! When I think of El Paso, I think of almost three million people on both sides of the border in Mexico and the United States who need to know Jesus. I think of 145+ precious El Paso residents who just made decisions of eternal value to join with God's people in El Paso to help proclaim the "Truth as it is in Jesus" so the Lord's work can be finished in their backyards, thus hastening the second coming of Jesus. We, in turn, can get off of this "old ball of mud" and go home!

Let me tell you how all of this came about. One year ago the Southwestern Union Conference Executive Committee, led by our president, Max Trevino, went to Livingston, Zambia, to preach 40 evangelistic meetings in Zambia and Zimbabwe. Some of us began to think, if we can do this in Livingston, why can't we do it back home? Buford Griffith and Eduardo Canales, two vice presidents of the Southwestern Union, said to me, we have got to combine our efforts in some major thrust of evangelism in the Southwest like we did in Africa. We began laying plans and working together to do an evangelism blitz involving all of the churches with the meetings beginning all on the same date. Our plan was to use joint advertising such as handbills, the Internet, billboards, television, and yard signs. Jim Stevens, president of the Texico Conference, and Bill Wright, president of the Southwest Region Confer-



Pastor James Bokovoy baptized his son during Oklahoma Conference camp meeting. His was one of over 5,000 baptisms this year.



Over 145 people gave their lives to Christ in a citywide effort known as El Paso for Christ this past August. A similar evangelistic effort will take place in Houston, Tex., in February 2011.

ence, both became very excited and supportive of the thrust. The following pastors participated in preaching and organizing the meetings: Eduardo Canales, Buford Griffith, Jr., Duane McKey, Nicolas Herrera, Rodel Liwanag, Jose Padilla, Manuel Rodriguez, Gladstone Simmons, and Fernando Villegas. We praise the Lord for the decisions made for Jesus.

All of us who participated in preaching our wonderful message night after night, we will never be the same because of the new friends we have made for Jesus.

**What is next?** In February, 2011, during “Houston for Christ,” 100 evangelistic meetings will all begin at the same time all across the great metropolis of Houston, a city that more than 100 language groups call home, and all of whom need to know Jesus. They tell us that something like this has never been done before here in the United States, so it is time we do

it, especially in the Southwestern Union, and especially in Texas! The Texas Conference president, Leighton Holly, and the Southwest Region Conference president, Bill Wright, are more than thrilled to give leadership to this new and unprecedented venture for Christ here in the U.S.

But it doesn’t end here, because just after you read this article, 40 new One-day Churches will be built by Oklahoma Conference builders in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. In partnership with ASI, The Quiet Hour Ministries, ShareHim, the Iowa-Missouri Conference, and the Lake Union Conference, 40 evangelistic meetings will be held in those 40 new churches in October of 2011. Also in October, 2011, we anticipate the Joshua, Tex., Seventh-day Adventist Church joining with us in Livingston, Zambia, to hold 20 evangelistic meetings in the 20 One-day Churches that were built this year by ASI, Maranatha, and Southwestern

Union Conference participants. In addition to these meeting sites, we most likely will have an additional 10 evangelistic meetings in Gweru, Zimbabwe, that will be held at the same time, bringing the total number of meetings to 70. Just as a note of interest, the challenge of the harvest is great in Zimbabwe with almost two million claiming to be Seventh-day Adventists but only 600,000+ have been baptized. Think of the tremendous need for churches and schools and evangelistic meetings to fill them. My friend, Garwin McNeilus of ASI, tells me that in partnership with Maranatha, 15 full elementary and some secondary schools, as well as 500+ One-day Churches will be erected in the next few months. Won’t you pray with me for these projects? Jesus said, “the harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few” (Matt. 9:37, NASV).

**Duane McKey**

## Two “Ss” and Two “Ms”

While he was president of the Texas Conference, Cyril Miller would often remind his pastors of the two “Ss” and the two “Ms.” I was just a young pastor at the time, but I have never forgotten the significance and importance of his point in referencing those two letters.

“If you are going to grow the church,” he would tell us, “you must be focused on soul-winning and stewardship.” Soul-winning is the mission of the church. It is what the Lord has commissioned all of us to do. Stewardship is the means by which the mission of the church is accomplished. It provides the resources to facilitate all the necessary aspects of ministry. A fulfillment of the call to soul-winning brings members into the church, and an appropriate stewardship education will bring the means necessary to accomplish the mission. Soul-winning and Stewardship. Members and Means. Soul-winning brings members, and stewardship brings the means.

I used to think that stewardship only meant money (another “M” word!). I thought that the only way to measure success in my stewardship education as a pastor was by the amount of tithes and offerings that were received each Sabbath at church. Certainly our tithes and offerings constitute stewardship, but I have come to discover that they only make up a small part of my steward-

ship accountability before God. Everything that I have, and in fact, everything that I am, constitutes my stewardship accountability before God. My life, my health, my abilities, my skills, my possessions, my ability to earn money, and the money I earn, are all to be used in such a way that I recognize none of it is my own, but all given to me by God. He has entrusted me with it and I must use it to glorify Him.

If I am a faithful steward, it will lead me into being a faithful soul-winner as well. I can never be content with just giving my money. I must give of myself (another “M” word!). God is waiting for each of us to wholly commit ourselves to His service. That is what becomes the crowning act of stewardship.

Stephen Orian, president

## Church Attendance Increases Ten-fold!

**JONESBORO, LA. »** When Pastor Bryan Laue visited the small church in Jonesboro, La., because it was a part of his new district, he wondered if there was anything he could do to revive it. The church, which holds about 40 people, had dwindled until there were only two people who attended Sabbath services. But they were loyal and committed to the Lord, and when their new pastor suggested they hold some evangelistic meetings, they readily agreed.

The first hurdle was finding a place to host the meetings. The best building for the campaign was the Barksdale Federal Credit

Union, which holds 50-60 people, and is on the main thoroughfare in town. The catch was that the building could only be rented by a member of the credit union. Pastor Laue began visiting missing members and bonded with a man who had once been the first elder. His wife worked at the credit union. Things began coming together! Pastor Laue began spending time in Jonesboro, and he, the two members, and several new-found friends handed out 1,000 brochures and put up posters all over town—in the laundromat, grocery store, at gas stations, hair salons, a restaurant, and other places. Seven thousand brochures were mailed to the surrounding area.

Pastor Laue used a full-fledged multimedia presentation and began his three-week (16-night) series of meetings with 39 non-members present. His members faithfully attended—as did several others that had been “missing” from the church for a while. As the meetings continued, the number attending settled to about 20. The church has had one baptism, but several others are studying for baptism and weekly Bible prophecy prayer meetings are continuing at the church. Multiple requests have come from town people who missed the meetings for various reasons and want Pastor Laue to repeat the series. The former head elder is back in church and has agreed to help with another series of meetings in the fall. The church has grown from two members attending Sabbath services to 20-plus attending each week. Praise the Lord! He is not lacking in the power of the Holy Spirit, and waits to surprise us as we take hold of the work in faith.

Bryan Laue, pastor, and Sylvia Downs

The **Bonnerdale Adventist Church** is hosting a Family Enrichment Weekend on October 22 and 23, 2010, with Shelley Quinn, Christian author and Bible teacher. Shelley hosts *Exalting His Word* and other programs on 3ABN’s television and radio networks. Her messages always include practical ways to develop an intimate relationship with our Lord—with a strong focus on the transforming power of God’s Word and His Spirit. Plan now for this weekend. Your family will never be the same again! Call 501.865.3234 for more information.

## Ozark Music Festival

**December 1–4, 2010**

The 3rd Annual Ozark Music Festival will be held at Ozark Adventist Academy, December 1-4, 2010. The choral, band and orchestra Festival is open to all 5th–9th grade students in public, home, and Adventist schools.

Complete Festival details and registration are available online at [www.ozarkacademy.org](http://www.ozarkacademy.org).



The small Jonesboro, La., Seventh-day Adventist Church—still burning brightly!

ARKANSAS-LOUISIANA CONFERENCE



# Former ARKLA Conference President Authors Book

Pastor William Elder, a retired minister, began his ministry in the Arkansas-Louisiana Conference as a ministerial intern. He later became a departmental secretary, was involved in public evangelism in connection with his pastoral duties, and ended his career with eight years as Arkansas-Louisiana Conference president. Elder Elder, as he was known, worked a total of 22 years in the ARKLA Conference.

Pastor Elder, now 93, lives with his wife, Mary, and has authored a new book, *Hearts in Harmony*, published by TEACH Services. The book provides an in-depth glimpse into the lives of Samuel, Jonathan,

and David, three of the most interesting characters in the Bible. Written in story form, you will gain a deeper understanding of their triumphs and struggles as they walked through life, holding on to the hand of God and following His providential leading along life's pathway. For more information, the publisher's Web site is [www.TeachServices.com](http://www.TeachServices.com).

## Youngest family member dedicated to God

**POCAHONTAS, ARK. »** Members of the Pocahontas church were treated to an extra-special Sabbath on May 20, when the youngest member of the Scales clan, little Ammabelle Scales, was dedicated to the Lord. She joins her brother and sisters who are committed to following the Lord's plan

for their lives. Following the dedication, the congregation took part in a wonderful Communion service with members giving testimony and praise for what the Lord has done in their lives. Praise God for the wonderful compassion and grace He so abundantly showers on each one.

Elaine Jones

## Fort Smith Pathfinders Conduct Worship

**FORT SMITH, ARK. »** On May 29, 2010, the Fort Smith church received a special blessing when the Fort Smith Cougars Pathfinder Club presented the entire morning worship service. The Fort Smith church has been blessed to have the dedicated leadership and encourage- **MORE »**



▲ William Elder is author of the newly-published book, *Hearts in Harmony*. He is pictured here with his wife, Mary.

► Pastor Tesch dedicates Ammabelle Scales, the youngest member of the Scales clan.

Top right: Fort Smith Cougars Pathfinders presented a worship service and also raised funds to help ADRA with earthquake relief efforts in Haiti.



ment of Betty Weyer as Pathfinder director for 11 years, and she has put forth effort to train the young people to be leaders in the church.

