

SOUTHWESTERN UNION

Record

SEPTEMBER 2011



This is
**NOT YOUR
FATHER'S CHURCH**

YOUNG ADULTS TAKE OWNERSHIP OF THE GREAT COMMISSION



In this Issue...

DEPARTMENTS

CREATION Health 4
 Shades of Grace 5
 Pass It On 6
 Visión Hispana 7

FEATURES

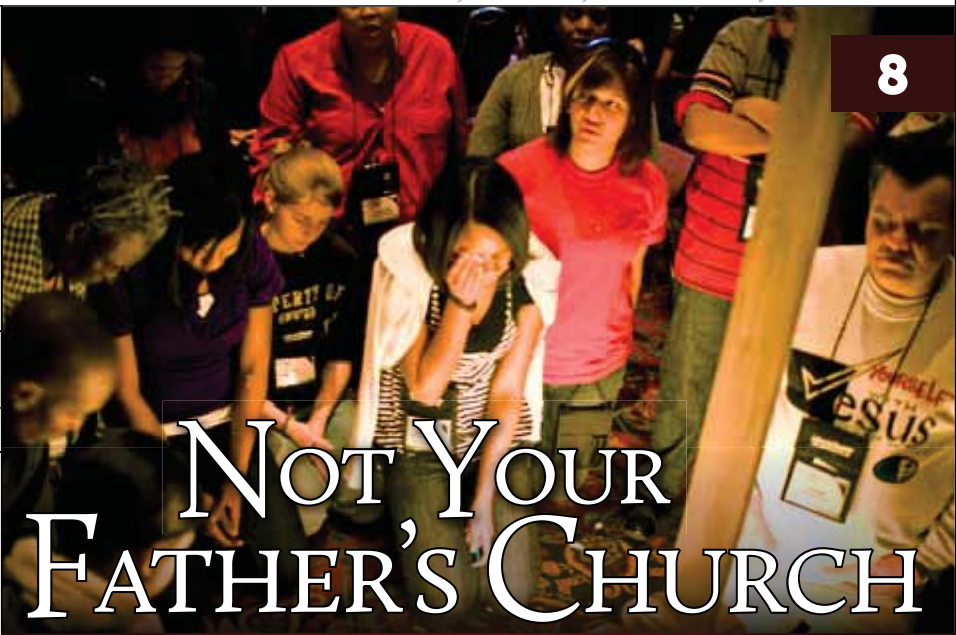
Not Your Father's Church 8
 Youth Ministry Today 10
 A Generation of Youth for Christ . . 14

NEWS

Arkansas-Louisiana 16
 Oklahoma 20
 Southwest Region 24
 Texas 28
 Texico 32
 Southwestern Adventist University . . 36
 ASI Convention Report 38

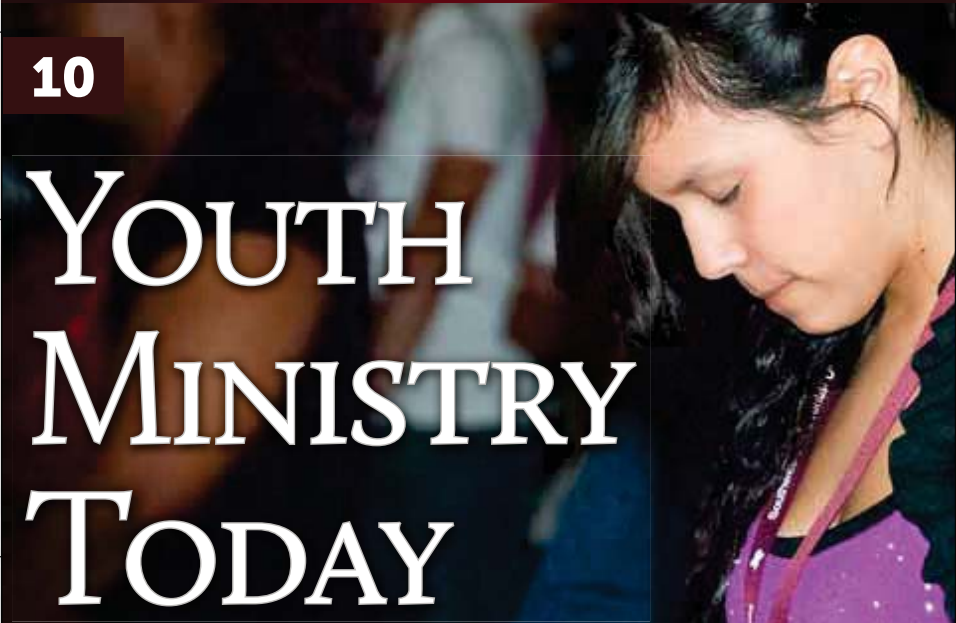
ETCETERA

Classified Ads 40
 Announcements 44
 Obituaries 45
 MyFaith 46
 For the Record 47



NOT YOUR FATHER'S CHURCH

8



10

YOUTH MINISTRY TODAY



A Generation of Youth for Christ—p. 14



SEPTEMBER 2011, Vol. 110, No. 9. The *Southwestern Union Record* is a monthly publication of the Seventh-day Adventist churches in Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, New Mexico, and Texas, and is published at the headquarters of the Southwestern Union Conference, 777 S. Burleson Blvd., Burleson, TX 76028, 817.295.0476. Printed at Pacific Press Publishing Association in Nampa, Idaho. www.SouthwesternAdventist.org.

On the Cover

Despite any statistics you might have heard about young adults who are leaving the church, not all of them have chosen that route. Many young adults are passionately embracing our beliefs and the commission we've been given to take the gospel to the whole world. Turn the pages of this issue to learn about the vibrant ministries young adults are involved in around the nation and right here in the Southwestern Union.

President's Perspective»

BY LARRY MOORE » SOUTHWESTERN UNION CONFERENCE PRESIDENT



It's Your Church

Larry Moore

It's been a long time since I was a young person—but not so long that I can't remember how important programs tailored for youth were to me. Back in the day, we had programs like “Missionary Volunteers” (MV) or “Adventist Youth Society” (AYS). We would do “Investment” projects to increase our offerings, and go “Ingathering” during the holiday season. “Colporteuring” or “canvassing” was a common way to earn money for school. And “canned food drives” were a regular annual event. In short, we were recruits in the Lord's army to reach the lost for eternity.

The names of our programs may have changed, but the goals are still the same. And while styles of worship among the youth here in the Southwestern Union vary greatly, there is a common purpose that brings them together.

There was a period in the 80s and 90s when youth ministry started to conform to what I call an MTV model—attempting to entertain our young people. Music, drama, and humor were all incorporated to create the most engaging programs possible. But over time, it became clear that simply entertaining our young people was not what they wanted or needed. Of course, there's nothing inherently wrong with music, a skit, or a humorous story. But entertaining our youth is not enough. Anything we attempt will fall short of the glamour and glitz the secular world has to offer

from an entertainment perspective.

When I talk to young people, they tell me that what they really want is something real. They want the chance to serve. They desire meaningful interactions with their church. They want opportunities to become involved in missions and outreach. They want to participate in relevant Bible study and prayer. In short, they don't want to sit on the sidelines; they want to be on the playing field. And more and more, they are.

The Southwestern Union is blessed to have myriad opportunities for young people to go on mission trips, preach evangelistic series, build churches, provide disaster relief, go door-to-door with literature, and share their faith with their neighbors and friends.

If you're a young person, and your church doesn't have service opportunities available, don't wait for an adult to make the suggestion, do it yourself. Create a committee of friends and trusted adult leaders to brainstorm ways you can impact your community. Roll up your sleeves and join the movement of Adventist youth who are actively changing the world.

Young people started this church, and young people will finish the work. Don't wait for your parents to pass the baton to you. God has already given you the call. This is not your father's church—it's yours.





CREATION Health

BY LYNELL LAMOUNTAIN

Five Tips From God For Less Stress

Our nation is stressed out as the aftershocks of the Great Recession shake people's confidence. Burdened by fear and overwhelmed by worry, they are driven to the edge. The economy barely has a pulse, people are out of work, and it seems every few weeks we hear of someone else who snapped and went on a shooting rampage.

Chronic stress is fracturing health, hearts, and hope.

When surveyed, a majority of Americans report they have moderate to high levels of stress and do not know how to change it. What rattles them most is stress about money, the economy, and job stability.

Many people confess that one of their greatest sources of stress is family responsibilities. Parents especially feel the weight. But 69 percent of them have the illusion that their children are not strongly affected by their stress. However, 91 percent of children say they know mom or dad is stressed because of their yelling, arguing and complaining—and it makes them feel sad, worried, and frustrated.

Can you guess the most common reason people give for being unable to manage their stress effectively? Not enough time. They are just too busy, they say.

We have a wonderful opportunity during these uncertain times to shine brightly for Jesus Christ by letting letting others

CREATIONhealth.com

get a glimpse of His faithfulness so they, too, may find a Refuge of Strength.

Jesus is never stressed, worried, or afraid. And this same experience can be ours. All we have to do is apply His "tips" for having less stress, found in Proverbs 3:5-6.

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight."

Tip number one: Choose to trust God. The first step for experiencing God's peace is choosing to trust Him with every worry and concern and seek His guidance.

Tip number two: Choose to trust God with all your heart. Full peace requires full trust. We must surrender all of our heart—every last portion. Revival and transformation are born within when we trust God fully.

Tip number three: Choose to relax in what God already knows.

Proverbs says to "lean not on your own understanding." The word "lean" in Hebrew means to rest "all of your weight." God's understanding is perfect and it just makes good sense to relax in what He already knows. Although there might be question marks in our minds, there are none in His.

Tip number four: Make Him our first priority *always*.

Every day in every way we are to make God our first priority in every area of our lives. The outcome is a heart that overflows with His peace, power, and presence.

Tip number five: Choose to act.

The Bible says that God makes our paths straight. A path suggests action—a journey from point A to point B. One of the greatest antidotes to stress and worry is *action*. As God's eternal children, we are a people who take action and follow His leading whether it is through the Red Sea, fiery furnace or the cross. We trust. We obey. We move. We are a *movement* of grace, truth, and healing.

In our world we are surrounded by challenges. No matter what we face today or tomorrow, experiencing the transformational power of a loving, trusting God will have a profound and positive effect on us. God expresses His desire to be by our side through every challenge. He longs for us to trust Him with our challenges, to look up to Him and cling to His strong hand. He longs for us to rest in His loving arms. And He will give us *His* strength, courage and peace.

That's CREATION Health!

Lynell LaMountain writes from Florida Hospital in Orlando, Fla.

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



Shades of Grace

BY MIKE TUCKER » SPEAKER/DIRECTOR, FAITH FOR TODAY



Responding to God's Voice

The Apostle Paul had an opportunity to give his testimony to King Agrippa. After relating his Damascus road experience Paul said: “Therefore, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, but declared first to those in Damascus and in Jerusalem, and throughout all the region of Judea, and *then* to the Gentiles, that they should repent, turn to God, and do works befitting repentance” (Acts 26:19-20, NKJV).

The definition of the word “repent” implies more than just feeling sorry for your sins. It indicates a decision to change the trajectory of a life. To repent means that we engage in a complete about face and begin to head in a different direction.

Repentance may involve sacrifice. It is often painful. However, those whose lives have been changed by Jesus will never be happy until they surrender to the promptings of the Holy Spirit to make meaningful changes. Because God loves you, He won't let you off the hook until you respond to it. Here is a story that illustrates this difficult lesson.

Quite some time ago former Watergate defendant and current Christian author Charles Colson was on the Bill Buckley television program talking about criminal justice. A few days later he got a call from Jack Eckerd, founder of the Eckerd Drug chain. He saw Colson on television and asked him to come to Florida. He felt that Florida had a criminal justice crisis and wanted to team up with Colson to do something about it.

Colson traveled around the state on Eckerd's Lear jet, talking to politicians about reforms. Everywhere they went Jack Eckerd would introduce Colson to the crowds and say, “This is Chuck Colson, my friend. He's born again. I'm not. I wish I were.” And then he'd sit down.

Every time they got back on the airplane Colson would tell Jack about Jesus. When Colson left, he gave Eckerd some books and then kept in touch for about a year.

One day Eckerd called up Colson and told him that he believed that Jesus was, in fact, resurrected from the dead. When Eckerd finished, Colson said, “You're born again!” He said, “No, I'm not, I haven't felt anything.” Colson said, “Yes, you are! Pray with me right now.” After they prayed Eckerd said, “I am born again!

Marvelous!”

The first thing Jack Eckerd did was to call in his president for Eckerd Drug and tell him: “Take Playboy and Penthouse out of my stores.” The president said, “You can't mean that, Mr. Eckerd. We make three million dollars a year on those books.” He said, “Take 'em out of my stores.” And in 1,700 stores across America those magazines were removed from the shelves because a man had given his life to Christ.

Colson called Jack Eckerd and said, “Did you do that because of your commitment to Christ?” He said, “Why else would I give away three million dollars? The Lord wouldn't let me off the hook.”

Jack Eckerd then wrote a letter to all the presidents of all the other drugstore chains, and he said, “I've taken it out of my store. Why don't you take it out of yours?” Not a one answered him. But then Eckerd's Drugs began to get floods of people coming in to buy things at Eckerd's because they'd taken Playboy and Penthouse out. So then People's Drug saw that and removed the magazines from their shelves. Next Dart Drug and then Revco removed them from their shelves. Then the 7-11 chairman, who sat on Jack Eckerd's board, finally gave in and 5,000 7-11 stores removed the magazines, as well. In a period of 12 months, 11,000 retail outlets in America removed *Playboy* and *Penthouse* because God wouldn't let one of his men off the hook.

This is a great illustration of what it means to repent. God will not let you off the hook with some issue in your life. Eventually, if you respond, God takes that decision and does something wonderful with it. Repentance is responding to God's voice when he won't let you alone about something in your life.

Mike Tucker, speaker/director of Faith for Today



Pass it On...

A Monthly Focus on Evangelism in the Southwest

BY ANN IKONNE, PRESIDENT, SOUTHERN YOUTH CONFERENCE

Young Adults Inspired to Finish the Work

SOUTHERN YOUTH CONFERENCE ENGAGES YOUNG ADULTS IN THE CHURCH'S MISSION

The Southern Youth Conference (SYC) is a young adult-led ministry based in the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex that hosts annual conferences for young people who live in the south. One cannot help but notice the underrepresentation or near absence of church members between the ages of 18-35. Many young adults are inactive because they are not engaged in their local churches and do not feel welcomed, equipped, or worthy to participate.

SYC was formed in August 2008, when a small group of young adults from the Richardson, Tex., church realized there were limited training and mentorship opportunities for young adults in their region. After much prayer, we decided to create a union-wide organization to assist young people. The leaders of SYC decided to host annual symposiums that challenge attendees to renew and expand their relationship with God, use their spiritual gifts to spread the gospel, and fellowship with likeminded young adults.

In June of 2009, SYC hosted its first conference at the North Dallas Adventist Academy in Richardson. The theme "CHOSEN" was selected, based on 1 Peter 2:9, and emphasized reclaiming the identity and mission that we have as Seventh-day Adventists. SYC was blessed to have almost 300 attendees from Dallas, Fort Worth, Houston, San Antonio, Brownsville, and Oklahoma City.

With the Lord's coming so eminent, we selected the theme "Send Me" for the second annual conference, using Isaiah 6:8 as its basis. SYC 2010 took place Labor Day Weekend at the Spring Branch Spanish church, where services and seminars were conducted in Spanish and English.

At SYC 2011 we wanted to remind our attendees that God has reassured us of the boundless love He has for those who believe in Him and persevere in His work. Despite the ills that may befall us, we have confidence that the Lord will be with us. Victory is guaranteed, so we declare ourselves "Unstoppable." SYC 2011 was hosted at the Richardson church on July 7-10. More than 500 people attended

our Sabbath services, with guests from South Texas to Arkansas.

At SYC we have the opportunity to hear inspiring and powerful sermons.



SYC attendees decorating greeting cards for residents of a local nursing home.



