

SOUTHWESTERN UNION

# Record

MARCH 2011



# FREE INDEED!

EXPLORING THE POWER OF PRISON MINISTRY



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**On the Cover**

More than seven million people will serve time in prison this year. Most are sad, lonely, and in desperate need of a Savior. Who will tend to their spiritual needs, if not us? Thousands of inmates find freedom as a result of Adventist prison ministries. But millions more are waiting... [Photo by James Bokovoy]

# President's Perspective»

BY MAX TREVIÑO » SOUTHWESTERN UNION CONFERENCE PRESIDENT



## You Have Done it Unto Me

A handwritten signature in cursive that reads "Max S. Treviño".

**Jesus says that when He comes in His glory, He will invite those at His right hand with these words:** “I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me” (Matt. 25:35, 36).



In our neighborhoods, there are countless residents who have no church home. Strangers who need a place to belong. Wanderers who long to respond to Christ's invitation, “Come unto me.” These strangers are longing for a home. **Take them in.**

Members of the church of Laodicea are identified as thinking they are wealthy and in need of nothing, but in fact they are cold, blind, and naked. Do you have family members and friends who need to put on the garment of Christ's righteousness? **Clothe them.**

When negative situations between friends are left unforgiven, it's like a cancer that eats

A few verses later, Jesus encourages, “Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, you have done it unto Me.”

I've been privileged to feed the hungry and give a drink to the thirsty. I've given clothes that I no longer wear to those who needed them. I've visited countless friends in the hospital. But I have yet to visit one of the “least of these” behind bars.

As I think about the spiritual implication of these verses, it makes me wonder if there might be more to the equation.

Jesus told us in his Sermon on the Mount, “Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness.” Do you know someone who is hungry for spiritual bread or thirsty for the water of life? **Fill them.**

away at the soul. Do you know someone who is soul sick and in need of your forgiveness? **Visit them.**

Pride, jealousy, and anger create prison cells of bitterness from which escape seems impossible. Words of comfort, kindness, and love can release the prisoner from bondage. Has someone caused you pain? Are you imprisoned by bitterness? Take Jesus' words to heart: “I was in prison and you came to me.” **Go to them.**

When you do these things, you will have done it unto Him.

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Max Treviño, Southwestern Union Conference president






# CREATION Health

BY LYNELL LAMOUNTAIN

## CREATION Health: Finding Freedom in Prison

**He's 17, but instead of enjoying the kinds of things other kids his age enjoy**, like ball games, amusement parks, and time with friends, he's sitting alone in an Orange County jail for committing a crime so serious that he's being tried as an adult. Truth be told, his spirit was imprisoned long before his body ever was. His life was a life that had been filled with disappointment, hopelessness, and pain. And he allowed those circumstances to shape him. The result was the loss of his freedom.

- C** Choice 
- R** Rest 
- E** Environment 
- A** Activity 
- T** Trust 
- I** Interpersonal RELATIONSHIPS 
- O** Outlook 
- N** Nutrition 

This story saddens us because we see a young man who traded opportunity for a dead end. But, with God, is there any such thing as a “dead end?” Not according to a certain Seventh-day Adventist pastor who reached out to this troubled teen. He volunteered his time to teach a class on forgiveness for the boy and eight other inmates who were also in their teens. He believed that if he could lead them on a journey of forgiveness, they would find the freedom they were seeking. The class was called *Forgive to Live*.

The response was incredible. There was heated discussion, vigorous debate, and deep soul searching. One of the inmates said, “I thought it (forgiveness) was for grown-ups, but it’s really great for kids. It really helped me to rethink my anger.”

The youth were shown how to practice and experience forgiveness while maintaining their dignity. This is extremely important in a jail setting because forgiving someone can imply fear and weakness. And then the only option left to save face is to fight.

The pastor taught the kids that forgiveness isn’t necessarily about forgetting, excusing, reconciling, or setting others free. He mentored them in how to reframe their anger so they could have peace in the present and hope for the future.

They learned that everyone has been hurt by someone or

something and that what they do with that pain dramatically affects the course of their life. As they began experiencing forgiveness, they embraced the hopeful reality that a better life could be theirs.

In his own words, the imprisoned teen in our story said this about *Forgive to Live*: “It taught me to stop blaming people for my circumstances and to take responsibility for myself and the future.”

The changes in these young men were so profound, that the program coordinator plans to teach *Forgive to Live* to dozens of other teens in the Youthful Offender Program, who are either awaiting trial or serving sentences of less than a year. The kids stay at the jail for an average of four to eight months. Sadly, 85 percent are convicted and sent to adult prisons. The others go back into the community where their choices will determine their fate.

Whether serving a sentence in jail, or suffering in silence from a broken heart, lost friendship, or other grievance story, negative emotions like anger and aggression result from unresolved grievances and can linger for years, negatively impacting our life and wellness. But forgiveness is a roadmap that leads to better health by eliminating unresolved anger so that we can finally enjoy the freedom for which our soul so desperately longs.

*“The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free”* (Luke 4:18, NIV).

*That’s CREATION Health!*

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**Lynell LaMountain** writes from Florida Hospital in Orlando, Florida. For information about hosting a CREATION Health program at your church, visit [www.CREATIONhealth.tv](http://www.CREATIONhealth.tv) or call 407.303.7711.



# Shades of Grace

BY MIKE TUCKER » SPEAKER/DIRECTOR, FAITH FOR TODAY

## Spiritual Blindness

**A friend told me about a pastor near where he lives who announced to his congregation that he was now “without sin.”** I sat dumbfounded as I listened to my friend’s story. After a while I began to feel a profound sense of sadness—not as much for the congregation as for the pastor—since anyone who feels that he has no sin is spiritually blind.

Jesus’ message to the church of Laodicea is for those who are spiritually blind. It is for anyone who trusts in their own abilities, their own wealth, or their own good works for salvation.

Laodicea was located at a crossroads and was a center of trade. The city was enormously wealthy and proud of its wealth. Most of their money came from the clothing industry and from banking transactions. They exported soft, black, woolen garments and wool carpets all over the world. The banks of the city stored vast quantities of gold.

The citizens of Laodicea were quite smug about their wealth. If they needed something, they could buy it. They were self-sufficient.

Perhaps you know people who are just a bit smug about their standing with Jesus. They seem certain that God must be very happy that such a good man or woman has chosen to be a part of the church. They feel that their wealth or wealth of character and good works makes them wonderful additions to the Kingdom of Heaven.

Jesus speaks to anyone who feels confident of his own goodness. “I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth. You say, ‘I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.’ But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked.” (Rev. 3:15, 16, NIV).

Jesus is unimpressed with our goodness. While we may think we are secure with our good deeds and keen spiritual insight, Jesus declares that we are “wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked.” Our very best deeds are “filthy rags,” according to Isaiah. We must place no confidence in our own righteousness.

Jesus says that Laodicea is “blind.” While on earth, Jesus called only one group of people “blind,” the self-righteous Phari-

sees. The Pharisees were legalists, and legalism is blind to its own imperfection.

What is the cure for spiritual blindness? Eye salve, the insight brought only by the Holy Spirit, is the cure for spiritual blindness.

The Holy Spirit has several jobs to perform in our lives. Among the first of those jobs is to reveal to us the perfection of Christ as it contrasts with our own depravity. When we understand that our need is complete, the Holy Spirit then points us to the only solution for our wretched condition, the perfect sacrifice of Christ on Calvary’s tree.

“To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne” (Rev. 3:21).

How do we “overcome?” Again we return to Revelation 12.

“They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony” (Rev. 12:11).

I remember the day that Frank realized that his good works were no guarantee of heaven. When he truly saw the glory of the sinless Lamb of God, Frank fell broken at the foot of the Cross. Trembling, this once proud man begged for forgiveness for his many sins, not the least of which was his pride. Seeing the depravity of his own soul, Frank wondered if he could ever be forgiven.

But as Frank continued to focus on the Cross, he came to understand the amazing power of the blood of the spotless Lamb of God. The blood of Jesus covered Frank’s sin and caused him to stand before God as though he was without sin, as the perfection of Christ covered his own imperfect record.

The blood of Jesus is available for you, as well. By His blood we see our need. By His blood we overcome. Jesus’ shed blood meets your every need!

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



# Pass it On...

A Monthly Focus on Evangelism in the Southwest

BY LESLIE SOUPET » NEW DISCOVERY BIBLE SCHOOL PRESIDENT

## Finding Freedom Behind Bars

**Captive. Prisoner. Condemned. Guilty.** At some time or another, we have all experienced this. We experienced it when the death of a loved one took prisoner the happiness that we once shared with them, or when we lost a job and were condemned to live at a lower level of the economic spectrum. Maybe we have found ourselves prisoners of our own feelings—real or imaginary—of guilt, low self-esteem, depression, deception, or infidelity. Those who have been freed of this know that it was only by the power of Jesus Christ that our chains were unshackled. This living Hope set us free! It is real, yet only for those who know Jesus Christ.

Unfortunately, according to the U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics, there are more than 7,225,800 people in the United States who, unlike us, are incarcerated, surrounded by four dark, cold walls. They are prisoners of desperation, hopelessness, guilt, and dismay. They reached prison as guilty or innocent. They live without an earthly or eternal future. Some do not know about God; others knew Him once and now seek His forgiveness for the second time, or maybe 70 times 7. They are individuals who want a change, but do not know how to pray or come to God. They are sons of God, and therefore, our brothers.

We may dare to think “that’s where they belong,” but if we saw these prisoners through the eyes of Jesus, we would acknowledge that they belong to Him. This is what Alice Davis saw when she received letters from prisoners saying, “I want a new life” and “I want to know how to get right with God.” With the desire to respond to these requests and not finding lessons appropriate for them, Alice began to prepare what we know today as the New Discovery Bible Lessons. In 1992, she started to send lessons only to those who requested them. One student told another about how the lessons had helped him, and soon there were more than 1,100 students.

Today, the New Discovery headquarters in Keene coordinates 36 correspondence schools in the United States. Some of these schools serve more than 1,000 students each. Every week we receive



multiple reports from prisoners who completed 108 lessons in four series. Many ask for pastoral visitation, and others say, “I want to be part of the commandment-keeping people.”

Baptism numbers increase every year, however, the most significant thing for them and this ministry is that they have found their liberty in Jesus. Now, they do not care if they are surrounded by four walls, because the chains of sin have been broken, their hopelessness has turned into hope, and their dismay is now encourage-

ment to share the news with their peers. They have found a new life!

It is impossible to express on paper the excitement we feel when we read the letters and reports that come in. We will never be able to compare our experiences to theirs. Yet one thing we can do is respond to God “to open blind eyes, to bring out prisoners from the prison, those who sit in darkness from the prison house” (Isa. 42:7). Will you respond by volunteering to send lessons to these prisoners? Will you start a correspondence school? Will you pray for their salvation?

For more information, contact New Discovery Bible Schools, Inc., P.O. Box 614, Keene, TX 76059, 817.648.5785, e-mail: [homelibrary@yahoo.com](mailto:homelibrary@yahoo.com).

**Leslie Soupet**, New Discovery Bible School president



## Encontrando Libertad en Prisión

**Cautivo. Preso. Condenado. Culpable. Prisionero.** En algún momento, todos hemos experimentado algo de esto. Lo experimentamos cuando la muerte de un ser querido llevó presa la felicidad que una vez compartíamos con esa persona, o cuando perdimos el trabajo que nos condenó a vivir dentro de nuestros límites económicos. Tal vez nos hemos encontrado prisioneros de nuestros propios sentimientos—reales o imaginarios—de culpabilidad, la baja estima propia, la depresión, el engaño, o la infidelidad. Los que salimos de estos encarcelamientos sabemos que solamente a través del poder de Jesucristo se desataron nuestras cadenas. Esta viva Esperanza que libera, nos puso en libertad. ¡Es algo real!, mas sólo es realidad para el que conoce a Jesucristo.

Desafortunadamente, hay más de 1,613,740 personas en Estados Unidos que viven encarceladas, y a diferencia de nosotros, se encuentran rodeadas de cuatro paredes físicas, oscuras y frías, y prisioneros de la desesperación, la desesperanza, la culpabilidad, y el desaliento. Han llegado a las cárceles culpables o inocentes. Viven sin futuro temporal o eterno. Algunas no saben de Dios; otras lo conocieron una vez y ahora buscan su perdón por segunda vez, o 70 veces 7. Son individuos que desean un cambio, pero no saben cómo orar o acercarse a Dios. Son hijos de Dios, y por lo tanto nuestros hermanos.

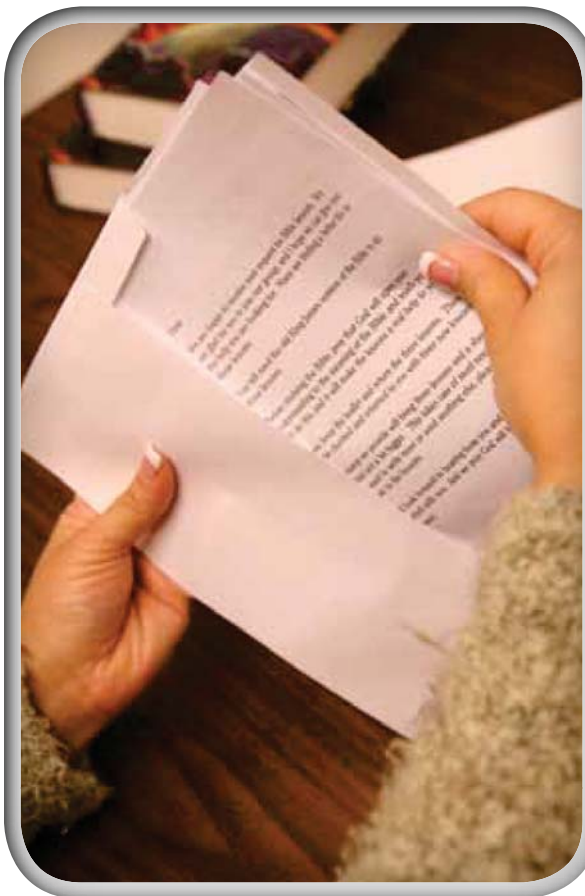
Algunos nos atrevemos a pensar “allí deben estar”, pero si los viésemos a través de los ojos de Jesús, reconoceríamos que pertenecen a Él. Esto fue lo que vio Alice L. Davis cuando recibió cartas de prisioneros que expresaban: “Quiero una nueva vida”, “Quiero saber cómo puedo estar bien con Dios”. Deseando responder a estos pedidos y al no encontrar lecciones adecuadas para ellos, comenzó a preparar lo que hoy se conoce como las lecciones bíblicas Nuevo Descubrimiento. En 1992, comenzó a enviar las lecciones solamente a los que las pedían. Un estudiante le contó a otro cómo las lecciones le habían ayudado, y en poco tiempo hubo más 1,100 estudiantes.

Hoy, desde la sede en Keene, se dirigen 36 escuelas en Estados Uni-

dos. Algunas de estas escuelas atienden a más de 1,000 estudiantes cada una. Cada semana se reciben múltiples informes de prisioneros que completaron las 108 lecciones en cuatro series. Muchos piden visitación de un pastor, y otros nos dicen: “Quiero unirme al pueblo que guarda los Mandamientos”.