During the worship service the opening announcements were made by Rose Scholl, followed by Laura Scholl, Jonathan Harris, and Michelle Evans leading the congregation in song. Jonathan Harris read Deuteronomy 8:19 as the morning scripture, which related to the day's sermon about not worshipping other gods. Offering and prayer were given by Aaron Sena, age 12. The younger children in church were treated to a children's story by Rose Scholl and special music was played by Zack Howell on the piano. Other participating Pathfinders, serving as ushers, were Justine Evans, Katelynn Stephens, and Scott Lewis. We were inspired by the young people and challenged by the sermon entitled "Modern Day Idols," given by Michelle Evans, age 15. She challenged each of us to look at our lives and to find and become willing to give up at least one thing which may have become an "idol" in our lives.

Also in May, the Voyagers Pathfinder Class wanted to contribute to the efforts in Haiti, after the devastating earthquake of January 12. The class, consisting of Tim Williams, Zack Howell, Laura Scholl, Jonathan Harris, Michelle Evans and Justine Evans, held a garage sale, raising \$877.00

for ADRA to help provide tents for the homeless in Haiti. It's wonderful to see our youth willing to serve the Lord and help others!

Lea Treshnell

## Couple Begins New Life Together With Christ

**LAFAYETTE, LA. »** On May 29, 2010, the Lafayette Seventh-day Adventist Church celebrated a momentous event with Ryan and Marina Stutes—their baptisms! One year ago their lives were very different and they didn't even know each other. Today they are married and looking forward to following Christ together.

In May 2009, Marina had just arrived in Louisiana from Moldova, a small country in Eastern Europe. Though her English was limited, she was excited about the opportunities open to her through the work and travel program she was enrolled in. With very little religious background, finding a church was not at the top of her list, but a close friend kept inviting her to attend the Adventist church with him.

Around the same time, Ryan, a native

of Louisiana, was trying to find answers to many questions about life and about the Bible. He had done some correspondence Bible studies, which led him to seek out the Adventist church near him. His first visit was a very positive experience and so he had been attending fairly often for about a month before Marina's first visit.

Thanks to the persistence of her friend, Marina agreed to visit the Adventist church and though she wasn't actively seeking spiritual things, something, or actually someone, did catch her attention! Right away Marina had her eye on Ryan, and for several weeks after that, whenever her friend asked if she wanted to attend church, her answer was a definite YES. Soon she and Ryan began to get acquainted, discovered that they really liked each other, and got married within a few months!

They both loved the people in the Adventist church and attended regularly while continuing to study together. Though she had not been initially seeking spiritual things, Marina could see God's guiding hand in her life already, bringing her halfway around the world to meet her husband. She desired to get to know Him more and see what else He had in store for her! She and Ryan spent a lot of time studying the Bible together as well as individually and with church members. Then the day came when Pastor Juan made an appeal, asking those who would like to be baptized to come forward. They looked at each other and knew that it was time. They went forward together, and a few weeks later they were baptized together.

As Ryan and Marina start this next stage of their journey, they know that there will be tough times ahead. But as they look back on how God has led them this far, drawing them closer to Himself and to each other before they even knew Him, they are confident about the future. Now they can tell others with confidence that God's way truly is the best way!

Elizabeth Fresse



◀ Marina and Ryan Stute were led to the Adventist Church through different circumstances, and after forming a friendship and studying the Bible together, the two were united in marriage. They continued their Bible studies after their wedding, and soon afterward, they were baptized together.



## Stewardship and Evangelism

Reviewing the very familiar stewardship passage in the book of Malachi, chapter three, we find an interesting connection with evangelism. In verse 12 is a promise for faithful stewards that says, “All nations will call you blessed, you will be a delightful land.”

Let us look closer at this promise. It is fair to assume that when we are faithful, God blesses us as promised, and then those around us who are watching can see that we are blessed. This blessing that others see naturally stirs up curiosity, so that they’ll want to know why we have received this blessing. Now the door is opened to tell of God’s faithfulness to us, in answer to their questions.

I knew a church member years ago—a wholesale farmer who received the attention of some retailers in his community for this very reason. They saw the blessings, but they did not know what had brought them about. So, some came to the farmer and asked him why he had been blessed. They told him that they had made a fascinating observation. They had observed that their customers were attracted more to his produce than they were to produce from other sources. The retailers wanted to know why.

This inquiry opened the door for this faithful Christian farmer to give an answer from a biblical perspective. He didn’t tell the retailers that he had a secret method of agriculture. He simply made it clear that God has made a promise in Scripture. If we are faithful stewards and put God first, recognize Him as the owner of all things, and return one tenth of the increase, then God’s blessings will be abundant and evident.

**Trevor W. Thompson,**  
secretary/stewardship director

## Native Ministries Partners with Small Church for Evangelism

**OKLAHOMA CITY** » In mid-July, the Native Ministries department sponsored an evangelism training event at Wewoka Woods Adventist Center. Robert Burnette, director, introduced new resources that are available for evangelism, including a 2,000-lumen projector with an integrated DVD player. He gave specifications and a price list to the pastors who were present, and advised anyone who was interested in purchasing one for their church to contact his associate, Elder Jim Landelius, an Oklahoma Conference pastor who helps Native Ministries on special projects.

After the meetings, Robert Burnette told Jim Landelius that he had been impressed that Native Ministries should help the smaller churches with limited resources. Bob promised that if any pastor called in by August 1 and expressed an interest, but didn’t have the funds on hand, Native Ministries would completely cover the cost.

James Bokovoy, who recently became pastor of the small church in Coalgate, did just that. With an average attendance of 10 people, James called and asked if there was anything Native Ministries could do to help with the cost. On August 28, Jim Landelius went to the Coalgate church and



▲ Jim Landelius (right), presented a projector to be used for evangelism to James Bokovoy, pastor of the Coalgate church.

presented the projector to the members of the church. The thankful members have agreed to hold and fully support at least two evangelistic meetings in 2011. Native Ministries has partnered with the Oklahoma Conference on several occasions and looks forward to future projects.

## Brothers Baptized

**BROKEN ARROW** » Two brothers elected to be baptized together at a recent baptismal service at the Broken Arrow church. Randy Vera, 15 years old, is the quieter of the two, as his younger brother, Brandon, who is 12 years old, is quite the “cut-up.” The church members are blessed to have the Vera family worshiping with us and have watched with delight as the two brothers grew up to become fine young men. We are often blessed with special music by both boys. They have chosen to study church doctrine with two of our new elders, Jack Phillips and Greg Marquette.

Randy and Brandon were baptized by our pastor, Clayton Calvert, whom they consider a mentor and friend. It’s amazing to see how God works in the lives of our young people and how He can use all personalities in His work. All that’s needed is a willing and loving heart—and the Vera boys have just that!

Judy Marquette



▲ Brandon Vera and Randy Vera, who are brothers, were baptized recently at the Broken Arrow church.

## A Blueprint for Purity

### Oklahoma Youth Rally 2010

**BRISTOW** » “My youth can’t stop talking about it.” It’s not a movie or the latest YouTube video; this mother is referring to the Oklahoma Youth Rally held on August 6-7 at Tulsa Adventist Academy (TAA) where nearly 200 young people from 20 Adventist churches, along with their sponsors/parents, attended. The theme was “A Blueprint for Purity,” a challenge to young people in grades 7-12 to establish and maintain a relationship with God that will empower them to resist temptation and remain pure in thought and act. “Our youth need real answers” to the purity questions and dilemmas facing them today, declared Adventist Fellowship youth pastor Stephen Carlile, one of the event coordinators. John Moyer, Oklahoma Conference president, stopped by the youth rally and was encouraged by the number of participants, and especially the number of sponsors and parents. The success of the rally is evident from these comments:

“The youth rally was awesome!”—15-year-old

“Praising GOD for the 2010 Tulsa Youth Rally today!”—young adult

“Had an AWESOME time at the youth rally yesterday! Can’t wait to see what we’re gonna do today! Can’t wait for the next one!”—14-year-old

“2010 Youth Rally was really good. I think I learned more than the young folks.”—parent

“It was AMAZING! I had a ton of fun! Thanks to all who planned and helped out with it.”—16-year-old

The youth rally was fueled by the energy of Richard Castillo, Oklahoma’s youth activities director. He remembers, “When I was younger I had a lot of frustration and angst as I watched many of my peers walk away from the church, sometimes without a word from my church. Now, with God’s leading, I can see a way to change [that] culture.” Richard is

passionate about creating a spiritual connection with Oklahoma’s youth, and he, along with Pastor Stephen, Kevin Bruce, pastor of New Life church in Tulsa, and Geraldo Alonso, Muskogee church pastor, share this passion. Southwestern Adventist University chaplain Islam Mattey, a music team, and several unseen coordinators also volunteered much planning, research, and personal time to impress upon Oklahoma’s youth the importance of purity.

On Friday evening, Richard shared with the group some personal experiences from his teen years about his creative attempts to impress his friends, and how he discovered that his relationship with God was more important. On Sabbath morning, TAA’s fellowship hall was swathed in blue “Blueprint for Purity” T-shirts as Pastor Geraldo, Pastor Kevin, and Pastor Stephen tag-teamed the sermon, giving the youth glimpses of their personal teenage failures and successes, and how their lives changed when they focused on looking for God’s will in their life, instead of thinking only of their own desires.

During the weekend, girls and guys were split into smaller groups with sponsors to discuss the importance of and practical ways to develop a friendship with God. This led into discussions about dating concerns and peer pressure, and the temptations of the Internet and other media that bombard teenagers today. The female parents/sponsors also prayed for these small groups in a separate area.

The last event was a roundtable discussion led by Pastor Stephen. The youth sent

questions about purity issues, such as when group or “one-on-one” dating is appropriate; how to resist peer pressure; and the inevitable question: why do girls go to the restroom in packs? The youth sent their questions via text messaging so they could remain anonymous, or wrote on slips of paper. This provided a discreet way for the youth to inquire about “hot topics” without embarrassment. The expert panel comprised of Pastor Stephen, Chaplain Mattey, and two young men and two young women from the audience then answered or led the discussion for each question.