In addition, those who register for SYC have access to relevant and edifying seminars. Past topics have included Witnessing in the Workplace, Christian Courtship, Adventist History, Christian Money Management, The Mind of Christ, and Foundations of our Faith. At-

tendees are also encouraged to participate in all of our outreach activities. We engage in door-to-door evangelism, as well as visit nursing homes and host a community health fair.

The organizers of SYC have been blessed by the ongoing support and mentorship from the leaders of the Richardson church, the Mosier Valley church, the Texas Conference, the Southwest Region Conference, and ASI (Adventist-Layman's Services and Industries). We hope and pray that our ministry continues to inspire young adults to be partakers in finishing the work and spreading the gospel.

SYC 2012 will take place Thursday, June 28 - Sunday, July 1, 2012 at the Richardson church. For more information, visit www.sycweb.net, find us on Facebook, or e-mail southernyc@gmail.com.

Visión Hispana

UN BREVE NOTICIERO MENSUAL DEL SUROESTE

Quien Eres

UN EVENTO PARA LOS JÓVENES DE LA IGLESIA ADVENTISTA HISPANA DE KEENE

Durante las fechas de 27 hasta el 30 de Julio del 2011, el departamento de jóvenes de la Iglesia Adventista Hispana de Keene "Youth Worship" tuvo un evento con el tema "Quien Eres." Los oradores invitados eran dos jóvenes del área de

Chicago, Ill., Sixto Ramos, Jr., y Arnoldo Cervantes. Ellos tuvieron varios temas para la iglesia entera sobre la adoración y sobre la responsabilidad de ser Adventistas del Séptimo Día. Compartieron sus poderosos testimonios personales y como Cristo cambio sus vidas.

Además de predicar cada noche, los oradores predicaron el sábado por la mañana en el gimnasio de la iglesia para el programa principal de youth worship, que incluye jóvenes de todo el área, que se toma acabo el último sábado de cada mes. Más de 200 jóvenes se reunieron el sábado por la mañana para escuchar la palabra de Dios. La mayoría de esos jóvenes se quedaron para almorzar y convivir juntos un poco.

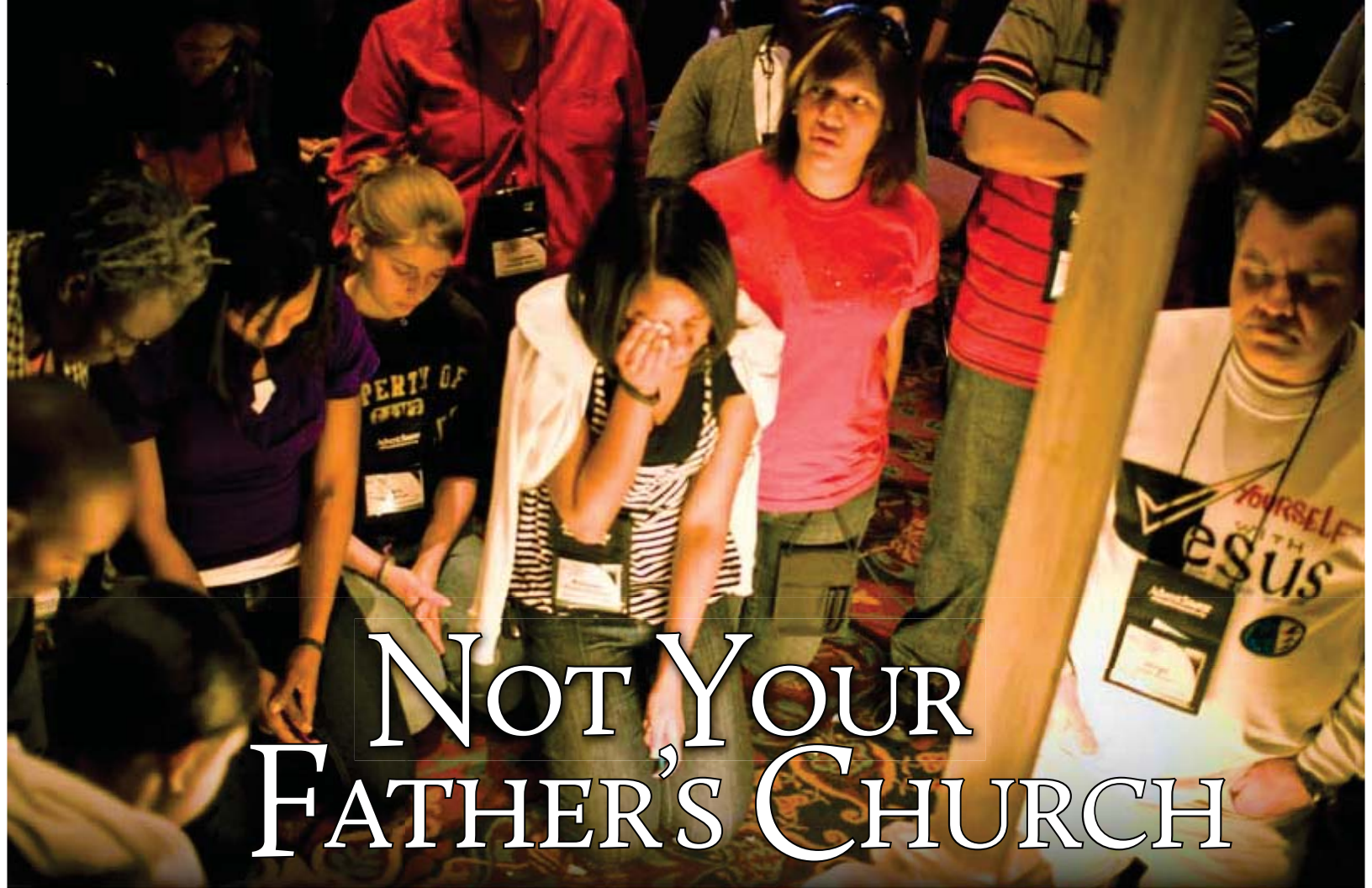
El sábado por la tarde, los oradores dieron seminarios en ingles y español sobre "como tener devocional personal" y "evangelismo personal" para entrenar y motivar a los jóvenes a tener una relación más estrecha con Cristo y también a compartir con otros el evangelio, que es nuestro propósito como Adventistas. El tema final se llevo a cabo el sábado por la tarde durante la sociedad de jóvenes. Sixto Ramos, Jr., tuvo el tema final e hizo un llamado, donde varios jóvenes respondieron. Una joven en particular, fue tocada por el Espíritu Santo esa tarde. Ella nunca había venido a la iglesia pero decidió venir esa tarde y fue impactada grandemente. Ella ha comunicado que quiere estudios bíblicos. Concluyo este evento con un social en el gimnasio. Los jóvenes jugaron baloncesto y voleibol. Los jóvenes de la iglesia disfrutaron mucho de las predicaciones y los seminarios de este fin de semana. Mostraron un deseo de aprender más de lo que Dios espera de ellos.

La visión que la Iglesia Adventista Hispana de Keene y el cuerpo pastoral tiene para Youth Worship, es entrenar y educar a los jóvenes de la importancia de tener una relación íntima con Jesús por medio del estudio de la biblia, y la oración.



Foto de arriba: Arnoldo Cervantes dando un seminario el sábado por la tarde sobre evangelismo personal.

Sobre estas líneas: Sixto Ramos dando un seminario a los jóvenes sobre como tener devociones personal.



NOT YOUR FATHER'S CHURCH

Teens and Young Adults gather together in prayer "at the foot of the cross" during IGNITION in Dallas, Tex. More than 2,000 attended the four-day event.

Manny Cruz

"It hit me right there and then. We as a church are doing the same youth ministry that we did 50 years ago! With so many of our youth and young adults leaving the church, something needs to change."

I love spending time with my parents and listening to their stories about how it was when they were growing up. I especially enjoy when my father shares his experiences as a teenager growing up in Mexico. Whenever my parents and I share stories, we always end up talking about church and God. One of the things they always say to me is, "Son, things are not the way they used to be. Times have changed." You see, my parents are very traditional. They enjoy church just the way it is and the way it has been for the last 50 years. And that's OK.

A few years ago I was visiting my parents, and on Sabbath my mother asked me to accompany her to AYS[1] at her church. As I sat through what I felt was a very boring 90 minutes (and this was supposed to be a youth program!), I noticed that there were not very many youth or young adults attending. When the program was over, as we were leaving the church, my mother said to me,

"That was a great AYS program, it reminded me of my teenage years—the AY songs, the morning watch, everything— just like it was back then." I then asked my mother, "Are these the same songs you used to sing?" "Yes," she responded. "Are these the same things you all used to do?" Again, she said yes. It hit me right there and then. We as a church are doing the same youth ministry that we did 50 years ago! Something needs to change.

I think that one reason our youth and young adults leave the church is that the church has become irrelevant to them. Whether or not you agree with this statement, the reality is that young people leave the church. In several places around the North American Division territory, including the Southwestern Union, youth and young adults continue to leave the church. This is not good news; however, I am thankful to God, because I am seeing more and more churches and church leaders doing something about

the problem instead of just talking about it. I am also extremely encouraged, because as I travel around the U.S., Canada, and Bermuda, I see that not all young people are leaving the church. Some have stayed. Here are just a few examples:

Home Makeover Project

Until a couple years ago, the youth/young adult program at the Arizona camp meeting was the same ol' thing. Then someone came up with the idea of going into the community and helping out someone in need. So the Arizona Youth Camp Meeting team combined forces with the City of Prescott, Ariz., during the week of June 11-19, to reach out to a woman named Mari, who had lost her teenage son in 2007. Mari is a big advocate for reaching troubled teens in her community, but she had not had a group of teens at her home since her son Kendall passed away. God connected our group of Adventist youth with a woman who needed love and a little help with her home. Each year the youth/young adults and their Home Makeover Project are featured during the adult camp meeting. You can watch the story on video here <http://www.adventistyouthspace.com/video/2011-arizona-home-makeover-documentary>

Adventist Competitor in World Triathlon

One ministry that continues to grow and is mostly led by young adults is Adventist Christian Fellowship (ACF). This is a ministry for students on secular colleges and universities. One amazing story is that of Christine Wallace. She came to Christ through the witness of Adventist students at York University in Toronto, Canada. Now God is using her to witness through the Adventist healthy lifestyle as a qualifier for the Woman's World Triathlon to influence others for Christ. The Pioneer Memorial church has asked this young adult to lead their health ministry. You can read her full story here: http://gallery.mailchimp.com/7ae0ea6bef9ab5c68076333if/files/Being_All_That_We_Can_Be.pdf

GODencounters

Another excellent ministry by young adults is GODencounters (www.godencounters.org). Launched in 2002 by Allan Martin, NAD Young Adult Ministries coordinator, GODencounters aims to deepen devotion to Jesus by developing disciples, walking recklessly in His footsteps. Thousands of young adults in North America have attended the GODencounters conferences and many have become God followers through this ministry. When I attend these gatherings, I get excited to see young adults leading and actively participating in their local church.

IGNITION

IGNITION is the North American Division's ministry for young adults. "Fueled by worship," "ignited to disciple," "spark-

ing a revolution," IGNITION focuses on young adult leadership development with experiences, training, worship, and intensives intended to equip and empower young adults. IGNITION is sponsored by the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists [NAD], and endorsed by the NAD Young Adult Ministry Advisory [YAMA]: www.adventistyouthministries.org.

Social Media

Using social media, young adults are constantly connecting and sharing Jesus with their friends. Prayer requests, news, words of encouragement, thoughts for the day, etc., are constantly posted in real time. Our own Adventist Youth Space, which has over 6,000 members, and PC Jovenes (Spanish) with over 15,000 members, are ministry tools that Adventist youth/young adults are using to fellowship and create community as well as to witness for Christ. Imagine this "online church" with over 21,000 members. You can access it here: www.AdventistYouthSpace.com.

Relevant Worship

The YG church in Arlington, Tex., is a wonderful example of what young adults can and will do as church leaders. When I have visited this church, I am encouraged to see a thriving congregation that is targeting the "Younger Generation" and reaching many for the Kingdom of God. The ministry style that is carried out may differ from what I would call a "traditional" church; however the message is as Adventist as it can get. I applaud the leadership of the Arlington church and many other churches across our division who continue to offer opportunities for youth/young adults to carry out their God-given ministries, whether they are "traditional" or not.


Generation of Youth for Christ

With a more traditional approach to worship and training, GYC's annual convention gathers young adults from around the world to focus on evangelism and door-to-door witnessing. Completely run by youth and young adults, the convention is a wonderful four-day event. Visit <http://gycweb.org/>.

Why are some youth/young adults NOT leaving the church? What is it that makes them stay? I would like to suggest that it is because they feel they are a part of the church. In other words, the church they attend has made them feel welcome, loved, and appreciated and has included them in the activities and ministries of the church. How are youth/young adults involved in *your* church?

Manny Cruz is associate director of the North American Division Youth Ministries Department.

[1] AYS – (Adventist Youth Society) a youth program typically held on Friday night or Sabbath afternoon



YOUTH MINISTRY TODAY

Teens pray during a Spanish youth rally at Tulsa Adventist Academy.

Geraldo Alonso II

“If the purpose of youth ministry were to be entertainment, there is no way that we could compete with the world. If we are to be successful at keeping our youth in the church, it is essential that we start following the teachings of the Bible.”

Where are we with youth ministry? It seems as though the Seventh-day Adventist Church is struggling to keep our youth engaged. Statistics indicate that as many as 80 percent of our youth will leave the church upon graduating from high school or reaching their 18th birthday. Why are we struggling to keep them engaged? In years past the approach to youth ministry has been entertainment. However, I believe this idea has done more harm than good. Youth ministers and leaders believed that pizza parties, movie nights, and entertainment were enough to keep youth in the church. It was believed that program-

ming had to have all sorts of entertainment or the youth would not show up and engage in a Christian walk.

It is true that we have to make things fun for our youth because, let's face it, otherwise the youth will not show up. However, as one of my mentors shared with me, we as youth ministers have to be entertaining but we cannot and should not be entertainment. If you analyze this statement, you see that it is very profound and it can lead to some dilemmas. The question arises, How are we supposed to balance being entertaining and not being entertainment? (This you will have to pray about earnestly and ask the Holy Spirit

to guide you.)

As youth leaders we are to give the youth everything that they need to become Christian young men and women. If we do not do this work as youth ministers/leaders/mentors, there is no difference between us and the rest of the world. Our work in youth ministry is of the utmost importance, because we are not the only ones working to win our youth. That is why the Bible tells us, "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms" (Ephesians 6:12, NIV).

If the purpose of youth ministry were to be entertainment, there is no way that we could compete with the world. Consider what Jesus Himself tells us when He says, "Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it" (Matthew 7:13-14, NIV). If we spend the majority of our time being entertainment, then we are leading our youth down a path of destruction.

So what are we supposed to do instead? The answer is not easy, neither is there just one answer, nor is there only one plan of action, because the reality is that every youth group is different. Just as every church is different, each youth group has its own unique makeup. To figure out what we are supposed to be doing with our youth takes much prayer and time with God, because things are constantly changing with our youth.

However, there are four things the Bible mentions as be-

ing essential for any group of likeminded Christians. After Jesus ascended to heaven and the Holy Spirit was poured out on the Apostles, something incredible occurred. On the day of Pentecost 3,000 individuals accepted Jesus following the sermon that Peter preached. At this point in history I imagine the question arose, "Now what do we do?"

This is probably the same question many of you have been asking as youth ministers and leaders. *Now what do we do with our youth?*

If we are to be successful at keeping our youth in the church, it is essential that we start following the teachings of the Bible. Shortly after the 3,000 were baptized we are told, "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer" (Acts 2:42, NIV).

Teach Them the Bible

We need to have our youth exposed to the Bible and the teachings found within. For years it was thought that if we kept our youth entertained they would stay in the church. This has not worked and it is now time to give our youth a firm foundation in the things of God. Matthew Hargett, 3rd & 4th grade teacher at Tulsa Adventist Academy, has taken on the challenge trying to give his students a firm foundation. Hargett uses every opportunity he can to share Bible promises that are applicable to his students. This instruction goes beyond classroom devotionals and Bible class.





