

SOUTHWESTERN UNION

Record

JANUARY 2012



REVIVE US

Again

MAKING REVIVAL AND TRANSFORMATION REAL IN YOUR LIFE

An interview with the Joshua church pastor



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On the Cover

General Conference president Ted Wilson has called for revival and reformation throughout the world church. Members in the Southwestern Union have responded affirmatively to the charge and through earnest prayer, the study of God's Word, and the leading of the Holy Spirit, individuals and churches are experiencing revival and reformation. It is our prayer that 2012 will be a year of revival in every corner of the Southwestern Union. Revive us again, Lord!

Record

JANUARY 2012



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President's Perspective»

BY LARRY MOORE » SOUTHWESTERN UNION CONFERENCE PRESIDENT



It's Time to Re-connect

Larry Moore

There are times in our lives when we sense a closeness with God, yet at other times God seems far away. Even pastors are not immune from these feelings. Thankfully, our salvation is not based on feelings, but rather, on faith. And the way to renew our faith is by re-connecting with Jesus, the True Vine.

But the need to re-connect isn't just for individuals. As a body, there are times when the church also needs to re-connect or renew its commitment to Jesus Christ, our Savior. Our General Conference president, Ted Wilson, has called the church to revival, which, he says, based on Paul's counsel in Romans 12:12, leads to a renewal of our minds. That comes about, according to Wilson, through a study of God's Word and by "opening our lives and our daily behavior to being reshaped by the Holy Spirit." When that happens we will have "the mind of Christ" (1 Cor. 2:16).

That's where reformation comes in. True revival leads to true reformation. Remember, our mission in life isn't to reform others, but to allow ourselves to be radically changed by the Holy Spirit. As a result, our new habits and attitudes will be like a sweet fragrance that helps to lead others to Jesus. Because we are all in dif-

ferent places in our lives and in our walk with Jesus, we need to allow the Holy Spirit to lead others according to God's will and plan for their lives.

I believe true revival comes as a result of prayer and study of the Word, which leads us to Jesus. As we begin this New Year, wherever you are in your spiritual life, I invite you to re-connect with Jesus. Don't let a day pass without searching His Word and inviting Him to renew your life through the application of the vital principles you find there. Imagine what might happen if every member of every church in the Southwestern Union—and around the world—were to make this their daily practice! The church would be revived and we'd be ready to go home to live with Jesus forever! Won't you do your part to make it happen?

Farewell, Mark! Welcome, Pat!

As the years come and go, we typically greet the New Year with anticipation, and we sometimes bid farewell to the old one with a bit of sadness. Such is the case as we at the Southwestern Union and the *Record* welcome the year 2012. **Mark Bond**, who has served since the fall of 2008 as communication director and editor of the *Record*, has accepted a call to the Rocky Mountain Conference, where he will serve as director of communication and family ministries. Mark has been a blessing here at the Southwestern Union office and he and his family will be greatly missed. Mark brought several innovations to the *Record*, including a complete re-design of the magazine. Though we are sad to see him go, we are confident that his creative talents will be just as appreciated in Rocky Mountain as they were here.



Mark Bond



Pat Humphrey

Accepting the invitation of the Southwestern Union Executive Committee to serve as the new communication director and editor of the *Record* is **Pat Humphrey**, who has served as the department's associate director for the past four and a half years. If you're a regular reader of the publication, you've no doubt seen her "imprint" on the magazine, and we look forward to seeing more of Pat's creative touch on the pages of the *Record* in the coming years. May God bless you, Pat, as you take up the mantle of communication ministry.

Larry Moore, president



CREATION Health

BY LYNELL LAMOUNTAIN

Resolution #1: Live Life To The Fullest in 2012

Japanese soldier, Second Lieutenant Hiroo Onoda, disappeared into the Philippine jungle on December 26, 1944 to serve his country during World War II, and didn't emerge again until thirty years later. He and three others were left on the island of Lubang and ordered to carry out their mission, even if Japan surrendered. Through the years, his fellow soldiers either surrendered or were killed, leaving Onoda to fight his war alone.

After the war ended, authorities knew Onoda might still be in the jungle. American troops searched for him, as did the Philippine police, to no avail. He managed to even outmaneuver Japanese search parties.

Though messages of Japan's surrender were played over loud speakers, and leaflets begging him to surrender were air dropped into the jungle, nothing lured him out.

One day, a Japanese college dropout named Mr. Suzuki was traveling and hiking around the world when he stumbled across Onoda. They became friends. But try as he might, Suzuki couldn't convince Onoda to leave the jungle with him. Onoda said there would be no such thing until he was ordered to do so by his commanding officer.

Suzuki returned home and shared photos of Onoda with the Japanese government as proof that the WW II soldier was still alive and fighting a war that had ended decades earlier.

Fortunately, the government was able to locate Onoda's superior officer, Major Taniguchi, and sent him to the Philippines. And so it was, that on March 10, 1974, Second Lieutenant Hiroo Onoda, after being informed

by his commanding officer of Japan's defeat and ordered to stand down, surrendered his weapons and emerged from the jungle. Although his sword was dull with rust, his Arisaka Type 99 rifle still worked and he had 500 rounds of ammunition remaining, along with several hand grenades. Onoda's lonely war was finally over; he was 52.

For 29 years he fought a war that didn't exist, except in his own mind, while waiting patiently for his fellow soldiers to return victorious.