The weekend wound up on Saturday night with a one-year purity pledge; there were no written contracts, but the entire group of youth, parents, sponsors, and pastors created a circle and were bound together by yarn to demonstrate their unity in purity. But the pact doesn’t end there. Establishing personal physical boundaries and defining Christian values were at the core of this rally, but another important goal was to help young people live a pure life at home. A “Pure Life” curriculum written for teenagers, especially those not involved in traditional church outreach such as church school and Pathfinders, is one of the tools for long-term purity. Pastor Stephen and Richard met with the parents/sponsors privately to explain how they can continue the “Blueprint for Purity” concept in their own homes and churches. (Contact Pastor Stephen at 918.624.2444 or Richard at richardcastillo@clearchannel.com or 405.802.5661.)

The Oklahoma Youth Rally coordinators especially thank the parents and sponsors who brought their youth; the First SDA Church of Tulsa and Adventist Fellowship for providing delicious meals for everyone; and TAA for lending their facilities. With youth leaders’ and parents’ help, Richard says, it will be easier to “reach youth once unreachable. With God’s leading, I sincerely hope we begin to see a true youth program that will bolster the faith of our youth and bring new and motivated souls into God’s service.”

Caroline A. Fisher



▲ Friends Juston Weidman (Texas), Kara Banks (Oklahoma) and Alexa Fisher (Oklahoma) enjoyed spending time together at the Oklahoma Youth Rally.

## Bristow Celebrates New Member

**BRISTOW** » “The devil is in you!” These vicious words were directed at one of our newest church members, Shirley Towler, “in front of God and everyone!” she recalls with disbelief. Shirley was being reprimanded by a non-denominational church pastor’s wife because she couldn’t speak in tongues. As Shirley points out, she didn’t think it was necessary for her to speak in tongues to follow Christ. “That’s when I knew that church wasn’t for me,” she adds.



Shirley Towler (left) received flowers from Head Deaconess Marilyn Ailey (not pictured) and was welcomed into the Bristow family by Pastor Harvey Gil (right).

Shirley was attending these meetings and made friends with several church members; she also found the answers to her Bible questions. Even so, Shirley had not yet made her decision about which church to join. One day, her mother declared, “Shirley, you are going to be a Seventh-day Adventist!” That statement, and specifically the one accusing her of being devilish, helped seal the deal for her. In June, Shirley joined the Bristow church family by Profession of Faith and has been bringing her mother to church faithfully, and though she is incredibly shy, has also brought friends to our church, helped clean the church and assisted with VBS. We are so happy she has joined our church family!

Caroline A. Fisher

This shocking experience was a pivotal moment for Shirley, but is just one of many trials Shirley has endured, including the death of one of her teenage sons in 2009. Prior to his death, Shirley had attended several series of evangelistic meetings sponsored by our church, and had been employed part-time by a local Adventist family. Around the same time as her son’s death, our church was hosting a Bible study group on Thursday evenings, followed by a supper social on Friday nights. Pastor Gil led the Bible study, using Gary Gibbs’ “Prophecies of Hope” lessons. The study group also received DVDs from Shawn Boonstra’s series, “Revelation Speaks Peace.”

## New Sanctuary Consecrated at Three Angels Church

**OWASSO** » Members of the Three Angels church are excited to be in their new sanctuary facility. The church held its opening day consecration service on July 10 with a packed house. The original building had served the church well

during the 23 years since it was built, but recent growth made it obvious that a new facility was much needed.

The consecration service was highlighted with a four-minute video along with a slide program showing the history of the church and the construction of the new building. A special number was sung by the Three Angels Men’s Chorus (all the men in the congregation were invited to the front to sing). Special musical selections, testimonies, devotional thoughts, an ordination service, rousing messages, and other activities completed the day.

The original building is now being remodeled and will serve as a kitchen and fellowship hall, along with classroom space. The adjoining new building contains more classrooms, an office, and a mother’s room in addition to the sanctuary. The new sanctuary was finished just in time for an upcoming prophecy seminar. We can’t think of a better way to break in the new building than to invite the public to come and hear the present truth of how to be ready for the soon coming of Jesus!

David Qualls



The Three Angels church in Owasso completed their new sanctuary just in time to host a prophecy seminar. Above left: Inside view of the new sanctuary.

Top right: Cheery smiles in Primary Sabbath School. From left: Andrea White, Julie Orellana, Kristianna Eaton, and Hannah Bartell.



## Continue to Give as You Continue to Receive

SOUTHWEST REGION CONFERENCE

To show our appreciation to God for His faithfulness to us, we are to give to others in need and also to the cause of God so that His kingdom might be advanced. Ellen White, a Christian writer, espouses the following principle of stewardship. She says, “**continual recipients are to give continually.**” It is from this principle that we should operate as it relates to our giving to the cause of God.

In fact, we are given some timely counsel as to why our stewardship should be based on this principle. “As we continually receive the blessings of God, so are we to be continually giving. When the heavenly Benefactor ceases to give to us, then we may be excused; for we shall have nothing to bestow. God has never left us without evidence of His love, in that He did us good.

“We are sustained every moment by His care, and upheld by His power. He spreads our tables with food. He gives us peaceful and refreshing sleep. Weekly He brings to us the Sabbath that we may rest from our temporal labors, and worship Him in His own house. He has given to us His word to be a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. In its sacred pages, we find the counsels of wisdoms; and as often as we lift our hearts to Him in penitence and faith, He grants us the blessings of His grace. Above all else is the infinite gift of God’s dear Son, through whom flow all other blessings for this life and for the life to come.

“Surely goodness and mercy attend us at every step. **Not till we wish the infinite Father to cease bestowing His gifts on us, should we impatiently exclaim, ‘Is there no end of giving?’** Not only should we faithfully surrender to God our tithes, which He claims as His own, but we should bring a tribute to His treasury as an offering of gratitude. Let us with joyful hearts bring to our Creator the first fruits of all His bounties—our choices possessions, our best and holiest service” (*Review and*

*Herald*, February 9, 1886, emphasis supplied).

I am a living testimony as to the blessings of giving. The more I give sacrificially to the cause of God, the more God keeps right on giving back to me from unexpected sources. The more I give to the street people or the homeless, or offer generous tips to servers at restaurants, make substantial gifts to someone in need, or sponsor children in Adventist schools, God just keeps right on giving back to me. He is an awesome God!

Why don’t you become one of the faithful and diligent stewards that He can trust to support His work among mankind? Then watch the blessings flow back to you. If you are already a faithful giver, just keep right on doing what you are doing and continue to be blessed of God.

Please remember, “The Lord does not need our offerings. We cannot enrich Him by our gifts. Says the psalmist: ‘All things come of Thee, and of Thine own have we given Thee.’ **Yet God permits us to show our appreciation of His mercies by self-sacrificing efforts to extend the same to others. This is the only way in which it is possible for us to manifest our gratitude and love to God. He has provided no other**” (*Review and Herald*, December 6, 1887, emphasis supplied).

May God bless us as we continue to be His faithful stewards. Love you!

**Bill Wright**, president

## Vacation Bible School At Westbank United Church

**NEW ORLEANS, LA. »** Our children’s ministries department held Vacation Bible School from July 12-17. Approximately 50 children spent five days doing crafts, memorizing Bible texts, singing songs, playing, and learning how to pray. When I asked the Children’s Ministries Coordinator, William Wilson, why he chose the theme “Prayer Connects Us With God,” he said that by connecting with God, children learn how to pray and that they are not too young to enjoy a personal connection with God. This concept was incorporated into every activity, teaching the children that it’s important to pray before engaging in any task or activity. Before having snacks, the children prayed because they wanted God

▼ Children, accompanied by their teachers, display their work at the close of VBS at the Westbank United church.



to bless the snacks. They were also learning to have a connection with God. On Friday the Zoo Mobile, owned by Vaughan Mountain, the owner of Critter Zoo, presented a show that taught the children about the greatness of God and how God takes care, not only of people, but also of animals. The children learned how to thank God for everything during VBS. It was a great week for the children and some of them cannot wait for the next VBS.

**Mathieu Cherenfant**

## Alexandria VBS

**ALEXANDRIA, LA. »** The third annual VBS at the Maranatha church was quite successful, with 150 to 175 children attending each night. Based on the theme “Saddle Ridge Ranch,” the program taught children and adults about God and how to be more like Him.

Thanks to the talents of April Mitchell and Sylvester Dotson, who decorated the sanctuary with a replica of a barn complete with chickens, hay, a fence, and logs, everybody was amazed when they walked in. A stable with horses, hay, chickens, and a coyote grabbed everyone’s attention as they entered the church foyer. The Lord blessed each night, and everyone looked forward for the next evening’s lesson and activities.

The week ended with a Fun Day featuring water slides

▶ Approximately 175 children attended this year’s VBS program at the Maranatha church in Alexandria, La.



and a jumper, watermelon eating contest, basketball game, and water balloon fight. Christine Ince, M.D., held a health fair during Fun Day, and all who stopped by received valuable information to take home with them.

Those who participated said they enjoyed the day’s activities and are looking forward to next year’s VBS. Thanks to VBS director Nicole Price and her staff for a job well done.

**Valarie Dotson**

## First Cowboy Camp Meeting Held at Lonestar

**ATHENS, TEX. »** Helvis C. Moody, in cooperation with the Southwest Region Conference (SWRC), organized the very first Cowboy Camp Meeting held in Athens. Adventists and non-Adventists from

Dallas, Fort Worth, and surrounding areas traveled to Lone Star Camp to fellowship with other “cowboys,” and to worship God through nature. The cowboys were excited, but they had to get their rest to be ready for Sabbath morning. They began their day with Sabbath School, which was led by James Wright, an elder from Grace Temple. Afterward, the Grace Temple praise team, led by Jimmy Wright, gave an inspired praise and worship session, and then Pastor Moody preached the Word of God. The evening program, “Cowboys and Their Health,” was conducted by Billy Wright, SWRC president, and Mildred Dyer, SWRC health director. The day ended with an enjoyable night hayride and trail ride with the horses. On Sunday morning everyone met for worship, watched a horse training demonstration, and then said goodbye. The cowboys had a tremendous time and asked that we make this an annual event. This year’s theme is “Cowboys and Their Families.” You are invited to attend on October 1-3, 2010. See you there!