Encourage Fellowship

The next component to a successful youth group is to encourage fellowship. True fellowship is that moment beyond which conversations are superficial, but it is also past that moment when vulnerability is present. It's when we are able to share with one another what is really going on in our lives without the fear of gossip. Fellowship helps us share with one another and to encourage each other to trust God. This is extremely important because our youth are well connected with the world (i.e. Facebook, Twitter, etc.) but often they lack real, substantive, healthy and structured relationships that lead to God.

During our Oklahoma Camp Meeting the Earliteen Division made sure to encourage fellowship with all the teens who came to the meetings. Pastors Kevin Bruce, Stephen Carlile and Ryan Neill incorporated time into their program for "Hot Topic" discussions. During this time they encouraged the youth to text message their questions to the pastors and then they would give them Christ-centered and Bible-based answers. This allowed the youth to be honest with each other and many made up their minds to stand up for God. The best part of this fellowship is that the pastors connected with the youth so that the youth knew they were in a safe place.

Break Bread Together

The third element will help with fellowship but it is also important in that it goes beyond fellowship. "Breaking bread" involves more than eating together; it meets the needs of those you are

eating with. At my church in Muskogee we have been struggling to keep our youth engaged in Sabbath School. To get our youth coming to Sabbath School we are going to try breaking bread together. Many of the youth say they are hungry when they are at church, so we will try to satisfy their needs and give them a pastry/baked good and orange juice. While the youth are eating, we are going to try to encourage fellowship and not spend this time passively. We will be utilizing every moment the youth are in church to get them engaged in a Christ-centered walk.

Pray

The final piece to a successful youth group is prayer. It is said that the average American spends about one minute in prayer a week. It is also said that the average pastor spends about one minute and a half in prayer per week. Notice that the key word in both these statements is average. Some might be praying more, but some might also be praying less. It seems to me that one of the difficult challenges we have as Christians is that we do not pray enough. I honestly believe that if we can teach our youth to pray and get them praying, it will dramatically change the landscape of our church.

During our summer camp at Wewoka Woods this past summer, all the staff intentionally incorporated prayer into everything they did. The counselors would pray with their kids in the mornings and evenings. After raising and lowering the flag on the parade ground each unit of campers would pray together. Praying was an

integral part of the summer camp program. On one occasion we saw some severe storms producing strong winds, hail and having the potential to produce tornadoes. After noticing the possible threat, the summer camp staff along with the campers prayed for protection as these storms came towards us. We prayed that God's will be done and what occurred next was incredible! The storms broke up into two parts and traveled around us and once the storms passed us they connected together and continued their path. Everyone one of the staff and campers experienced God answering prayer!

It is hard to stomach the fact that 80 percent of our youth are leaving the church. It seems that some of the approaches we have tried in the past are not working. I pray that the Holy Spirit will continue to work on every church leader and youth leader to change this statistic. We are told by Ellen White that the youth and young people will be instrumental in bringing forth the Second Coming, so perhaps it is time to work harder to keep this demographic within the church.

Geraldo Alonso II is camp director for the Oklahoma Conference.



Stephen Carlile leading the earlieen class at the Oklahoma camp meeting.

A GENERATION OF YOUTH FOR CHRIST

Justin McNeilus, GYC president

On December 29, 2010, more than 7,000 young adults poured into Baltimore, Md., for Generation of Youth for Christ's (GYC) ninth annual conference. The theme, *No Turning Back*, was a challenge to young people to take a wholehearted stand for Christ without thought of going back to the world.

For four days, attendees are immersed in Bible study, prayer, and fellowship. Dozens of speakers share a wealth of information on topics that are relevant to young people. It's intense!

Yet one aspect of the conference stands out from the rest.

Every year we're told that the highlight of GYC is the outreach day. This provides an opportunity for attendees to not just listen, but to actually *go out* and share their faith. Four years ago, when GYC was last in Baltimore, we needed 29 buses to transport everyone for outreach. This year we initially planned for 50 buses in faith that we could fill them all.

As the conference neared, we began to re-

alize that 50 busses weren't going to be enough and frantically began adding more. Ultimately we sent out 72 busses with more than 3,000 young people!

In two hours, 80,000 pieces of literature were distributed to nearly 40,000 homes. We prayed with more than 2,000 people at the door, and received 1,500 requests for Bible studies!

It's evident that young people are eager for the opportunity to be active in ministry. Even when we had the conference in Minnesota—in December!—the young people still went out door-to-door!

The enthusiasm is infectious.

A girl from Scotland came to GYC this past year but didn't want

to do outreach. A friend convinced her to try it and she had an amazing experience. She went home to Scotland and organized her church to go out door-to-door every week!

And she's not alone. More than 40 countries were represented at our 2010 conference and there's a steady stream of similar reports from around the world: a young person encounters God at this event called GYC, He changes

their life, and they return home to their church where they begin working for Him.

One young man told me that some friends from his church had gone to GYC the year before and when they came back he saw the change in their lives. Now he was there at GYC because he wanted that same experience and to experience change in his own life.

Not only are attendees impacted by this event, but the cities that host it are too.

When we returned to Baltimore this past year, we discovered that several of the church members we were working with to coordinate outreach had become Adventists



Alden J. Ho Photography



Alden J. Ho Photography

through GYC attendees knocking on their doors back in 2006 during our conference in Baltimore!

This has been the story of GYC from the start. The initial conference was organized by a handful of college students who used their parents' credit cards to rent a facility. Completely uncertain of what to expect, the attendance that first year far exceeded what they'd imagined.

It was apparent that this was bigger than a group of students, the attendees, or the event itself—God was at work.

Every year we've been "blown away" by the ways that God uses the conference to change lives.

This year's theme, *Fill Me*, is an individual prayer for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Yet as God's people, our individual prayers rise to heaven as a single plea—*Our Earnest Plea*.

The potential is huge.

God desires to pour upon His people the early and latter rains. Jesus said, "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!" (Luke 11:13). Indeed, "the Spirit awaits our demand and reception." "It is the privilege of the church to have it now," and we are counseled



© Alden J. Ho Photography

to "seek for it, pray for it, believe for it."

That's exactly what we're doing.

We're gathering in one place, with one purpose: to pray—to plead—for the Holy Spirit. The focus isn't on the outward, but on the heart.

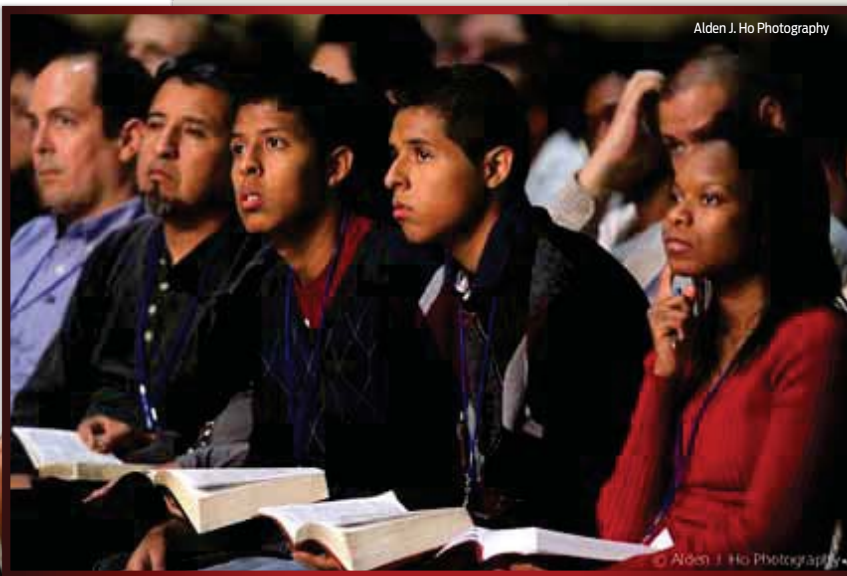
If there is one GYC conference to go to, this is the one.

Join thousands of other young people in Houston, Tex., from December 28, 2011 to January 1, 2012 to seek to understand, desire, experience, and share the gift of the Holy Spirit. Speakers include Dwight Nelson, Mark Finley, Stephen Bohr, Sebastian Braxton, Doug Batchelor, and more.

For additional details, promotional materials, bulletin inserts, pricing, or to register, please visit www.gycweb.org.

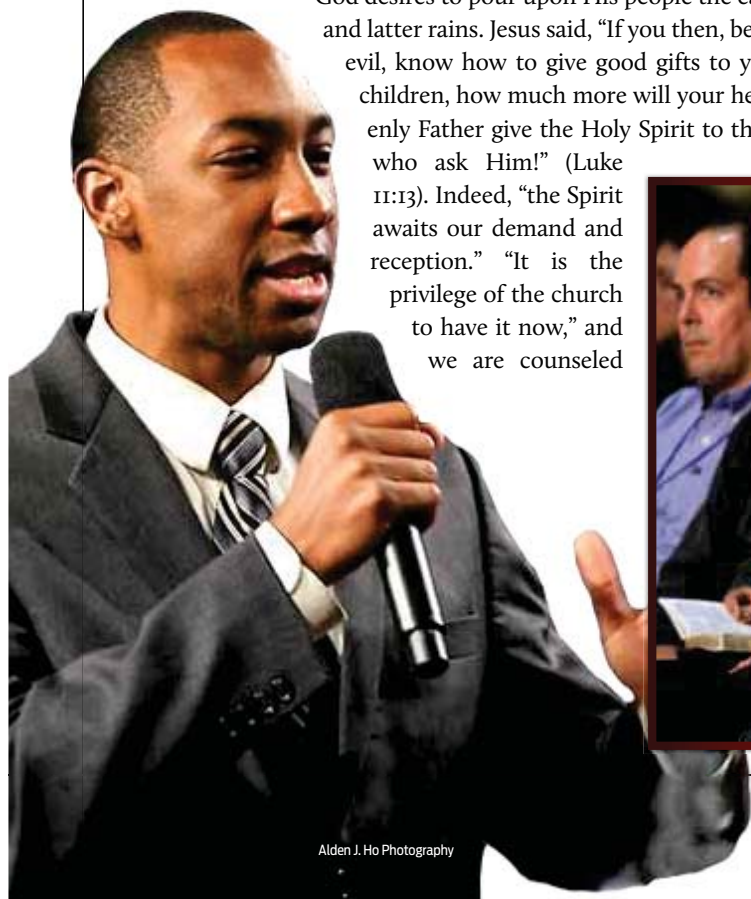
"Could there be a convocation of all the churches of earth, the object of their united cry should be for the Holy Spirit." (2 Manuscript Release, p. 24). Generation of Youth for Christ 2011 will be such a convocation. *Fill Me: Our Earnest Plea*.

More than 7,000 young people from over 40 countries attended the GYC meetings in Baltimore, Md., in 2010.



Alden J. Ho Photography

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Youth Making a Difference



ARKANSAS-LOUISIANA CONFERENCE

Recently I have observed something that has brought me a great deal of satisfaction and happiness. It has to do with a spirit and attitude that I have seen exhibited time and again in the lives of so many of our young people. While so many have been quick to criticize and to minimize the potential for young people to bring transformation to the lives of others, it has been gratifying for me to witness young people who defy the negative sentiments that are so popular today.

Our young people today *are* making a difference. Some are shy, some just need a little encouragement, and some need guidance and instruction, but I have found that when someone has stepped in to provide the guidance and encouragement, the youth will step up to the challenge and

then meet—or exceed—expectations! I witnessed this in a most dramatic way this past March when 15 students from Ozark Adventist Academy and 12 students from Sandia View Academy went together to the Philippines to conduct evangelistic meetings. I cannot begin to express to you how thankful and proud I was of our students. They did an absolutely incredible job of preaching and interacting with the local people.

Initial estimates by local church leadership indicated that there would be 200 baptisms from the 20 evangelistic sites. However, at the end of the mass baptismal service, we all rejoiced at the 310 baptisms! As I visited later with the local conference leadership, they expressed how pleased they were with, not only the numbers of those baptized, but that so many of those

baptized were young people. They said to me, “It was your young people that influenced other young people to make their decision to be baptized. Our pastors could not have accomplished this.”

Then they added this commentary. “What this has taught us is that we need to utilize our young people just like you have, and train them, and put them to work in evangelism! They will be the ones who connect with other young people just like your young people did!” Yes, there are those who will choose not to be involved. Yet I believe the majority will respond to use their God-given talents, if we will just create for them the opportunities. They will make (and are making) a difference!

Steve Orian, president

God Knows Your Name

ARKLA Women’s Conference and Retreat

“We are ordinary women with an extraordinary walk with Jesus”

September 30 – October 2, 2011

Camp Yorktown Bay Conference Center

361 Camp Yorktown Lane

Mountain Pine, AR 71956

Cost for this event: \$95.00

The cost includes five wonderful vegetarian meals and two nights lodging in air-conditioned cabins.

Travel to and from conference is not included. Visit www.GodKnowsYourName.org to print registration form and mail to Melody Rodde, Women’s Ministries director, P.O. Box 8106, Springdale, AR 72764. Call 479.283.7537 or e-mail mldyrd@aol.com.



You won’t want to miss the line-up of very powerful speakers! Check out the Web site for more information about the seminars and speakers.

Family Enrichment Weekend

November 11-12, 2011

Bonnerdale Seventh-day Adventist Church

709 Adventist Church Road

Bonnerdale, AR 71933

For more information, call June Bates: 501.865.3234

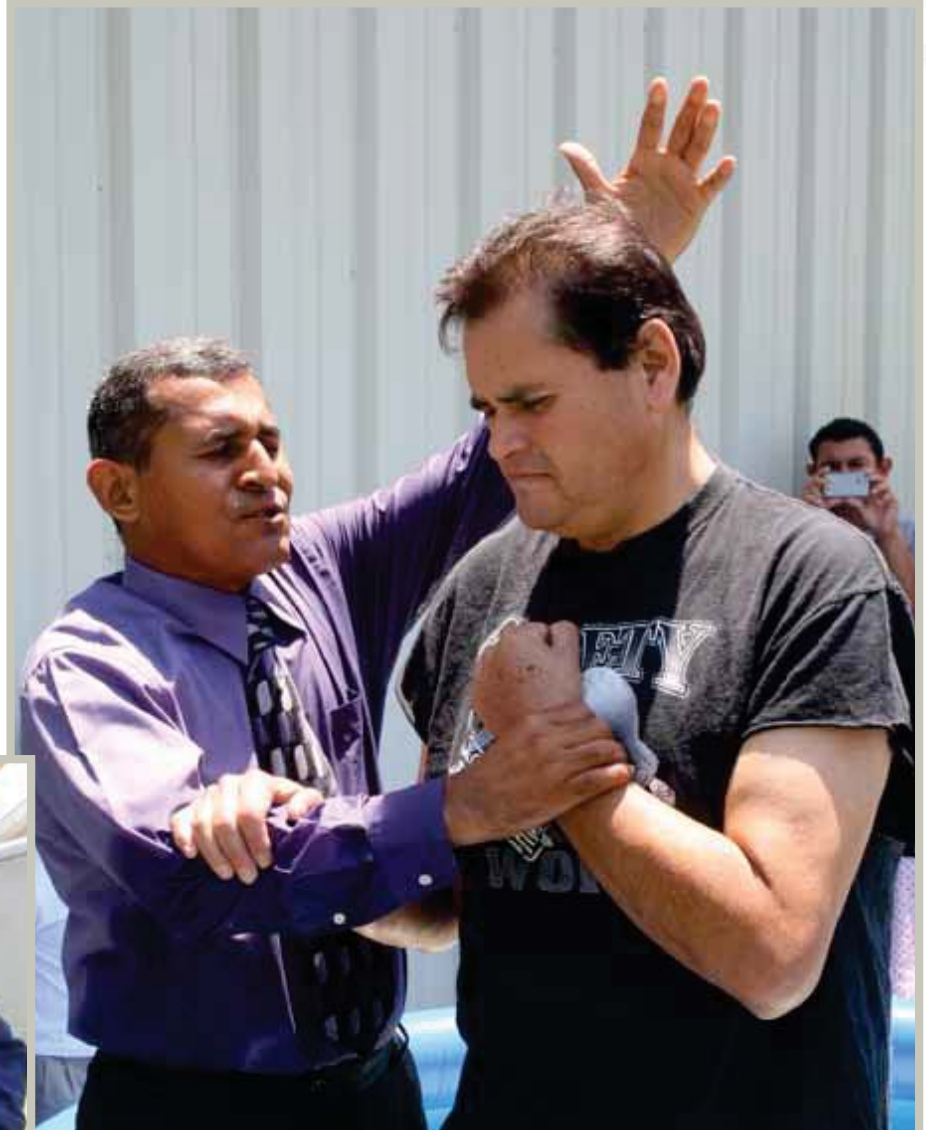


The speaker is Jeff Reich. Jeff Reich at one time said he would never be a Christian, but God had other ideas. At 18 years old, Jeff and his 16-year-old girlfriend, Christy, went into an evangelistic meeting to make fun of the evangelist. The Bible truths they heard provided answers to their questions and life for them would never be the same again! But cutting old ties was not easy. Two years later, Jeff and Christy were married and they decided to “get away from the old life completely.” They bought some “wilderness” property and began building a life together with God. Their goal was to establish some type of “outpost ministry,” which has become Laymen Ministries. Laymen Ministries produces programming for 3ABN and The Hope Channel, and broadcasts from South India, reaching 75 million people around Asia and the Pacific. Their bookstore ships materials all over the world, and the Laymen Ministries mission magazine reaches over 11,000 readers. Jeff also conducts seminars on communication between spouses, country living, missions, and practical Christianity.