Two things strike me about this story. The first is the epic tale of Onoda's dedication, resourcefulness, and ingenuity. The second is the story of a man who put his life on hold for nearly three decades to fight a war that had long since been settled (I intend no disrespect to Mr. Onoda).






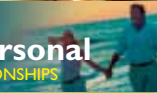


As a new year begins, I wonder how many of us are fighting imaginary battles that need to end. Are there any conflicts we need to leave behind? Is there an area of our life that needs to be healed and restored? And is there anything we need to surrender to our Commanding Officer so we can *finally* get on with life?

Now is a great time to assess our lives to see if our lifestyle reflects God's original plan for wellness and wholeness. How is life in the areas of Choice, Rest, Environment, Activity, Trust in God, Interpersonal Relationships, Outlook, and Nutrition?

As we begin this new year's journey, let's decide to trust Jesus Christ with all of our heart and accept His peace, freedom, and joy. Let's **choose** to accept the fresh start that He freely offers and resolve to live life to the fullest in 2012.

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 

CREATIONhealth.com



Lead Your World»»»

BY DR. PAUL HUNT » PASTOR, ACTS TWO CHURCH, PLANO, TEX.



The Quest for Vision

*Whether your circle of influence extends to your home, your church, or your community, knowing and utilizing principles of effective leadership is an essential element of the Christian life. Whatever your world may look like today, it is possible, with intentionality, prayer, and insight, to lead it a little better. In this new column, Dr. Paul Hunt will share timeless insights from the Bible, the greatest leadership treasure-trove, specifically designed to help each of you to **Lead Your World.**—The editor*

When asked, “What could be worse than being born without sight?” Hellen Keller replied, “being born with sight and no vision.” Today, everything from advertising to politics revolves around some articulation of vision.

It was not until 1994, when GM’s then CEO, Jack Smith, revealed in *Fortune* magazine that *vision* was one of his key priorities, and that major corporations all over the world were following suit. But what exactly is vision?

How we define it largely depends on whether we believe that vision is something we create or something God gives. A CEO is often tasked with creating a projection of what their organization can become. They examine the marketplace for new opportunities and work with other top leaders to create a vision. In the business sector, vision is the process of creating a preferred future where new markets and greater profitability are the primary objectives. However, a biblical perspective reveals radically different objectives.

Vision in scripture is a tangible picture of a future reality determined by God. It is not just that God knows the future, but He determines the best possible outcomes. Vision provides us with a snapshot of God’s concern for humanity. We see this dynamic in action when God spoke to wealthy businessman from the metropolis of Ur, sharing His vision for Abram’s personal and professional life. This vision involved relocation, extensive travel, and the promise of a future heir, despite a track record of infertility for Abram and Sarai.

Vision jumps out at us as God captures the attention of an inquisitive, exiled prince with a burning bush. God invites Moses into plans that were clearly in progress toward a mass liberation movement. God’s vision is clear as we see Him appealing to a reluctant Jonah to join Him where he was already at work in the hearts of the people of Nineveh. The consistent picture in scripture is that God alone knows the future and His vision reveals the concerns of His broken heart and the plans He’s devised for our

greatest good.

The quest for vision presents a serious faith challenge too. While we possess a legitimate need to discover our purpose in life, we wrestle with an almost irresistible urge to control and determine every aspect of our existence. The desire to find meaning is embedded deeply in all of us, but so is the desire to follow a path that appeals to our fallen nature. It is all too easy when trying to discover our place in life to make the quest for this knowledge more important than our need to be connected with the source of the insight we crave. Our “need to know” can become self-serving, but the mature Christian seeks to make a difference in the world to the glory of God.

Vision inspires courage and confidence both personally and in our various life roles and as leaders and church members. When we personally commit to *lead our world* by taking responsibility for the influence we possess, a shift occurs. Jeremiah put it this way: “*There is a fire in my bones and I can’t just sit quiet.*” We know the source of his fire was God. But Jeremiah had to trust Him implicitly, because achieving a God-given vision is only possible by faith.

During the terrible days of the Blitz, a father, holding his small son, ran from a building that had been struck by a bomb. In the front yard was a shell hole. He needed shelter fast and jumped into the hole, holding up his arms for his son to follow. Terrified, and only hearing his father’s voice telling him to jump, the boy replied, “I can’t see you!” The father, looking up against the red tinted sky, called to the silhouette of his son, “*But I can see you. Jump!*” The boy jumped, because he trusted his father. Our faith enables us to face life or meet death, not because we can see, but with the certainty that we are seen; not that we have vision and know all the answers, but that we are known. (Adapted from Donner Atwood).

As we focus on revival, let’s remember the simple truth that our quest for God’s vision begins with revival—reinstating His will in our lives.



Pass it On...

A Monthly Focus on Evangelism in the Southwest

BY DAN SERNS, PASTOR, RICHARDSON SDA CHURCH

How to Transform Your Church

Since we are living in the last days of earth, we cannot afford to just go through the motions, to just play church, to have a dead religion, or to be part of lukewarm Laodicea.

The inspired counsel given 125 years ago is even more important today. "A revival of true godliness among us is the greatest and most urgent of all our needs. To seek this should be our first work" (*Christian Service*, p. 41).

But how do we experience *true* revival that leads to reformation and transformation rather than *false* revival that is simply fascinated by the sensational?

Inspired insights make it clear that any true revival and reformation involves the Holy Spirit, serious Bible study, prayer, humility, a willingness to be obedient to God's Word and His law, and a growing missionary spirit that is expressed in actively proclaiming the truth.