▲ “Cowboys” from the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex gathered for the very first Cowboy Camp held at Lone Star Camp in Athens, Tex.



## Pathfinders Answer the Call

**DALLAS, TEX. »** When Roger Wade, youth director of the Southwest Region Conference, called on Pathfinders of the North Texas Youth Federation, about 150 youth and adults in the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex from six area churches responded, including All Nations in Arlington; City Temple, Penuel, and Faith Temple in Dallas; Grace Temple in Fort Worth; and Mosi-



er Valley. Young people and their chaperones traveled to Fort Hood and Killeen, Tex., to entertain our troops and provide humanitarian outreach and assistance to the citizens of Killeen during the weekend of July 30-August 1. Groups began arriving on Thursday evening to be ready for orientation and training early Friday morning, and after training, each group boarded a bus for a tour of Fort Hood and then departed to their mission field to work. The goal of the mission trip

was to teach the youth how to give back to their community; to reach out to the soldiers and their families as well as the citizens and community of Killeen, Texas; and to show appreciation to those who dedicate their lives to service on a daily basis.

The young people passed out 5,000 pieces of literature, conducted a VBS for the Girls and Boys Clubs, painted a battered women's shelter, sorted clothes and distributed them to the needy, marched in a parade, and participated in a sacred service on base. On Sabbath afternoon, the youth waited for over an hour for the Killeen Police Department to escort them as the parade participants lined up. They marched with drums and passed out literature to the area residents who came outside to see what all the excitement was about.

The program ended on Sabbath evening with a free concert at Howze Auditorium, Fort Hood. These youthful warriors for the Lord returned to their churches and gave an

exciting report about their activities.

**R.E. Brown**, Penuel pastor, and **Walter Lowe**, North Texas Youth Federation president

## He is Marvelous

**HOUSTON, TEX. »** H.I.M. (He Is Marvelous) Prison Ministries, under the direction of Willie Coats, church elder, presented its third annual Prison Ministries Day featuring Carl Ming, pastor of the Caffin Avenue church in New Orleans, La. Ming concluded Hebron's month-long Amazing Facts Revival Series and spoke to the hearts of church members and people from the surrounding community. The Holy Spirit spoke through Pastor Ming as he delivered messages of truth and the Spirit moved on hearts as people were led to recommit their lives to God through baptism. Billy Alexander's mother, Darlene, a faithful member of Hebron and a member of H.I.M. Prison Ministries, has shown Billy by example the love of Christ. Billy gave his heart to God and was baptized on September 4. H.I.M. Prison Ministries meets the needs of inmates, in not only the surrounding areas, but actively visits and studies with those incarcerated in Huntsville, Tex., as well. The gospel should reach every individual on earth and H.I.M. is committed to following Jesus' example of loving those who have been deemed hopeless and unlovable by the world.

**Gabrielle Williams**

▲ Top: Pathfinders from the Dallas-Fort Worth area marched in a Sabbath-afternoon parade during a three-day mission outreach project at Fort Hood in Killeen, Texas.

▲ Above: Penuel Pathfinder Pioneers sitting in front of the entry gate of Fort Hood. From left: Benjamin Taylor, Evan Paulden, Bruno Taylor (Pathfinder director), Brittany Taylor, Daphanne Wiley, and Moriah Wade.

► Willie Coats, church elder, assisted Gilbert Williams, pastor, in the baptism of Bill Alexander, the son of church member Darlene Alexander.







## Power That Makes the World Tremble

How much does your church spend on evangelism? Over the past nine years, I've been encouraging the Texas churches to allocate at least 25 percent of their local church budget for evangelism. It is surprising that there are many churches that have only dedicated one to five percent of their budget for such purposes! If our mission is to reach lost people, shouldn't our finances match that? One church in North Dallas set aside 50 percent of their local budget for evangelism. (Note: when they started a church school, they were still able to maintain 35 percent for evangelism.) What was the result? Creative outreach and soul winning! Another pastor worked with his congregation to raise their evangelism budget by five percent every six months as long as they met the budget in the previous six. If your church is having a hard time meeting its budget, it might be a priority/vision is-

sue rather than a financial issue. Churches that put mission first and, as a result, see lives being transformed, will find that members are excited to give to God's work. When we generously support God's work, we see not only a positive individual impact but a corporate impact, as well. Notice this quote from Ellen White: "Those churches who are the most systematic and liberal (generous) in sustaining the cause of God are the most prosperous spiritually.... were our numbers half as large, and all of these devoted workers, we should have a power that would make the world tremble" (*Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 405).

Let's put first things first and experience God's power released in us and in our church.

**Tom Evans**, church planting and stewardship director

## Valley Grande Honors Graduates

**WESLACO** » David Escobedo, a graduate of Valley Grande Adventist Academy, was one happy student on May 30. His mother, Liz Scheineman, a member of the Kerrville church, asked her son what he would like for his graduation. His answer came as a complete surprise: "Mom, I want all my family members to be at my graduation." That wish included his grandparents, aunts and uncles, and their children. Joy was written on David's face the night of his graduation when all his family members were sitting in the audience. This was a very special time for David to remember.

David has an ear for music, especially for playing the guitar, and composes many of his own songs. He took piano lessons in his earlier years before learning the guitar. Music teachers at school recognized his special gift, and in 2010 he won first place at the Southwestern Adventist University Guitar Competition. David belonged to the chorale group in school and also played with the bell ringers. He was involved in music when he attended the Music Fest at the Meyerson Auditorium this year.

Among the 28 graduating students, eight were from Vietnam and Korea. Valley Grande, accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, is well-known as a co-educational boarding academy operated for Adventist youth and others desiring a Christian education. Many professionals from Texas and the world have benefited from the academy's Christian education, which is driven by Bible-based values. The academy is staffed with dedicated teachers, pastors, and educators who love the Lord.

When students like David spend four years at Valley Grande hearing the Word of God daily and being with dedicated teachers who pray before classes begin, it leaves a mark of consecration and faith in their hearts and on their fellow students. As they leave this fortress and delve into a hostile world, they will be armed to withstand the unseen forces of the enemy. The lessons learned at such an early age will kindle their love for honoring God, upholding His standard of righteousness. Many pastors, teachers, and leaders serving the Lord today have been trained at Valley Grande. God continues to bless this school.

**Betty Blair**



◀ David Escobedo (left) has been richly blessed during his four years at Valley Grande Adventist Academy. He told his mother, "Mom, I want all my family members to be at my graduation." He was filled with joy when his grandparents, aunts, uncles and their children were all able to attend.

▲ Valley Grande Adventist Academy chorale performs during graduation.

## Evangelism Thrives in East Texas

**TYLER »** The Tyler church hosted the Power Points of Prophecy evangelistic series with Lynwood and Peggy Spangler, resulting in 15 baptisms. Pastor Paul LeBlanc says, "We won't compromise our evangelism." Our youth will conduct meetings this fall.

As a follow-up to the Power Points of Prophecy series, our church is continuing Bible studies with the Unlocking Revelation prophecy series, combining the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation. Along with Pastor LeBlanc, our young adults have been presenting the message each Wednesday and Friday evening, as well as during services on Sabbath mornings and evenings.

On Sabbath morning, June 19, one of our young adult members, Demitrius Paine, preached a dynamic message. His subject was the Fourth Commandment, "Remember the Sabbath day." Demitrius gave a personal testimony about losing his job with a major department store because of his acceptance of the Sabbath and choosing not to work during the Sabbath hours. God provided him with a much better job with a major pharmacy store and Paine received a promotion after working just six short weeks. In addition, his salary was doubled after working for three months.

God is to be greatly praised for the work He has done in this East Texas town.



Demitrius Paine shares how God blessed his decision to "Remember the Sabbath day," even when it meant losing his job.

**Christine Petersen**

## Volunteers Serve in Mexico

**KEENE »** On Thursday, March 11, a bus carrying 44 team members, including an 83-year-old retired nurse and a six-month-old baby girl, departed from the Keene church for a mission trip. Our destination was Apodaca, Mexico, a suburb of Monterrey.

The major goal of our trip was to improve the physical plants of three existing churches. At the Las Flores church, a cement floor was poured from the ground up, walls were completed, the sanctuary was roofed, and lighting and electricity were installed. At the Pueblo church, the children's' division was painted, and the upper-story windows were weatherproofed. At the La Canada Blanca church, a large "upper room" was plastered and painted, windows were installed, lighting and electrical fixtures were installed, and

plumbing was installed for a kitchen. In the future, cooking classes will be held at the church.

Each team member put in 70 actual hours of mission work during this trip, whether in preparing for and conducting Vacation Bible School, serving as musicians, preaching the Word of God, or actually working "hands on" with cement, plaster, paint, or other construction materials. The commission of Jesus, to evangelize new believers in Christ, was accomplished. Nightly preaching services and the Vacation Bible School meetings resulted in one baptism and one profession of faith, with 14 precious souls studying in baptismal classes. The highest attendance at VBS was 70 children on the last night.

Harley Larkin and his wife, Charlotte, live near Keene, Tex. Harley has led 23 mission trips to date, his efforts having been greatly blessed by God over the years. Harley has a network of helpers from all walks of life with a heart for missions. These trips are accomplished by many consecrated people working together. Kathy Holland, Harley and Charlotte's daughter, was head cook, ably assisted by Becki Seery and Paula Westbrook. I have participated in about 13 mission trips to various locations around the world, and have never had better food. To God be the glory!