Triple Play for South Louisiana Spanish Churches

BATON ROUGE » On May 1, Gerald Margil, pastor, started a series of three evangelistic meetings in his district with Salomon Espinoza, pastor/evangelist from Nicaragua. Baton Rouge Spanish was the first to reap the results on May 7, with seven baptisms. The small company at Larose followed a week-long series with four baptisms on May 14, and the week of May 21 ended with three more people being baptized in the church of Kenner. What a wonderful harvest! We thank God with all our hearts for the miracles and testimonies of those who were witnesses in this beautiful journey of faith.

Gerald Margil, pastor



Fourteen people were baptized as a result of evangelistic meetings in the Spanish districts of Baton Rouge, Larose, and Kenner.



Dallas Brazilian SDA Ensemble Performs at Bonnerdale

S-LOUISIANA CONFERENCE

BONNERDALE » On Sabbath, May 14, the Bonnerdale church was blessed with the music of the Dallas Brazilian SDA Ensemble. The ensemble provided special music for Sabbath School and church, giving members a taste of what was to come during the afternoon concert. The ensemble played such songs as “The Prayer,” “Pachelbel’s Canon,” and some selections from Michael W. Smith’s album, “Freedom.” Interspersed in their concert program were songs performed by the group, Faithful Trio. The Dallas Brazilian SDA Ensemble truly brought an added blessing through their music and their obvious passion for the Creator of music.

Amanda Meseraull



Faithful Trio (**right**) and the Dallas Brazilian Ensemble (**below**) blessed the members of the Bonnerdale, Ark., church with beautiful music.



Disaster Relief Team Helps Tornado Victims

BENTON » On Saturday, April 30, several members from the Benton church went to Conway, Ark., with the Disaster Relief Team to help victims of the tornados that had hit earlier in the week. We found a place that needed our help, as a sweet little

lady named “Ms. Pat” had several large trees down in her yard. Thankfully, the weather was nice and we were able to help get her yard passable. Before we left, she thanked us for our willingness to help a stranger and said that she would never forget “the

people in yellow.” The experience was very rewarding and reminds me that we should always be a witness for Christ and that we are called to be His hands and feet.

Francis Caple



Ms. Pat (center) with the group who helped clean up her yard.

Ten Children Dedicated at Pocahontas Church

POCAHONTAS » The Pocahontas, Ark., church seems to be growing by leaps and bounds—especially in the area of children. Praise the Lord! We have had three new baby boys, all born within a few months. However, we were pleasantly surprised to find that, in actuality, 10 children asked to be dedicated to the Lord. They ranged in age from six months to eight years old. Four families were represented in the dedication: The Scales family, with four-month-old Roland; the

Brandt family, with five-month-old Ka-

son; the Borreson-Todd family, with five children, including six-month-old Jaxon; and the Berry family, with three children. The Pocahontas church is blessed with a quiver full of arrows from the Lord.

Elaine Denton-Jones



Baby dedication at Pocahontas church: Johnnie and Elizabeth Scales, Roland Scales; Sarah Brandt, Kason Brandt; Chris Borreson and Donya Todd, James, Joseph, Jaylin, Jessamin, and Jaxon; Anora Berry, Hannah, Larissa, and Jace.

Help Them Go for the Gold

Do your children, youth, and young adults have the knowledge and education necessary to confidently share with their neighbors what they believe and why?

Young people often leave the church because of an internal struggle for meaning and truth. Many young adults are trying to figure out what it really means to be a Seventh-day Adventist, and often find it hard to fit into their local congregation.

They are challenged when comparing the growth that some non-denominational churches exhibit, with what can seem like meager successes in soul winning in our own churches. These mega churches offer a chance to blend in and disappear, while youth might feel ill-fitted when they walk into a smaller Adventist church. But often the eyes that make the comparisons look through distorted lenses.

A mature Adventist might view their church as bricks of pure gold—brilliant in luster, heavy in weight, and extremely valuable. In comparison, other churches take on the appearance of a colorful candy store. To mature eyes these may appear to have lots of fun and sweetness, yet lack nutritional value. But

through the distorted lens of so many of our young people, the view is much different.

Comparatively, the candy store is vibrant and inviting, the taste is sweet, and the attraction undeniable. However, when young eyes look at the local congregation through distorted lenses, they see what they've been *told* is gold. But over time, they have perceived it to be fake and ingenuous, like fools' gold. They don't see the value because they have never tested the gold for themselves and discovered how pure and true it really is. We cannot expect them to accept on our authority alone that it is indeed real.

We want to see our young people draw closer to Christ. We want them to stay and grow and become leaders in our own congregations. In order for this to happen consistently we need to help the young people remove their distorted lenses. The local congregation needs to find ways for the young people to not just attend, but to belong. Handshakes and hugs are wonderful, but there must be a deeper connection to capture the hearts of our young people.

We must create opportunities for our young people to "taste and see" that the Lord is good. Without personal study and experience, they can't make educated decisions on

where they would rather be. Let's find ways to empower young people to preach, share, witness, and serve. Let's challenge them with Bible study. Let them test the gold for themselves. Then they will be able to discern the truth from the error. Rather than going for the temporary sweetness, they will go for the gold that lasts forever.

Here is a challenge and hopefully the beginning of a solution for your local congregation. Begin to develop a program where every young person has someone other than a parent who is advocating for them individually looking out for the young person's best interests and looking for signs of spiritual fatigue. They can point the way to others that can be of assistance for challenges the advocate may not be equipped for. The advocate should challenge their knowledge, ask questions, and stay involved. If advocates are prayerful and real, their care and love should be more than enough to show youth and young adults how valuable they are and engage them to grasp the beauty of what we hold true.

The great hope is that one day you will be standing in heaven with the young person you took interest in, and you will enjoy the fruits of your labor and walk together on streets of gold.

Richard Castillo, Oklahoma youth/young adult ministries

Tillie Christensen Named "Ms. Senior Broken Arrow, Oklahoma"

BROKEN ARROW » When 91-year-old Tillie Christensen opens a conversation with the question "Did you know I was a war bride?" you know you are going to hear some interesting stories about her young life in war-torn London during World War II. While teenagers in America were still able to safely learn the latest dance steps and the names of the newest "crooners," Tillie and her friends were trying to remember the number of steps to the nearest bomb shelter and naming bombs by the sounds made as they dropped from the sky. It seems that everyone in town recognized and feared the "umbrella bomb," as it was called, because it held four bombs that dispersed in different directions upon landing. Tillie tells about the day that they

couldn't easily locate the fourth bomb, but it was later found in the rain barrel in her parent's backyard. She blushes still as she tells of the handsome young American soldier that swept her off her feet, and that is how Tillie, born into the Jewish faith in London, became the bride of a young Seventh-day Adventist stationed in London.

Tillie has four children and spends her time visiting with them and vacationing during the winter at her home in Texas. However, she does consider Broken Arrow her home now and she lives on a ranch with her daughter, Barbara, and son-in-law, Clayton Calvert, our pastor. We are always sad to see Tillie take off on one of her trips and rejoice when she returns. We look forward to many more stories from

Ninety-one-year-old Tillie Christensen was recently named Ms. Senior Broken Arrow, Oklahoma. She was presented with flowers by the winner of the Miss Broken Arrow pageant.

the "blushing war bride."

Recently, Tillie was named Ms. Senior Broken Arrow, Oklahoma. Not only is she a beautiful lady, but she has a beautiful contagious Christ-like spirit that draws everyone to her.



Judy Marquette

Oklahoma Youth Trained for Service

WEWOKA » In the book *A Call to Stand Apart*, page 65, Ellen White makes this statement: “There are many lines in which the youth can find opportunity for helpful effort. Let them organize into bands for Christian service, and the cooperation will prove an assistance and an encouragement. Parents and teachers, by taking an interest in the work of the young people, will be able to give them the benefit of their own larger experience, and can help them to make their efforts effective for good.”

Each year, youth ages 16 to 18 come to Wewoka Woods Adventist Center for camp meeting. In addition to the standard offering of Bible study and worship services, the youth class has the opportunity to partici-

pate in another “line . . . of Christian service.” For the past three years, the youth have worked in Seminole on different projects to improve the community. This year, two pastors, James Bokovoy and Jim Landelius, chose one of the city parks in a predominantly Native American neighborhood to repaint.

Each morning, the group would leave around 7:15 to beat the sweltering heat that hovers over most of the Southwestern Union during the summer months. Armed with rollers, paintbrushes, and 15 gallons of paint, the youth repainted Jim Magurie park in its original red, white, and blue theme.

The community projects are sponsored each year by the Native Ministries Department of the Oklahoma Conference. There are several Native American tribes represented in Seminole and the hope is to make friends to benefit evangelistic efforts held

in the city. While the group has received thanks every year for the projects they have completed, including an official letter from the Public Works manager in 2009, this year the city re-dedicated the park in a short ceremony (due to 100+ temperatures) that included the mayor, city council representatives, and other city officials. A certificate of appreciation was given by Seminole mayor Chayne Fisher to James Bokovoy, who is in charge of the community service portion of the youth program at camp meeting.

The mayor told us at the meeting that many residents of the city wanted to know who the young people were who were restoring the park in such hot weather. On one day, from one of the houses, a small group of children shouted, “Thank you!” as the group painted.

While preaching, teaching, and Bible studies will always be a significant aspect of reaching out to people, the youth at the Oklahoma camp meeting are being taught that there are other “lines of Christian service” that can reach people, as well.

Jim Landelius, Oklahoma Camp Meeting Youth class leader



The youth class at the Oklahoma camp meeting took paint brushes, rollers, and 15 gallons of paint and spruced up the Jim Magurie Playground in Seminole. This kind act brought recognition from the mayor of Seminole during a re-dedication ceremony with city officials at the park.



▲ Before | After ▲

An Action-packed VBS!

OKLAHOMA CONFERENCE

WOODWARD » The evening of July 5 was “action-packed” as Vacation Bible School opened at the Woodward church and we welcomed 60 children to the program! Our church had been wanting to have a VBS program for several years but as with many things, the plans were laid aside. That is, until this year when our church had an awesome opportunity for the “Natives With A Mission” (NWAM) VBS team to come and present a vibrant, Spirit-filled, energetic nightly program for the Woodward community.

Each night 50-60 very excited kids came to see what the team had in store for them. I saw so many smiles on the children’s faces as they sang, played games, listened to puppet skits and Bible stories, and did their craft each night. It was such a blessing to our church members to see the great potential for children’s ministry in our community! It was truly a breath of fresh air to

see so many of God’s special young people come eagerly each night to learn a variety of Bible stories, such as the Prodigal Son, Noah, Jonah, and Esther.

We want to extend a very special thank-you to Troy and Ana Hicks and their awesome team for allowing God to use them in our community and church. The Woodward community has a large representation of Native Americans and it was a real treat for the NWAM team to minister to our Native American community here in northwest Oklahoma. The kids truly bonded with this team and begged them to come back next year!

July 9 was a very special Sabbath as we closed the VBS program and saw many of the children’s parents come to Sabbath School and church to witness the impact that NWAM made on their children the previous week. Many thanks to all those who were responsible for allowing

our church to be blessed by their ministry!

Rick and Cindy Mercer



Sixty children eagerly attended a VBS program with a Native American flavor at the Woodward church this past summer.



She Went to **Bless** Others, But Was **Blessed** Instead

BROKEN ARROW » Often we think of the blessings our missionaries bring to those that hear the good news. But many times, those who are bringing the message receive as great, if not a greater blessing, than those who receive it. According to the testimony of Broken Arrow member Honey Caranzo, daughter of Sonny and Christy Harmon, that is exactly what happened on her mission trip to the Philippines. Honey says that she intended to have a lot of fun with her friends and that the spiritual side was not as important—that is, until she actually interacted with the people there. It has been so inspirational to see the change in Honey as she witnesses to her fellow church members. She is now trying to find

space in another upcoming mission trip and plans to spend a year on various mission trips after college graduation. When Honey returned from the Philippines, she organized and executed the Sabbath-morning program with the participation of our youth. Honey gave an inspirational sermon and the congregation was truly blessed. Honey graciously wrote a report about her recent mission trip experience, which follows:

“On March 10 around 4 a.m., 15 kids and two adults boarded an Ozark Adventist Academy shuttle. We were on our way to the Northwest Arkansas airport and one step closer to our destination, the Philippines. This mission trip was a collabora-

tion between Ozark Adventist Academy, Sandia View Academy, and ShareHim. We had nine preachers and six assistants from OAA. Every day we diligently practiced our sermons three or more times a day. Then, around four in the afternoon, our drivers would pick us up to take us to our own churches.

“The moment I set foot in my church I felt a sense of fear. I was actually going to be preaching! It dawned on me that this was really a mission trip and not a vacation. I realized that I couldn’t do this alone, so I prayed diligently each night. It was amazing to see how God used 15 teens to preach His Word.

“It was obvious to see God was working in the hearts of the Philippino people. The conference preachers told us to expect 200 baptisms, maybe even less. However, on baptismal day, after a seemingly endless amount of people being reborn for Christ, the total number baptized amounted to 310.

“Regardless of your age, race, or gender, God can use you. Even if you feel you are not capable, God can equip you with the capability, if you are willing.”

Judy Marquette

Honey Caranzo, third row, fourth from left, with those who were baptized as a result of Honey’s evangelistic meetings in the Philippines.



LEGAL NOTICE

Oklahoma Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

Notice is hereby given that the Constitution and Bylaws Committee of the Oklahoma Conference of Seventh-day Adventists will meet on Sunday, October 16, 2011 at 10:00 a.m. at the Oklahoma Conference Office, located at 4735 NW 63rd Street, Oklahoma City, OK.

Individuals desiring to make suggestions concerning the work of this committee should submit them in writing to Trevor W. Thompson, P.O. Box 32098, Oklahoma City, OK 73123, or by emailing to: twthompson@okla-adventist.org.

Trevor W. Thompson, Oklahoma Conference secretary

The TRE Factor



SOUTHWEST REGION CONFERENCE

I have heard leaders proudly proclaim that “The youth are the church of tomorrow.” But when is tomorrow going to come? The youth are ready now! We have been training and preparing them for over 60 years to lead triumphantly. However, we have not allowed them to lead. There is another myth prevalent in our worshipping communities that claims that only those who are 35 and older can lead. Oh, how far from the truth this could be. Many of our college and university graduates are given multibillion-dollar budgets to manage right out of school, yet they are held back until a particular age to lead in our churches.