Here are five of the ideas our church at Richardson has found helpful in cooperating with the Holy Spirit to experience true revival and transformation.

1) Leadership Challenge. If a church is going to be revived, its leaders need revival. At a church board meeting, as the pastor, I challenged church leaders to spend ten minutes more a day in Bible study and mission-focused prayer for 30 days. At the next board meeting, when we shared our experiences with each other, we began to bond with each other on a deeper level and to be more open with the congregation and community about what was happening in our personal time with God. Now it is common to see people praying for and with each other in the lobby, sanctuary, hallways, and in each others' homes.

2) Bible Reading Bookmarks. Any true revival is rooted in the Bible. Our church produces a simple bookmark each month listing a chapter a day from the Bible on a particular theme. Members often use this Bible-reading plan for personal or family worship or Bible study groups. The sermons for that month usually come from some of the readings. This has helped many to find a simple way to become regular students of God's Word. December's theme was the Second Coming of Jesus.

3) Groups. For a church to experience continual revival, members need to be connected, not only with God, but also with each other and their community. In our congregation every member is encouraged to be in three kinds of groups (Sabbath School, Ministry, and Bible Study), every group is encouraged to have three leaders (Upreach, Outreach, Inreach) and every group must have a mentor that is a church leader. In this way groups can be started very easily and provide support. In the past year many groups have been started for Sabbath School (Spanish, Amharic, and New Members/Visitors), Ministry (Soccer, Youth Retreat, Literature, Master Guide Club, Singles, Best Weigh,



Each Sabbath at the Richardson church, during a four-minute feature during the worship service, a member shares about how God has been at work in their lives recently.

Community Services Home Visits, Junior/Teen Baptismal Class, etc.) and Bible Study (in homes, office buildings, retirement centers, etc.).

4) Missionary Mailmen. Handing out literature is a simple way to involve everyone in ministry. Each month the church provides packets of 100 GLOW tracts and other literature free to anyone who signs up to distribute them. In this way more than 60,000 pieces of literature have gone out in the past year.

5) Celebrating Changed Lives. People are revived and transformed when they hear the story of others who have been revived and transformed. Every Sabbath we have a four-minute feature during the worship service where we interview a member about how God has been at work in their lives recently. During the past few months we have heard from people who were recently baptized, joined on profession of faith, transferred in, were converted by reading *The Great Controversy*, returned tithe for the first time of their lives and shared their faith with a co-worker over the phone only to find out the co-worker was a former Adventist!

The promise of the Holy Spirit, who brings revival and transformation through God's Word and our witness, is available to all of us. Let's ask for it daily and let it do its work in our hearts, homes, and congregations. Let's not just go through the motions! Let's be a part of the final Latter Rain and Loud Cry.

Visión Hispana

UN BREVE NOTICIERO MENSUAL DEL SUROESTE

Evangelismo en la Iglesia Hispana de Dallas Oak Cliff

OAK CLIFF, TEX. » De Octubre 28 a Noviembre 19 de 2011, la iglesia Hispana de Oak Cliff, bajo el liderazgo del pastor Luis Rojas, se vio envuelta en una campaña evangelística muy fructífera.

Algo que me impresionó grandemente fue la organización, dedicación y el arduo trabajo de los hermanos y hermanas de la iglesia de Dallas Oak Cliff.

Por lo que pude captar, la iglesia está diversificada en varios ministerios para proclamar el evangelio de nuestro Señor Jesucristo. Entre ellos están servicios a la comunidad, estudios bíblicos personales, grupos pequeños y un ministerio radial.

El ministerio de grupos pequeños ha sido muy efectivo en nutrir espiritualmente a los feligreses como en generar interesados para el evangelio. Los miembros de iglesia se reúnen semanalmente en sus casas para estudiar la Biblia, orar por sus necesidades y para dar testimonio de las oraciones contestadas por Dios en favor de ellos. Esto hace que las familias de la iglesia se mantengan animadas, alimentadas espiritualmente, unidas y creciendo en la fe. El grupo pequeño llega a ser un grupo de apoyo para los participantes. Por otro lado, el ministerio de grupos pequeños facilita el generar interesados en el evangelio. Los miembros de los grupos pequeños aprovechan toda oportunidad para invitar a familiares, vecinos, amigos y compañeros de trabajo, y en el caso de nuestros jóvenes, a compañeros de clases a asistir con ellos al grupo pequeño. En el grupo pequeño se desarrollan lazos amistosos más profundos, se rompen las barreras de prejuicios religiosos y cuando hay un evento evangelístico en la iglesia, estas personas están más

abiertas a la invitación para asistir al evento evangelístico. Cuando asisten a la campaña evangelística, no solo ya tienen amigos en la iglesia, sino que ya tienen un conocimiento bíblico que han adquirido en las reuniones semanales de los grupos pequeños. La mayoría de los bautismos de la campaña evangelística fueron generados por el ministerio de los grupos pequeños.