**Margaret Eustace**



A team of 44 volunteers participated in a series of mission projects in Apodaca, Mexico.

## Valley Churches Join for Convocation

**SOUTH PADRE ISLAND** » More than 3,000 people attended the 2010 Rio Grande Valley Convocation at the South Padre Island Convention Center. God used Pastor Jose V. Rojas in a mighty way as he preached over the weekend and encouraged people to be “light” to those in darkness. With participation from every church in the South Texas Valley, there was a sense of unity and fellowship throughout the program. We were blessed when a mass choir and orchestra performed a song that elevated the hearts of listeners during the Sabbath morning worship hour.

Six people gave their lives to God through baptism at a ceremony conducted by Pastor Rojas at the beach. Many were blessed and the messages brought a renewed commitment to God. Pastor Rojas preached about the light, and his messages emphasized the mission that the churches of the Valley must carry out in the coming years. The Holy Spirit made its way deep into the hearts of people, nudging them to take a stand for Jesus Christ. With worshipful hearts, the congregation joined Pastor Rojas in praising God and concluded the Sabbath with a prayer of commitment as they united to follow the Master, Jesus Christ, wherever He leads.

## Gulfhaven Guardians Honored for Special Achievements

**HOUSTON/GULFHAVEN** » Six groups of precious young people, known as The Gulfhaven Guardians, were acknowledged and honored for their special achievements during the Adventurers’ Investiture Service on Sabbath, May 22. Proud parents, family members, and friends watched anxiously as these enthusiastic boys and girls marched down the aisle in full dress uniform, proudly carrying the Christian and

American flags in front, while their sweet voices rang out with “The Adventurer Song” to open the program.

After the group recited the Adventurer Pledge and Law, Ronda Kennon, director, offered prayer. She then presented our pastor, Ervin Thomsen, with a special service pin for his loyal support to the Adventurer Club. Ronda informed the congregation that she and her staff had been teaching and training the children from the book *Sealing Touch-Junior* by Donna Nichols. Each counselor was awarded a service pin for their years of service with the club as they presented their own group to the church body. All the Gulfhaven Guardians were recognized and honored for their specific memory work and required objectives that they had completed by receiving class level pins and patches.

The highlight of the program occurred when this energetic and extraordinary group came together and lifted their voices to sing “Jesus Loves Me” in both English and Spanish while demonstrating the lyrics through American Sign Language. This dynamic Spirit-filled presentation concluded with the Adventurers singing “Don’t Forget the Sabbath.”

Ronda Kennon and her dedicated staff of five, including Ana Sweatt, Marquell Chapman, Beth Kipp, Tamara Perez, and Sandra Blake, are to be commended for their dedication and expertise, and for the many hours they spend teaching and training these exceptional young boys and girls for service to the Lord.

**Jean Hagen**



Top: More than 3,000 people joined together in worship during the Rio Grande Valley Convocation.

Above: The Gulfhaven Guardians Adventurers participate in a special Sabbath program marking their Investiture.

## Be Faithful

From Pentecost forward, the disciples proclaimed the truths of the gospel, and many believed. The common interest that controlled them was the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ to the world. The Spirit of God moved on hearts, and money, time, and influence were used as a means to advance the gospel.

Acts 5:1-11 shows a different spirit and its results. Church members Ananias and Sapphira were present when the Holy Ghost fell upon the apostles. They made commitments to sell a certain piece of land to give to the apostles. This money was going to be distributed among the rest of the members of the church to help advance the gospel.

As they thought about their commitment, they felt they had been too hasty and decided not to fulfill their pledge. Yet they saw that those who parted with their possessions were held in high esteem among the believers. So they pretended to give all the proceeds from the property sale to the general fund, but kept a large share for themselves. They purposely practiced fraud in their dealing with God.

When Ananias came with his offering, Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled thy heart to lie to the Holy Ghost and to keep back part of the price of the land?" He went on to say that "while you had it, it was yours, and after it was sold, it was in your own power. Why have you done this thing? You've not lied to men, but to God. When Ananias heard these words, he fell down and died." About three hours later, Sapphira suffered the same fate. The Bible goes on to say, "And great fear came upon all the church and upon many as heard these things."

You might ask, "Why is it recorded in Scripture?" *Acts of the Apostles*, p. 74, states, "God has made the proclamation of the gospel dependent upon the la-

bors and the gifts of His people. Voluntary offerings and tithe constitute the revenue of God's work. Of the means entrusted to man, God claims a certain portion, the tenth. He leaves all free to say whether or not they will give more than this. But when the heart is stirred by the influence of the Holy Spirit, and a vow is made to give a certain amount, the one who vows no longer has any right to the consecrated portion." God blesses us with means, so we may give to the advancement of His cause. God wants us to show our gratitude by returning tithes and offerings.

There are many excuses for unfaithfulness. First, "I need it to pay my bills." Second, "I've got to help my kids." Third, "The church board doesn't know how to handle money and they never listen to me." Fourth, "Conferences are loaded with money and they can't manage it right, anyway." Some complain about church leadership locally, at the conference, union, and the worldwide levels. Some believe they can withhold tithes and offerings or use them in other ways. Friends, they can't fool God. God knows their intentions and motives. Unfaithfulness is a sin problem. It demonstrates there is no covenant or partnership relationship with Jesus to share the good news of His redeeming love. If members of the church willingly rob God of tithes and offerings, or divert God's tithe from the organization that God has commissioned and blessed to carry this gospel message to the world, they are, in fact, committing the sin of Ananias and Sapphira.

"In the case of Ananias and Sapphira, the sin of fraud against God was speedily punished. The same sin was often repeated in the after history of the church and is com-

mitted by many in our time. The warning has been given; God has clearly manifested His abhorrence of this sin; and all who give themselves up to hypocrisy and covetousness, may be sure that they are destroying their own souls" (*Acts of the Apostles*, p. 76). The lesson of this story is that you can't fool God. God has given us blessings and He asks us to be faithful with Him.

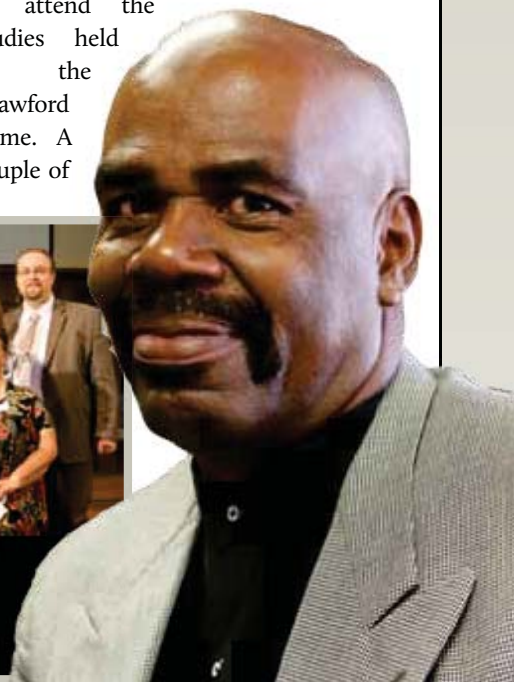
Jim Stevens, president

## God Gave the Increase!

**LUBBOCK, TEX. »** Several months ago I received a call from Karen Crawford requesting prayer. She stated that she had called her sister, Dale Morris, who is an Adventist Christian in Amarillo, Tex., and asked if there was someone in Lubbock who could pray for her daughter, Stephanie. I not only prayed with Karen and for her daughter, but I went to their homes, as well. After a few days and several sessions of prayer, I invited Karen and Stephanie to start taking Bible studies, which they agreed to do.

Eventually, Karen's husband, Rick, joined in the studies. Rick had only gone to church once in their 30-plus years of marriage, yet he agreed to attend the studies. The next week after studying with the three of them, Karen invited her granddaughter, Heather, to attend the studies held in the Crawford home. A couple of

TEXICO CONFERENCE



► Leroy Green, Leland Flyger, Sven Frantzen, pastor, and the newly baptized members accepting their baptism certificates at the Lubbock church.

► Far right: Leroy Green, Bible worker at the Lubbock church, studied with nine members of the Crawford family, resulting in the baptism of all nine people.

weeks later another daughter, Melissa, son-in-law, Gary, granddaughter, Destiny (13), and grandson, Travis (18), began attending the studies. Eventually the third daughter, Christy, her husband, Jeremy, and their son, Ricky, moved back to Lubbock and they, too, came to the studies held on Sunday afternoons.

Following several weeks of studies and completing the 28 fundamental doctrines, an invitation for baptism was extended and I was very pleased when nine decisions were made! This actually represents three generations of the Crawford family coming in at the same time: Ricky (dad), Karen (mom), Stephanie (daughter), Melissa (daughter), Travis (grandson), Heather (granddaughter), Christy (daughter), Jeremy (son-in-law), and Ricky (grandson).

Leroy Green, Bible worker

more than 80 registered visitors on opening night (overall, a total of 210 registered visitors attended the conference at some point).

Prayer was a key to the meeting's tremendous success and the visitors kept coming from all parts of the city, from one end to the other. Visitors accepted the

message, and as early as the end of the first week of presentations, started showing interest in being baptized.

During the final week of the seminar, baptisms were celebrated every day, with a total of 26 baptisms, 28 professions of faith, and 30-plus more showing interest in being baptized the future Closing day was a total blessing and a day of joy.

Pastor Kircio Mota was present for the closing ceremonies and an award was presented to all participants, especially Pastor Canales, for their effort.



◀ Children enjoy the programming provided for them during the evangelistic seminars.

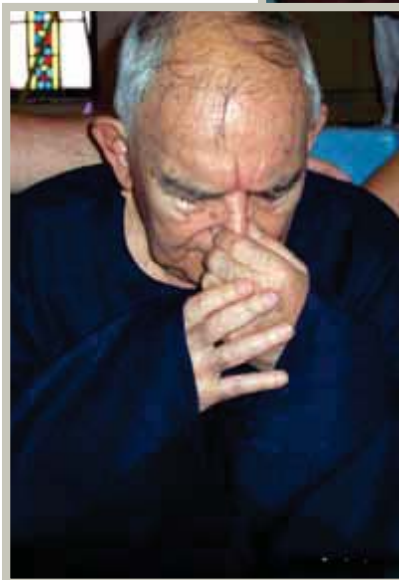
◀ From top right to bottom left: Bertha Alicia Rezendes, Gabreilla Romero, and Eleuterio Peña surrender their lives to Christ through baptism.