Los números de bautismos aumentan cada año, no obstante, lo más significativo para ellos y este ministerio es que han encontrado su libertad en Jesús. Ahora, no les importa estar rodeados por cuatro paredes físicas, pues las cadenas del pecado han quedado rotas, su desesperanza se ha vuelto esperanza, y el desaliento ahora es aliento para compartir las nuevas con sus compañeros. ¡Han encontrado una nueva vida!

Es imposible expresar en papel lo que se siente al leer las cartas e informes que nos llegan. Nunca se podrá comparar nuestras vivencias con las de ellos. Mas una cosa podemos hacer: responder al llamado de Dios de “abrir los ojos de los ciegos, sacar de la cárcel a los presos, y de casa de prisión a los que moran en tinieblas” (Isaías 42:7). ¿Responderás enviando lecciones a estos prisioneros? ¿Iniciarás una escuela? ¿Orarás por su salvación?



**Leslie Soupet**, presidente, New Discovery Bible School

# I WAS IN PRISON AND HE VISITED ME

Pat Humphrey

Since 1983, Raymond Bevins has been in and out of prison. No, it's not for the reason you're probably thinking—though it might have been, were it not for God's intervention. An ex-convict, Raymond is now actively involved in a prison ministry in which more than 200 people have been baptized into the Seventh-day Adventist Church. But I'm getting ahead of the story.

Growing up in the projects in Fort Worth, Tex., and later moving to Houston, Raymond was raised by his single mother, who joined the church when he was five years old. He spent much of his early education in Adventist schools, yet was not free from the influences around him. Often bullied by neighborhood kids, Raymond learned to fight back. As he matured, he was allured by the street life. "By the time I was 13, I was out of control, with no direction. There was no father figure at the house and my mom was raising us to be tough boys."

When he was about 14 years old, Raymond's mom sent him to spend the summer working with his uncle in Austin, Tex., who was a concrete finisher. "I worked all day without seeing daylight," he recalls. "After that summer was over, my uncle gave me \$200 for the work I had done. I was going to buy some school clothes for school in September." On his way to the store, as Raymond moved toward a street corner, a con artist approached him, saying, "You look like you're pretty good with numbers. Can you come over here and help me?" Soon the man and his buddy had conned Raymond out of all but 10 dollars. "Needless to say, I didn't get any school clothes. When I realized I wasn't going to get my money back, I got so angry I decided I was going to learn how to do the same thing, so I got into the street life—robbing and stealing, drinking, drugging—you name it. I knew when they started sticking guns in my face that I was either going six feet under or to prison." And it wasn't long before Raymond wound up in prison.

"When I got to prison," Raymond continues, "several pastors told my mom they wouldn't come to visit me, because I was no good and would never amount to anything. I vowed in prison that I would never be a Seventh-day Adventist again." But one day, Harold Lee, who at the time was pastor of Bellfort church in Houston, did visit Raymond. "He stayed about four hours, and never once did he beat me over the head with the Bible or tell me how much sin I had committed. He just shared his experiences in

the army, and talked about things that I could relate to. What he did share with me was salvation and hope," Raymond says.

It was Harold Lee's visit that gave Raymond hope for a better life. "That is what inspired me," he recalls. "The Holy Spirit really worked through Harold Lee. I knew I didn't want to be a career criminal. So I started trying to do better, to think better, to act better." But it would be nearly five years before Raymond would have any chance for a release. Having no Bible and no one to minister to him, Raymond relied on the early religious experiences of his childhood to carry him through. The memory verses and the hymns he had learned in church gave him great comfort as he struggled to rediscover his faith. "A lot of times, when I would get depressed or it didn't seem like anything was going right, I would repeat the twenty-third Psalm that I had learned as a child. God would bring many of the Bible verses back to my memory and I didn't even have a Bible!" Raymond remembers. "That was a comfort to me when I was going through tough times and it helped get me through the last phases of prison life," he adds.

The big turning point for Raymond was when one of the guys that he had run the streets with, who was also a fellow prisoner, was murdered by an inmate. "It really got my attention," Raymond says. "I remember one day looking down into the day room from the second tier and hearing the cursing and watching the fellas play cards and shoot dice, with the radio blasting and a whole lot of bedlam, and I thought to myself, *I don't want to live like this and I don't want to see anybody else live like this.* I was tired of the degraded lifestyle. Little did I know that God was beginning to answer my prayer."

About a year after Raymond was released from prison, Harold Lee returned to Houston to run a tent effort. "I remembered that he was the one who came and visited me, so I decided to at least go and listen to what he had to say. He spoke on Revelation 13 and told us to go back and read Revelation 17. I thought, wow, this is some scary stuff." Not having studied the prophecies and end-time events, Raymond's interest was piqued and he wanted to learn more. A few days later he learned that a Revelation Seminar would be held at the Berean church. Shortly after that seminar, he and his wife were baptized into the Seventh-day Adventist Church.



Within two years of his release, Raymond was invited to do prison ministry. "Because of the nature of my offences, I wasn't supposed to go into a prison within 15 years of my release." Hesitating, he told the person who invited him that he probably wouldn't be able to do prison ministry. "So Rodney asked me, 'If God opened the doors, would you go in?' I told him that's the only way I would go." Amazingly, God did open those doors.

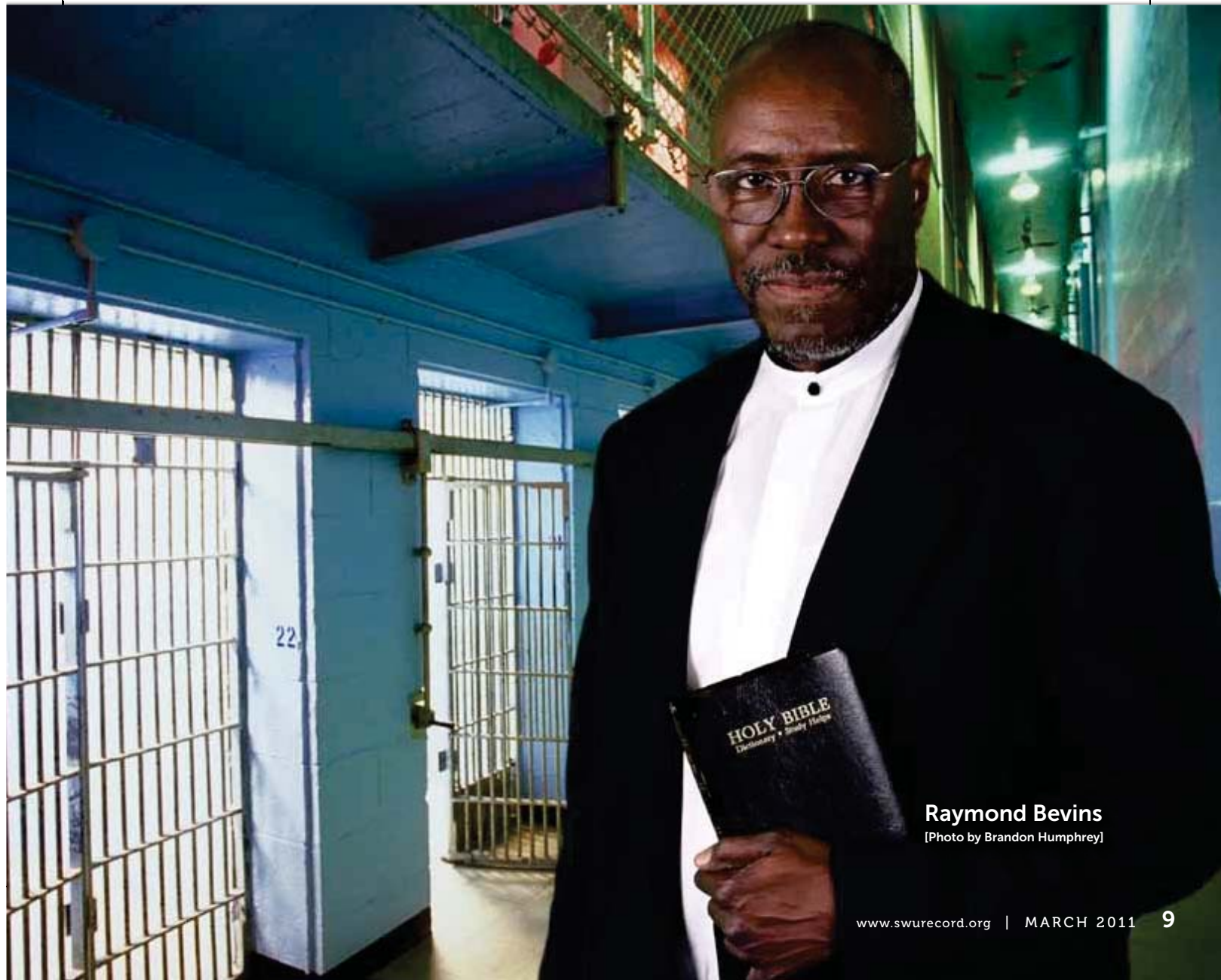
"The first prison we went to was the last prison I got out of," Raymond recalls. "I went in and we had to give them our driver's license. I knew they would do a background check for outstanding tickets. I thought, *I'm clean, so it shouldn't be a problem.* But while I was sitting on the front pew in the chapel, waiting for the prisoners to come in for the service, the chaplain sat in the pew behind me, called out my TDC number, and addressed me by my nickname. And I thought, oh, no, I'm not getting out." He said matter-of-factly to Raymond, "I know you've recently been released, and I'm trusting that you will do the right thing. But if you don't do the right thing, you will never get out." Raymond assured him that he didn't have to worry. "I don't intend to do anything wrong ever

again," Raymond told the chaplain. And he's been going into the prisons ever since.

Each month, on a Friday evening, Raymond and his wife, along with Pastor Rogers Johnson, and a prison ministry team from the Emmanuel church in Cleburne, Tex., visit the prison in Venus, sharing hope with the inmates through music, prayer, and the Word of God. "God has blessed us with over 200 baptisms," Raymond says, beaming with joy. "Two of them I did time with. One had been my cell partner for two years, and when he saw me, he didn't even recognize me. He said, 'If God can do that for you, I want Him to do that for me!'"


When inmates hear the story of Raymond's miraculous transformation, they often ask him, "How did you do it?" He responds that the answer is a relationship with the Lord. "The only thing that will help you is a changed heart," he says. And really, that's the only answer for each of us.

**Pat Humphrey** is the associate editor of the *Southwestern Union Record*.



**Raymond Bevins**

[Photo by Brandon Humphrey]



# THE LIGHT OF GOD'S LOVE SHINES THROUGH PRISON WALLS

Selene Sellinger

I was a seeker. I still am and always will be—it's just part of who I am. The problem with being a seeker is that I don't usually know what I'm seeking for. And that has caused me a lot of problems. The yearning for something unknown began to awaken the seeker within me at a young age. That yearning, that ache for something vital, is what brought me to this point in my life.

I was born and raised Catholic and attended Mass with my mother every Sunday morning until I married and moved away. My upbringing was good and loving, and my mother was the best parent that a girl could ask for. She read to me and taught me to read when books were the farthest things from my mind. Tales of Jesus mingled in my young imagination with stories of King Arthur and his round table. David killed giants just as Jack did when he climbed back down his beanstalk, and Noah built the Ark while Tinkerbell helped Peter Pan battle the evil Captain Hook. For me, God was as

distant as the moon and just as reachable. My mind struggled to separate fantasy from reality, fiction from history, but no answers were forthcoming to my young intellect.

Soon I left the world of fantasy and discovered the alluring world of boys. Bawdy jokes about "good Catholic girls" swirled around me as my teen years turned to promiscuity and rebellion. God was left in the dust as I searched for sensual pleasure. I was never satisfied—and I was always left with an empty feeling.

Sometime into my second marriage, I looked fleetingly back toward an unknown God. The little church that I passed every day drew my attention and I attended a few times. The people were kind, but all that I remember is being repeatedly asked if I was saved. Saved from what? I had no idea what they were talking about. I was not happy, I was still seeking, and I was confused. My small attempt at "doing" church was once again abandoned and I left God behind

so that I could resume my futile search elsewhere.

Though I still buried my pain and emptiness beneath a cold blanket of promiscuity and the numbing effects of alcohol, I continued seeking for the mysterious something. My endless exploration soon took me over an edge that dropped me into the fascinating world of the occult, witchcraft, and paganism. Before I go on, let me clarify that witchcraft or Wicca, is a pagan religion, not much different than the pagan religions referred to in the Old Testament. I freely swam in the sea of darkness, always believing that I walked in the light. I had finally found what I was seeking—or so I thought.

As before, I began a downward spiral. For nearly ten years I walked in sin and idolatry, defaming the name of Jesus through blasphemous jokes and mockery at every turn, holding tight to the laws of demons masquerading as gods and goddesses. Evil and gloom were my dearest bedfellows, though they wore a deceptive mask of gold. The fantasies of my youth had become the realities of my life.

Then one day I was arrested on charges that would change my life forever. I was held in county jail for 18 months before being sentenced in Federal Court for 11 years, eight months. The entire time of my detention was spent in prayer and solemn meditation to the god and goddess of my choice. I wrote spells for freedom that I performed inside my cell and made talismans to wear in court but nothing worked to save me from the fate that awaited me.

On September 12, 2006 I was transferred to a prison facility in Tallahassee, Fla. Within the first week I became acquainted with and was eagerly accepted by the other Wiccans who were incarcerated there. Most of the young ladies in the group had never seen a true Wiccan ritual before and they had no idea where I had been or why I found prison Wicca too restrictive and tame. Soon I began to separate from the others. I felt disconnected in a way that I could not understand. Again, I felt a strong sense of loss. Slowly, day by day, I slipped further and further away from a way of life that had been a part of me for years. I didn't know who I was or where I belonged. One Friday afternoon I slipped into the back of the chapel during Catholic Mass and listened to the priest. I felt out of place and unwanted, but I sneaked in each Friday for several weeks. The Mass was always in Spanish, so I didn't understand much of it, but I did remember some things from my childhood. I had no place to belong. I wasn't Catholic, but I didn't feel like I was Wiccan anymore, either.

December 21, 2007 was the last time I joined in a Wiccan ritual. On December twenty-fifth I attended Christmas Mass and gave myself to God. I had no idea what that meant, except that I was drawn toward Him in a way that I could not explain. I wanted to learn, but had no idea how to go about it. I tried to read the Bible, but it made no sense to me at all. My Wiccan friends continually asked me to return to them, but I resisted their invitations.

Then one spring day in 2008, I was walking the track and enjoying the warm sunshine, when I flipped the stations on my radio. My finger stopped when I heard a preacher talking about the evils of the

human heart. That intrigued me and I sat down to listen to him. His name was Pastor Steven Bohr and he began to lead me to where I am today. I then began listening to other Adventist programs, such as the one produced by White Horse Media, where I made "friends" with many people who have helped to shape my faith. I learned about Jesus through Lonnie Melashenko and his "Farmer Jesus Series" and many other programs that helped me understand what the Bible is all about.

But I still had a problem. Some of my questions were still unanswered. I tried asking the priest, but he wasn't much help. The Baptist chaplain at the chapel tried to help, but his answers didn't always make sense to me or match up with what I had heard on the radio. I started to read my Bible more and, with my radio teachers, began to learn about so many things. But I was afraid. I knew that God had forgiven me for my life of sin and debauchery, but I was afraid to face the Lord Jesus. I couldn't even say His name. How could I ask Him to forgive all the wicked things that I had said about Him? I cried night after night, wishing that I could erase those wasted years, yearning to know Him but terrified to seek Him out. I took the safer road and prayed only to God the Father.