Sin embargo, el ministerio radial fue muy fructífero también, de las 28 personas que se unieron a la iglesia por bautismo o por profesión de fe, durante la campaña evangelística, 9 provinieron del ministerio radial. La Iglesia patrocina un programa radial 6 veces por semana en una estación de radio evangélica. Se requiere de mucha organización y arduo trabajo para preparar la programación semanal. Sin embargo, el pastor Rojas dice, "Me siento agradecido a Dios y profundamente orgulloso por los líderes de iglesia que con dedicación están contribuyendo con sus talentos y su tiempo para hacer de este ministerio una realidad." La programación incluye entre otros temas, programas familiares, series doctrinales y mensajes de profecía bíblica. Entre los oradores participantes están los pastores Carlos Quintana, Osvaldo Rigacci y Luis Rojas. También algunos líderes de iglesia contribuyen a la programación. El ministerio radial ha sido muy efectivo. Semanalmente se reciben cantidades de llamadas de la comunidad, expresando su gratitud por la calidad de programación. Y semanalmente se envían un promedio de 225 copias de CDs de los temas presentados que solicitan los radio escuchas.

Personalmente doy gracias a Dios por el espíritu misionero de la iglesia Hispana de Dallas Oak Cliff y oro para que ese espíritu misionero permanezca en la feligresía y cuando venga El Señor Jesús en gloria que podamos oír las palabras del Señor, "Bien buen siervo y fiel, sobre poco has sido fiel, sobre mucho te pondré. Entra en el gozo de tu Señor."

Eddie Canales

Foto mas izquierda: El pastor Luis Rojas Bautizando a Hector Lopez.

◀ De izquierda a derecha, Juan Herrera, Colporteur y líder del ministerio radial, Apolonia Maldonado y Alejandro Ramirez, dos de los nueve bautizados del ministerio radial.



IGNITING THE FLAME OF REVIVAL

Pat Humphrey

Recently, members of the Joshua (Texas) church returned from a ShareHim mission trip in Zambia. Jeff Coleman, pastor of the Joshua church, shares, from personal experience, how short-term mission involvement can bring excitement, synergy, and revival to a congregation.

Q: What has happened at the Joshua church as a result of the church members being involved in a short-term mission trip?

A: I think that what I've seen taking place is a process. First, the members made a decision and said, "OK, we're going to do this in Zambia." That was almost a year ago. It seems they started reviving just about the time they made the decision to go. They started to be more active in areas in which they never would have been active before. They started telling other people about the importance of mission. They began fundraising, writing letters, and doing all kinds of projects. People began to pray about mission when they hadn't prayed before. They began telling others about the mission, praying about it, getting their materials together, getting their funds together, practicing their sermons, and coming together as a group to practice and pray. The group's synergy started to spread out beyond the group because people in the church heard about it.

As you become involved in a mission trip it seems to build a momentum of excitement. And the closer and closer you get to actually going out and preaching, the more revived people seem

to be, because the group is becoming more and more active, until it's just a flurry of activity. And you're just going gangbusters getting the last-minute details together. Finally you're getting on the plane and going over there and you're preaching, and now you're just in the sweet spot of revival, because the Word's going out, people are praying for you at home, you're praying while you're doing it, you're preaching, the people there are praying, and people are hearing the Word in the best possible faith-building format.

Now when they [church members] come back and share what has happened, it starts planting seeds in people's minds. Others think, "Hey, I would like to do that." And as the story spreads, more people want to go. It builds on itself. Jesus said in Matthew 28, "Go and make disciples and baptize them . . ." The revival starts when we make a decision to follow this command.

Q: How do you think this will impact the Joshua church in terms of its own programs back home?

A: I think one of the things that is helpful back home is that people see what happens overseas. And we may not see the same results that we get overseas, but there is the same desire to do something here. They say, "Our schedules won't allow us to travel, we can't get the time off, but we can help here. I really want to be part of evangelism." It contributes to the commitment, so that when we do something locally, there is more support.

Q: Some people feel that we don't need to go overseas. They say, "We've got needs right here in the U.S. Why do we need to put all that effort and money into overseas missions? Let's focus here at home." What do you say to people who say that?

A: I have to go back to Matthew. Jesus asked us to think in a global mindset, not just locally. There is a balance. If we were to think so globally that we can't affect our neighbors next door, we might be in trouble. And if we are just





thinking about our neighbor next door, but not about the farther field, we are also in trouble. But God has asked us to think on a global scale. God says, "It's My money, it's not your money."

Q: Have you seen any positive changes in people who have gotten involved in evangelism?

A: The effect on the youth in the church is just amazing. Young people are used to concentrating on only what's around them. But when they go overseas, and their friends come back and tell their story, they think, "Wow, we're part of something bigger than what's here. We are part of a world mission." They realize this is bigger than just our church. And it inspires them to want to be part of something. They realize God is in all of this and they want to give themselves to God's mission because it's big. It almost changes their whole focus.

Q: We've talked mostly about short-term mission as it relates to revival. What else can bring revival to the church?

A: When a church wants revival and reformation they have to focus on it. And that has to continually be part of their vision. We can't bring revival to ourselves. God is the one who brings us revival. As we focus on revival, that focus is going to lead us to the One who can bring revival, and that will bring us to Jesus. Ultimately, a church that is completely focused on Jesus is going to be revived.

Q: How do you define revival and reformation?

A: Revival, to me, is something that happens one person at a

time. It's kind of like Josiah in the Old Testament. He finds the book of the law and as he reads it, he experiences a personal revival. So revival comes, first, individually. I see revival as being something that God puts in our hearts and reformation is the response to what He is doing in our hearts.

Q: Any other thoughts about revival and reformation that you want to share?