I believe we must do three things. We must first trust the youth and young adults. We must trust this precious gospel to them. For far too long we have dangled the joys of the gospel in front of our youth and young adults. In order to finish this work, we need all hands on deck. “With an army of youth, rightly trained, *[and we have trained our youth well, with youth days, mis-*

sion trips, youth congresses, and weekly youth meetings in our local churches] how soon the message of a crucified, risen, and soon-coming Savior might be carried to the whole world!” (*Education*, p. 271). We must trust, that is, rely on the integrity, strength, ability, surety, etc., of our youth and young adults. Our church will die a slow death of relevance if we don’t trust our youth. Trust also means that the adults must be trustworthy also. What we say must be what we mean.

Another thing we must do is give responsibility to our youth and young adults. Expecting our youth and young adults to just watch us each week does nothing for their spiritual growth. Responsibility develops character. What better opportunity than to develop characters that are prepared for heaven. Responsibility develops confidence and courage. I am drawn to the story of David. This youth had the confidence and courage to meet the challenge of Goliath because of the responsibility given him. David’s ability to meet challenges was developed by his job of shepherding. Many

would say it was a lowly role, but look at the character it developed in David—King David.

Finally, I believe with the responsibility we must also give realistic expectations. Too many times we set up people to fail. We ask folks to fill positions they are not equipped or skilled for. Or maybe they fail because we don’t provide the resources necessary to fulfill the role successfully. When we engage our youth we need to provide the expectations we are looking for. This helps in developing a balanced Christian. When expectations are far out of reach, the individual is susceptible to developing low self-esteem and the inability to complete tasks.

To facilitate the swift spreading of the gospel, one may want to use the TRE factors: Trust, Responsibility, Realistic Expectations. Trying these may help to encourage our youth and young adults to stay engaged in their faith walk a little longer. Unless we engage our youth and young adults, we will lose them.

Samuel Green, president

Men of Memorial Church Honored

MANSFIELD, LA. » June 25 was a special day for the men of the Memorial church. To honor them, the ladies of the church prepared a special dinner. This past May, the men had prepared dinner for the ladies on Mother’s Day/Women’s Day.

The program was held after the regular Sabbath services. At the end of the church service, the men were directed to the multipurpose building next door, where they were to line up and wait to be escorted to their seats by one of the ladies. The married men were escorted by their wives, and when they arrived at their tables, each couple was asked to pose for a picture.

The women put a great deal of planning into the program, and it showed. From the detailed menu items that the men suggested, to the decorations, the serving, and the charge given by Sonja Polley, the women carefully executed every detail. At the microphone, women and children gave words of love and appreciation to their fathers,

husbands, and friends. The entire event was a beautiful display of love and appreciation.

Precious L. Fuller

The ladies of the Memorial church prepared a special dinner for the men on June 25.



COWBOY CAMP MEETING

Sept. 30-Oct 2
Lone Star Camp
6829 FM 317
Athens TX 75752
Bikers are
welcome!!



Adventurers Enjoy a “Sweet” Spring Camporee

ATHENS, TEX. » “Knowing Jesus is Sweet” was the theme of the Southwest Region Conference Adventurer Spring Camporee, held June 10-12 at Lone Star Camp. Nearly 60 Adventurers, Eager Beavers, Little Lambs, and their families gathered to enjoy camping, nature, worship, community outreach, and fun activities throughout the weekend. Friday’s activities kicked off with several Adventurers earning the Camper Award by assisting with their club’s campsite set-up. Afterward, they participated in several activities to earn the Honey Award, including learning how bees make honey,

creating a lap-book full of bee facts, and tasting several flavors of honey. Naturally, when the Adventurers tasted honey and wax directly from a honeycomb, many said that the honey was really, really sweet, which provided a perfect object lesson from Psalm 19:10, which says that God’s laws are even “sweeter than honey and the honeycomb.”

The lesson was highlighted with a field trip to the Athens Arboretum, where a professional beekeeper from the East Texas Beekeepers Association showed us an active beehive and further explained the honey-making process. Later, Adventurers explored the science of magnetism as they experimented with various magnetic and non-magnetic objects to earn the Magnets Award. With James 4:8 as the focus, they

learned that, like magnets of opposite polarity, if we draw close to God, He will draw close to us.

Sabbath activities consisted of the Adventurers sharing worship with the Pathfinders, marching in a one-mile parade through an Athens neighborhood, and singing songs, making prayer boxes, and dramatizing Bible stories as they earned two Bible awards. After sunset, the Adventurers had a blast at “WOW Time,” a camporee-syle carnival complete with games, rides, prizes, and food! Camporee concluded on Sunday as lead-

ers presented the Adventurers with their awards, gifts, and goody bags. Adventurers who attended the camporee will also receive a special patch to display on their class A uniforms.

Now that the camporee is over, area coordinators are planning the 2011 Adventurer Family Retreat, to be held September 16-18. For more details about the retreat, or to find out how to start an Adventurer, Eager Beaver, or Little Lamb club in your church, please contact the area coordinator in



Eager Beavers, Little Lambs and their families enjoyed a “sweet” time at the Adventurer Family Retreat held at Lone Star Camp in September.

your federation: Carl Birl (Ark-La-Tex) at hc828385@valomet.com; Gwen Williams (Capital Cities) at glwilliams@aldine.k12.tx.us; Janice Wilson (North Central Texas) at wilshenr818@aol.com; or Aleta Runnels (Oklahoma) at runnelsfamily@peoplepc.com.

Aleta Z. Runnels, Adventurer area coordinator, Oklahoma

Alvin Johnson Graduates From Eighth Grade

“Why would you send your child to a Seventh-day Adventist school for nine consecutive years and you’re not even a member of the church?”

BATON ROUGE » It began with kindergarten at the former Berean School nine years ago and ended with his eighth-grade graduation from what is now Berean Adventist Christian Academy this past May. Ordinarily, this would not be unusual—except that neither the graduate nor any of his family then or now is a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The obvious question then becomes “Why would you send your child to a Seventh-day Adventist school for nine consecutive years and you’re not even a member of the church?” The answer lies with the graduate’s grandfather, Alvin Johnson, for whom Alvin was named and with whom he resides.

Alvin’s mother, Ann Johnson, and her brother, Jonathan Davis, both attended Berean when the school was on South 14th Street, where it remained for 31 years. The late Lilburne Thompson was principal and her distinguished staff included “Sister Bruce” and Erma Williams. “I was so impressed with the education that my children received at Berean that I determined right then and there that when my grandson (Alvin) became school age, he would go to Berean,” said Grandfather Johnson. By the time little Alvin reached kindergarten age, the decision was made. He was going to Berean. However, unlike his mother and his uncle, little Alvin got to attend Berean School at its new location at 5100 Osborne. Cherrie Seales would serve as his first teacher and that year would set the pace for what would follow. This grandson of a staunch Baptist would return to Berean for the next eight years. “I wanted a good Christian education for Alvin, and that’s what I got. The public schools just couldn’t compete,” he proudly exclaimed. “I really enjoyed his receiving homework and that the homework was actually checked. I also liked the idea of my grandson beginning each day with God,” he continued.

Grandfather Alvin also made it a point to get involved in his grandson’s education at Berean, often donating and delivering pizzas for the students during Friday

lunch and running errands for the school. In fact, it was he who came to the students’ rescue when, in April of this past school term, they needed a van for transportation to Lone Star Camp for the annual outdoor school. “We could have rented a van; however, doing so would have increased the overhead expense for each student. But when Alvin’s grandfather learned of our dilemma, without hesitation, he offered his van,” reports Jerome Pondexter, Berean’s principal. “This was my grandson’s final year at Berean and I certainly wanted him (and the other students) to have this last opportunity to enjoy the experience,” echoed the elder Alvin.

Graduation was an emotional night for Alvin. Proudly strutting down one of Berean’s two center aisles, not only was he the lone male, but of the three, he had the distinction of having the longest tenure of any other recent Berean student. So it was only natural that he would begin the evening’s proceedings by reading Psalm 121:3, “He will not suffer thy foot to be moved. . .”

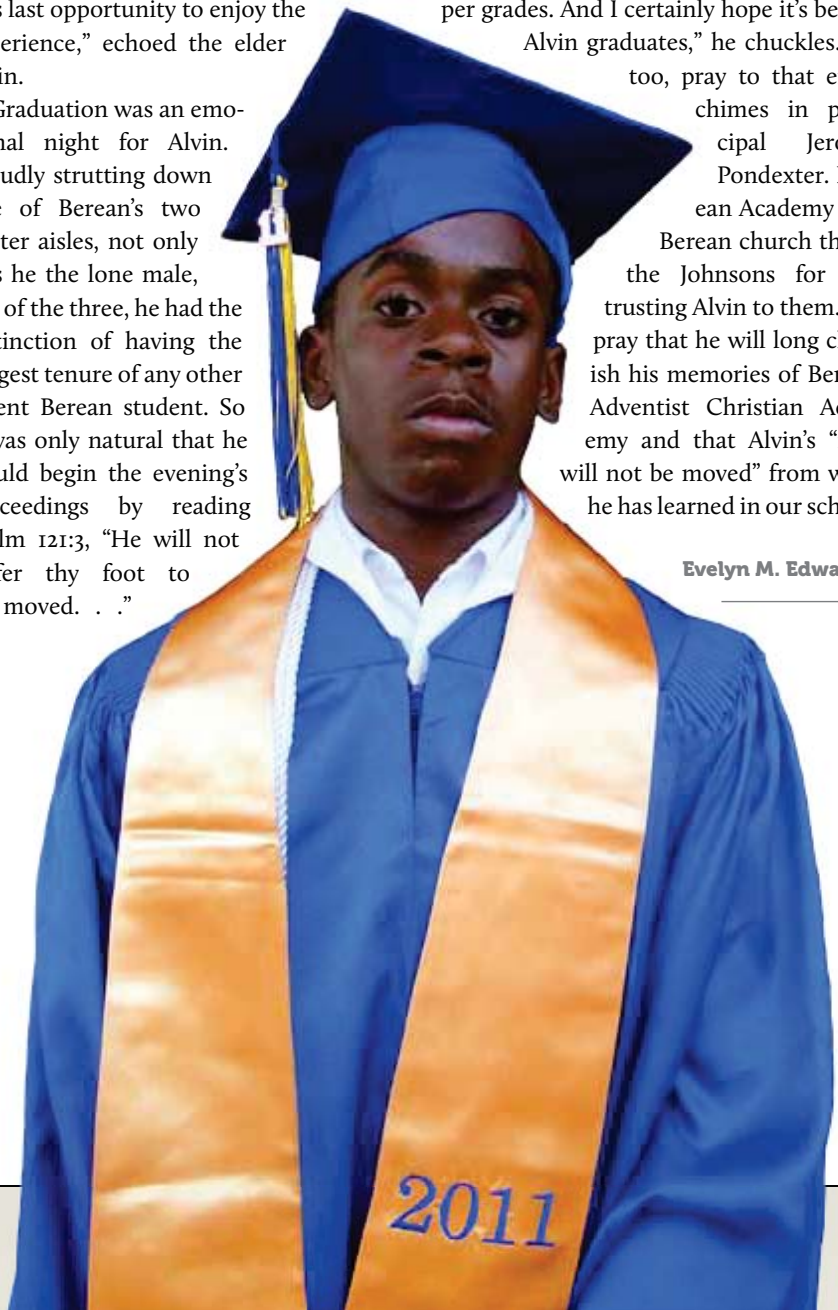
which was the scripture chosen for the occasion.

When school opens this fall, for the first time in his 13 years, Alvin will be attending a different school because Berean does not offer education beyond the eighth grade. However, his grandfather is determined that Alvin should continue the Christian education begun at Berean and has enrolled him in another Christian school. “It won’t have what Berean has, but at least he’ll be able to read his Bible and pray in school. I’m just looking forward to the day when Berean will once again have the upper grades. And I certainly hope it’s before

Alvin graduates,” he chuckles. “I, too, pray to that end,”

chimes in principal Jerome Pondexter. Berean Academy and Berean church thank the Johnsons for entrusting Alvin to them. We pray that he will long cherish his memories of Berean Adventist Christian Academy and that Alvin’s “foot will not be moved” from what he has learned in our school.

Evelyn M. Edwards



SWR Bible Bowl Championship

ATHENS, TEX. » An amazing, memorable event took place at the Southwest Region Bible Bowl Championship on June 20 on the campgrounds of Lone Star Camp. It wasn't during a game, it wasn't because of the number of participants or spectators, it wasn't even during those nail-biting close moments, although we had some of those. The memorable event took place during the awards ceremony when the Dallas City Temple church, representing the North Central Texas Federation, received the second runner-up trophy, and the Houston Hebron church, representing the Capitol Cities Federation, received the first runner-up trophy.

However, when the Mansfield Memorial church, representing the Ark-La-Tex Federation, came to receive their first-place championship trophy, they made a startling announcement. They asked that the first runner-up team from the Hebron church be allowed to represent the conference rather than themselves at the National Championship games to be held in October in Detroit, Mich. Maurice Turner, Southwest Region Bible Bowl coordinator, asked the Mansfield Memorial team again if they were sure, and they affirmed. When the Hebron team was asked if they would accept the offer, they said yes.

Such a selfless act has never been seen in a Bible Bowl in the Southwest Region and I would dare to say anywhere. This dem-

onstrated the true spirit of Bible Bowl and Christian camaraderie. These two teams played together at the All-star games held in April 2011 at the United Youth Congress and finished second runner-up together there. As a result, they became great friends and showed the utmost respect for one another. To give up a chance to go two years in a row as the conference champs and graciously concede to the first runner-up team showed true humility and love. Team captain Tim Fuller indicated how much they love and respect the Hebron team and said this was the way they wanted to show it.

Earlier that day Linda Thompson, captain of the Hebron team, told Maurice Turner that she loves this ministry so much that even if her team doesn't win the championship she will still go on to the nationals as a judge and to support the team that wins. And her faithfulness was rewarded. After this amazing announcement was made, Roger Wade, conference youth director, made another surprising announcement. He decided to reward Mansfield Memorial's selfless act by offering to pay half of their expenses for going to the nationals to support their friends and to serve as judges.

Three federations participated in this year's Bible Bowl Championship: Ark-La-Tex, Capitol Cities, and North Central Texas, representing seven churches. The final

results of the championship are as follows:

Pre-Junior Division (6-9 years old)

- Champion: Capitol Cities Houston Berean
- First Runner-up: Capitol Cities Houston Fondren
- Second Runner-up: North Central Texas, Killeen, New Hope

Junior Division (10-15 years old)

- Champion: North Central Texas, Dallas, City Temple
- First Runner-up: Capitol Cities, Houston, Berean

Senior Youth Division (16-22 years old)

- Champion: Capitol Cities Houston Berean
- First Runner-up: North Central Texas, Dallas, City Temple

Young Adult Division (23-35 years old)

- Champion: Capitol Cities, Austin Alpha
- First Runner-up: North Central Texas, Fort Worth, Forest Hill

Adult Division (36 years old and above)

- Champion: Ark-La-Tex, Mansfield Memorial
- First Runner-up: Capitol Cities, Houston, Hebron* (Will represent at national championship.)
- Second Runner-up: North Central Texas, Dallas, City Temple

For pictures of this event, follow this link: <http://ccyf.shutterfly.com/1107>.

If you've played Bible Bowl or coached Bible Bowl this year, you are welcome to join us at the nationals on October 21 and 22 as a judge or to help with logistics. If you're interested in joining us, or if your church would like a Bible Bowl demonstration during an AY program, contact Maurice Turner.

Maurice Turner

Adults from the Hebron church in Houston, Tex., and the Memorial church in Mansfield, La., competing at Southwest Region's Bible Bowl championship competition.



Affirming Our Camp Staff



TEXAS CONFERENCE

Camp is not a babysitting service. It is not a place for kids to simply be watched over.

It isn't a job you fall back on when other plans fall through. It has been my experience that many people consider what goes on at camp to be somewhat small, or even insignificant, but that misconception couldn't be further from the truth at Nameless Valley Ranch. Ministry is at the forefront of our minds as we seek out ways to share our love of Jesus with our campers. As a church we have seriously undervalued summer camp's full potential.

I want to change our perception of what goes on at camp. If people knew just how effective it is at ministering, our camps would be enormous and be made available to all who wanted to attend. Some of this may sound radical, but I truly believe in the hope of our youth. They will be leading the church one day. Shouldn't we do everything in our power to reach them, teach them, and prepare them?