My fear and confusion stayed with me until after I was sent to the Carswell facility in Fort Worth, Tex. There I found a Seventh-

day Adventist prison ministry that proved to be more than I expected. I was instantly accepted into the fold, and many of my questions began to be answered. Though I was happy to have found real people to talk about my new faith, I was very disheartened to find out that there was no radio station that played the program by White Horse Media. I missed my radio friends deeply and grieved the loss of their teachings. I

was sure that I would be lost without them. But it didn't take long for me to discover that White Horse Media is an Adventist ministry, and thanks to the Adventist prison ministry at Carswell, I would not be lost. I had been found!

In the year that I have been at Carswell, I have learned more than I could have imagined possible. I know what being saved means now, and I know that I have been saved. I am no longer afraid of my Lord, Jesus. I know that He died for those very sins that I was afraid that He would never forgive. I am still seeking, but I am no longer empty. I have the Lord in my heart because of Adventists who took the time, both on the radio and in person, to teach and guide me to a fuller understanding of Jesus Christ and God the Father.

With joy, I was baptized into the Seventh-day Adventist Church on August 8, 2009. As I look around, I see many faces—people who are lost and searching just like I was. This is the reason that Jesus said, "I was in prison and you visited me." Someone is waiting and longing to be visited in prison. Won't you consider being the one who will go?

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**“I HAD NO PLACE TO BELONG.  
I WASN'T CATHOLIC, BUT  
I DIDN'T FEEL LIKE I WAS  
WICCAN ANYMORE, EITHER.”**

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A condensed version of this story appeared in the Fall 2010 edition of *The Flame*, published by the Texas Conference.



# FREE INDEED!

By Josh Holly as told to James Bokovoy

*Josh Holly made some bad choices as a teenager, and he spent eight years of his life behind bars. Today, he's 26 years old and shares his story of freedom, which really began while he was still in prison...*

**T**here was a time—I think in the middle of 2008—when I reached the lowest point you can possibly reach. I realized I just wasn't where I was meant to be.

I'd been transferred from a maximum security prison to a medium security facility, but immediately got into serious trouble and was sent right back. I thought, *What's the point? There must be something more to life.*

Being in prison was not what I wanted anymore. I wanted to have a life. I wanted to have a family. I wanted to have a loving relationship.

At that point, I didn't believe in God. The whole concept of God seemed to me like a fairy tale. I didn't believe the stories in the Bible, even though my grandfather was a preacher, and my whole family said they were Christians.

When I first entered the system, some of the guys said, "Just pretend you're a Christian." But when I was younger, I had watched preachers on TV begging for money, and it made me seriously hate Christianity and the Bible.

But then I reached that low point and—it's hard to explain

it—but God just let me know that He's real—that the Bible is real. Ironically, I had been getting high the night before. But when I woke up the next morning, I had the strong impression: *God is real. The Bible is real. That's where your answer is. You want joy. You want peace. You're never going to find them anywhere but from God.*

My brother, who'd also been in and out of the correctional system, had become a Christian. He'd attended an Adventist Bible prophecy seminar and started sending me long letters. He was convinced that the world is going to end soon and wanted me to be ready. So I started praying to God, "Please change me. Show me the way, and I will serve You."

In prison, we'd had only had 13 channels on TV, but that week they added eight new channels. On Sunday morning, I was watching one of the new channels and a preacher named Leo Schreven came on. He was presenting a prophecy seminar dealing with Revelation. I didn't know anything about Seventh-day Adventists, but the moment that program came on, I knew it was different from the other televangelists' pro-



grams I'd grown to despise.

I began watching every Sunday. Eventually Pastor Schreven mentioned the Sabbath, so I started studying my Bible with a passion. I kept wondering, *If the Bible says that Saturday is the Sabbath, why does everyone go to church on Sunday?* Some of the things I was hearing seemed crazy, so I read through the whole Bible in about four months, and then kept reading through the New Testament over and over, trying to figure out if what he was saying was really true.

My TV was sitting on a stack of books, and I noticed that one of the books was called *Patriarchs and Prophets*. I thought, *Wow, I bet this is a good book.* So I opened it up and started reading. It started answering all my questions about the Sabbath, and I eventually read the whole book through twice. Between the Bible and *Patriarchs and Prophets*, I was reading about four or five hours a day.

Most of my questions were being answered, but I still had questions about Revelation. I knew that the beast power represented the Catholic form of religion, but I had no idea what the lamblike beast of Revelation 13 represented.

Josh Holly made some bad choices as a teenager, and he spent eight years of his life behind bars. At 26 years of age he shares his story of freedom, which really began while he was still in prison.



One day I was listening to the radio and heard the “Bible Answer Man” say in passing that the “lamb that formed an image to the beast” was America. That really caught my interest, but it still wasn’t completely clear, so I kept asking God for wisdom.

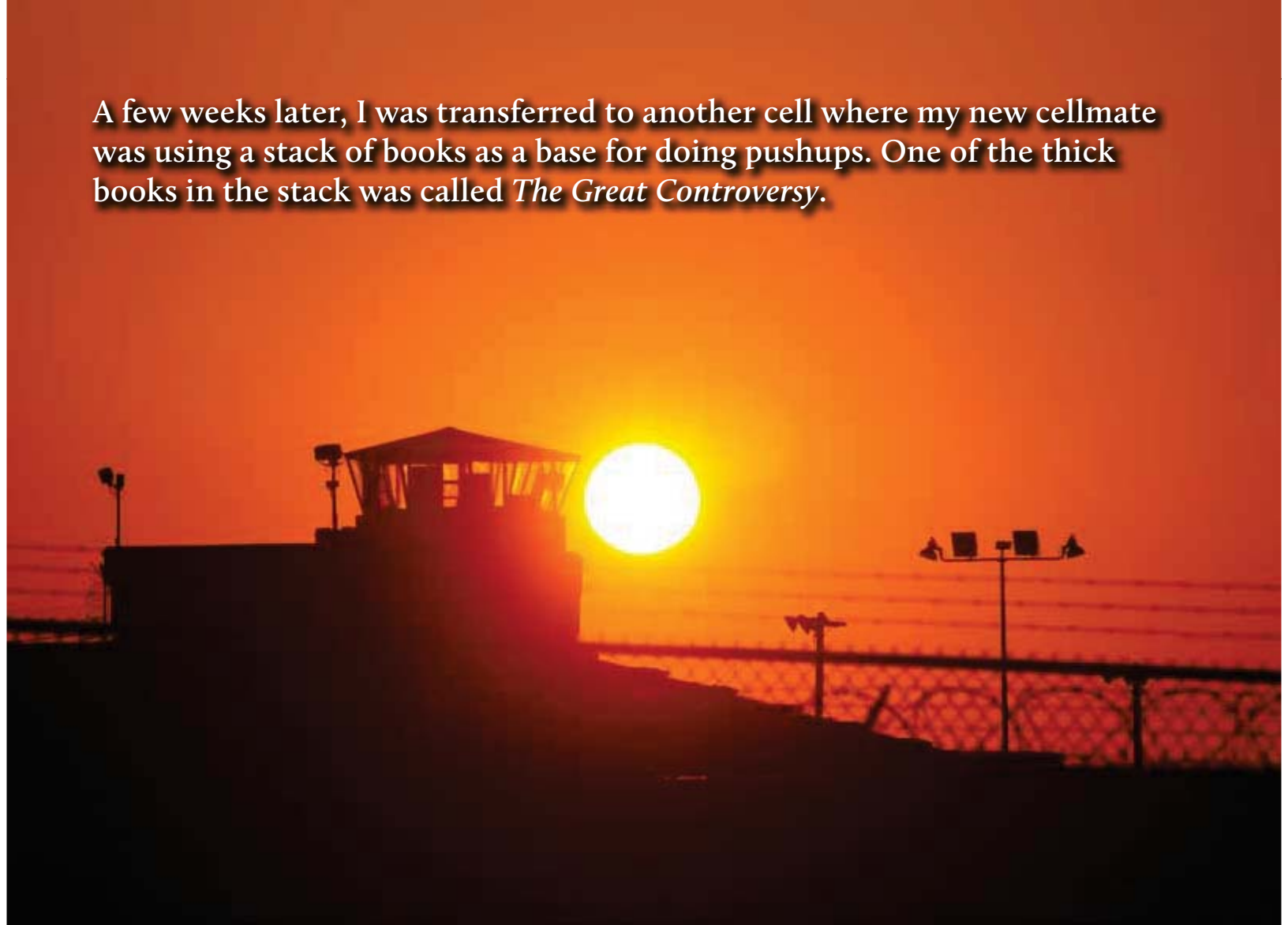
A few weeks later, I was transferred to another cell where my new cellmate was using a stack of books as a base for doing pushups. One of the thick books in the stack was called *The Great Controversy*.

I traded one of my other books for his copy of *The Great Controversy* and immediately opened to the chapter about America in prophecy, which answered all my questions. That same week, *Amazing Facts* with Doug Batchelor started airing. The first sermon he preached was about the United States in prophecy.

So many amazing things kept happening to confirm that God was answering my prayers. For instance, while reading through the Old Testament, I started thinking, *We’re not supposed to be eating some of this stuff we’re eating!* About that same time, Pastor Schreven started talking about what we should and shouldn’t eat. To me that was an amazing revelation. I mean, if the Bible says it, I want to do it. No questions.



A few weeks later, I was transferred to another cell where my new cellmate was using a stack of books as a base for doing pushups. One of the thick books in the stack was called *The Great Controversy*.



God revealed his love to me in so many ways throughout the whole process. All the things He was asking of me were for my benefit! Not a bunch of arbitrary laws, but guiding principles for my good.

The things I was learning were direct answers to my prayers. I wanted to know the answer to a specific question, so God would put a certain book or speaker in my path. And the answers came from the Bible, so I knew they were true.

All of this happened over a period of about a year. It seemed the Lord was preparing me for my life beyond prison. I wasn't yet released, but I was already free. And I knew I'd go looking for an Adventist church as soon as I got out.

Thankfully, I was released a year early for good behavior. It was on a Friday. Right away I called my brother and said, "Tomorrow we're going to the South Tulsa Adventist Fellowship, because that's the church that was on the Leo Schreven videos."

When I got there, I immediately felt at home. We ate lunch after church, and I couldn't even leave, because so many people wanted to meet me and make me feel welcome. When I told them I'd just gotten out of prison the day before, they were doubly excited about having me there.

One of the church members—Eric Glasser—took me under his wing. Pastor Steven Carlile was amazed to find that I already had a full understanding of Adventist beliefs and was completely prepared for baptism. About two weeks later, I was baptized and became a member of the Adventist Fellowship. God provided for all my needs. I quickly found a job, and my mother helped me get a car.

I don't know exactly where God will lead me next, but I want to go wherever He leads me and do whatever He places in my path. I've been in prison, and now I'm free.

Jesus said, "When the Son sets you free, you are free indeed." The reason we exist is to serve God and bring others to Him, and that's what I intend to do.

*Countless other young men and women behind bars need to hear a message of hope and truth. If you'd like to become involved in prison ministry, contact your local conference office.*

**Josh Holly** is a new member at the Adventist Fellowship in Tulsa, Okla.  
**James Bokovoy** is the pastor for the Arbuckle View and Coalgate (Okla.) churches.

## Transformations Behind Prison Bars



ARKANSAS-LOUISIANA CONFERENCE

The memory of the sound of the clanging doors behind us during my first visit to a federal penitentiary is still loud and clear. It was anything but inviting and certainly not the sound one would want to hear on a daily basis. The orientation visit lasted about two hours and was more than ample to indicate this was no place I would want to spend even a day of my life. Some time later I took a two-day course to be certified as a religious volunteer in a state prison. We were instructed, "They are all con men and will try to con you for their own benefit." We were also told, "No one in prison will admit to any guilt."

Over the course of several years of

prison visitation I heard all kinds of tales from inmates and came to recognize their cons. I was also shocked to discover how hardhearted one could become. Locked in a tiny visitation room just large enough for two chairs, I listened to a man who had been charged with murder say to me, "I'd just as soon kill a man as spit on him." I remember silently praying, "Lord, if he is going to do one or the other, let him spit on me." I suppose I'll never know what impact my visit and (audible) prayer had on him, but I'm grateful the Lord gave me those few moments to try and reach his heart.

However, I also discovered there were those men and women who knew they had not only violated civil law, but they came to recognize they had also violated

God's laws. Their hearts were open to learn about forgiveness, pardon, and acceptance. They were looking for hope and would find refuge in the promises of Scripture and in human friendship that offered God's love. Their hearts were softened as they engaged in Bible study and prayer, and accepted encouragement to remain faithful to Jesus. The transformations that took place were truly miraculous. It is for these very people that Jesus bade us not to forget those behind prison bars. You and I can be used as instruments of God's grace to those who are incarcerated.

**Stephen Orian**, president

## CYB 2011 "Metamorphosis: Forever Changed"

**MOUNTAIN PINE, ARK.** » Have you ever noticed how sometimes we can be like chameleons? We are one way in front of some people, such as our family, and then we are someone different in front of others, say, for example, our church family. The problem is that we are not really two different people. We only appear as if we are. The change that others may see is only temporary. As we leave the church parking lot, we change back into that other person we were before we got to church. However, there is a way to make a permanent change.

Webster's dictionary defines *metamor-*

*phosis* this way: "a change of physical form, structure, or substance, especially by su-

pernatural means" and "a striking alteration in appearance, character, or circumstances."



Think caterpillar to butterfly here. The change is drastically supernatural, and in the case of the butterfly, permanent. This is the type of life change we want everyone to experience this summer at Camp Yorktown Bay (CYB). Our theme this year (as you probably have guessed by now!) is "Metamorphosis: Forever Changed."

Scripture tells us in Romans 12:2 that this change

comes about by renewing our mind, and 2 Chronicles 3:18 says the only way change is possible is by beholding the Lord, and allowing the Holy Spirit to change us. Looking for permanent change? Then look to Jesus, and join us at CYB as we witness His life-changing power this summer. Visit us on the Web at [campyorktownbay.com](http://campyorktownbay.com).

**Brandon Westgate**, CYB camp director



At summer camp, kids learn lessons from nature that have spiritual applications. The goal of Camp Yorktown Bay in 2011 is for campers to experience a metamorphosis, similar to the way in which a caterpillar changes to a butterfly.



# Bonnerdale Youthfest 2011

**BONNERDALE, ARK.** » The Bonnerdale church hosted its Tenth Annual Youthfest on January 14-16. The guest speaker was Pastor Bernie Anderson, a native of Arkansas and the first Youthfest speaker in Bonnerdale 10 years ago. “Just Jesus” was the theme for the weekend as he talked about the Christian journey from belief to active ministry. Bernie’s messages challenged youth and sponsors alike to reevaluate where they are in their Christian walk and emphasized the need to focus completely on Christ in this journey.

Kevin Bowen and Tim Nelson, also known as TKO, shared creative messages in their skits throughout the weekend about what it means to live for Jesus and to minister for Him. They are from Colorado, where Kevin serves as youth pastor for the Boulder Seventh-day Adventist Church. Tim and Kevin have been involved in minis-

try through drama for over 15 years. They were definitely one of the highlights of the weekend.