A: I think we can't emphasize enough that it starts with ourselves and moves out from there. We often see it as something that needs to happen to other people. But we can't look across the aisle or over the pews and say, "So-and-so needs revival." That's a certain sign that we need revival and reformation in our own hearts!

When you focus on revival and reformation, you realize that it doesn't come from within, it comes from without. You have to ask Him for it. It won't happen without prayer.

Pat Humphrey is editor of the *Record*.



▲ The Joshua church waves goodbye to its members who traveled to Zambia, Africa, to conduct evangelistic meetings.

► Joshua church pastor, Jeff Coleman

PRAYER CAN TRANSFORM A CHURCH

Marian Parson

Every sincere Seventh-day-Adventist has looked forward with eager anticipation to the second coming of Jesus. But we know that before He can come, there is a mission to complete. This brings us to a dilemma, knowing that, short of a miracle, we cannot possibly accomplish this mission. We have seen amazing progress with the gospel reaching the farthest parts of the globe, but many are asking, will it ever happen here in America? Can it possibly happen in my church? We see the struggles in our churches with Laodicean lethargy, falling church attendance, and discouraged pastors and members.

Let's look at some churches that have experienced what God can do when we are ready and willing to allow Him to move us forward. It all starts with prayer and continues with prayer.

Derek Morris, former pastor of the Forest Lake church in Apopka, Fla., shared with a group of prayer coordinators just how that church grew and became a true "house of prayer." When he became the pastor of that church, he requested all of his elders to join him and the prayer team every Sabbath morning to plead with the Lord to revive the church and to ask for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. This continued throughout his ministry there.

Pastor Morris also felt it was vital to a thriving church to make the prayer meeting the most important meeting of the week. When I visited that church on Wednesday evening, 30 minutes before the service, I found the vestibule bustling with people who were greeting each other with eager anticipation about what God was going to do





that evening. We were not disappointed. With a simple service of prayers, songs, a brief message, and an anointing service at the end, it was very evident that the Holy Spirit had shown up early, as well. A young man who had attended the church previously, but fallen away, came that evening and asked for an anointing. Most of the church came forward to welcome this “prodigal” back home. The church was full, and you would have thought this was a special Sabbath morning service. We left with our hearts full of joy.

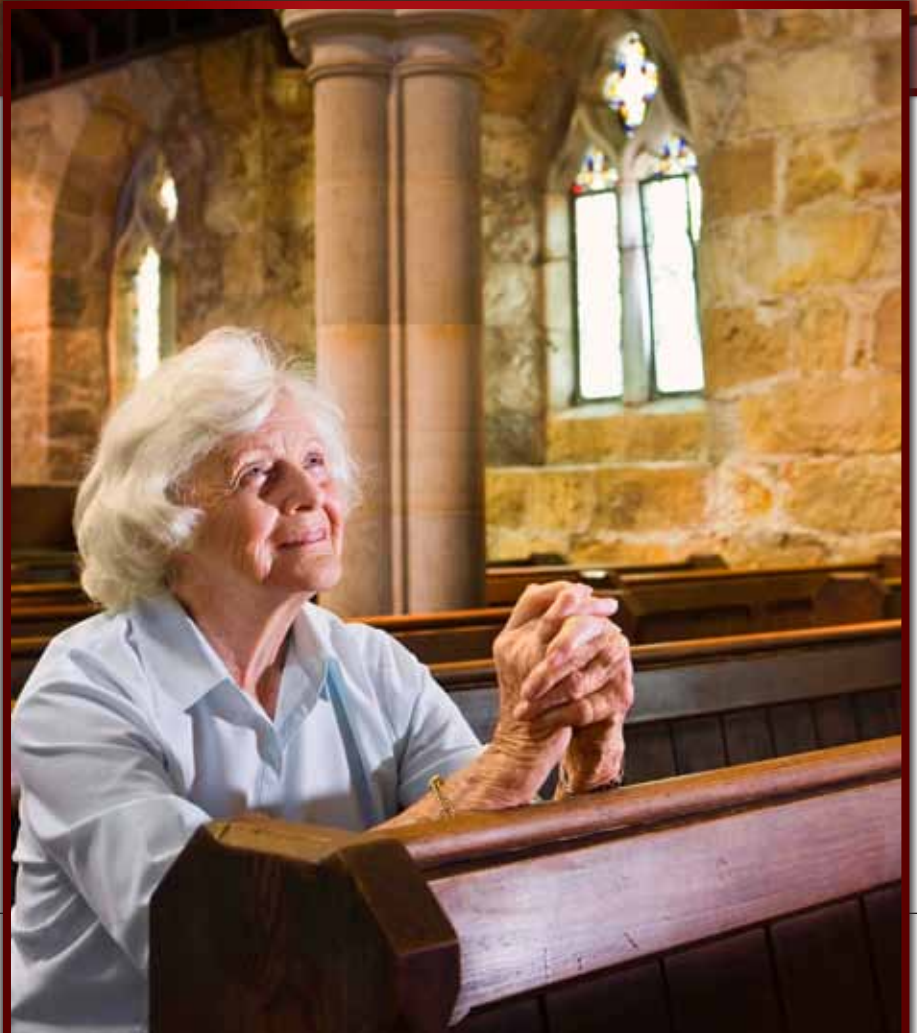
We find another testimony to what God does when His people pray in Ron Clouzet’s book, *Adventism’s Greatest Need* (published in 2011 by Pacific Press), where he shares what happened in a church he pastored early in his ministry. He tells that the church held 400 people, but only 100 showed up on Sabbath morning. Pastor Clouzet recognized the importance of prayer, Bible study, and witnessing, and after some time in that church, he held a series on prayer, and as he says, “a whole new world opened up for me. Prayer and commu-





nion with God became much more real and concrete. . . . The Spirit of God moved on the church, and people began to pray.” He continues telling of what happened spontaneously when he invited his elders to join him at 5:00 a.m., which finally went from meeting once a week to every day! The church board began to pray through conflicting issues and found that they were taken care of without dissension! Evangelism took on new meaning, resulting in many baptisms, and the church grew by “leaps and bounds.”