A week before the campers come to camp, the staff comes together in preparation. This year, Devin Anavartare and I, the camp's programming directors, wanted

to share some things with the rest of the staff that had been bothering us for some time. Throughout the many years working at camp, we had been happy to ask many different staff members to return, yet it continues to break our hearts when they say, "No, I can't work at camp anymore; it is time for me to get a real job."

I understand that there is a time when people must move on and do other things in life, but more than the fact that they can't come back, it hurts that they somehow think that what they did at camp wasn't a "real" job.

That is why during our staff week this summer we wanted them to know that there is no higher calling than to share Jesus with someone. It is so very important that we change the perception of the summer camp ministry program, not only in our union, but in our entire church. Summer camp isn't just some place to have fun for a few weeks. It is more than just a safe place to send your youth. Summer camp is the place where many of us meet Jesus for the first time.

Nameless Valley Ranch just finished its summer camp session in July and our

theme was "The Love of the Guardian," which gave us the opportunity to ask a lot of questions, such as: What is love exactly? Why do we love? How do we love? and so on. We discussed, debated, and discovered that in learning about love we learned about God, understanding that the characteristics of love are the characteristics of God. The staff of Nameless Valley Ranch spent their summer teaching campers about the character of God and I defy anyone to point to a higher calling. If teaching others about the character of God isn't a "real" job, then what is?

Everyone should know that camp is a ministry! Camp is the place where Jesus vacations and spends time with His people. We need more of this; we need to affirm these kinds of actions anytime we see them. Great things are happening in our church and summer camp is a big part of that. The next time you see a summer camp staff member, make sure you take the time to affirm them and support the real job they did this summer.

J. Coker, camp programming co-director

Jefferson Academy Church Welcomes New Pastor

JEFFERSON » The Jefferson Academy Seventh-day Adventist church is happy to welcome our new pastor, Jeffery Crain, from the state of Washington, where he ministered for the past six years. With Pastor Crain leading, we have been doing health and get-acquainted surveys in the area. Everyone seems to be receptive and we have received several Bible study requests. During prayer meetings Pastor Crain led us through the *40 Days of Prayer and Devotions to Prepare for the Second Coming*. It has been a great experience studying and sharing with our "partner."

In addition, the young adults have started a class of their own across the street from the church in the old store building, which they have dubbed "The Furnace." Michael and Pat Gonzales, along with Cody Tullock

and Jared Trabucco, have been leading out in the programs and outreach. They have even presented the church service with one of the academy seniors preaching the sermon. One of their outreach projects has been a program that they have taken to other churches to raise money for the tornado

disasters that occurred this summer. They sponsored a bake sale to raise money for things they needed to enhance their meetings and have planned several social functions for the entire church.



Joey, Alyssa, Jeff and Tara Crain—Jefferson church's newest pastoral family.

For more information go to www.facebook.com/thefurnace10.com.

Sylvia Downs

Bags of Love

CONROE » In 2008, Conroe Seventh-day Adventist church member Norma Jean Rose, introduced the community outreach program known as Bags of Love to the church. The mission of Bags of Love is to provide comfort to children (infants to age 17) who are displaced from their homes, usually after law enforcement intervention. It's a scene that is all too common across the country—parents are arrested and children are taken to care facilities or foster homes with nothing but the clothes on their backs. Often, the only ray of hope for these kids in such dismal circumstances is being given a “Bag of Love” containing a handmade quilt, toys, a stuffed animal, books, and toiletry items.

Norma Jean quickly won the approval of the Conroe church board, but there was no room available at the church (a Pre-K–12 academy) for working on the bags or storing materials. With a handful of other ladies, she began to gather supplies and arrange for distribution of the finished product

through local social service agencies, using her home as the base of operations.

Within a few months of its quiet launch, Bags of Love was making a dramatic impact in the Conroe area and other parts of Montgomery County, with up to a dozen volunteers meeting regularly in the Rose home to keep pace with the needs of three separate agencies that work with displaced children.

Sadly, in March 2010, we lost Norma Jean to cancer, but the *Bags of Love* group continued her vision. Charlotte Hamilton, a charter member of the Conroe “Bag Ladies” and Norma Jean’s main caregiver during her illness, offered her home as the storage depot, and the group met at various homes to keep the bags coming. Af-

ter seeing an article in a local paper, a ladies’ group in a Presbyterian church organized their own quilt-a-thon to supply our team with hand-made quilts. Soon, however, the space problem was again limiting not only production, but participation. Our church group was at maximum capacity for a house-to-



▲ Estella Selby folds a completed quilt and readies it for distribution.

◀ Tammy Frye and Blanca Comacho pack essential toiletries into each bag.

house operation, and there was no room to grow. Bags of Love needed a new home, but where?

This was an un-budgeted mission effort, so rental of commercial office space or even a small warehouse area was beyond reach. Even so, there was a desire to make this program more visible to the community, and it seemed like an impossible combination—but not to God!

The solution came after much prayer and several false starts. However, when the time was right, Ray Johnson, the husband of one of the “Bags” team members and an assistant county attorney, found a vacant 4-room suite in a county-owned building in the heart of downtown Conroe. The news was wonderful, but the rent could

still be a deal-breaker. Nevertheless, God had taken care of that concern, too. The county offered us the space at the minimum rental to make it a legal transaction: \$1 per year!

After a four-week process of moving in and setting up, Bags of Love is now operating in its new quarters,

with an office, cutting room, sewing room, and bagging room, all dedicated to helping children through difficult circumstances. Each Wednesday, up to a dozen women gather across the street from the county courthouse for several hours to put love in a bag for some special child. With the help of a recent open house event, dozens of city and county officials saw Christ’s love flowing out to the Conroe area through our church.

Since Norma Jean brought Bags of Love to Conroe, more than 300 young lives have been touched by this program. What a blessing for the Conroe area and for us!

Bob Sengele

Model Pathfinders at Alvarado SDA

TEXAS CONFERENCE

ALVARADO » At 40 members strong and with an enthusiasm that doesn't quit, the Alvarado Midnight Warriors have proven themselves model Pathfinders. During any given week, Alvarado church members can witness the group in action, either at its Wednesday-night meetings or on Sabbath, recounting its latest exploits in community service, camping, or friendly Christian competition.

Other Pathfinder clubs trying to build their programs may want to know: How

does Alvarado do it?

"Since the majority of kids are not from our own church, it's really something that the kids share with their friends and so on," said club leader Bo Gendke. "This is a ministry that's active because the kids want it to be. I'm really just here to facilitate that."

Gendke admits that when he became the club leader two years ago, he stepped into an already flourishing program and was "groomed" for club leadership by former Pathfinder, Tim Sinclair.

But however long it took his predecessor to establish the program—11 years to be exact—Gendke is keeping it alive with his own long-held enthusiasm for Pathfinders, a supportive family, and a lot of help from a handful of enthusiastic staff members.

"[Pathfinders] was my childhood," he says, adding that he wants to help kids experience the fun and ministry that he enjoyed as a youngster.

In addition to facilitating weekly club meetings, Bo and his wife, Deborah, regularly organize camping trips, community service opportunities, or other events for the Pathfinders.

In April, the group helped serve breakfast to about 200 veterans from the *Center for the Intrepid*, as well as military bases Fort Bliss and Fort Hood during the last part of the *Ride 2 Recovery*. Several weeks later, the club was one of several to take first place in Precision Drill at the 2011 Texas Camporee. In addition, the club took first place in the division Bible Bowl Competition in Berrien Springs, Mich.

With a track record like this, it may come as a surprise that the club does not place a major emphasis on honors or awards. On the contrary, Gendke maintains that his Pathfinder club could not be prosperous without the added spiritual emphasis.

"We don't place so much emphasis on honors themselves, but on the spiritual aspect, which a lot of clubs don't emphasize," said Gendke. "There is not as much spiritual growth when the focus is only on fun. We've got to put the focus back on the spiritual aspect of Pathfinders."

Still, Gendke maintains that the best part of leading the Midnight Warriors is "seeing the kids excited... whether it's for camping, doing their honors, or being with friends."

With its well-established past, solid leadership, and fired-up youth, the club promises to stay strong for years to come. Meanwhile, the Alvarado Pathfinder Club remains a model group for any church looking to engage its youth in devotion, ministry, or good, clean Christian fun.

Lindsey Gendke



▲ The Alvarado Midnight Warriors were one of the first-place drill teams at the 2011 Texas Camporee. Front, from left: Jessica Vargas, Kilory Weis, Colton Weidman. Back, from left: Jeremy Vargas, Tony Seery, Liliya Trusyuk, Jaque Willson, Larry Seery.

▼ From left: Emily Peterson, Caleb Hannah, and Jessica Vargas serve breakfast to wounded veterans during *Ride to Recovery*.



Active Year for Atascosa Angels Pathfinders

ATASCOSA » The Atascosa Angels Pathfinder Club started the year off with a bang. January began with *The Most Important Questions (MIQ) Series*, hosted by Doug Batchelor, and was presented every Friday and Saturday throughout the month. Though the Pathfinders were incredibly busy memorizing verses from 1 and 2 Corinthians for the area Bible Achievement competition (Bible Bowl) that would take place in February, they attended every meeting without complaint. Each Wednesday evening they would practice for the Bible Bowl, reading a chapter from Corinthians and discussing it afterwards.

In early February, these Pathfinders shared with the church what they had learned and memorized. During the MIQ series they learned how important it is to honor God by respecting their bodies. And after the sermon they were presented with a purity plaque

and key. The plaque read: I commit myself to purity, my eyes, heart, and hands, until the day I marry. The key was engraved with the word "Pure," which was attached to the plaque and an MIQ T-shirt for attending all of the meetings. After the fellowship luncheon that followed, they competed at the area Bible Achievement and won first place among 15 clubs. They went onto the conference-level bowl, which was held in March.



During the March competition, the Atascosa Angels once again demonstrated their skill and biblical knowledge, attaining a four-way tie for first place.

They started their spring break by volunteering at the Atascosa First church's VBS program. The Pathfinders were in charge of activities, leading classes, helping in crafts, and distributing snacks. The club's new director, Angel Castillo, is a 17-year-old whose mission is to study with his Pathfinders and help pave the way to the North American Division-level Bible Achievement competition. They know and trust that they can do all things through Christ, who strengthens them, and they anticipate a strong end to an otherwise busy year.

Sandy Castillo

With a busy first-half of the year behind them, Angel Castillo and the Atascosa Angels are looking forward to finishing the year strong.

God's Wild Love Comes to Life at VBS

HOUSTON » During the week of June 27 to July 1 more than 75 children, including 50 children from the local community, participated in the VBS program at Houston Alief Spanish church. The PandaMania VBS theme encouraged the children to explore God's "wild love" and let their love shine.

Ely Ray Juanillo, VBS co-director and church treasurer, and Karen Velasco, VBS

co-director and church music director, helped give the kids an unforgettable VBS. Numerous volunteers helped with crafts, snacks, games, and interactive Bible lessons. The children learned that God made us, listens to us, loves us no matter what, and gives good gifts. The evening activities included games, crafts, movies, Bible adventures, and concluded with closing exercises. On Saturday evening the parents,

relatives, and friends of the children were invited to watch the VBS graduation program, during which each child received a VBS certificate of completion.

There were approximately 300 people inside the church that night, with more than half being non-Adventist. The impact of VBS can be great, since a few families who attended our VBS program last year are now members of our church. Everyone had a great time and VBS continues to be one of the most effective tools of evangelism in our church. We are looking forward to an even better VBS next summer.

Ely Ray Juanillo

More than 75 kids showed up for the recent PandaMania Vacation Bible School program at the Alief Spanish church near Houston.



“I Don’t Think the Church Will Survive”



TEXICO CONFERENCE

A number of years ago, before I became a minister, I was talking to a respected church elder one evening. He was concerned about the future of the local church. He said, “Jim, I don’t think the church will survive when we older members are gone. The youth and young adults are just not as committed financially or otherwise to our church. I don’t see how the church will survive.” I listened intently to the heartfelt musings of this man of God. (I respected him then and still do today.) It has been more than 35 years since he said this. That church is stronger than it was and a new generation of people has taken up the cross of Christ to carry forth His mission and message. I’ve heard similar sentiments over the past few years. What is going to happen to the church when we are gone? I have faith in our youth and young adults, because God

is leading them.

God continues to lead His church. With men, things seem impossible, but with God, all things are possible. We simply cooperate to the best of our ability with Him. Remember, it is His! God is going to bring this work to a glorious conclusion and the young in our movement will spearhead this because they cannot do otherwise.

“All who receive the gospel message into the heart will long to proclaim it. The heaven-born love of Christ must find expression. Those who have put on Christ will relate their experience, tracing step by step the leadings of the Holy Spirit—their hungering and thirsting for the knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ whom He has sent, the results of their searching of the Scriptures, their prayers, their soul agony, and the words of Christ to them, ‘Thy sins be forgiven thee.’ It is unnatural for any to keep these things secret, and those who

are filled with the love of Christ will not do so. In proportion as the Lord has made them the depositaries of sacred truth will be their desire that others shall receive the same blessing” (*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 125).

God is still touching lives, young and old. Those who are truly touched cannot keep silent, will not refuse to give, will not ignore the gospel commission, and will not let this message sink into oblivion. We are God’s church, and that includes the young and the old. I am almost as old now as the elder was who wondered if the church would survive. It has survived, and it will. The young took up the task then and they are taking it up now. Soon we will all go to heaven—young and old—and that respected church elder will see that the church has survived.

Jim Stevens, president

VBS Is Popular With Kids

ODESSA, TEX. » The Odessa Spanish church held Vacation Bible School from June 26-30, under the direction of Beatriz Berzosa and her assistant, Bianca Barrientos. They did an awesome job, along with the staff, which included 12 station leaders, 10 crew leaders, and a few others who helped as they were able. It took our decorating crew a day and a half to finish

decorating the whole church. Every day one of our church members drove around picking up most of the kids. On the first day approximately 40-45 kids attended, and by the end of the week that number had grown to 78. The activity stations included Sing and Play, Chadder’s Movie Mania, Crazy Crafts and Missions, Tree Top Treats, Wild Bible Adventures, Bamboo

Blast Games, Rowdy Wrap Up, and Preschool Pandas.

The children were sad when VBS came to an end and one of them asked why VBS finished so early. Others asked if they could still

come to VBS when they turn 20! I told them they could and then let them know they could help out as crew leaders. It is such a blessing to know how much kids love VBS. I was asked by a church member if it was worth having VBS, and I responded by sharing a story with her. On Saturday two little boys who were visiting asked me if I knew anything about VBS and I told them that it would start on Sunday and asked them if they were going to attend. They replied that they *love* VBS and were planning to come. What I heard there was a blessing, and yes, it is worth having VBS, even if it had only been for those two boys.

Every day I posted pictures of VBS on Facebook and one day, a mother told me that her kids were ready and waiting for the bus to pick them up one hour before the bus arrived. I think every church should have VBS. It is a great blessing, not only for the children, but for those who work with them, as well.

Tina Berzosa



By the end of the week of VBS at the Odessa Spanish church, 78 children were attending each day.

Students Conduct Worship Service

LUBBOCK, TEX. » It was a privilege for the students of Lubbock Junior Academy to conduct the entire worship service on Sabbath, May 14. Our church is anxious to assist students in realizing their potential as future leaders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

The church program started with an eight-minute video highlighting the North American Division's goals to make Seventh-day Adventist education exemplary and cutting edge. Next, as the students walked in, they shook the hands of members of the congregation. An exercise like this helps students realize they are a vital part of the church and have a responsibility to reach out to others. It can also help take away the timidness a young person might experience around strangers.

The church service included a warm welcome, an interesting children's story, a thought-provoking prayer, a persuasive offertory, and an antiphonal offertory prayer. Even the offering was collected by our youngest students.

Our message was entitled "Journey of Praise," which included classic praise

songs, kids' favorites, and timeless hymns. Between each song, students recited Bible verses of praise and described how we can praise our Lord now and forever. Many of the songs were accompanied by props and hand motions. A favorite song was the one during which the school board joined the school in singing "Jesus is the Way to My Father's House." Board members raised red hearts as they sang the refrain, "Joy, Joy, Joy!"