Three guest musicians sang over the weekend. Maria Long, who just released her second album, *Endeavor*, shared several songs and the inspiring stories that motivated her to write them. Tori Snead, a budding, but very talented Christian musician, shared several original acoustic songs and the Halls–Aaron, Nathan, and Hilary—from Hot Springs, sang and played several songs

that will be on a CD they are currently recording.

Students from Southwestern Adventist University and Ozark Adventist Academy, along with ARKLA Conference youth director Brandon Westgate, were a big part of Youthfest. The recruiters shared their talents in special music, led breakout sessions Saturday afternoon, and gave away gifts and scholarships Saturday evening. Brandon Westgate attended for the fourth straight year and helped out wherever he

was needed, especially spending time hanging out with the youth and ministering to them at every opportunity.

Saturday evening was packed full of activities. TKO led out in improv skits and games that got the youth actively involved. This was followed by basketball and volleyball in the gym with pizza, corn dogs, and sodas. As always, the evening ended with the Youthfest video, featuring the weekend activities with pictures, video, and music.

Bonnerdale Youthfest 2011 was a time for reconnecting with old friends, a time for making new friends, and a time to make sure that we are connected to our best Friend—Jesus Christ. It was an inspiring and fun-filled weekend, and those who attended left refreshed and refocused after having spent time with Jesus.

**Ryan Long**, pastor



▲ Bernie Anderson, the Youthfest 2011 speaker, was the speaker at the very first Youthfest held in Bonnerdale 10 years ago.

◀ A shot from the balcony at Youthfest.

Christ. It was an inspiring and fun-filled weekend, and those who attended left refreshed and refocused after having spent time with Jesus.

## Melody Radde Appointed Conference Women's Ministries Director New ARKLA Women's Ministries Director

Isaiah 43:1-4 has always been one of my favorite verses in the Bible. To know that God knows my name and has a plan for my life has made me so very grateful that He is in control. Sometime ago, a good friend of mine, Carlene Whatley, the former Women's Ministries director for the Arkansas-Louisiana Conference, asked me if I would take over the women's conference this year, as she and Sam were leaving to be part of the Iowa-Missouri Conference. My initial thought and reaction was "No Way!" but I told her I would pray and ask for God's guidance. Well, God had a plan... and I have been so honored to be a part of it. Like Moses, I gave God all the reasons that I felt I couldn't be effective for Him, and He totally disregarded my excuses. I felt Him telling me to do what I know to do, and He would tell me who, what, and where.

He has been there every step of the way, providing the speakers, the praise team,

even the attendees. Our Christian Women's Conference was such a blessing. The women who spoke are ordinary women with an extraordinary walk with God. They have testimonies that have made me cry, and thrilled me with awe at the power of a changed life. Each one is as unique as the woman whom God created. It has been wonderful to see the transformation of these women unfold before my eyes. God has been so good. We opened the conference to women of all faiths, which in itself has been a blessing. Funding is always a concern, but God has provided just when we needed it. From scholarships for the attendees, to the conference convention hall, His hand is leading. I am looking forward to discovering what new journey God has in store for me, and for the women in this conference.

**Melody Radde**, ARKLA Women's Ministries director



**Melody Radde**, Arkansas-Louisiana Conference women's ministries director

## Blessed By Our New Members

**NEW ORLEANS, LA.** » In October, 2010, Pastor Emanuel Beck held a Revelation Seminar in the New Orleans First church. Emanuel put everyone at ease with his simple, straightforward presentation, riveting facts, and gentle humor. The seminar helped many find courage, understanding, and conviction about the essential topics that were presented. Pastor Beck and his wife, Keala, with their two sons, Isaac and Newton, were such a blessing to the church and guests. Six people decided to give their lives to Christ and were baptized as a result of the wonderful truths that were revealed in the series. Several other guests are attending services on Sabbath as they continue to study the Word of God. Our new members have given the New Orleans First church an extra measure of blessing by becoming a

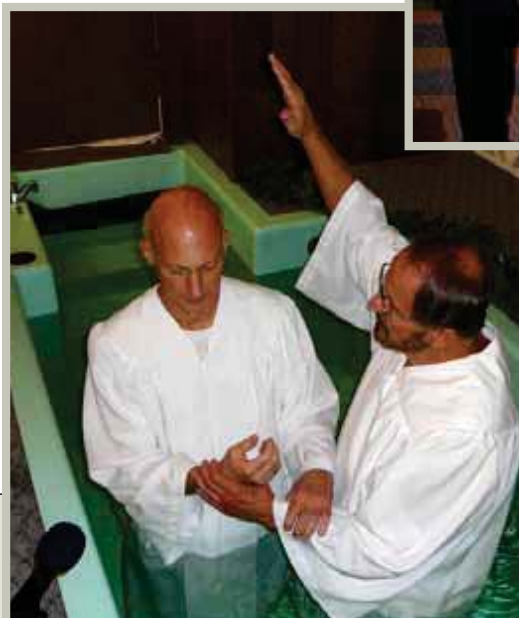
part of our church family. Welcome home, brothers and sisters in Christ! May we all grow closer to one another as we strive to grow daily in Christ.

**Edna Vicknair**



▲ From left, Emanuel Beck, (speaker), Toshia Cartman, Brittany Butcher, Natile Carter, and her father, Stephan Carter, Monty Dugas, Richard Frye, and the church pastor, Glenn Farinola, following the Revelation Seminar at the New Orleans First church.

◀ Stephen Carter was baptized after attending a Revelation Seminar at the New Orleans First church.



# He Super-sized His Faith

**SPRINGDALE, ARK. »** Faryl Boykin is from Chicago, Ill., and has traveled all over the world singing with famous groups such as TLC, Usher, MC Hammer, etc. He met his wife, Pam, in Fayetteville, Ark., while passing through during a music tour. Since Pam was the daughter of Pastor George Oregon, it wasn't long before Pastor Oregon started sharing Jesus with Faryl at every possible opportunity, hoping also to bring his daughter back into the church. Shortly after their courtship and marriage, Faryl and Pam Boykin were baptized in May 2009 at the Springdale Adventist Fellowship church, and Faryl attended his first camp meeting at Gentry, Ark. The speaker was Barry Black, U.S. Senate chaplain, who spoke about "Super-sizing Your Faith." That Sabbath, Faryl prayed for the Lord to once again help him use the gift and ability to sing that had been given him. He asked the Lord to super-size his faith, and little by little he started participating with the praise and worship teams at his

home church and at times, he sang special music.

Plans were made to visit some of Pam's relatives in South America and, through phone

calls, a production company became aware of Faryl's talent and desire to sing and perform. A call came requesting to set up dates and times to perform in a show and Faryl agreed to do a Christian Christmas concert, as long as he could sing only Christian songs. The production company said that because of the economic situation, they could not offer any money. But through much prayer and preparation Beryl and Pam trusted the Lord to make this trip happen and to be a blessing to all involved. Continuing in prayer and faith, they watched the amazing hand of the Lord at work.

Arriving in Chile on December 23, amid a series of hectic events, from almost not getting into the country to having the customs office take the last American dollar they had, and with no cell phones or transportation, and having to rely completely on family contacts they had not spoken face to face with in over 5 years, the Boykins prayed every step of the way. Right away they noticed two things. When asked why they were there, if Beryl and Pam said they were there just to visit family, no doors opened for them, communication got tougher, and customs was impossible to get through. But when they said they were on a mission trip to sing a Christmas concert in Valparaiso, Faryl was asked to sing, and then everyone wanted to help in any way they could. Faryl sang for anyone who asked after that!

Faryl sang almost every night for family groups and some nights the whole neighborhood would show up. They quickly learned how important it is to pray every step of the way. On Christmas day he was privileged to sing at the new Seventh-day Adventist Church in the city of Santiago, the capital of Chile. It was such a blessing for Faryl to see firsthand just how big and far-reaching the Seventh-day Adventist Church is worldwide.

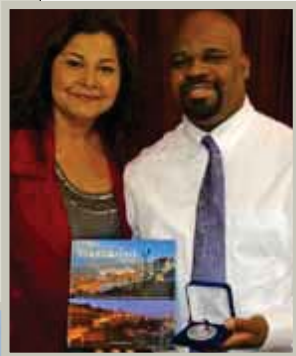
The Boykins found that

Faryl was being talked about on the radio, in newspapers, and on TV, as thousands of flyers were passed out throughout the city of Valparaiso. The governor called and wanted to schedule time when he could come meet Faryl and hear him perform. He did come and spent some time talking with Faryl before listening to the show. The show went well and it was amazing to watch as the crowd became very involved, even though he sang in English. The governor was very impressed with the generosity of Faryl, as he knew that he was not getting paid and that this concert was for the benefit of the people of Valparaiso. When the last song ended, the governor walked on stage and awarded Faryl the UNESCO Medal of World Heritage. Humbly receiving the medal, Faryl and his family had no idea just how precious the medal was to the city.

When the show was over, the pictures taken, and the autographs signed, Faryl did some research, and found that Valparaiso is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, listed as having a special cultural or physical significance. This list is maintained by an International World Heritage Program, administered by the UNESCO World Heritage Committee, composed of 21 state parties which are elected by their General Assembly. The program catalogues, names, and conserves sites of outstanding cultural or natural importance. Now Faryl Boykin's name will be in their history of medals given—a very rare event. When told that these medals are only given to very important people, Faryl smiled and said, "It was a blessing for me to be here."

Faryl's dream is to keep singing for the Lord and to spread the gospel with the talent God has given him, sharing what he has learned with everyone who will listen. He understands that his gift is not his and that it belongs to God. He has expressed an interest in attending the Amazing Facts School of Evangelism in California to possibly use his music and the skills he would learn as an evangelist to teach others that God belongs the glory.

**Pam Boykin**



Faryl Boykin received the UNESCO Medal of World Heritage for his unselfish service to the people of Valparaiso, Chile.

## Our Work Should Be HIS Work



OKLAHOMA CONFERENCE

According to the gospel writers, Jesus made a public proclamation at the beginning of His ministry stating that prophecy was being fulfilled through His ministry. He said, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord"

(Luke 4:18, 19). He was sent from the Father to bring compassion to the poor and suffering, both physically and spiritually. The inspired record indicates that He was faithful to the assignment. In John 17:4 He states, "I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do."

It seems to me that our work should be His work. He said so in John 20:21: "As the Father has sent me, I also send you." Jesus states very clearly, in Matthew 25, just what He wants His church to be do-

ing as we wait for Him to come back. He pictures a church that is actively doing the ministry that He said was His. We put a lot of emphasis on preaching the message in the last days, and that is good. Perhaps our preaching would have more power if we prayed for the Holy Spirit to live out the mission of Christ within us. As it was with Jesus, our proclamation must be backed up with our actions in seeking to serve those in need of the healing ministry of Christ.

**John Moyer**, president

## Students in the "News"

**BRISTOW** » Everyone dreams of 15 seconds of fame. The children at Bristow Adventist School are no different. Every year the students participate in a community service project. For the past three years, the project has been to help clean the Chamber of Commerce, which includes cleaning an old caboose and raking all the leaves.

November 12 was the designated date for the school's community outreach, which happened to coincide with the day that



◀ Bristow Adventist School students made the news as a result of doing a community service clean-up project at their local Chamber of Commerce building.

▲ A reporter from the Channel 8 news team in Tulsa was featuring small towns in Oklahoma when he happened upon the Bristow Adventist School students doing a clean-up project at the local Chamber of Commerce.



Tulsa's Channel 8 News team also chose to shoot a segment featuring small towns in Oklahoma. The students were raking leaves, washing windows, and cleaning the caboose when reporter Charles Ely and his team began to take part in the cleaning after interviewing a few of the student workers.

Ely used a short clip of Bristow

Adventist School students in his first segment on the news at 4 p.m. (Go to [www.KTUL.com](http://www.KTUL.com) and search for Bristow, Oklahoma "Rollin Through Main Street" for a quick view.)

Perhaps it was only 15 seconds of fame on earth, but the BAS students will always be remembered in the eyes of their Lord.

**Annette Park**

# Christmas Around the World

**TULSA** » The First Seventh-day Adventist Church of Tulsa celebrated Christ's birth and the rich cultural diversity of our church family in our recent Christmas program, "Christmas Around the World." In the opening procession, church members from a number of countries and ethnic backgrounds wearing colorful national costumes carried flags of 10 different nations to the front of the church sanctuary. The procession was led by a local Scottish bagpiper playing a medley of Christmas carols on his bagpipes.

One by one the countries of Israel, Russia, Mexico, England, Colombia, Zimbabwe, the Philippines, Scotland, and Sweden were featured. Most of the countries' presentations included a Christmas song sung in the native language, a bit about how the birth of Christ is celebrated there, and a video of that country's Christmastime sights and sounds. When the focus was on Sweden, homemade Swedish Christmas cookies were shared with everyone in the audience. Church members who are originally from Bur-

ma and Indonesia offered prayers.

What a blessing it was to celebrate the coming of our Savior as a babe in Bethlehem to redeem His children from "every nation, kindred, tongue, and people."

**Judi Carrico**



# Pathfinders Collect Canned Goods for the Community

**BRISTOW** » Every year the Adventist Community Services department of the Bristow church makes food baskets for local families. This past December, the Bristow Stars Pathfinder Club and a few other helpers collected canned goods around the small town, and the ACS volunteers packaged the nonperishables. Later in the month, 20 food baskets and 10 fruit baskets were delivered to families with sparse cupboards. "The community and our church members were very generous," says Rita Baker, director of our Adventist Community Services program. "We have enough food in our pantry to last a couple of months." The ACS program also provides a clothing store



Annette Park

Bristow youth collected canned goods in Bristow for food baskets.

that is open once a week for families who are victims of natural disasters, or who simply cannot afford to purchase regular-

priced clothing.