Most recently, a Prayer Emphasis Weekend was held at a church in the Arkansas-Louisiana Conference. This church had been discouraged because of falling attendance, and although the church had a dedicated pastor and a small group of loving Christians, they expressed dismay over the situation and didn’t know what to do to change it. So a Prayer Emphasis Weekend was held, and the small group of members came together to



make it a success.

The Holy Spirit was very evident as we prayed together, discovered amazing insights into familiar Bible stories, participated in dynamic praise worship, and took part in outreach.

There was a profound change in the atmosphere as the weekend progressed. By Sunday morning, the members were praising God for what had taken place, and were ready to see what else God was going to do as they committed fully to His leading.

I have seen this happen to many churches that have placed a priority on praying together, and when they become serious about finishing the work of the gospel in their part of the world. During a recent trip to Africa with a ShareHim Evangelistic campaign, I witnessed a vibrant, growing, dedicated congregation where my meetings were held. I asked my translator what was happening that was bringing about such a transformation. He shared with me that a group of up to 100 members walked to the church for prayer every morning at 5:00 a.m.! No wonder we are seeing the explosion of evangelism in African countries!

God is anxiously waiting to pour out His Spirit in Pentecostal power, but He has made it very clear what is necessary before this can take place. Second Chronicles 7:14 gives us the simple formula: "If My people who are called by My name, will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land." Are we ready for this to happen in our churches here in the Southwestern Union? We can if we just ask someone to join us and they ask another, until your church becomes a house of prayer, and God will finish His work in us and in our part of the world. You can begin by joining the Wednesday-morning Call to Prayer at 7:30 a.m., Central time. Just call 712.432.0031 (access code: 270973#). Then get ready to see a transformation take place in your church!



REVIVE US AGAIN

Mark A. Finley

One of the greatest revivals in history was the Welsh Revival of 1904. Twenty-six-year-old Evan Roberts had been praying for thirteen years that his life would be totally controlled by the Holy Spirit. He pled with God for an undivided heart—a heart totally committed to the kingdom of God. Evan often prayed late into the night, interceding for the teens and the young adults in his church. He especially prayed regularly that God would visit Wales with revival power. The Welsh Revival began at a youth meeting in Evan Roberts' own church, Moriah Loughor, when he shared his own experience with God. Evan urged his friends to seek the infilling of God's Spirit in their own lives.

The Holy Spirit touched hearts. Sixteen young people were converted. The sparks of revival begun in this humble village church would ignite the flames of revival throughout the country. It is estimated that within nine months, one hundred thousand people were converted in the tiny country of Wales. The crime rate dropped. Drunkards and prostitutes were transformed by God's grace. Pubs reported losses. Lloyd George, once prime minister of England, wrote that on one Saturday night at the height of the Welsh Revival one tavern sold only nine cents' worth of liquor. Many taverns were transformed into places of prayer.

An entire nation was changed because a young man, Evan Roberts, and a group of his young friends took our Lord's example of passionate intercession seriously.

The Prayer Life of Jesus

Jesus is our great model in intercession. He regularly retreated to a quiet place to pray. He sought God for strength to meet the challenges of the day. He pleaded with His Father for strength to overcome Satan's temptations. The Gospel of Mark records one of Jesus' early morning prayer sessions in these words: "Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed" (Mark 1:35). If Jesus, the Divine Son of God, understood that prayer is a necessity, don't we need prayer much more in our own lives?

Jesus was never too busy to pray. His schedule was never too packed to spend time with His Father in communion. He never had so much to do that He rushed in and out of His Father's presence. Jesus came from these intimate times with God spiritually revived.

He was filled with power because He took time to pray.

Four Life-changing Prayer Principles

If you will incorporate the four basic prayer principles outlined below as a regular part of your devotional life, God will pour out His Spirit on you abundantly. Your spiritual life will be revived, and God will use you as a catalyst for revival in home, your school, your workplace, your neighborhood, and your local church.

1. Set aside a specific time each day to be alone with God. Place top priority on this uninterrupted quiet time alone in God's presence. Many have found the ACTS model a helpful guide to keep their minds focused during their devotional times. You, too, may find it helpful in keeping your thoughts from wandering in your prayer times.