▼ Bottom: Pastors Alvaro Sauza and Kircio Mota presenting a recognition to Pastor Eduardo Canales.

## El Paso for Christ Seminar

**EL PASO, TEX.** » August was a great month for preaching the gospel in our city. The Southwestern Union hosted a city-wide seminar entitled El Paso for Christ with guest speaker Eduardo Canales from August 13 through September 4. The seminar brought rich blessings to our city, with an average attendance of more than 100 persons every day, about 45 of those being visitors.

With great expectations, the seminar opened with an impressive start, having



## A Roman-style VBS

**CLINT, TEX. »** Children who attended Vacation Bible School at the Clint church this summer got to “visit” Rome. The guards and myriads of little “peasants” learned

children visited with the apostle Paul in prison, and even got to talk with the Roman guard and witnessed his conversion. The scariest place was the cave, a dark place where the early Christians hid. Games and snacks helped to make each day complete.



▲ Children earned prizes at the marketplace during VBS at the Clint church.

► Graduates of the Clint VBS proudly display their certificates.



▼ Each of the four candidates who were recently baptized at the Abilene church has a story to tell about how God led them to their decision.



about Paul’s prison experience and witnessed the conversion of the guard. The children were placed in the Roman “homes” of Octavius, Pompeius, Servius, and Tiberius. Together with their families, children studied the Word of God and learned about the lives of early Christians. Each day, the children enjoyed a visit to the different areas of Rome, such as the Roman homes where families congregated to study the Word of God while hiding and running from the Roman guards.

The marketplace was a fun place to create elaborate crafts, and after that activity,

Friday’s events included an expanded marketplace where children earned tickets while playing an assortment of games. The children presented a special program for their parents on Friday night. They sang the songs they had learned, and were

presented with graduation certificates. Teachers and their assistants were also recognized. A fellowship meal followed the closing program.

**Manuel Peña**

## Evangelism is Alive and Well

**ABILENE, TEX. »** Martha Schwartz was one of four people who were baptized in the Abilene, Tex., church at the conclusion of evangelistic meetings presented by Jason Morgan from Amazing Facts. While in prison, a church had sent Martha a Bible, which she began reading. After her release from prison, she started attending the church that had sent her the Bible. While reading *The Word*, she learned the truth of the Sabbath and wondered why churches were not keeping the Sabbath. Martha began calling all the churches in the community to ask them about the seventh-day Sabbath. But no one had an answer to her question. Then she called and left a message at the Abilene Seventh-day Adventist Church. Pastor David McLauchlan called her back and church member Clovia Rice began sending Bible studies to Martha and her friend, who is still incarcerated. When the time came for the evangelistic meetings, Pastor McLauchlan invited Martha to attend. She accepted all the truths that were presented from the Bible and willingly surrendered her life to the Lord through baptism.

Also baptized were Shelly Dunning and Jacquie Almeida, who had been studying the Bible with church clerk Amanda Calvin. John Huitt recommitted his life to Christ

after leaving the church years ago following his wife’s death. The Holy Spirit was working mightily in his life to draw him back to following the truth. He drove 120 miles round trip every night to attend the meetings, even though he has been facing tough financial constraints. We thank God for each person who has taken their stand for Christ and for all the faithful church members and leaders who live a life of evangelism!

**Sue Hinkle**

## Convocation Marks Official Beginning of School Year

Dressed in colorful academic regalia, the faculty of Southwestern Adventist University marched into the Keene church for the annual Convocation ceremony during assembly on Thursday, September 2. The Southwestern Trumpet Quintet played "Trumpet Voluntary" to mark the beginning of the processional and a new academic year.

Ben McArthur, vice president for academic administration, welcomed students to the event by reminding them that convocation recognizes an academic process that dates back more than a millennium to higher education in Italy.

Speaker for the Convocation was Dr. Eric Anderson, president of Southwestern Adventist University. Speaking on "The Folly of Prestige: Kenosis, Glory, and Education," Anderson compared and contrasted Southwestern Adventist University with other similarly-sized colleges that present themselves to the world with all the apparent trappings of prestige and success.

"The truth is that Southwestern is not richly endowed or widely known," said Anderson. "To be brutally honest, a person does not gain prestige or status by enroll-

ing here—or by working here.

"Too many schools have confused themselves on what is desirable or possible or appropriate, and ended up neglecting essential matters as their leaders ride off in pursuit of imaginary objectives and impossible dreams. Adventist education must focus on what we really are, instead of building on appearances, or longing for greater prestige."

Anderson went on to cite how, for more than a century, Southwestern's greatness has been in its record of changed lives. "Southwestern has had the audacity to aim at 'the harmonious development of the physical, mental, and spiritual powers,' to seek to prepare students not just for a job, but for life, even eternal life."

"Certainly if we follow God's leading, we will be blessed beyond our greatest imagination," he said at the close of his presentation. "And 'blessed' is a better word than 'prestigious.'"

Glen Robinson

## Paulsen and Reynolds to Speak at SWAU

Two noted and accomplished speakers will visit the campus of Southwestern Adventist University during October.

Dr. Jan Paulsen, just-retired president of the General Conference, will visit campus October 28-30. He will speak to students and faculty at the university's weekly assembly on Thursday, October 28, and preach in the Keene Seventh-day Adventist Church on October 30. In addition, he will meet teachers for a discussion of how to integrate faith and learning. "Elder Paulsen has said that Adventist teachers need to expose their students to intellectual challenges, but 'bring them home at the end of the day,'" says Eric Anderson, university president. "A scholar himself, he has given serious thought to these issues." Paulsen is the author of two books: *When the Spirit Descends*, and *Let Your Light So Shine*.

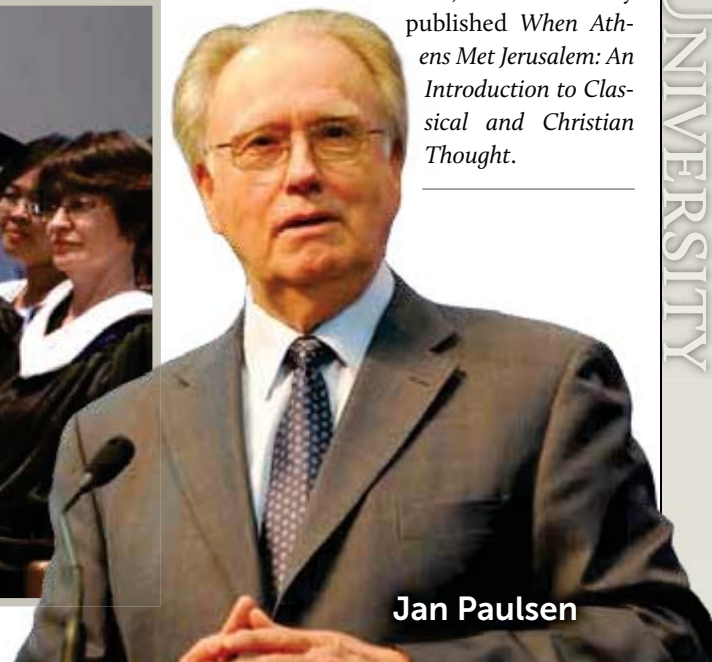
Dr. John Mark Reynolds, a philosopher and director of the honors program at Biola University, will visit Southwestern the previous week. Reynolds will explain "Why the Origins Debate Matters," in the first presentation in this year's Saxon Lecture Series in Science and Religion. This public lecture will be held in Wharton Auditorium on Sabbath, October 16, at 4 p.m. Reynolds will also meet with the freshman class, presenting the Christian case for a life of learning.

Speaker for last year's Convocation at Southwestern, Reynolds is founder and director of the Torrey Honors Institute, a "great books" program. He is the author of three books, entitled *Three Views on Creation and Evolution*, *The New Media Frontier*, and his recently

published *When Athens Met Jerusalem: An Introduction to Classical and Christian Thought*.



Southwestern Adventist University students and faculty listen to the convocation message..



Jan Paulsen

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### Andrews University

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### Research Coordinator

opportunity available in Andrews University's Physical Therapy department. Ideal candidate will be a Physical Therapist with a doctorate degree and experience in re-

search, teaching, and cardiopulmonary. For more details and to apply, please visit: [http://www.andrews.edu/HR/emp\\_jobs\\_faculty.cgi](http://www.andrews.edu/HR/emp_jobs_faculty.cgi).

### Employment Opportunities:

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### Assistant Herdsman

needed at Andrews University. Opportunity includes managing the

milking parlor on a 650-cow commercial dairy, ensuring proper milking, cow handling, cow treatments, calving assistance, etc. Candidate must have degree in Dairy Science or related field and minimum 2 years dairy experience. Interested individuals apply at: [http://www.andrews.edu/hr/emp\\_jobs\\_hourly.cgi](http://www.andrews.edu/hr/emp_jobs_hourly.cgi).

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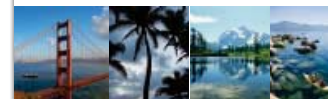


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**Heritage Singers, celebrating their 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**, are now taking concert invitations for fundraisers and special church events. Call Max Mace at 530.622.9369 to book a 2011 concert while

there are still available dates.

## Announcements

**Andrews Academy Homecoming Weekend** will be held October 15-17. All alumni of Emmanuel Missionary College Academy, Andrews University Academy, and Andrews Academy, plan now to join us for special services on Friday evening and all day Sabbath. Honor classes are 1936, 1941, 1946, 1951, 1956, 1961, 1966, 1971, 1976, 1981, 1986, 1991, 1996, 2001, 2006. For more details, contact the Academy Alumni office at 269.471.6140, or e-mail [acadalum@andrews.edu](mailto:acadalum@andrews.edu).