Caroline A. Fisher

# Neighborly Witness Leads to Baptism

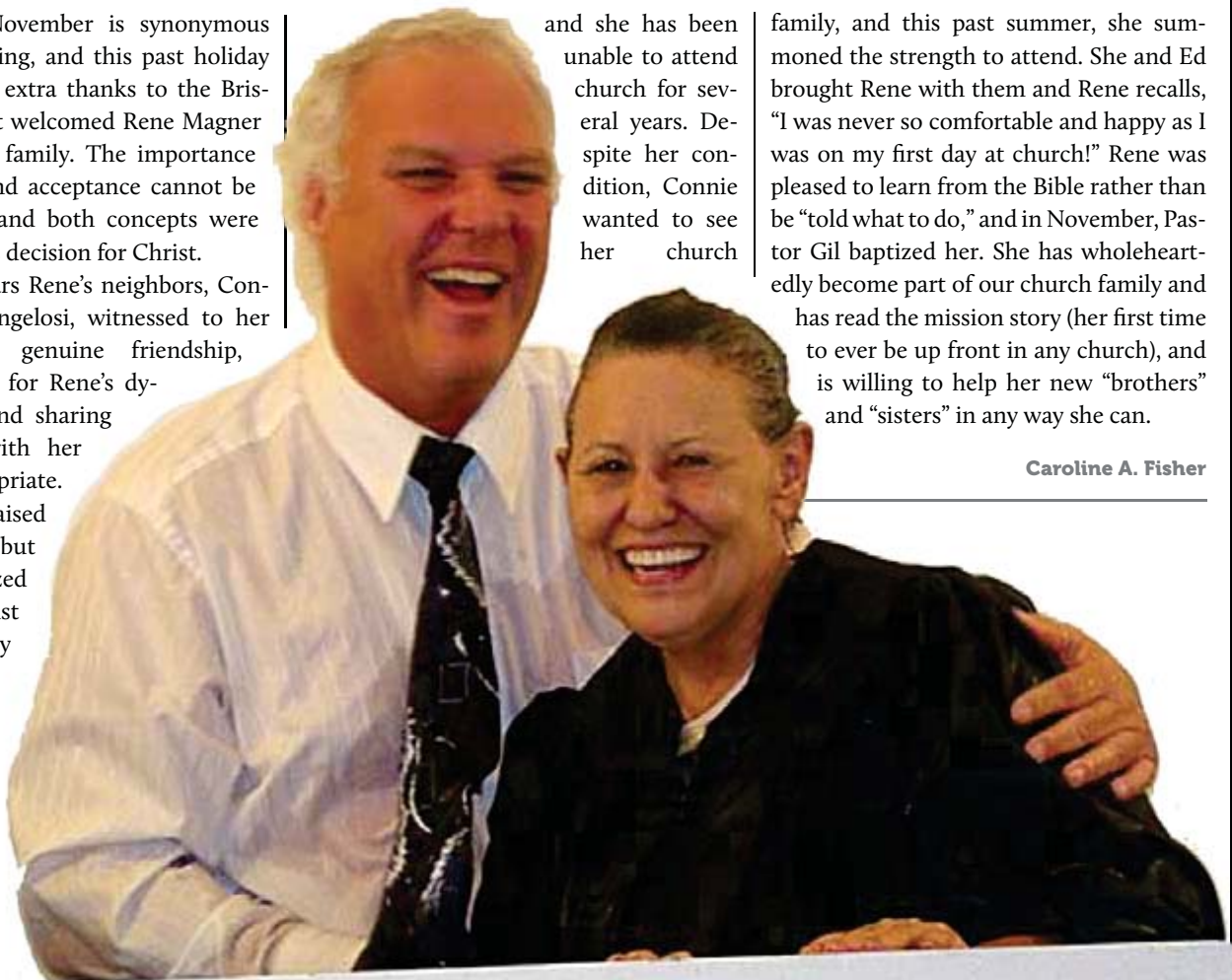
**BRISTOW** » November is synonymous with Thanksgiving, and this past holiday season brought extra thanks to the Bristow church as it welcomed Rene Magner into its church family. The importance of friendship and acceptance cannot be overestimated, and both concepts were pivotal in Rene's decision for Christ.

For many years Rene's neighbors, Connie and Ed Cangelosi, witnessed to her through their genuine friendship, helping to care for Rene's dying husband, and sharing Bible truths with her when appropriate. (Rene was raised as a Lutheran but was later baptized into the Baptist Church.) Many conversations about the Bible were held over the telephone because Connie has a condition that makes moving very painful,

and she has been unable to attend church for several years. Despite her condition, Connie wanted to see her church

family, and this past summer, she summoned the strength to attend. She and Ed brought Rene with them and Rene recalls, "I was never so comfortable and happy as I was on my first day at church!" Rene was pleased to learn from the Bible rather than be "told what to do," and in November, Pastor Gil baptized her. She has wholeheartedly become part of our church family and has read the mission story (her first time to ever be up front in any church), and is willing to help her new "brothers" and "sisters" in any way she can.

Caroline A. Fisher



# Come Apart and Rest

**WEWOKA WOODS** » Every Pathfinder and Adventurer leader knows that come January, leaders are tired and wondering

if they will make it through the year. Children have been coming since September to meetings and activities that have been carefully planned, bringing their

untamed energies, trials from home and school, and the list goes on.

Apple Park, Oklahoma Conference director of Pathfinders and Adventurers, along with his council, recognized that



Pathfinder and Adventurer leaders and their families took time for games and activities during their weekend of learning, play, and spiritual enrichment at Wewoka Woods in January.



## Oklahoma Campmeeting 2011

Come let us seek for spiritual revival and blessings from heaven in 2011.

Hear keynote speaker **Dan Jackson**, North American Division president, on opening night, Friday, July 15, at 7:00 p.m.; and Sabbath, July 16, at 10:45 a.m. and 7:00 p.m.

**WHERE:** Wewoka Woods Adventist Center, Wewoka, Okla.

**WHEN:** July 15-23, 2011

Call 405.721.6110 or 405.257.5404 for more information.

**SPONSORED BY THE OKLAHOMA CONFERENCE OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS**

their leaders needed some “R and R” (rest and relaxation), so they called their team of directors and their families to a weekend of rest, play, and spiritual renewal January 7-9 at Wewoka Woods.

God anointed the weekend with His healing power as John Moyer, Vialo Weis, and Bob and Dana Holbrook gave messages on leadership, forgiveness, and strategies for working with our children. Chuck and Donna Hill led Sabbath School with descriptions of the disciples and their leadership, followed by small group studies on different leaders in the Bible. Sherry Fisher led the children’s group of 45 with her helper, Audrey Weber, and then Johnny Flores pulled the group of leaders and their families together to play games with the area coordinators and their director, Apple Park.

Apple Park concluded the retreat with the challenge that Jesus calls each of us to come away and renew our spirits with His Spirit. May God bless each club as they finish their 2010-11 year.

**Apple Park**, Oklahoma Conference Pathfinder/Adventurer director

## The Least of These

“Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the creation of the world. For I was hungry, and you fed me. I was thirsty, and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger, and you invited me into your home. I was naked, and you gave me clothing. I was sick, and you cared for me. *I was in prison, and you visited me.* Then these righteous ones will reply, ‘Lord, when did we ever see you hungry and feed you? Or thirsty and give you something to drink? Or a stranger and show you hospitality? Or naked and give you clothing? When did we ever see you sick or in prison and visit you?’ And the King will say, ‘I tell you the truth, *when you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were doing it to me!*’” (Matt. 25:34-40, NLT, emphasis supplied).

My friend, when was the last time you

ministered to the “*least of these?*” When was the last time you fed the hungry or gave water to a thirsty soul? Or invited a stranger to your home; provided clothing to a person that was in need; provided care for a person that was sick; or visited a person that was incarcerated? Jesus says that as we minister to the “*least of these*” and supply their needs, we are doing the same to Him.

Briefly, I will focus on one group of the “*least of these*” and that is, the imprisoned.

- **Do you know** that *one in 136 United States residents will live in prison by 2011?*

- **Do you know** that 2.3 million people will be behind bars in 2011, filling an area the size of Jamaica and overflowing the city of Houston, Tex.?

- **Do you know** that the United States has the highest documented incarceration rate in the world followed by Russia? (Wikipedia, *The Free Encyclopedia 2011*)

Just think about it—one in every 136 United States citizens will be in prison in

2011. What staggering figures!

Ladies and gentlemen, what a vast field to evangelize for Jesus Christ! *The prison field is ripe for the harvest, but where are the reapers?* Heaven is still asking, “Who will go for us?” Will your response be, “Here am I, send me?”

If you are not part of an active prison ministry team, I urge you to get involved today. If no one has an interest in your local church, then join up with another team from a different congregation. Or, better yet, if there is no active prison ministry in your church or area, then ask God for wisdom and strength to begin such a ministry. *Remember, when we do this work, we are doing the work of Christ and ministering to Him, as well.* Let’s go and help set the captives free and minister to this group of the “*least of these.*”

**Bill Wright**, president

SOUTHWEST REGION CONFERENCE

## Family Life Team Provides Christmas Gifts for Children

**BATON ROUGE, LA.** » As shoppers rushed to and fro in busy streets and long lines formed at various department stores, the Berean Family Life team rushed about buying goodies to fill stockings for 25 children at the battered women’s shelter in Baton Rouge. Thanks to the community services department, the Family Life team was able to deliver a trunk full of Christmas goodies. Thirty-five brand-new and brand name sweaters, 13 pairs of shoes, 16 teen/boys shirts and sweaters, toys, and more than 100 toiletries were delivered. Also, 25 Christmas stockings were purchased and filled with teddy bears, tissue, pencils, candy canes, toys, etc. In addition, because the spirit of giving was flowing so abundantly in less than an hour, monetary donations from more than 10 members came flowing in, so each child could enjoy a Wal-Mart gift card. The group also handed out 25 copies of *Happiness Digest*.

**Jerome and Yvonne Pondexter**



The Family Life team at the Berean church provided toys and clothing for the children of residents at a battered women’s shelter in Baton Rouge, La.



# Kids Meet Jesus and New Friends at -Lone Star Camp-

Praise be to God! Last year summer campers at Lone Star Camp came from Oklahoma City, Dallas, Austin, Houston, Killeen, New Orleans, and other cities within the Southwest Region Conference to enjoy two weeks of fun, socializing, learning, and getting to know Jesus! "A Time to Shine!" was their theme, through which the children learned that God has given each of them talents and skills, and they were given an opportunity to share their talents with the entire group. Campers were challenged to learn more about themselves, as well as their cabin mates. Camp

pastors presented the gospel of Jesus and many campers responded, asking for special prayer, and 23 campers made a decision to be baptized at the campgrounds. Each week started off on a high, as 157 campers learned each other's names and planned what they would do during the week. Camp-

The theme is *Game On!* The enemy is constantly bullying our youth, and at camp this year we plan to show that, with Christ, we can do all things, even resist the enemy.



ers were engaged in arts and crafts, Bible class, archery, waterfront activities, music, and horsemanship.

This year we are off to the races already.

Summer camp dates this year are June 19-July 17. Adventurer Camp (ages 7-9) will be held June 19-25. Junior Camp I & II (ages 9-12) will be held June 26-July 2 and July 3-9. Teen Camp (ages 13-16) will be held July 10-17. We are also planning a Sports Camp (ages 8-17) from August 7-14! **For more information, contact the Southwest Region Conference Youth Ministries office or click on [www.mysouthwestregion.org/summercamp](http://www.mysouthwestregion.org/summercamp).**

Roger R. Wade

## He Still Calms Storms!

**HOUSTON, TEX. »** The city of Houston braced for an unseasonal winter storm as the Houston for Christ meetings were scheduled to start. The Southwestern Union, in partnership with Share Him Ministries, along with churches in the Greater Houston area, from the Southwest Region and Texas conferences, planned the Houston for Christ evangelism campaign

storm. Despite inclement weather and low attendance at the pre-meeting rally held on February 4, Southwest Region conference president Billy Wright thanked God, prayed for success, and assured the speakers who were scheduled to preach that there is power in prayer. "When you call upon God evening, morning, and at noon," he said, "God will hear!" Among the attendees were Dan Jackson, president of the North

and said he felt impressed to attend. He did not see a flyer or a billboard, however, the Holy Spirit led him to the meeting! Pastor Mota, director of Hispanic Ministries for Southwest Region Conference, shared that four Hispanic churches and two companies, plus more than 18 home meetings started on February 4, with more than 140 visitors attending. On the next day the attendance increased about five percent. As I write, 12 people have been baptized. Praise

God! Throughout the city churches shared that attendance on opening night was very good. One church reported over 40 visitors.

Six meetings ran concurrently at the Fondren church in Missouri City, Tex. Member Sam Beale, a lawyer, held a meeting at his law office. Matthew Makua held a meeting in Swahili with positive responses. Tyron Clements held a meeting at a local Boys and Girls Club. Melvin Warfield, Sr., conducted a meeting for the Burundi and Rwanda population in the area. And there was even a children's meeting being led

by the teens of the church and coordinated by Brigdet Gipson. Helvis Moody, senior pastor of the Fondren church, was very excited to see all the evangelism happening at the church. He, along with Alex Bryant, preached the main English meeting held at Fondren.

The power of God was seen, not only on opening night, but throughout the meetings!

**Roger Wade**



Top left: Pastor Folkenburg praying for the success of the Houston for Christ meetings with Pastor McKey in the background.

▲ Billy Wright, Southwest Region Conference president, addressed the Houston for Christ rally participants, speaking about the power of prayer.

◀ North American Division president Dan Jackson (left) and Duane McKey, Southwestern Union Conference vice president for evangelism, speak to attendees at the Houston for Christ prayer rally.

for the month of February. Meeting sites were chosen, with more than 130 meetings scheduled, a number of them taking place in private homes. But the enemy was not happy with all of the preparations. The night before the start of the campaign, the city of Houston closed down due to a winter storm that brought snow and plenty of ice to the greater Houston area.

God heard the prayers of the prayer warriors and softened the impact of the

American Division of Seventh-day Adventists, Alex Bryant, secretary of the North American Division, Robert Folkenburg of Share Him Ministries, and Duane McKey, vice president for evangelism at the Southwestern Union.

On opening night, despite the challenges of weather, there were over 100 meetings, 30 of which were held in homes. In Beaumont, Tex., one gentleman walked off the street into Terrell McCoy's meeting

# Single-Minded for Jesus

## Southwest Region Hosts Singles Ministries Weekend

“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.” With Philippians 2:5 in mind, singles of Southwest Region Conference began yet another annual enrichment weekend. Their customary December trip takes the group to one of the five states in the conference. This past December the singles headed to Little Rock, Ark., for their weekend, which began with Friday-night vespers at the host church, Shiloh, and ended with a Sunday-morning brunch at Embassy Suites. The unique enrichment weekend broke with tradition and, to the delight of many, featured a female speaker, Minyonne Natasha Paige of Bowling Green, Ky., on Sabbath and at the Sunday brunch. In her Sabbath message she didn’t hesitate to reveal her less-than-glamorous past. “I lived a life pleasing only to the enemy, but because of God’s goodness, I died to sin and was resurrected a minister for Christ,” she boldly proclaimed. “My goals are now God’s goals,” Paige continued. Her moving testimony reminded singles that they cannot be a complete single if their spiritual life is broken.

The theme “Single-Minded for Jesus” dominated the announcement flier, the printed program, the tote bags, and every other aspect of the weekend. However, as in the past, the highlight of the weekend was the Sabbath-evening community outreach. The host group had decided to assist “Our House,” a shelter for homeless families. Shiloh’s Tatyana Stubblefield, who, along with her committees, coordinated the outreach, explained, “The shelter provides housing for families in transition. It is for the working homeless and, as a result, assists its residents with locating employment, allowing them to contribute to their own upkeep. Funds deposited in individual bank accounts are accessible to the families who eventually become able to be self-sufficient, moving out on their own.” Prior to arriving, state and area coordinators had received a “wish list” identifying what the residents needed. The list included such essentials as bedding, linens, baby necessities, toiletries, and cleaning supplies. To make the drive even more exciting, the phone conference organizing

committee made the event competitive by promising first- and second-place trophies to the groups with the largest number of items. Thus it was with a spirit of anticipation that groups arriving at the shelter unloaded their vehicles, anxious to see what each had brought. Following a brief program, it was time for the presentations, a much-anticipated event that singles conference director Vera Ragland would direct. Upon receiving their gifts, which included gift cards and candy-filled Christmas mugs, appreciative residents offered embraces and extended hands while thanking all for remembering them so kindly. Little Rock, the host group, won first place, with Louisiana coming in second. “The competition made us work harder,” said Kim Sylvester of New Orleans. Everyone agreed

it was in the spirit of fun. As singles exited, heading to their now lighter vehicles, some couldn’t help but remark how good it felt to be giving at a time when so many expect to be receiving. The singles of Southwest Re-



The singles of Southwest Region brought joy to residents of Our House, a homeless shelter in Little Rock, Ark., during their annual Singles Enrichment Weekend held in December 2010.

gion are grateful for their auxiliary that continues to promote ministry.