A-Adoration

C-Confession

T-Thanksgiving

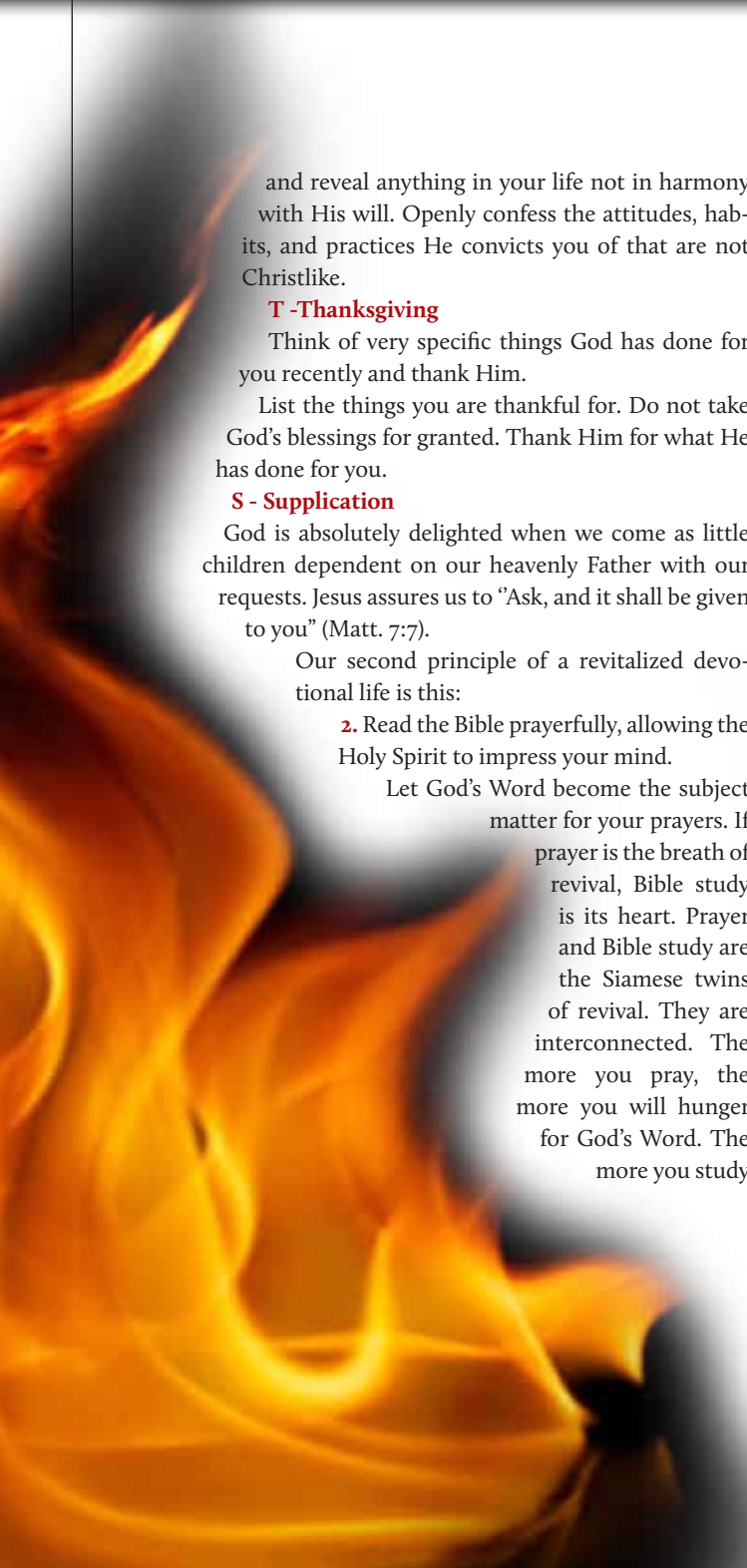
S-Supplication

A-Adoration

Begin your prayer time with a period of adoration and praise. Praise God for who He is and what He means to you.

C-Confession

Ask God to humble your heart



and reveal anything in your life not in harmony with His will. Openly confess the attitudes, habits, and practices He convicts you of that are not Christlike.

T -Thanksgiving

Think of very specific things God has done for you recently and thank Him.

List the things you are thankful for. Do not take God's blessings for granted. Thank Him for what He has done for you.

S - Supplication

God is absolutely delighted when we come as little children dependent on our heavenly Father with our requests. Jesus assures us to "Ask, and it shall be given to you" (Matt. 7:7).

Our second principle of a revitalized devotional life is this:

2. Read the Bible prayerfully, allowing the Holy Spirit to impress your mind.

Let God's Word become the subject matter for your prayers. If prayer is the breath of revival, Bible study is its heart. Prayer and Bible study are the Siamese twins of revival. They are interconnected. The more you pray, the more you will hunger for God's Word. The more you study

the Word, the more you desire to pray.

Study the great passages of the Bible prayerfully. It will make a significant difference in your devotional life. Let God speak to you through His Word. Pray with the psalmist, "Revive me according to Your word" (Ps. 119:154).

We now come to our third principle of a revived prayer life.

3. Learn to pray aloud. Secret prayer is not necessarily silent prayer. Often during daily activities, it is appropriate to send up silent petitions. During our devotional times, praying aloud keeps the mind concentrated on God. Jesus prayed aloud. The book of Hebrews tells us that Jesus "offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death" (Heb. 5:7).

We need not fear that somehow Satan is listening to our prayers, knows what we are praying, and is preparing some strategy to deceive us for we are assured that "at the sound of fervent prayer, Satan's whole host trembles" and God answers our petitions by sending legions of angels, causing Satan's host to fall back (*Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 346).

This leads us to our fourth principle of prevailing prayer and spiritual revival.

4. Organize a small prayer group of three to five people and covenant to meet together at least once a week to pray. The New Testament church united in praying for the power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:14; 4:31). Jesus instructed His disciples to pray together. "Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in My name, I am there in the midst of them" (Matt. 18:19, 20).