As the service concluded, the congregation was asked to sing the final praise song, "I Will Sing Praise." It was beautiful to hear everyone joyfully singing. I am sure that the angels couldn't help but sing along with us. The Mizpah (Genesis 31:49) was chosen as the closing prayer.

My prayer is, "Lord, watch over our children and never let them forget they are an indispensable part of our church."

Susan Zimmermann, principal



Lubbock Junior Academy students demonstrated excellent leadership potential as they conducted the entire worship service on May 14.

Texico Pastors' Wives Preach in the Dominican Republic

TEXICO CONFERENCE

ALBUQUERQUE, N.MEX. » It began at the first union-sponsored Pastor's Wives' Retreat over two years ago in Dallas, Tex., on February 21, 2009. That Sabbath morning Betty Trevino, wife of former Southwestern Union president, Max Trevino, and Cheryl Retzer, wife of Southern Union president, Gordon Retzer, told about their ShareHim preaching experience in Africa. As I listened, I wondered if the Texico Conference pastors' wives would be interested in doing the same thing. I asked the wives during that retreat if they might be interested in participating in a 10-day mission trip, with each one conducting her own series in English or Spanish, in place of having our weekend retreat in 2011. The response was positive and immediately, I went to Kathy McKey, Ministerial Spouses Association coordinator for the Southwestern Union and a ShareHim coordinator, to get the plan rolling. It was decided that the Dominican Republic would be a good place, since it was only two time

zones away and we would present at 20 sites.

During the following two years there were fundraisers of epic proportions, bake sales, offerings, donations, etc., to meet our \$33,000 goal, which was reached just two days before our departure. Obtaining passports, immunizations, travel arrangements, requesting time off from work, and review-

ing and editing sermons were just a few of the necessary preparations to be made.

The group arrived at the Albuquerque airport by 8:00 a.m. on Wednesday, June 22 for the 12-hour-plus trip to Santo Domingo in the Dominican Republic. Everyone hauled a projector, one or two computers, and numerous cords. The ShareHim orientation followed the next morning to prepare us



for our meetings beginning on Friday evening. Excitement and anxiety ran high as the time to begin the meetings drew near. Many first-time speakers were wondering how God would use them to do His work, but had confidence that He would. Others joined our group, such as Donna Jackson, the wife of NAD president, Dan Jackson; Carmen Griffith, Women's Ministries director for the Southwestern Union; and others from different parts of the country.

The trip to the meetings each night was an experience in itself. Flat tires, cars "dying" in the road, windshield wipers not working, and near car accidents were so commonplace that I lost count of how many times we were divinely protected. Several wives had medical problems that should or could have prevented them from going on the trip, but there was special protection for each one. All 20 sites were filled that first night. There were so many amazing experiences of God's leading and intervention that I'm sure each woman could write her own story.

One pastor's son, Daniel (age 17), was added to our group two weeks before it was time to leave. His dad called me and asked if he could go. I almost said, "Why did you wait until now to ask?" but I didn't. I told him that there was a possibility that one of the wives would not be able to go (which would leave one of the church sites open) and I would know later that day. I called the dad back a couple of hours later and said that if Daniel had a passport and could be a speaker, we had a spot open for him. At the same time, Lynette, one of the wives, called to see if she could fly out of Abilene instead of Albuquerque because she had a mandatory meeting the day before we flew out, which would make it very difficult for her to make the Albuquerque flight. This meant we now had a ticket open, which was used for Daniel.

Then, eight days before we were to leave, Lynette was hospitalized with acute pancreatitis, which the doctors said was life-threatening. This did not dampen her determination to join us on the trip. Many prayers were ascending to heaven on her behalf. On



▲ Kathy McKee of the Southwestern Union teaches an orientation class prior to the launch of evangelistic meetings in the Dominican Republic conducted by pastors' wives.

Previous page, top: Members of the pastors' wives group that traveled to the Dominican Republic rejoiced in knowing that others gave their lives to Christ as a result of their efforts.

Previous page, bottom: Joanne Rodriguez, whose husband pastors the Amarillo Spanish church along with several other congregations, enjoyed spending time with the children at the church where she preached.

Friday, three days later, she left the hospital with normal lab results and the blessings of her doctor and four children (ages 2 through 12) to go on the trip. What a miracle! And what a blessing that she was able to fly out from a closer airport. This helped to give her strength for the trip.

Now back to Daniel. Daniel's mom, Daisy, is a pastor's wife, who was born in the Dominican Republic. Daisy's brother, Joaquin, who still lives there, left home at the age of 13 and left God behind. He sang professionally in the Dominican Republic. Daisy contacted him to sing for her meetings and he agreed. She told him that he must sing religious songs and he consented. The first night Joaquin decided to go to his nephew Daniel's meeting to sing instead of going to his sister's site. Daniel's assigned interpreter was having difficulty interpreting, so his uncle, Joaquin, offered to be his translator! The third night Daniel spoke on the Sabbath and Joaquin translated. Later that night, Joaquin called his mother in New York and said, "I get it! I get it! I'm going to be baptized!" When Daniel made his first appeal at his meetings, his uncle was the first to go forward, which had a powerful impact on others.

The very last thing that we did before we left the Dominican Republic on Sun-

day morning was to have worship together on the beach of the beautiful Caribbean and witness Joaquin's baptism. Jim Stevens, Texico Conference president, told the story of the man born blind whom Jesus healed. Duane McKey, Southwestern Union vice-president for evangelism and ministerial, performed the baptism. What a great ending to the new beginning of so many lives. We had over 120 baptisms, with many more people preparing for baptism when we left.

I think I could write a book on the experiences of all the ladies. Our 11 days certainly strengthened the believers and brought salvation to the unbelievers. The Holy Spirit was present and the presentations were powerful and persuasive. Thanks to all who contributed financially and through prayer. Also, thank you to the pastors who came along and supported their wives, and also filled one open site for us. Most of all, we thank God for His protection and that our health problems stayed at bay during this unforgettable life-changing event. God allowed us to have the privilege of speaking on His behalf and to watch Him transform not only the lives of those we preached to, but our own lives.

Rita Stevens, Texico Ministerial Spouses Association coordinator

James The Named VP For Student Services

James The (pronounced Tay) has been named vice president for student services at Southwestern Adventist University. The announcement came from Dr. Eric Anderson, Southwestern Adventist University president, on Friday, July 1.

James The has been serving as acting vice president for student services since May, 2011. Before that, he served as dean of men for the University for 10 years.

Born in Indonesia, James and his family moved to Los Angeles when he was 4. His father was a physician in the Indonesian military and stayed behind to finish up his military obligation before he joined them. His mother became a registered nurse in the United States; his father died of tetanus shortly after joining them.

Dean The attended Loma Linda Academy and then Pacific Union College, where he graduated with a degree in physical education and minors in religion and biology in 1983. He completed a master's degree in educational leadership at Southwestern in 2010.

He and his wife, Cheryl, were married in 1983. Their first job was serving as the sole teachers and principal at a 35-student elementary school in Modesto, Calif. By the time they left the school eight years later, the school had grown to 130 students and seven teachers.

Dean The also served as principal at Modesto Academy from 1991 to 1998, where he also taught religion, health, PE and general math. From 1998 to 2001, he was in charge of campus ministries and taught religion at Highland View Academy in Hagerstown, Md.

James applied for the dean of men position at Southwestern in 2001 when two former academy students of his who were attending Southwestern encouraged him to. During his time at Highland View, he had served as the HVA village dean, chair of the school's discipline committee, and substituted for the boy's dean on occasion.

Cheryl recently joined Southwestern's department of

education as an assistant professor. They have two grown children, Janelle, age 23, and Jordan, age 21.

According to the university student handbook, the vice president for student services (also known as dean of students) coordinates and develops the non-academic programs of the university, including career counseling, counseling, placement, residential living, health services, student activities, regional activities, and student discipline. As the new VP, James is already hard at work revising the student handbook, helping plan assemblies, appointing faculty sponsors for the Student Association. He will also serve on the university's administrative council.

Dean The sees his priorities in the new job as (1) continuing Southwestern's tradition of customer service; and (2) focusing on student success. "A lot has to do with being appropriately proactive," he says. "We all need to work together to foster students' success in academics."

As dean of men, Dean The saw many incoming

freshmen who were caught up in the many fun social activities at Southwestern, and yet struggled academically. He wants to do what he can to help prevent that, and plans to work closely with faculty and staff. "If you don't have a game plan that first semester of school, it's make it or break it time for students."

On January 30, 2011, Dean The received the Extra Mile Award from Southwestern Adventist University for meritorious service at the annual Faculty Service Awards Banquet. According to Anderson, he is widely respected by both students and faculty for his dedication, hard work, and

"commitment to a service mentality." Dean The is "one of the outstanding student services leaders in the denomination," he states.

"I am looking forward to a good year with James in this essential position," says Anderson. "The talents that earned him an Extra Mile Award will stand him in good stead in his new role."

Glen Robinson



James The has been named vice president for Student Services at Southwestern Adventist University.



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ASI Convention Draws Record Numbers in Sacramento

NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION

Record numbers of attendees and exhibitors participated in the 2011 ASI International Convention August 3-6 at the Sacramento Convention Center. They also gave approximately \$2.1 million—well above the \$1.5 million goal—to support 47 carefully-selected ministry projects around the world. ASI leaders were both surprised and grateful that their planning efforts were enjoyed by so many, despite a volatile economy and uncertain times.

George Adams, ASI convention site selection and housing coordinator, says it's hard to pin down why the numbers change from year to year. Recent adjustments in registration fee structures no doubt affected this year's attendance. But Adams says that significant support and attendance from California locals also drove numbers higher this year.

Extra chairs had to be set up for the more than 3,300 people who came to hear Ted N. C. Wilson, Adventist world church president, on Sabbath morning. The exhibit hall had a record-breaking 338 booths, representing 221 ministries and organizations from all over the world.

To Terry Anderson, ASI vice president

for evangelism from Franktown, Colo., Sabbath afternoon attendance at the "ASI Presents" program was most telling. "That's the time when people usually go back to their hotel rooms and take a nap," he said. "But this year, many more stayed by to hear the testimonies presented during the afternoon program. It seemed to indicate a seriousness about the times we live in."

"The times we live in." That phrase is increasingly tossed around in religious and secular gatherings alike, as the world collectively wonders how to respond to wave after wave of crisis. The messages presented by eight general session speakers and 24 seminar presenters were marked by a common sense of urgency and hope reflected in the convention theme, "Finishing Strong."

During the opening night keynote address, Doug Batchelor, speaker/director for Amazing Facts in Roseville, Calif., spoke of the need for courage. On Friday night, Ivor Myers, pastor of the Templeton Hills (Calif.) Seventh-day Adventist Church and president of Power of the Lamb and ARME ministries, packed the entire Great Con-

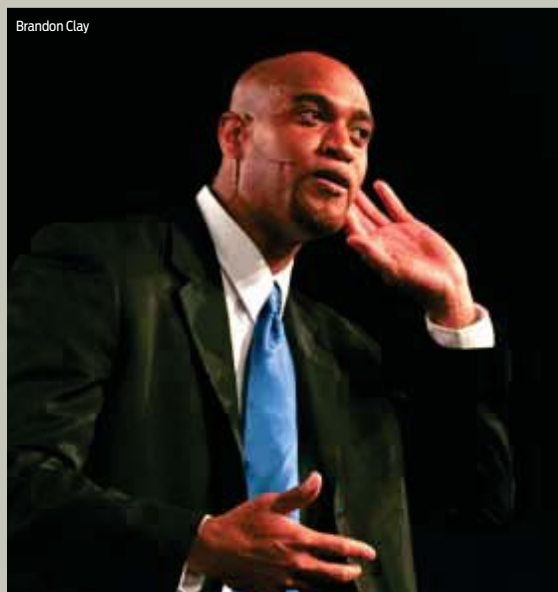
troversy theme, including all major doctrines and prophecies, into 38 breathtaking minutes that left listeners with a clearer understanding of why the Adventist movement is significant.

Floyd Courtney, a Harlingen, Tex., physical therapist and president of the ASI Southwestern Union chapter, has attended seven ASI conventions. He and his wife, Alejandra, have started bringing their grown children and grandchildren to the conventions. "Now, no one in the family wants to miss!" he says.

Nearly all who attend recognize the value of the networking opportunities, witnessing inspiration, and new ideas generated at ASI conventions. Of course, each person generally has a different "defining moment" when they think, "Now I know why I came!"

For Courtney, it happened on Friday night. "Every aspect of the convention was great," he said, "but probably Ivor Myers' Friday-evening sermon just made me realize it would have been a great loss if my family and I had missed this convention."

His daughter, Alicia Alvarez, also of Harlingen, agreed. "I know I was meant to hear



Brandon Clay



Adam Jackson

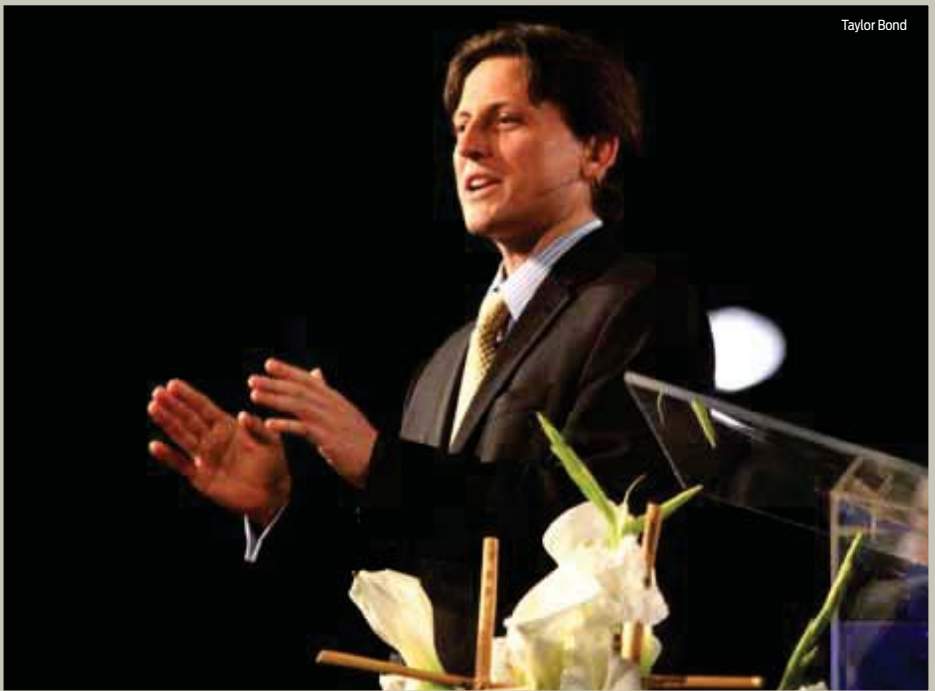
▲ Ivor Myers covered the entire Great Controversy theme, including all major doctrines and prophecies, in 38 very interactive minutes during the Friday-evening general session.

▲ Audience members leaned forward to catch every word of Ivor Myers' fast-paced presentation on Friday night.



Brandon Clay

An earliten division participant helps out with a local community service project in Sacramento during the convention.



Taylor Bond

Chester Clark III of Ouachita Hills Academy and College in Arkansas closed the convention with a Sabbath vespers presentation.



James Bokovoy

In addition to the 47 projects funded by the ASI Convention special offering, representatives of ADRA presented Maranatha Volunteers International with a check for \$1 million to build One-Day Churches around the world.

this specific sermon, which applied the message of the sanctuary to my life and the purpose God has for us as Adventists. But I cannot narrow my experience to just that one night. All four days were packed with blessings and much learning.”

For many families, attending the ASI convention takes the place of a family vacation, with all the attendant costs but more eternal blessings. “We are not a family with means,” said Alvarez, “but the Lord has always provided for us to go to ASI. Before we attended our first convention, someone encouraged me with those very words. I am so glad we went. ASI can only

be fully appreciated when you experience it for yourself.”