Evelyn Edwards

## Matthew 25:36 Exemplified in the Texas Conference



TEXAS CONFERENCE

Prison Ministries are alive and growing in the Texas Conference. Sharing the gospel with others through prison ministries is very different than handing out tracts in a neighborhood or mailing pamphlets to an area code, inviting the recipient to an evangelistic series. Prison ministry is a one-on-one ministry that requires genuine personal interest in a less-than-perfect individual, from a less-than-perfect Christian. It isn't a glamorous activity. But, I have never heard an individual regret being involved in prison ministry. Lives are impacted by the work done by volunteers who share the Word of God with individuals who are thirsty for the Lord. Those individuals truly value the time and effort spent on them, sharing Jesus' love.

In the Fall 2010 issue of our conference magazine, *The Flame*, we featured the testimony of someone whose life has been transformed through prison ministry. Here is an excerpt:

*"What I found at [Federal Medical Center] Carswell (in Fort Worth) was a Seventh-day Adventist prison ministry that was more than I expected. I was instantly accepted into the fold and many of my questions began to be answered. I was happy to find real people to share in my budding faith, but I missed my*

*radio friends and their teachings. Then I discovered that White Horse Media was an Adventist radio program. Because of the Adventist prison ministry at Carswell I was not lost at all. I had been found!*

*In a year at Carswell, I have learned more than I could have imagined possible. I now know what being saved means and know I have been saved. I am no longer afraid of my Lord Jesus. I know that He died for those very sins that I was afraid He would never forgive.*

*I was baptized into the Seventh-day Adventist Church on August 8, 2009...*

*I have the Lord in my heart because of Adventists who took the time, both on the radio and in person, to teach and guide me to a fuller understanding of Jesus Christ and God the Father. I don't want to think where I would be without the volunteers who gave their time and love to help me come back to the Lord."*

Prison ministry impacts the lives of many people in our conference. There are many areas of need and many churches committed to reaching inmates. If this testimony inspires you to get involved, listed below are some of our churches who currently have active prison

ministries. If you would like to start a new prison ministry, please contact your local church pastor.

**Kristina P. Lockhart,**  
Communication director

### Prison Ministries in Texas

- Alvarado Church**  
817.790.2120
- Arlington Southern Worship Center**  
817.480.5695
- Bryan/College Station Church**  
979.595.1115
- Bastrop Church**  
512.589.7643
- Fort Worth First Church**  
817.294.5729
- Houston Central Church**  
281.890.1002
- Keene Church**  
817.641.9804
- Lufkin and Corrigan Area Churches**  
936.639.1898
- Mineola Church**  
903-569-6930
- San Antonio Laurel Heights**  
210.732.6898
- Weslaco Church**  
956.968.5631

## Elgin Church is Moved to Action

**ELGIN »** For the past year and a half we have been really busy at the Elgin church. We decided some time ago to get real about following Jesus. We started a literature evangelism team and our goal has been to cover the city and surrounding areas knee deep in literature. Currently, we have covered about 70 percent of the city with *Steps to Christ* books and when we are finished, we are going to return with literature on the Sabbath. It will be an ongoing mission.

We have also finished our yearly cycle with a lay-led evangelism series using the Share Him program. Non-Adventists attended nightly and we have maintained contact with some of them through a

follow-up series about Daniel and Revelation.

We started a food bank with the purpose of spreading the gospel. We are converting our old church school into a recreational center that will be open on Saturday nights with the purpose of encouraging friendship evangelism.

At the end of last year we had two baptisms, one profession of faith, and several membership transfers to our church. We firmly believe that when



The Literature Evangelism team at the Elgin church has handed out *Steps to Christ* books to 70 percent of the city.

the church gets busy, so does God!

**Curtis Snead**

# Pathfinders a.k.a. Evangelism

I have been involved with the Pathfinder ministry for 20 years and have always believed that the Pathfinder program is evangelism. I have heard outreach directors say, “you must teach a Bible study” or “you must go out and knock doors to convince people to believe in Jesus”. But over the last 20 years I have seen young people give their hearts to Jesus, I have seen young people accept Jesus and give their life to Him because Pathfinders is like an evangelistic campaign in itself.

From December 10-12, 2010, the Houston Bay Area Pathfinders held our annual area camporee and I really felt and experienced evangelism through Pathfinders. Our guest speaker was Southwestern Adventist University theology student Smith Castillo. On Sabbath morning he talked to the Pathfinders about how God is in control and how God calls you in different ways, and no matter how bad your life may be, God always gives you strength to work for Him. He also shared with the Pathfinders his testimony and all the struggles he had growing up. When he finished, he told the Pathfinders that if any of them would

like to speak to him about giving their life to Jesus or getting baptized, that he would meet them at the side of the stage.

The final prayer was barely over when one young man approached Smith Castillo; he was crying, and I heard him say, “I want that strength, I want to be baptized.” So many details made it possible for this young man, who had only visited the Texas City church a few times and who had never been to a Pathfinder Camporee, to give his life to Jesus. It seemed like a coincidence, the way every piece of the puzzle was put together, but I know it was the Holy Spirit that did all the work. Yave Alexander Garcia, the young man, said that he could not leave that camp without being baptized. We didn’t have any ordained pastors at the moment; four pastors were registered to attend with their churches, but all of them had to stay to tend to some needs at their churches.

It seemed that Ismael Castillo, pastor at the Houston Spanish Spring Branch, just happened to come by to visit his club, but I know God had taken him there because we needed an ordained pastor to conduct the baptism. With his support and with Pastor Gabriel Perea’s help, a baptismal pool was brought to camp and Yave gave his life to Jesus. Yave’s mother, brother, and little sister were brought by one of the Texas City members, so they could witness the baptism. Yave’s mother said that she felt God calling her to go and get to know the same Jesus that her son had met at the Pathfinder Camporee.

I have always believed that Pathfinder ministry is a form of evangelism. However, I had never experienced the work of the Holy Spirit as miraculously as I did this time. We are grateful for the Houston Bay Area Pathfinder Council’s hard work. God worked His miracle that weekend to bring Yave into His army of youth.

Abigail Mireles



# Trevor's "Guardian Angel"

**KILLEEN** » At Killeen Adventist Junior Academy, Mrs. McClain's Pre-K-Kindergartners (all 25 of them) were enjoying the pleasant fall weather out on the playground. Trevor Baker and Christopher Vickerson were on the steps at the top of the tall slide. Mrs. McClain asked Christopher to step down a few steps and give Trevor room, but Christopher stayed right behind Trevor and held tight to the rails. Suddenly, Trevor fell backward, away from the slide, right into Christopher's arms. Christopher held on tight until Trevor regained his balance. His care for his friend saved Trevor from what could have been a bad fall. Christopher is known as Trevor's

"guardian angel" and the two five-year-olds share a close friendship.

But Trevor is not just your average five-year-old. He was born with a brain cell migration disorder that affects his muscle tone and speech development. He only began walking at age 3.

Trevor's parents put him in the local public school kindergarten program, but the teachers had little time for him. Trevor was unhappy and didn't want to go. On the advice of a friend, the Bakers brought Trevor to KAJA. His mother told Mrs. McClain that they would evaluate the way Trevor reacted to that first visit and this would determine whether he would enroll. When

Trevor walked in, he was immediately at home. Trevor's father, Staff Sergeant Eddie Baker, was to be deployed overseas within the week, and he was greatly relieved that his son had found a place where he could find acceptance and be happy. Here Christopher and Trevor met and became fast friends. Christopher is always at hand to help Trevor and encourage him to try new things. Trevor is loved and protected by all the students in his class and has found a place to grow and thrive.

Fran Wilson



Christopher Vickerson (left) helped Trevor Baker when the two boys were playing on top of a slide. Christopher kept Trevor safe from what could have been a bad fall.

## Orange Adventist Church Experiences Many Months of Kindness Ministry Outreach

**ORANGE** » In February of 2010 I was asked to read the book *Conspiracy of Kindness* by Steve Sjogren. I was receptive to the strategies used. I took notes of things I thought we could implement in our ministry, reaching out to people and sharing our wonderful message. Then in March, we began showing God's love in practical ways. We got matching shirts and went to

visit an Adventist lady in the local assisted-living home. We put up birdfeeders and filled them up every week. All 32 residents enjoy watching the birds feeding in the courtyard. We bring Hazel Daniel a church bulletin, short devotion, and have prayer with her also.

In April we found practical ways to witness. After our usual training and instruc-

tion at the church, we went to the Lion's Den Park. After praying before each visit, we handed out balloons, popcorn, cookies, punch, and water. We turned up the Christian music and fellowshiped with our neighbors. On one visit we were surprised by a volunteer who brought his pony to share and took pictures for the kids. Sharing with about 15 people, we explained we were just showing God's love in a practical way.

In May we ministered to seniors and celebrated Mother's Day together. We handed out flowers and shared lunch together. In August, we revisited the assisted-living home we had been to in February. Even though Ms. Hazel Daniel is the only Adventist resident, we are well-known and our visits appreciated. We had a devotional, and shared gifts and ice cream with our friends. In October, we visited a local Wal-mart and handed out drinks, popcorn and an inspiration card. We also held our Disaster Relief Drive simultaneously.

We continue working hard and showing God's love in practical ways through our Kindness Ministry Outreach.

**Jacquie Herbert**



The Kindness Ministry Outreach team have become regulars at the local assisted living home where they celebrated Mother's Day with the residents last May.

## Kerrville Church Buys Land

**KERRVILLE** » The Kerrville church has purchased a 1.49 acre tract of land located behind the present facility. The land is being purchased to provide space to build a new facility for the school because the current school space is "bursting at the seams." According to building committee member Carolyn Northcut, "Contrary to popular belief, it is no easy project when churches attempt to expand." Such has been the awakening for the Kerrville church and the Hill Country School. The building committee was faced with much fact-finding to satisfy requirements by the city codes, as well as those of the Texas Conference for new construction on any church or school property in Texas.

Northcut continued, "Remarkably, the Lord has provided much-needed guidance

in the form of local members, and the conference suggested recommendations of architect Stanly M. Bell and civil engineer Mark Hickman. At a special church meeting, both Bell and Hickman presented a proposed master plan for a new school building. Their presentation involved all aspects of erecting a new building on this tract of land, from construction to finish.

Presently, the Kerrville church and Hill Country School are in the midst of making the decisions, and trust the Lord is at work through all these avenues to see this project through to its finish and advance His message in this area.

God has given the church family a chal-



Civil engineer Mark Hickman and architect Stanly M. Bell are assisting the Kerrville church with their building project.

lenge that may appear humanly impossible; however, with God all things are possible, especially when it comes to providing the means necessary to educate the children for His kingdom. The Hill Country School continues to grow, with new members joining the church and enrolling their children.

**Betty Blair**

# TEXICO NEWS

## I Was in Prison



TEXICO CONFERENCE

“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me’” (Matt. 25:31-36).

We live in a day when millions of people are imprisoned. According to the latest Department of Justice statistics, 2.3 million are currently in prison in America. Another 5 million plus are on some type of parole. We incarcerate 756 inmates per 100,000 residents. The number of people incarcerated is increasing. Local, state, and federal spending on corrections adds up to over \$70 billion a year. Of those who get out, almost 70 percent return again. This is a national tragedy.

We’ve learned we cannot legislate morality.

As a minister, I have visited prisoners many times. Most of these young men and women have committed errors in judgment that led to their arrest and incarceration. Jesus died for those who are in prison and He needs His witnesses to reach them and He has commanded us to visit them. It is an opportunity for ministry and for improving the lives of, not only the prisoners, but everyone they meet in the future. The gospel can change society.

I am thankful we have hundreds of ministers and lay people across America who have not forgotten our prisoners. Many of them are in the Texico Conference. They visit weekly, bringing Bible studies and church services. Thousands of other prisoners are ministered to through correspondence Bible studies and personal cards and letters. Thanks to all of you who are “visiting” prisoners in this way.

Several years ago I met a young man who was arrested and charged with a crime. He was in jail for over a year without going to trial. Then all charges were dropped.

By this time he had lost his home, job, and family. But thankfully, during his time in jail, he was visited by Seventh-day

Adventists who led him to Jesus and our message. He was an active, positive Seventh-day Adventist and a credit to our church, all because he was visited. The Bible says that Daniel, David, Jeremiah, Paul, Peter, Silas, John the Baptist, and John the Revelator were imprisoned. The legal authorities thought they were doing the right thing. Throughout the history of the church people of faith were imprisoned by people who thought they were doing the right thing. Prophecy tells us that the time is coming when people of faith will be imprisoned again by people who think they are doing the right thing.

Jesus said, “I was in prison and you came to visit me.” People need Jesus and they need love. The only way to change society for the better is to help people truly have a relationship with Jesus Christ, not through enacting more laws, or locking up more people. Let’s do all we can to minister to those in prison, for when we do, we are following Jesus’ words, “inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.”

Jim Stevens, president

## Baby Dedication at Alamogordo

**ALAMOGORDO, N.MEX. »** James Stevens, Texico Conference president, gave an inspiring dedication for our son, Jonah Levi Spooner, who was dedicated on January 22 at the Alamogordo church. President Stevens read a passage from Mark 10 and commissioned us, and the church, to raise our little boy for the Lord. A special song was sung to Jonah showing how much God cares about each little child that is born, and what a masterpiece children are because God created them. Many family members and friends were there to witness this special occasion.

April Spooner

Jonah Levi Spooner was dedicated to the Lord on January 22 at the Alamogordo church. He is the son of Pastor Andrew Spooner and his wife, April.





# Coming Soon: A New Building for Odessa Spanish

**ODESSA, TEX. »** On January 23 the Odessa Spanish church erected a sign announcing the site where their new church building will be built. Church members gathered on Sunday morning to see the sign go up. Considering that it was 32 degrees outside, more people showed up than expected. Hot chocolate and biscuits were provided for us as we waited in the cold. As the men dug the holes and prepared the cement for the sign, others drank hot chocolate and sang hymns. Right before the sign went up, we gathered around the sign and held a brief devotional and prayed, asking God for His blessings for our new church. As the sign went up, each person would get a shovel full of cement and put it into the hole. Our sign is now visible on Highway 385 in Odessa.

We are optimistic about the location of our new church and believe that it will provide us with high visibility in the community. When our sign had been up for not even a week, a friend of one of our church members saw his truck at the site and told the church

member that he believes this is a good place for the church. The church member's friend also decided to donate some money so our church could start clearing the land. The following week church members began pulling out all the mesquites and leveling out the land. We hope to begin the construction of our new church this summer!

**Tina Berzosa**



▲ A sign announcing the future home of the Odessa Spanish church goes up.

◀ Odessa Spanish church members held a devotional ceremony in January at the site of their soon-to-be constructed church building.

▼ Members of the Odessa Spanish church pose near the sign that was erected at their building site on Highway 385 in January.



## A Special Day for Three Special Pastors

TEXICO CONFERENCE

**LOS LUNAS, N.MEX.** » October 9, 2010 was a very special day for three pastors here in the Texico Conference as they were ordained into the ministry at the Los Lunas church. Conference president James Stevens was honored to congratulate Leonard Cummings, Erwin de Graaff, and Chuck Workman, along with their wives, on this momentous occasion.