**College View Academy/ Union College Academy Alumni Weekend 2010.** Oct. 8-10, 2010, in Lincoln, Neb. More events this year! We have lined up two great speakers and the basketball tournament is back. For more information on the weekend, please contact Ryan Lindbeck (Class of '99) at 402.483.1181 x 15 or e-mail: [rlindbeck@collegeviewacademy.org](mailto:rlindbeck@collegeviewacademy.org).

**Norse Church Annual Service.** October 9 is the Sabbath designated for the annual worship service at the Norse-Clifton SDA church in Bosque County, Tex. Guests are invited to attend Sabbath School at 10 a.m., followed by worship service and potluck luncheon. From Cleburne take Hwy 174 south to Meridian. Drive through town and turn left on Hwy 6 toward Clifton. Turn right



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- » You can set up a gift annuity through a will or trust.



Since 1980 Maria Lambeth has lived about a mile from Southwestern Adventist University in Keene, Texas. She enjoys working at "Great Stuff" and serving as a deaconess in the Keene church.

## »A Passion for Evangelism

Maria Pinheiro was born and raised in Brazil. In 1958 she met Cecil Lambeth, who had been president of the East Brazilian Union, instrumental in building a four-year college near Rio and the Adventist hospital that looks out over the Bay of Rio. She soon realized public evangelism was his passion.

During 1964 Cecil and Maria were married in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. He was on leave from the General Conference to be a free (no salary) missionary. That relationship lasted for the rest of his life. He was free to preach and preach he did, from Brazil to Texas. His friends heard him say, "Woe is me if I preach not." In the evangelistic meetings Maria would teach a special class for the juniors while Cecil preached the Advent message to the adults.

Although the days of public evangelism with Cecil are gone, Maria has never lost her passion for sharing Jesus with young people. Whether it was teaching Spanish to senior high school students, working as a behavior modification therapist, being the administrator of a residential treatment center for abused children, or talking to the air conditioning repairman, her goal was to talk about Jesus and His soon return.

A long time ago Cecil and Maria had decided to someday make a significant gift

to the Lord's work. They discussed the many needs of the church they loved and concluded that their gift should be used for public evangelism.

In January 2010 Maria made the gift she and Cecil had talked about so long ago. She set up a gift annuity that will someday be used by the Texas Conference for evangelism. This gift that I call GivingForward comes from a commitment and decision that was settled long ago. It will support the Lord's work.

—John Mathews

## Q&A

**Q:** What is the difference between an insurance annuity and a charitable gift annuity?

**A:** Insurance annuities are contracts that are sold for a lump sum or a series of payments. The annuity will return set payments to you at a future date. If the owner dies during the accumulation phase, heirs will receive the accumulated amount in the annuity and be subject to ordinary income tax and possible estate taxes. A gift annuity is a contract offered by charities that is not sold but treated as a "gift," with any remainder going to charity instead of family. Both annuity types offer guaranteed payments, but only the gift annuity offers a charitable tax deduction, a portion of payment as tax-free.



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on Hwy 2136, then left on Hwy 4155. The church is about one mile on the left.

**Oak Park Academy Alumni Weekend** will be held October 8-9 at Gates Hall, Nevada, Iowa. The honor classes are '35, '40, '45, '50, '55, '60, '65, '70, '75 and '80. For more information, go to [opainiowa.com](http://opainiowa.com).

**Sandia View Academy Alumni Association** invites all former faculty, staff, and students to our annual Alumni Weekend, held the last week of Balloon Fiesta, October 7-9. All honor class years end in 5 or 0 (2005, 2000, etc.). For more information, visit our Web site at [www.sandiaviewacademy.org](http://www.sandiaviewacademy.org) or contact Lisa Christopher-

son: [svarocks@aol.com](mailto:svarocks@aol.com).

**Tulsa Adventist Academy Alumni Sabbath**, October 9, 2010 at First Tulsa church, 920 S. New Haven; 9:30 a.m., Sabbath School, 10:45 a.m., church; alumni picture; fellowship lunch—Mexican theme. Current and past students and faculty stay and perhaps see your picture on slide shows. Bring your old yearbook and pictures, enjoy activities after lunch, with volleyball games for everyone in the evening. Contact Evelyn Hold at 918.834.1107.

### Milestones

**Thurman and Martha Petty**, formerly of Burleson, Tex., celebrated their **50th** wedding anniversary August 21. They were married in 1960 at the Pio-



neer Memorial church in Berrien Springs, Mich., following Thurman's second year at (then) Emmanuel Missionary College. Thurman received his M.A. at Andrews University Seminary in 1966, after which the Pettys served as a pastoral couple in several states. Martha

became an R.N. in 1979, and later received a B.S. in hospital administration (1987). They spent a term of mission service on Pitcairn Island, where Thurman was pastor and Martha was the medical director. The Pettys lived 20 years in Burleson, Tex., and have recently retired in Thompson Falls, Mont. They have three children and 10 grandchildren.

**Pastor Doug Baker** of the Yukon, Okla., church celebrated his **60th** birthday on July, with many friends and church family. Wonderful fellowship with good food, beautiful music, and fun made the occasion of growing a year older a true blessing.

### Obituaries

**BECK, Dellia Kathryn**, born October 11, 1930 in Jefferson, Tex., and died August 13, 2010 in Tyler, Tex. She was a member of the Tyler church. Survivors: son and daughter-in-law, Michael and Patricia Scott of Tyler; daughter and son-in-law, Pat and Ronnie Marshall of Chandler; one brother; five grandchildren, 11 great-grandchildren, and several nieces and nephews.

**DICKHAUT, Leroy Ray**, born December 13, 1939 in Golden Valley, N.Dak., and died June 19, 2010 in Springdale, Ark. A member of the Gentry, Ark., church, he was laid to rest in Gentry. Survivors: wife, Janet Dickhaut of Gentry; daughter and son-in-law,

Jenni and David Robeson of California; daughters, Lisa Forney of Arkansas, Melinda Brassfield of Arkansas, and Ashley Wilson of New York; son and daughter-in law, David and Sheryl Dickhaut of Tennessee; son, Michael Dickhaut of California; brothers and sisters-in-law, Calvin and Christine Dickhaut of Missouri, and Roger and June Dickhaut of Texas; sister and brother-in-law, Durnetta and Gordon Werth of North Dakota; 10 grandchildren, three great-grandchildren.

**GONGORA, Silvestra Olivarez**, born December 31, 1908 in San Isidro, Tex., and died July 16, 2010 in McAllen, Tex. A member of Mission Spanish Church, Gongora was laid to rest in San Isidro, Tex. Survivors: son, Hector Gongora of Albuquerque, N.M.; daughter, Belia Peterson of Banning, Calif.; three grandchildren, six great-grandchildren, one great-great-grandchild, eight step-grandchildren, 14 step-great-grandchildren and four step-great-grandchildren.

**LOEWEN, Roy L.**, born November 17, 1931, in Hitchcock, Okla., and died July 23, 2010 in Okeene, Okla. A member of the Okeene church, he served in the U.S. Army during the Korean Conflict. Survivors: wife, Madge Loewen of Okeene; son, Jimmy Loewen of Okeene; brother, Sam Loewen of New Mexico; sister, Betty Christianson of Napa Valley, Calif. A son, Bobby, and a brother, Robert, preceded him in death.

**PURDOM, Janice E.,** born June 20, 1920 in Lawton, Okla., and died June 10, 2010 in Berryville, Ark. A member of the Berryville church, she was laid to rest in Berryville. She was united in marriage on Christmas day in 1937 to William W. Purdom, Sr., who preceded her in death. She and her husband helped pioneer the church in Berryville by giving Bible studies and holding a Branch Sabbath School. Later, others from the Harrison church came to help build and organize the Berryville church. Survivors: son and daughter-in-law, William W., Jr., and Bernita of Berryville; daughters, Sherry Y. Oden of Santa Cruz, Calif., and Regina E. Purdom of Berryville; brother, John Homer Coatney, Jr., of Camano Island, Wash.; sister, Eula D. Rice of Tulsa, Okla.; seven grandchildren, 17 great-grandchildren, and four great-great-grandchildren.

**SMITH, Monnie Dwayne,** born May 15, 1947, in Waco, Tex., and died May 9, 2010, in Arlington, Tex. A member of the Mansfield, Tex., church, he loved the Lord, and was a prayer warrior in the Calimesa, Calif., church for years. He was also a Disabled Vets Officer at Loma Linda and Citizen of the Year in California for four years, being instrumental in building the first Little League baseball field in Yucaipa, Calif. Survivors: wife, Barbara, of Arlington; mother-in-law, Nan Brazier of Arlington; twin brother, Ronnie Smith of California; sisters, Ha-


zel Perciful of Arlington; Imogene Jackson of Fort Worth, Tex.; sons, Monte, Jr., Cory, and Daryl of California; daughter, Heather Martin of California; four stepsons, Stuart, Jason, Brian, and Adam McCormick, all of Texas; five grandchildren; numerous friends and family members.

**STARR, John,** born January 14, 1924 in Slick, Okla., and died July 24, 2010 in Tyler, Tex. He was a member of the Tyler church. Survivors: wife of 62 years, Geneva Starr of Tyler; son, John Starr, Jr., of California; daughters and sons-in-law, Donna and Larry Brockett of Tyler and Charlene Randall and Dr. Randy Randall of California; four brothers; one sister; seven grandchildren, 10 great-grandchildren, and two great-great-grandchildren.

**WELLS, Venita Jean,** born January 2, 1935 in Big Springs, Neb., and died September 1, 2010 in Tyler, Tex. She was a member of the Tyler church. Survivors: husband, Merlin Wells of Troup, Tex.; three sons and one daughter-in-law, David and Carolyn Wells of Troup, Ronald Wells of Whitehouse, and Rex Wells of Conroe; one daughter, Debbie Steele of Overton; two brothers; one sister and a brother-in-law; three grandchildren.