This year, Alvarez took advantage of the opportunity to visit the various Adventist academy booths in the exhibit hall, interviewing the staff and students. “We don’t have the time and money to travel across the country to check all of them out,” she said. “We were able to get great information about academies we hadn’t even heard of!”

The annual ASI convention has been likened to a worldwide church camp meeting, complete

with powerful speakers, life-changing personal testimonies, and awe-inspiring music. Those who attend can expect to return home with changed perspectives—and sometimes changed circumstances. Some who have never before experienced a sense of mission or calling find themselves establishing medical outreach centers in Zimbabwe, ministering to the needs of orphans in Haiti, or simply sharing their faith with friends in their inner circle with a new sense of purpose and understanding.

Paul Karmy, a cement business owner from Burleson, Tex., has helped to establish a Christian radio station that reaches

the entire Dallas/Ft. Worth metro area. That idea—and the technical support—arose from a conversation he had a few years ago with someone at a neighboring ASI convention exhibit hall booth.

This year, ASI officers were elected or re-elected for two-year terms, with Frank Fournier of Eden Valley Institute in Loveland, Colo. taking the helm as president. Despite natural reticence, Fournier embraced the challenge of leadership and accepted the symbolic Bible and gavel from outgoing president Norm Reitz, a California attorney who will continue serving as an ASI board member.

Regarding his leadership plans, Fournier said, “My heart’s burden is to bring the focus around to spiritual preparation of God’s people to ensure success in our ministries.” Fournier presented the morning devotionals during the convention.

All general sessions and seminars from the convention will be made available for online viewing or download on the ASI Web site at www.asiministries.org. Many are already posted. Next year’s convention will be held August 8–11 in Dallas, Tex.

Conna Bond is the communication director for ASI.

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Union College seeks committed SDA candidate for **tenure track faculty position in voice/choral music** beginning June 2012. Responsibilities include overseeing the

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Coming Soon! Fall Spiritual Revival at the Hurst Seventh-day Adventist Church in Hurst, Tex., October 6-8, 2011. Key-note speaker: Pastor Victor Gill of Amazing Discoveries. For more information, call Pastor Kyle Baldwin 817.946.5920. 100 W. Hurst Blvd., Hurst, TX 76053.

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Obituaries

DICKERSON, Carl Melvin, born June 4, 1927 in Fort Scott, Kan., and died July 31, 2011 in Sublimity, Oreg. Carl served in the U.S. Army following World War II, and later was food service director for Valley Grande Academy and Ozark Adventist Academy. He was preceded in death by a son, Donald

Dickerson. Survivors: wife, Lois Dickerson; sons, Dennis Dickerson of Crowley, Tex., Michael Dickerson of Ringgold, Ga., Jon Dickerson of Salem, Oreg.; daughters, Deborah Nakamura of Kapaa, Hawaii, Terri Capps of Hannibal, Mo.

CLIMER, Aubrey, Jr., born August 25, 1925 in Crockett County, Tenn., and died June

29, 2011 in North Little Rock, Ark. He was a veteran and a member of the Little Rock church. Survivors: sister, Louise Adams of Fowlkes, Ind.; sons, Mike Climer of El Dorado, Ark., Patrick Aubrey Climer of St. Petersburg, Fla.; daughters, Diane Kuhlens of Texas, Judith Ann Lewis of Joplin, Mo.; 12 grandchildren, and 17 great-grandchildren.

Announcements

Help for Africa. Gently used children's clothes and toys are needed to take to an orphanage in Zimbabwe by a mission group. Monetary donations are also helpful to defray the cost of shipping. All donations must be delivered before September 20, 2011 to the Southwestern Union Conference in Burselson, Tex. For more info, contact sfacundo@swuc.org. Any excess donations that cannot be shipped will be donated to a local charity.

Oak Park Academy Alumni Reunion, October 7 & 8. Meet with classmates and friends at Gates Memorial Hall, 825 15th Street, Nevada, IA. Honor Classes: '36, '41, '46, '51, '56, '61, '66, '71, '76, (81, '82, '83). For additional information, go to www.opaliniowa.com.

Sheyenne River Academy/ Dakota Adventist Academy Alumni Weekend, Sept 30-Oct 2, 2011, at Dakota Adventist Academy, 15905 Sheyenne Circle, Bismarck, ND. Honor Classes: '42, '47, '52, '57, '62, '72, '82, '87, '92, '02, '07. For more information, call 701.258.9000 ext 236, or visit our Web site at www.dakotaadventistacademy.org/alumni/alumnierevents.

The Ft. Worth Area Coronary Health Improvement Project (CHIP) will begin on Tuesday, October 4 at 7:00 a.m. in the lower floor conference room at Huguley Memorial Hospital with HeartScreen No. 1. Meetings begin on Thursday, October 6 and continue every Sunday, Wednesday, and Thursday through November 10. For more information, call Larry Blewett, M.P.H., at 817.556.3235 or 817.526.4654 or Yvonne at 817.933.4472.

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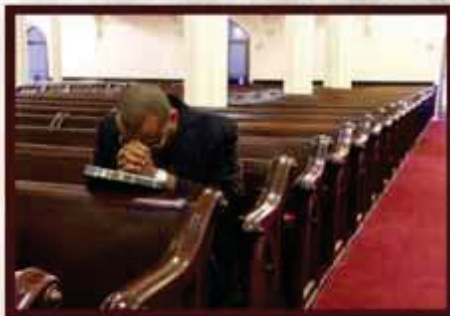
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LESTER, Harold Ramon, born May 18, 1922 in Shreveport, La., and died June 12, 2011 in Shreveport. He was a member of the Shreveport First church. Harold was preceded in death by his wife, Cecile Fulco Lester; and brother, Albert Lester. Survivors: brothers-in-law, Philip A. Fulco and wife, Jill; V.J. Fulco and wife, JoAnn, of Louisiana; and sister-in-law, Mary Lester of Shreveport.

MEIER, Humberto, J., born in Brazil and died March 11, 2011. As the son of missionaries, he grew up in South America, where he later worked in Peru on the Amazon Mission Launches and at the Nevati Station for the Inca Union Mission and East and South Peru Missions. He continued his ministry in the Arkansas-Louisiana and Potomac Conferences, where he helped establish several Spanish churches. Survivors: wife, Mary Lou Palau Meier; two brothers, and one sister; daughter, Monica McCartney; sons, Carlos Arturo Meier and Juan Meier; and many grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

SANFORD, Hugh (Dalton), born March 12, 1937 in Center, Tex., and died June 28, 2011 in Springdale, Ark. Dalton was what some people called a "super salesman." Survivors: wife, Lou Sanford; daughters, Debbie Brazil, Tammy Shelley, Tonya Wineland, Vicki Howard; son, Reggie Sanford; 13 grandchildren, and five great-grandchildren.

SEEBECK, C.W. (Doc), died on June 14, 2011 in San Marcos, Tex. He was a long-time builder who constructed more than 300 homes in the area. As an avid cyclist he logged more than 100,000 miles on his bicycle. He was a member of the San Marcos church. Survivors: wife, June Seebeck; son and daughter-in-law, Curtis and

Kimberly Seebeck; daughters and sons-in-law, Shelli and Nathan Chapman, Shari and Frank Taglavore; ten grandchildren; foster son, J. and Cyndi Flores, and many other foster children and grandchildren.

SMITH, Stephen William, born May 21, 1950 in Hot Springs, Ark., and died June 13, 2011 in Texarkana, Tex. Steve was active in the Texarkana church and local Kiwanis Club. He was a graduate of La Sierra University and studied Psychology at Andrews University. Survivors: wife, Sherry Smith; sisters and brothers-in-law, Arlene and Dwayne Tucker, Joan Marie and Charlie Cook, Maxine Smith; brother and sister-in-law, Arley and Sharon Smith of Texarkana; sons and daughter-in-law, Michael and Martha Smith, Jonathan Smith of Texarkana; daughter, Carrie Smith of Texarkana, and one grandchild.

SORENSEN, Willard (Bill), born April 24, 1927 in Coweta, Okla., and died May 29, 2011 in Ranenden, Ark. He served as a pastor in Oklahoma, Illinois, Arizona, and Arkansas. Survivors: wife, Betty; son, Christopher (Chris) Sorenson of McKinney, Tex.; daughter, Audrey McGrew of Ranenden; and two grandchildren.

WARREN, Alice Coney, born November 20, 1905 in Magnolia, Miss., and died June 27, 2011 in New Orleans, La. She was a member of the Westbank United church and served as a deaconess, usher, community service helper, and assistant Pathfinder leader. At 105 years of age, she was the oldest person living in Louisiana. Survivors: daughters, Willia Ruth Stansberry and Abena Barton of New Orleans; sister, Minnie Cheney of Detroit, Mich.; ten grandchildren, 40 great-grandchildren, and 57 great-great-grandchildren.

WAINWRIGHT, Jerry W., born June 13, 1934 in Tulsa, Okla., and died July 12, 2011 in Salem, Ark. Jerry and his wife, Kathleen, became members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church after attending a Revelation Seminar in Wichita, Kan. He was an active member of the Mammoth Spring church. Survivors: wife, Kathleen Wainwright; son and daughter-in-law, Larry and Terry Wainwright of Glenwood Springs, Colo.; two grandchildren, and one great-grandchild.

YOUNG, Clarence J., born September 3, 1944 in New Hope, Ark., and died July 8, 2011 in Hot Springs, Ark. He was a member of the Hot Springs church. Survivors: wife, Patricia Ballowe Young; sons and daughters-in-law, Trent and Candice Young, and John and Angel Young of Hot Springs; daughters and son-in-law, Malissa and Randy Hill, Carey Gates; seven grandchild-

dren, and one great-grandchild.

YOUNG, John F., born June 9, 1925 in Evansburg, Pa., and died January 22, 2011 in Clifton, Tex. After three years in the U.S. Navy, John enrolled at Washington Missionary College in Tacoma Park, Md., and graduated with a degree in Religion and History in 1951. He served as pastor in Colorado for many years. He was preceded in death by his brother, Arthur Young and grandson, Dane Young. Survivors: wife, Therissa Crabtree Young; sister, Elizabeth Willauer of Staunton, Va.; daughter and son-in-law, Naomi and Leroy Nabors of Cranfills Gap, Tex.; sons and daughters-in-law, Timothy and Kim Young of Midlothian, Tex., Stephen and Holly Young of McGregor, Tex.; step-daughter, Elena Benson of Farmington, Ark., step-son and daughter-in-law, Eric and Charlene Benson of Marrero, La.; two grandsons, and great-grandchildren.

Upcoming Camp Meetings:

GODencounters Conference: Sept. 15-17, Arlington, Tex.

Bonnerdale Cowboy: Sept. 30-Oct. 1, Bonnerdale, Ark.

Lone Star Camp Cowboy: Sept. 30-Oct. 1, Athens, Tex.

Springtown Fall Round-up: Oct. 13-15, Springtown, Ark.

SABBATH SUNSET CALENDAR

	Sep 2	Sep 9	Sep 16	Sep 23	Sep 30	Oct 7
Abilene, TX	8:04	7:55	7:46	7:36	7:27	7:17
Albuquerque, NM	7:34	7:24	7:14	7:04	6:54	6:43
Amarillo, TX	8:15	8:05	7:55	7:44	7:35	7:24
Brownsville, TX	7:50	7:42	7:35	7:27	7:19	7:11
Dallas, TX	7:52	7:43	7:34	7:25	7:15	7:05
El Paso, TX	7:30	7:22	7:12	7:03	6:54	6:44
Fort Worth/Keene, TX	7:55	7:46	7:36	7:26	7:17	7:07
Gallup, NM	7:43	7:33	7:23	7:13	7:02	6:52
Galveston/Houston, TX	7:44	7:36	7:27	7:19	7:10	7:01
Gentry, AR	7:46	7:36	7:26	7:16	7:05	6:54
Little Rock, AR	7:36	7:26	7:16	7:07	6:56	6:46
Muskogee, OK	7:49	7:40	7:29	7:19	7:08	6:58
New Orleans, LA	7:23	7:15	7:06	6:58	6:49	6:40
Oklahoma City, OK	7:58	7:48	7:38	7:28	7:17	7:07
Roswell, NM	7:24	7:14	7:05	6:55	6:46	6:36
San Antonio, TX	7:56	7:48	7:40	7:31	7:22	7:14
Shreveport, LA	7:40	7:31	7:22	7:12	7:03	6:53
Tulsa, OK	7:52	7:42	7:32	7:22	7:11	7:01

Stepping Out in Faith

IT BEGAN IN THE PHILIPPINES. That was my first mission trip, and as I sat on the plane flight back, I resolved that it would not be my last. Two hundred and thirty people had accepted the Lord, yet still many more precious souls out there had never heard of the Lord. I knew that the harvest was plentiful, but the workers were few.

I am a nineteen-year-old college student and just finished my first year at a community college taking general education courses. Around January of this year, I began to feel impressed that the Lord wanted me to take my witnessing for Him, not one step, but

excitement kicked in; I really was going! The Lord had made what I thought to be an impossible dream a reality.

This fall I leave for an eleven-month student missionary term in Southeast Asia. Public evangelism is not welcome in the country I will be working in, but that is why I am going. Those people need the Lord. I will be teaching English, but my priority will be making friends, spreading the gospel message, and winning souls for Christ. My family has been very supportive during this whole process. I deeply appreciate their words of encouragement and prayers. I

know that through the strength of the

Lord and with the support of my friends and family, this mission trip will be a success for the Lord.



Elissa Tesch has been to the Philippines and also to Romania. She makes friends with the children wherever she goes.

a whole leap forward. I felt that the Lord wanted me to march completely out of my comfort zone and by so doing, develop a stronger and closer relationship with Him.

That's when I thought of Adventist Frontier Missions. I knew they sent student missionaries overseas, and I decided to apply and see if AFM might accept me, and they did. That's when the





For the Record »

BY MARK BOND » COMMUNICATION DIRECTOR, SOUTHWESTERN UNION

Two Guys and the Word

A few years ago, my cousin, Stephen Carlile, and his friend, Kevin Bruce, both pastors in the Tulsa area, began working in the earliteen division at the Oklahoma Conference Camp Meeting. They developed a program called “Hot Topics,” which grew to be one of the most popular youth meetings on campus. Each evening, they talked about real issues and real situations that are affecting our teens.

Armed with good-natured humor and their Bibles, they tackled tough issues such as abuse, toxic relationships, religion, sexting, dating, pornography, sharing your faith, witnessing, and bullying. After a successful camp meeting, someone came up to them and suggested, “You guys should have a show!” So they came up with the idea to do a year-round webcast that deals with these issues.

On Sunday, August 14, their dreams became reality as they launched “Two Guys and the Word.” During the inaugural live-streaming webcast, they dove into the topic of dating and courtship, and looked at what advice the Bible offers on the topic. Through text messages, Twitter feeds, Facebook posts, Skype, and a live, moderated online chat, they fielded questions and comments from more than

60 virtual participants and a handful of live viewers from the youth room at the Adventist Fellowship church in Tulsa.

I happened to be driving home from Oklahoma when it came time for the program to start, so I found a wifi hotspot in Ardmore, and took a break from the drive to log in from my computer. I enjoyed their fun, uninhibited approach. Kevin is African-American; Stephen is a blonde-haired, blue-eyed white guy. But their friendship transcends race or ethnicity. They laughingly teased about why Kevin was sitting in the black chair and Stephen was not. (They switched seats halfway through, to plenty of laughs.)

But although the tone was lighthearted throughout the webcast, they didn’t shy away from answering tough questions, like, “Wouldn’t dating someone from out-

side of your faith be a good opportunity to witness to them?” or “The guy that I’m dating is taking me the a wrong direction—what should I do?”

They both quipped at times, “I’ve got an opinion on this, but my opinion isn’t what’s important. Let’s see what God’s opinion is in the Word.”

Another appealing aspect of the program was that they used personal experiences and testimonies to make their point. Without sugar-coating the issues, they talked about personal triumphs and failures and how God had intervened in their lives, ultimately bringing them to the godly women who are now their wives.

Each Sunday evening at 7 p.m., Stephen and Kevin will be online digging into God’s Word to find relevant answers to the tough issues facing our young people. Encourage the young adults you know to visit www.twoguysandtheword.com.

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