**Pastor Leonard Cummings** was born in Deer Park, Ca. He and his sisters grew up around Pacific Union College where, thanks to his caring mother, they received an Adventist education. After attending a Revelation seminar at the age of 11, he was baptized at the Pacific Union College church. At 17, he attended Fairhaven Academy in British Columbia. During this time, he considered being a pastor as he participated in Sabbath School and enjoyed speaking in front of the church. Graduating from Walla Walla Valley Academy in 1996, he contemplated starting a degree in engineering, but shortly thereafter received an invitation to start a theology degree in Colombia, South America. After studying there for a year, he continued his studies in Peru for two and a half years. In between academic years, he participated in several mission trips to Bolivia and Peru. He also was a Bible worker at both the Spanish and English churches in Pasco, Wash.

Leonard graduated from Walla Walla College in 2003 with a degree in Theology. He then received a call to work as a full-time minister in the Texico Conference. From October 2003 to April 2007, he pastored his first district, Pampa, Borger, in Texas and Clayton, N.Mex., with the later addition of Tucumcari, N.Mex. During this time, Leonard met Edith Vasquez, and they married in September 2004, beginning a new partnership in ministry. In 2007, the family moved to Berrien Springs, Mich., so that Leonard could continue his Masters in Divinity degree at Andrews University, where he graduated in August 2009. Afterward, they moved to Santa Fe, N.Mex., where Leonard currently pastors the Santa Fe Marcy Park Spanish church, Santa Fe Airport Spanish company and Los Alamos company. Outings with the church family, traveling, photo editing, snow boarding, and going to the gym are activities Leonard enjoys. Edith loves working with children and wants to learn more languages and conduct seminars on the family. Together they love serving the Lord!

**Pastor Erwin de Graaff** was born in Hollandia, New Guinea. He and his parents moved to the Netherlands in 1962. Erwin received his education in Holland and

taught there for nine years. In 1985, he went to Pennsylvania for a vacation and accepted a job at a one-teacher school in Tunckhannock. Erwin taught a total of 25 years in Pennsylvania, Alaska, Indiana, Texas, and New Mexico. He received the Zapara Award for excellence in education.

His wife, Tricia, went to Alaska as a travel nurse in the summer of 1998 and worked in ICU at Providence Hospital. Erwin functioned as a guide, going on many adventurous trips and helping her fall in love with Alaska (and him!). Erwin and Tricia were married in the summer of 1999. He also worked as a professional photographer in Alaska, traveling to many of the Eskimo villages. Later in Indiana, Erwin and Tricia had their own computer instruction business, which won an award from the city of Evansville.

Erwin has been pastoring the Los Lunas, Belen, and Socorro churches since April 2010. His first pastoral district included Carlsbad, Pecos, Al-



**Leonard and Edith Cummings**

**Erwin and Tricia de Graaff, with their children Jeffrey, Alexandra, and Jordan**

pine, and Saragosa (two years later Roswell Spanish and Van Horn Spanish were added), where he served for almost four years. Tricia is home-schooling their three children: Jeffrey, 10, Jordan, 8, and Alexandra, 6. The de Graaff family enjoys traveling and the outdoors. They are very involved in church activities and want to continue to serve the Lord and help people prepare for His soon coming.

**Pastor Ralph C. Workman, Jr., (Chuck)** was born in Chattanooga, Tenn., to Ralph C. Workman, an Adventist minister/army chaplain, and Dorothy Workman, a schoolteacher. While growing up, his family moved to 14 different states and Germany. Chuck attended Southwestern Adventist College, and there met Cathie Christianson, who became his wife after graduation. They felt the calling to go to the mission field and had teaching assignments in Nairobi, Kenya; Mandeville, Jamaica; and Kauai, Hawaii; as well as five additional states in the United States. As he was working as a school administrator and educational superintendent for the Texico Conference, he was also an interim pastor for the Carlsbad, El Paso Northeast, East Mountain, and Truth or Consequences

churches.

Currently, he is pastoring the Las Cruces, N.Mex., district. The Workmans are blessed with three children: Adrienne, a medical student at Loma Linda University; Kelsey, a senior at Southwestern Adventist University; and Gilman, a college student awaiting a taskforce volunteer mission call. Their children have done mission and evangelistic series in Chuuk, Micronesia; Seoul, Korea; Taiwan, Chi-

na; and several locations in the Philippines. Cathie is currently teaching grades 4-8 at El Paso Adventist Junior Academy.

Pastor Workman's passions in life are family, youth, visitation, Bible studies, prison ministry, mission trips, photography, and evangelism.



**Chuck and Cathie Workman**

## Hereford Spanish Hosts Community Event

**HEREFORD, TEX. »** The Hereford Spanish group held a grand social event at Hereford Park designed to acquaint the community with the church and its members. More than 100 people attended, and among those were three pastors from different denominations. The well-planned event was a success. Pastor Jose Manuel Rodriguez was the guest speaker and, after the event, the group enjoyed a big potluck. Events like this one are key for our church to be known in the community. Other events are already being planned, including a one-day health fair and an evangelistic crusade later in 2011. Pray that the Hereford Spanish Church will continue to grow so that they can become a church that will produce other churches. Christ is coming soon!



**Jose Manuel Rodriguez**, pastor

Members of the Hereford Spanish church reached out into their community with a special event designed to acquaint people with the church.

# I Had a Plan, But God Had Another One

"I had a plan for my life. I knew where my career would be and the things I would have at each stage of my life. I knew what kind of car I would be driving when I was 30, when I was 40, and when I was 50. I was on the path to being successful and having a lot of material things, but I felt like I was empty."

Gerardo Martinez is a 36-year-old theology major who plans to graduate from Southwestern Adventist University this May. This will be his second degree from Southwestern; his first is in chemistry. He has spent most of the past decade working successfully as a scientist for Alcon Laboratories in Fort Worth. Working at Alcon, he says, "was the fulfillment of a life-long dream."

"All I wanted was to have a good job so that I could buy a nice house and a nice car and have a lot of money. But it wasn't God's dream for me."

When Martinez came to Keene in 1998, he didn't plan to stay. In fact, he planned to return to his native Mexico and finish his degree in chemical engineering. His plans changed when he met his wife, Jackie, at the Keene Spanish Seventh-day Adventist Church. The couple married in 2000. Gerardo transferred to Southwestern, completing English as a Second Language (ESL)

courses and finishing his chemistry degree in 2002.

Martinez says he'd always had the call to be a pastor in his heart, but had pushed it away to pursue a different life. A series of events in 2009 led him to realize the need for him to return to Southwestern. Once the decision was made, Gerardo says, everything seemed to fall into place.

"I know a lot of people thought I was crazy to quit my job, leave my home, sell my things, and go back to school to be a pastor. A lot of people told me I could be a

witness in my job as a scientist."

Gerardo says he realizes that every person is called in a different way. "I could have ministered to the other employees at my job, but God was calling me to do something specific. There are thousands of people who can do my job as a scientist, but only I can be the pastor God is calling me to be."

Jackie supports Gerardo's decision, saying she's always known that God had a plan for her husband. "Our family and friends have worried about what I feel about this change in our lives, but I support him. I know he is doing what he is supposed to do."

Jackie obtained her undergraduate degree in psychology at the University of Puerto Rico before coming to Southwestern to take ESL and family counseling courses. She works as an early childhood specialist, and plans to complete a masters degree in family counseling.

Because of personal trials they've had in their marriage, and the struggles of other couples and families that they've witnessed, the couple plans to be involved in creating and supporting family ministries wherever they are called. "Our church can only be as strong as our families," says Jackie.

Gerardo was ordained at the Keene Spanish Seventh-day Adventist Church on January 22, 2011, surrounded by family and friends. "I love Southwestern, and am grateful to the people there who made all of this possible," he says.

"I've learned not to make plans," he says. "God will make plans for me."



**Gerardo Martinez**

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ambos idiomas!  
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Southwestern Adventist University Campus

**JUNE 24-26, 2011**  
Keene, Texas

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General Conference



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**Off-campus registration includes:** 2 Sabbath meals, seminar cost, t-shirt & general sessions (\$25 savings).

For more information, contact the Southwestern Union Men's Ministries Dept., Pastor Buford Griffith, Jr., Dir.

by calling: **(817) 295-0476** or register online: [www.southwesternmen.com](http://www.southwesternmen.com)

## Houston for Christ Update

**HOUSTON, TEX. »** With more than 130 meetings being held, the “Houston for Christ” evangelistic event is in full swing. Nearly every church in the Houston and surrounding Gulf coast vicinity has participated in this historic evangelistic effort.

“This is the largest coordinated evangelistic campaign ever attempted in the United States,” reports Duane McKey, vice president for evangelism in the Southwestern Union. “This has been an amazing cooperative effort of the Southwestern Union, the Texas Conference, and the Southwest Region Conference, with help from ShareHim, ASI, and the North American Division.”

Unlike a NET series, where a televised evangelistic crusade is downlinked to hundreds of meeting sites, each Houston area location has been hosting its own series of live meetings using ShareHim presentation materials.

North American Division president Dan Jackson and executive secretary Alex Bryant both preached at local Houston churches. Other participating

Adventist leaders have included Armando Miranda, GC vice president; Ernie Castillo, NAD vice president; Ramon Chow, secretary/treasurer for ASI; Leighton Hol-

ley, Texas Conference president; and Bill Wright, Southwest Region Conference president. These leaders joined evangelists from across the United States and as far away as Nigeria, St. Lucia, Mexico, and Puerto Rico, as well as a host of local pastors and lay members in sharing the Good News with Houston.

Despite severe weather conditions, vandalism, electrical problems, and other technical issues, the meetings went on, and as of press time they are still in progress.

Large, citywide campaigns are often held in rented stadiums, with well-known evangelists engaged to attract people from far and wide to attend one main event. Such a campaign can cost more than \$500,000. In contrast, the promotional cost for



◀ Billboards inform passers-by of the prophecy meetings in Houston, Tex.

Next page: Dan Jackson, president of the North American Division, sharing Good News at the Houston Central Seventh-day Adventist Church.

▼ Many of the Houston-area pastors gathered together mid-week to share praise reports on how their meetings were progressing.





the Houston campaign's 130 locations was less than \$100,000, indicating that this is a cost-effective way to reach a large audience.

"When each church takes ownership of its own meeting, there is an energy and excitement that doesn't happen with a large, stadium-sized event," says Max Treviño, president of the Southwestern Union. "We have witnessed churches that haven't been involved in evangelism for more than 20 years get energized and excited about the new visitors in their church, and the decisions that are being made for baptism."

Although several weeks are left at many of the "Houston for Christ" locations, many attendees have already asked to be baptized, and the momentum remains strong.

**Mark Bond** is the communication director of the Southwestern Union.

## LEGAL NOTICE

### SOUTHWESTERN UNION CONFERENCE OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

Official notice is hereby given of the 29th regular session of the Southwestern Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists to be held in Keene, Texas, May 9-10, 2011. The first meeting is scheduled for 3:00 p.m. Monday, May 9, in the Keene Seventh-day Adventist Church, 114 S. Fairview, Keene, Texas. Regular delegates to the session are appointed by the local conferences of the Southwestern Union Conference.

MAX A. TREVINO, *president* | SAMUEL L. GREEN, *secretary*

### SOUTHWESTERN UNION CONFERENCE CORPORATION OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

Official notice is hereby given of the 29th regular session of the Southwestern Union Conference Corporation of Seventh-day Adventists to be held in Keene, Texas, May 9-10, 2011. The first meeting is scheduled for 3:00 p.m. Monday, May 9, in the Keene Seventh-day Adventist Church, 114 S. Fairview, Keene, Texas. The Constituents for this corporation are the delegates to the 29th session of the Southwestern Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

MAX A. TREVINO, *president* | SAMUEL L. GREEN, *secretary*

### SOUTHWESTERN ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY

Official Notice is hereby given that Southwestern Adventist University will hold its constituency meeting on Tuesday, May 10, 2011, in the Keene Seventh-day Adventist Church, 114 S. Fairview, Keene, Texas. The first meeting is called for at 11:00 a.m. The purpose of this meeting is to elect a Board of Trustees for the ensuing term and to transact such other business as may properly come before the session.

MAX A. TREVINO, *president* | ERIC ANDERSON, *secretary*

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### [EMPLOYMENT]

**Southwestern Adventist University** seeks a full-time nurse educator. Master's degree required; doctoral degree preferred. Must have some teaching experience and an unencumbered Texas nursing license. Contact Dr. Ron Mitchell at 817.202.6230 or rmitchell@swau.edu.

**Adventist Information Ministry** is seeking a Software Engineer to join our staff. Primary project is to write new software (written in .NET) to facilitate our 50-seat call center. AIM is the Evangelistic

Contact Center for the North America Division located in Berrien Springs, MI. Visit [www.callaim.org/jobs.php](http://www.callaim.org/jobs.php) to see full posting.

**Walla Walla University** seeks applicants for full-time, tenure-track faculty positions in Biology, Business and Chemistry. For more information and application process, please visit <http://jobs.wal-lawalla.edu>. All positions will remain open until filled.

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### [MISCELLANEOUS]

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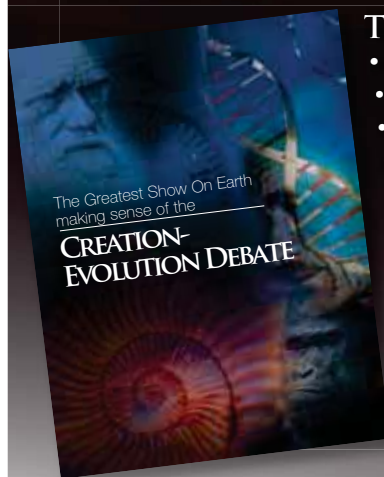
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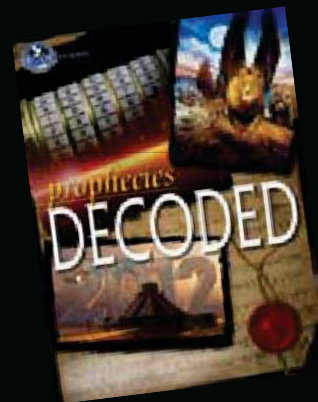
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## Announcements

**Broadview Academy Alumni Weekend** will be held April 29 and 30, 2011. All alumni are encouraged to attend, so mark your calendars, call your classmates, and start planning for this weekend now. Honor classes: 1951, 1961, 1971, 1981, 1986, 1991, and 2001. Activities include Friday night vespers, Sabbath School, and church. All ideas and information are welcome. **We need your e-mail address so we can keep in touch. Postage is too expensive.** E-mail Ed Gutierrez at edjulie1@att.net or call 630.232.9034. More information to come. Don't miss it!

**Chisholm Trail Academy Alumni Weekend** will be held March 25 and 26, 2011. Honor classes: 1971, 1976, 1981, 1986, 1991, 1996, 2001, 2006. Friday vespers will be at 7:30 p.m.; Sabbath services begin at 9:00 a.m. and continue through potluck lunch. Saturday night

vespers will be at 7:15 p.m., followed by a CTA Blazers basketball game and honor class parties. Contact Shelly at scastan@aol.com or visit the Facebook page: CTA Alumni 2011.