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## SABBATH SUNSET CALENDAR

	Oct 1	Oct 8	Oct 15	Oct 22	Oct 29	Nov 5
Abilene, TX	7:25	7:16	7:07	6:59	6:52	6:46
Albuquerque, NM	6:52	6:42	6:33	6:24	6:15	6:10
Amarillo, TX	7:32	7:23	7:13	7:05	6:57	6:50
Brownsville, TX	7:17	7:10	7:03	6:57	6:51	6:47
Dallas, TX	7:13	7:04	6:55	6:47	6:40	6:34
El Paso, TX	6:52	6:43	6:35	6:27	6:20	6:14
Fort Worth/Keene, TX	7:15	7:06	6:58	6:49	6:42	6:37
Gallup, NM	7:00	6:50	6:41	6:32	6:24	6:17
Galveston/Houston, TX	7:08	7:00	6:52	6:44	6:38	6:33
Gentry, AR	7:03	6:53	6:43	6:34	6:26	6:19
Little Rock, AR	6:55	6:45	6:35	6:27	6:19	6:13
Muskogee, OK	7:07	6:56	6:47	6:38	6:30	6:24
New Orleans, LA	6:47	6:38	6:31	6:23	6:17	6:11
Oklahoma City, OK	7:15	7:05	6:56	6:47	6:39	6:33
Roswell, NM	6:44	6:35	6:26	6:17	6:10	6:04
San Antonio, TX	7:21	7:13	7:05	6:58	6:51	6:46
Shreveport, LA	7:01	6:52	6:43	6:35	6:28	6:22
Tulsa, OK	7:09	6:59	6:49	6:40	6:32	6:26

## No Looking Back

**BEING RAISED A SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST**, I have been taught many of the Bible stories and basic concepts of Christianity since early childhood. Before the events of this past summer, I knew the fundamentals of the Bible, including Adventist beliefs, but I couldn't seem to find anything for myself when I searched through God's Word. The beliefs of my church seemed reasonable enough, but I didn't know how to back them up with the Scriptures, and, even worse, I was somewhat insincere in following some of them.

As a result, I fell into the worst of traps: feeling secure in my beliefs without realizing God's true calling on my life. After trying to follow God halfheartedly for a time, God moved me to take a mission trip to Peru sponsored by my school. What I found there in the poverty-stricken towns were joyful people, completely sincere and aching for the truth and the opportunity to spread it.

We were told that our group had a huge impact on the community. That made me think: If God can use me to make this much of an impact in a place where I can't even have a conversation with anyone, then why can't He make an impact through me at home in my own country?

At that point, I already had plans to attend ASI's Youth for Jesus program in the summer, which would be held on the LIFE (Lay Institute For Evangelism) campus in Florida. I'd heard great things about YFJ from several friends. But when I actually got there in July, it was a challenge to bond with youth from so many other places, sing mostly hymns, go door to door, and help conduct evangelistic meetings.

After the first few days, however, I really began to warm up to both the new friends and busy schedule. I loved attending morning worships and singing hymns full of God's promises, and I enjoyed going door to door to invite people to meetings. I also received a blessing from helping with the meetings

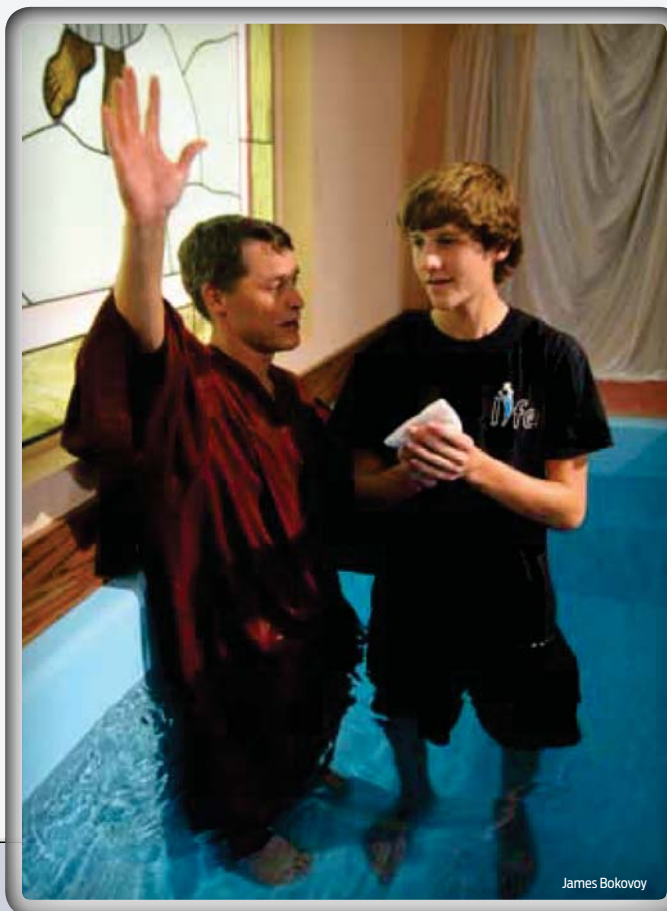
and hearing each of the topics preached in unfamiliar ways.

I started to take a particular interest in the studies presented each morning by various teachers who challenged us to think, study, and understand what we believed for ourselves. We also learned how to give Bible studies to others. God used those classes to establish in my mind the significance of the Bible and the reasons we should study it.

In addition, the teachers revealed the love that God gave to them and could give to each of us. Prayer took on new meaning to me as I saw countless prayers answered and realized that God wants to communicate with each of us as a Friend. Ultimately, I

came to realize that personal devotion to our amazing God brings abundant joy and grace, and I decided to fully commit my life to Him and be baptized.

Today, my church's beliefs not only seem reasonable to me; they are my own beliefs. I can both explain and defend them. And, best of all, I want to share them with others because they make my own life richer and more meaningful. I have discovered God's calling on my life, and I'm not looking back.



**Robbie Polski** is a senior at Chisholm Trail Academy in Keene, Tex.

◀ **Robbie Polski is baptized by Philip Sizemore at the final night of the Youth for Jesus meetings in Lady Lake, Fla.**



# For the Record »

BY MARK BOND » COMMUNICATION DIRECTOR, SOUTHWESTERN UNION

## ASI: Connecting Stewardship and Evangelism

**FOR SEVERAL YEARS, I'VE HAD THE PRIVILEGE OF WORKING WITH THE ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM AT ASI.** If you don't know what ASI stands for, you're not alone. In a church that seems obsessed with acronyms, ASI is one of the harder abbreviations to get your head around. Adventist-laymen's Services & Industries is the official name, but what it's really about is connecting laypeople with ministry opportunities.

ASI started more than 50 years ago as an organization of self-supporting ministries and institutions. Over the years, it has morphed into an international network of laypeople and lay-driven ministries working together as a unified force to support the Adventist Church's mission and finish the work. Many are professionals, business owners, and entrepreneurs who want their life's work to count for something more than their own bottom line. They see their offices and places of business as unique platforms for outreach and evangelism.

If you've never been to an ASI gathering, you're missing out. Each year, an international convention is held in August. Many describe it as a mini-General Conference Session. The four-day event is

packed with dynamic general session and seminar presentations, as well as phenomenal programming for children and youth. (My kids start looking forward to the next ASI convention as soon as the last one has ended.)

At ASI conventions, you hear from many names you know and many that you don't. ASI members from all over the world share their personal testimonies about how God is using them to fulfill the ASI motto, "Sharing Christ in the Marketplace." Their stories are fascinating, challenging, and unforgettable.

In some ways, it's like a big family reunion each year. Groups of reunited friends catch up in the exhibit hall and reflect on the fact that they're one year closer to the Lord's coming. Those who

attend take giving seriously. At this year's convention in Orlando, an offering of nearly \$2 million was gathered to support more than 35 evangelism projects around the globe.

Just over a year ago, my wife, Conna, was asked to join the ASI team as their communication director. She enjoys the challenges of maintaining their Web site, producing their bimonthly e-newsletter, *ASI Update*, and editing *InsideASI* magazine. Like me, she believes in the importance of communication—with each other and with the world. Numerous times, I've heard her say, "I'm so thankful to be doing work I actually believe in!"

When it comes to connecting stewardship and evangelism, there's no organization I know of that does it better. To find out more about ASI, and to learn how you can get involved, visit [www.ASIministries.org](http://www.ASIministries.org). It's a connection you'll be glad you made.

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**CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED**

# TAKE A PEEK AT WHAT'S HAPPENING AT SOUTHWESTERN

## **SAXON LECTURE SERIES IN SCIENCE AND RELIGION**

The first of the academic year's lectures will feature John Mark Reynolds, founder and director of the Torrey Honors Institute, and Associate Professor of Philosophy, at Biola University. October 16, 2010.

## **FORMER GENERAL CONFERENCE PRESIDENT JAN PAULSEN TO VISIT SOUTHWESTERN**

Paulsen will visit with faculty and students during the week, and then preach for the first and second services at the Keene Seventh-day Adventist Church on Sabbath. October 29, 2010.

## **DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC FACULTY IN CONCERT**

The Department of Music is proud to present John Boyd, Rudyard Dennis, Maria Harmon, Ana Scarone, and Jonathan Wall in concert. The evening will feature signature pieces for piano, clarinet, flute, and voice. Reception to follow. November 16, 2010.

## **CHORAL CHRISTMAS CONCERT**

Southwestern's choral ensembles perform during an evening of sacred music for the Advent season. December 10, 2010.

## **MEYERSON MUSIC FESTIVAL**

The Department of Music will host academy and high school students from around the nation during the Meyerson Music Festival, a choral and instrumental music clinic culminating in *A Night at the Meyerson*. February 9-13, 2011.

## **BRAIN GAMES: CODE JFK**

Brain Games is an fun and intellectually challenging event for qualifying high school students. This year's theme will foster students' appreciation of the humanities, such as literature, art, history, communication, and economics. March 24-26, 2011.



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