**The Fort Smith, Ark.,** church will celebrate its **100th Anniversary** on April 29 and 30, 2011. The weekend will include a candlelight vesper service, guest speakers, inspiring music, and other special events. All members, friends, former members, and pastors are cordially invited to attend this very special weekend. Please mail any "old" photos to Fort Smith SDA Church, c/o Communications Director, P.O. Box 180430, Fort Smith, AR 72918. All photos will be returned. For information, contact Joyce Hilton at 479.996.2974.

**La Sierra Academy Alumni Weekend** will be held April 29, 30, May 1. Honor Classes 1's and 6's and 50-plus. Friday morning golf tournament, CrossCreek,

Temecula; Friday evening meet-and-greet, LSA campus library; Saturday/Sabbath morning Alumni Homecoming, LSA gym, 9 a.m. check-in; Delta Mu reunion (contact alumni office); Alumni/varsity basketball LSA gym; Sunday morning Ladies Charity Tea. For more info, contact LSA Alumni Office, 951.351.1445 x 244 or lsalumni@sak12.com.

### Los Angeles Adventist Academy

will be honoring the alumni from 1941, 1951, 1961, 1971, 1981, 1991, 2010 and 2011 at its **Third Annual Alumni Homecoming Weekend** on the campus of LAAA, located at 846 E. El Segundo Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90059 on March 11-13, 2011. Call or e-mail us at 323.321.2585, ext. 229. Visit our Web site at [www.alumni-laaa.com](http://www.alumni-laaa.com).

### Memphis Junior Academy

in Memphis, Tenn., will be celebrating their **100th Anniversary** April 8-10. Details:

search Facebook for MJA 100th Anniversary, or call the school at 901.683.1061.

**Sustainable Preparedness, a country living seminar** focusing on the spiritual and physical aspects of relocating to the country, conducted by Mountain Media Ministries, will be held April 30 and May 1 at the Joshua Seventh-day Adventist Church. For more information, visit [mountainmediaministries.org](http://mountainmediaministries.org) and click on Spring 2011 Seminar Trip.

### Washington Adventist University Alumni Weekend 2011

(Columbia Union College, Washington Missionary College) April 7-10. Alumni, friends and former faculty and staff are invited. Honor Classes are '31, '41, '51, '61, '71, '81, '86, '91 and '01. For more information, visit the Web site at [wau.edu/alumni](http://wau.edu/alumni), e-mail [alumni@wau.edu](mailto:alumni@wau.edu) or call the alumni office at 301.891.4133.

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## Obituaries

**COHEN, PATRICIA ANN (Addison)**, born June 7, 1946 in Atlanta, Ga., and died December 29, 2010 in Alamogordo, N.Mex. She was a member of the Alamogordo church, and a loving wife, mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother. She was also a foster

parent to many children and never turned anyone away, regardless of race or religion. Survivors: husband, Robert Lee Cohen; daughters, Mitzi S. Wright, Zina P.L. Fuller, and Rohnda L. Wittliff, all of Alamogordo, Dawn Marie Medlin of Valdosta, Ga., Tammy L. (Cricket) Nix of Covington, Ga., and Mara E. Najar of Alamogordo;

sons, Lonnie Ray Anglin of Griffin, Ga., Thomas R. Anglin of North Carolina, and Jeffrey A. Jones of Ellijay, Ga.; sister, Jean Tuttle of Deland, Fla.; brother, John Addison of Atlanta, Ga. She was preceded in death by a sister, Margrett Ramsey; brothers, James Addison and Ronald L. Ramsey; and a daughter, Lisa D. Jones.

**HILL, Faye**, born July 15, 1924 in Burleson, Tex., and died December 28, 2010 in Fort Worth, Tex. She was a member of the Alvarado, Tex., church. Survivors: husband, Richard Hill of Alvarado; son, Richard Hill, Jr., of Denton, Tex.; daughter, Yvonne Morten of Alvarado.

**KESSLER, JEAN, BORN Dec. 29**, 1924, in Empire, Okla., and died Nov. 22, 2009 in White Oak, Tex. She was a homemaker. Survivors: daughters, Kimberly Skelton of White Oak, and Kelly Gentry of Tyler, Tex.; three grandchildren; one great-grandchild; and numerous loving family members. She was preceded in death by her husband, Eddie Kessler, and four brothers.

**LEWIS, ADDIE, born June 22**, 1927 in Phoenix, Ariz., and died December 17, 2010 in Fayetteville, Ark. A member of the Ozark, Ark., church, she was laid to rest in Patrick, Ark. She taught in Adventist elementary schools, having worked in three conferences. She retired because of health problems, but remained very active in church activities, serving as Dorcas leader, Pathfinder leader, teaching children's Sabbath School classes and raising funds for Feed the Children. Survivors: sons, Wendell Eddie Lewis of Joshua, Tex., and Mason Lee Lewis of Delaney, Ark.; daughters, Marie Swayze of Joshua, Tex., and Audrey Lewis of Patrick, Ark.; 12 grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren. She was preceded in death by a daughter, Dianne McLaughlin.

**ROBISON, Charles Wendell**, born October 16, 1929 in Blaine County, Okla., and died August 9, 2010 in

## LEGAL NOTICE

### TEXAS CONFERENCE OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

Notice is hereby given that the Quadrennial Session of the Texas Conference of Seventh-day Adventists will convene at the Keene Seventh-day Adventist Church (114 S. Fairview St.), Keene, Texas, on Sunday, April 3, 2011. The purpose of this meeting is to elect officers and directors for the ensuing quadrennial term, to consider changes in the constitution, and to transact such business as may properly come before the Conference.

The meeting is called for Sunday at 10:00 a.m. Each church is entitled to two regular delegates without regard to membership, plus one regular delegate for each 40 members.

**Leighton R. Holley**, President  
**Carlos Craig**, Secretary  
**Errol Eder**, Treasurer  
**Gary Brady**, Vice-president

### TEXAS CONFERENCE ASSOCIATION OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

Notice is hereby given that the Quadrennial Session of the Texas Conference Association of Seventh-day Adventists will be held at the Keene Seventh-day Adventist Church (114 S. Fairview St.), Keene, Texas, on Sunday, April 3, 2011. The purpose of this meeting is to elect officers and directors for the ensuing quadrennial term, to consider changes in the constitution, and to transact such other business as may properly come before the Association.

The meeting is called for Sunday at 10:00 a.m. Delegates to the Texas Conference of Seventh-day Adventists are also delegates to the Texas Conference Association.

**Leighton R. Holley**, President  
**Roger Mekelburg**, Secretary

### VALLEY EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION

Notice is hereby given that the Quadrennial Session of the Texas Conference Valley Educational Foundation will be held at the Keene Seventh-day Adventist Church (114 S. Fairview St.), Keene, Texas, on Sunday, April 3, 2011. The purpose of this meeting is to elect officers and directors for the ensuing quadrennial term, and to transact such other business as may properly come before the Foundation.

The meeting is called for Sunday at 10:00 a.m. Delegates of the Texas Conference of Seventh-day Adventists are also delegates to the Valley Educational Foundation.

**Leighton R. Holley**, President  
**John Page**, Secretary/Treasurer

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Canton, Okla. Raised in the Southard, Okla., area, he graduated from Southard High School in 1948. He served two terms as Blaine County Commissioner and was active in the Canton Lions Club. He served as an elder in the Canton church. Survivors: wife, Joyce; son, Kelly; several grandchildren and great-grandchildren. He was preceded in death by a son, Sheldon Robison and a brother, Elmer Gene Robison.

**ROY, JODIE, born February 17, 1972** in Bossier City, La., and died January 9, 2011 in Springdale, Ark. She was a member of the New Orleans First church and was the daughter of Floyd Bearden and Sarah Lucas Bearden. Survivors: father and step mother, Floyd and Marian Bearden of Siloam Springs, Ark.;

sons, Austin Roy and Hunter Roy, both of Springdale; brother, James Bearden of Springfield, Mo.; brother and sister-in-law, John and Shonda Bearden of Siloam Springs; sister, Julie Sharpiro of Siloam Springs; step-brothers, Stan Allen of Jay, Okla., Tom Allen of Harrison, Ark., Randall Allen of Georgia, Jeff Allen of Rogers, Ark., Jack Allen of Ashville, N.C.; step-sister, Carrie Sorbet of Houston, Tex.

**WOOLSEY, FRANK E. Sr.,** 89 (almost 90), died December 30, 2010 in Tilly, Ark. He was a member of the Marshall, Ark., church. Frank Woolsey was a busy trucker when approximately 35 years ago, for health reasons, the doctor gave him only about five years to live. He and his wife, Rose Ann, educated themselves regarding healthy living and diet and

prayerfully made changes in their lives. God honored those changes and Frank and Rose Ann Woolsey were able to celebrate more than 64 years of marriage. Survi-

vors: wife, Rose Ann Woolsey; son and daughter-in-law, Pastor Ron and Claudia Woolsey, all of Tilly.

### SABBATH SUNSET CALENDAR

	Mar 4	Mar 11	Mar 18	Mar 25	Apr 1	Apr 8
Abilene, TX	6:39	6:44	7:49	7:54	7:59	8:04
Albuquerque, NM	6:05	6:11	7:17	7:23	7:28	7:34
Amarillo, TX	6:46	6:52	7:58	8:04	8:08	8:14
Brownsville, TX	6:34	6:37	7:40	7:44	7:47	7:50
Dallas, TX	6:27	6:32	7:38	7:43	7:47	7:52
El Paso, TX	6:07	6:11	7:16	7:21	7:25	7:30
Fort Worth/Keene, TX	6:29	6:35	7:40	7:45	7:49	7:54
Gallup, NM	6:13	6:19	7:25	7:31	7:37	7:42
Galveston/Houston, TX	6:23	6:28	7:32	7:36	7:40	7:44
Gentry, AR	6:16	6:22	7:28	7:34	7:40	7:46
Little Rock, AR	6:08	6:14	7:19	7:25	7:30	7:35
Muskogee, OK	6:20	6:26	7:32	7:38	7:43	7:49
New Orleans, LA	6:02	6:06	7:11	7:15	7:19	7:23
Oklahoma City, OK	6:28	6:34	7:40	7:46	7:52	7:57
Roswell, NM	5:58	6:03	7:08	7:14	7:19	7:23
San Antonio, TX	6:35	6:40	7:44	7:49	7:52	7:56
Shreveport, LA	6:15	6:20	7:25	7:31	7:35	7:40
Tulsa, OK	6:22	6:28	7:34	7:40	7:46	7:52

**Note:** Daylight Savings Time begins at 2:00 a.m. on Mar. 13.

## Just Stop, Look, and Listen

**I AM A SENIOR AT SANDIA VIEW ACADEMY**, and I have been on three mission trips in my entire life—two to El Terrero, Chihuahua, in Mexico, and one to Veracruz, Mexico. I have had fun and received a blessing on all of them, but the one mission trip that changed my life was the one to Veracruz, during spreak break of 2009 when I was a sophomore in high school.

I must admit that, at first, I didn't want to go. I had a great trip planned to visit my aunt and uncle in California and I wanted to go there, instead. Our school secretary, Mrs. Ledezma, kept insisting that I should go and translate, since I am bilingual. Mrs. Ledezma suggested that I pray about it. At that time I wasn't really close to God, but I decided to pray about it anyway. So the prayer began. Since I'm not really one who does something simply because someone suggests it, I felt I needed more evidence that God wanted me to go.

So I prayed to God for a sign to let me know whether or not I should make the trip. A couple of weeks later, I was at a church and I had to give an answer to the school so they could buy my ticket. I prayed that morning and said to God, "If you want me to go, let people at this church ask me about mission trips at the school." During the potluck at the church, a lady asked me, "So, is Sandia View Academy having any mission trips this year?"

My jaw dropped open, but still feeling very stubborn, I prayed, "God, if you want me to go, let another person ask if I am going and what I would do if I go." I talked to the lady and informed her that the school was going to Veracruz, Mexico. A man then walked up to us and said, "Are you going? You should translate, it's very good practice." Now there wasn't much more I could ask of God. He had given me the answers and signs I had asked for!

The blessings don't stop there, though. On the plane ride I was



**Melissa Chacon (foreground) had a life-changing experience during her mission trip to Veracruz, Mexico.**

very nervous. I had never translated for anyone, and it was going to be a completely new experience. I started looking through my backpack, pulled out my Bible, and remembered that, before leaving, I had become a bit upset with my dad for taking my favorite Bible out and then returning it to my bag. Then, as I picked it up and started flipping through it, I noticed that he had gone through and highlighted a lot of memory verses in my Bible.

This time I was even more angry, because I usually don't mark in my

Bibles. But amazingly, while I was in Veracruz, every time I needed a Bible verse, I would pick up my *Clear Word Bible* and start reading. It seemed that when I would randomly turn to a page, my dad had highlighted something there, and it would be the perfect verse to help in the situation I was in!

I translated for my Bible teacher on that mission trip, and we had seven out of 20 members of our church ask for Bible studies. That trip was a great blessing, and I learned that, like Jonah, you can't run away from God's will. And, like Gideon, when you ask God for a sign, no matter how stubborn you are, God will give you huge neon lights, letting you know what He wants you to do. All we need to do is stop, listen, and look for the signs.

**Melissa Chacon** is a senior at Sandia View Academy in Corrales, N.Mex.



# For the Record »

BY MARK BOND » COMMUNICATION DIRECTOR, SOUTHWESTERN UNION

## Would You Be Willing?

**IT STARTED AS AN INVITATION FROM A FRIEND.** “Would you be willing to bring your guitar along to help with some music for a chapel service up at the youth academy?”

I didn't know what the “youth academy” was, but I'm always up for playing my guitar. I soon found out that the Swan Valley Youth Academy was a detention center for non-violent 13- to 17-year old boys caught up in Montana's criminal justice system for crimes like drug possession or breaking and entering.

At first I thought, *Prison ministry isn't for me.* But then I wondered, *How bad can it be? They're just kids.*

I wasn't prepared for the joy those “kids” would bring into my life. Each Sunday evening, I joined a small, inter-denominational group of Christian brothers to make the 30-mile drive up to the youth academy, often chugging through snow and ice storms and dodging deer and elk along the way (or were they dodging us?).

We took turns leading out in music, prayer, and Bible study. We shared from our hearts, and in turn, the young men

opened their hearts to us—and to God—once they realized we truly cared about them.

One evening, a young Native American named Running Horse shyly asked, “Why do you guys come here? Do they pay you to come?”

When we assured him that we came, not for pay, but just because we cared, he said, “I didn't know anybody really cared about us. I mean, the guards and teachers come because it's their job. They get paid, but you guys...” His voice trailed off as he contemplated the notion that anyone might care about him that much.

It's interesting to share Bible stories with boys who don't know baby Moses from the Easter Bunny. They were eager to learn and soaked up what we shared like sponges. They loved singing songs like, “As the Deer,” “Amazing Grace,” and “I'll Fly Away.” When we reached the line,

“Like a bird from prison bars has flown,” they sang loud enough to shake the walls.

After a few years, the youth academy fell on hard times financially, and the state government closed down the facility. The boys were sent off to other programs, and our weekly ritual came to an end.

Even now, I still get a note or phone call every so often from one of the boys. I'll always treasure the memory of their untrained voices singing with gangly, teenage passion. They asked such probing questions, I'm not sure who was impacted more—them or me. I hope to see them all again someday around the Tree of Life. I'll bring my guitar, and we'll all sing, “Worthy, worthy is the Lamb!”

Someday, someone may approach you and ask, “Would you be willing...?” Don't hesitate—just say yes.

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