Do you want to plant the seeds of revival? Bathe your life in prayer. Cover your family with prayer. Saturate your neighborhood with prayer. Intercede for your spouse, your work associates, your friends, and your neighbors. Lift up your petitions to the God who hears. Seek the One whose ear is always bent low, listening for the requests of His children. Open your heart to a Savior who is more interested in answering your prayers than you are in praying.

When you do, you will have discovered the all-essential key to revival for both your own life and God's end-time church.

Excerpted from *Revive Us Again* by Mark A. Finley (Pacific Press Publishing Association). Used with permission.

Revive Us Again . . . And Again!



ARKANSAS-LOUISIANA CONFERENCE

In Matthew 25:1-13, Jesus gives us the parable of the Ten Virgins. From our study of this parable, we understand that what

Jesus is describing for us is a church made up of Bible-believing members who have a pure, undefiled doctrine, and are waiting for the return of Jesus. However, the entire church is snoozing! The issue is not about good versus bad members. The issue is about who is wise and who is foolish, and the point is clearly made that those who were wise had made provision for a personal ongoing revival experience.

In the last days, there will be a revival—an awakening of the church—and some will be ready for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, while others will miss it. Jesus describes these two categories of church

members as the five wise virgins who have refilled their lamps with oil—they've allowed the Spirit of God to come in, they've relit their lamps, and they are prepared to meet the Groom. But the foolish virgins are found rushing to the marketplace to buy more oil. They have depended on the oil they had acquired in the past, but it is insufficient to carry them all the way to the coming of the Bridegroom.

Note these two important points: 1) We cannot depend on our past experience. We may have had a wonderful conversion experience years ago, we may have brought someone into the church years ago, but regardless of how many good things may have taken place in our spiritual development years ago, if it does not continue to happen on a regular, daily basis, our past

experience will not take us through the days ahead. As people on Wall Street say, "Past performance is no guarantee of future results." 2) No one can borrow from someone else's spiritual experience and make it his/her own. Everyone must have his or her own encounter with the Lord.

My Bible study, prayers, and devotions of the past, and the growing spiritual experience of my spouse or fellow church member will all fall short in filling my lamp with oil. I must come to Jesus and seek His grace daily. My prayer today, and every day, must be, "Revive me, Lord, again . . . and again."

Stephen Orian, president

Minden Graduates Thirty-three

MINDEN, LA. » Thirty-three participants of the Nedley Depression Recovery Program conducted by the Minden church graduated from the recent eight-week program. All experienced positive results, which often lead to further improvement as the new lifestyle changes are continued.

While the Depression Recovery Program was in progress, the church hosted two showings of the documentary *Forks Over Knives*. This was followed by a "Breakfast for Kings" presentation, demonstrating a wholesome plant-based meal. In October the church started monthly cooking classes and health talks. These will be ongoing the first Thursday night of each month at 6:30 p.m. The classes have been well attended

and there is a growing interest in healthy plant-based eating. As Seventh-day Adventists we want to be at the forefront in demonstrating this kind of diet.

Studies from the book of Daniel called "What's the Connection?" began November 14 and take place each Monday night

at 6:15 p.m. This series shows the connection between health science and Scripture. Many who attended the Depression Recovery Program signed up to attend the Daniel series.

Kathryn Irizarry



A graduation dinner was held following the Depression Recovery Seminar at the Minden church.

A Fresh Look at American History

GENTRY, ARK. » On October 16, 2011 students of the junior and senior classes from Ozark Adventist Academy embarked on the Heritage Tour, a ten-day experience of a lifetime. Forty-five students and faculty boarded a charter bus and hit the road. Traveling along the East Coast, we would ultimately explore 10 different states as we learned about our country's unique and amazing heritage.

Long hours of bus travel helped us bond with one another and establish new and stronger friendships. After a 24-hour bus ride, our first stop was Philadelphia, Penn., where we visited the United States Mint and learned firsthand how money is made. We viewed an original copy of the Declaration of Independence and visited Independence Hall, where it was signed. We were inspired by the Liberty Bell that represents freedom for our nation. Walking through downtown

long ago. We looked at the names of immigrants posted on huge tablets that stood outside the memorial. From Ellis Island, we boarded another boat that carried us to the Statue of Liberty. We roamed the island, taking hundreds of pictures of the statue's oxidized, copper-covered body. We especially appreciated the elevators when we got inside the statue; from there we had the opportunity to look out at New York from high inside Lady Liberty.

Later that day, we divided into groups with sponsors and headed out to explore the huge city. We saw Central Park and Ground Zero, where hundreds of people lost their lives in terrorist attacks ten years ago. We stood in awe as we looked at this solemn memorial.

taking and overwhelming! It overlooks hundreds and hundreds of skyscrapers and is definitely the view of a lifetime. Elenoa Moala, a junior, said, "If heaven is better than this, I cannot wait!" Our time in New York City was chaotic, but oh-so-fun.

The last four days were spent in Boston, Mass., where we walked along the "Freedom Trail," visited Harvard University, and explored yet another big city. We walked around a replica of the Mayflower and learned about different ethnic groups who settled in the Americas long ago. We saw where the Revolutionary War began and where the "shot heard around the world" was fired. We experienced this historic site in a unique and memorable way as we gathered for worship in this beautiful natural outdoor setting. Early the next morning we headed for Niagara Falls where we boarded the "Maid



▲ Natalie Permaul, OAA Senior, looks forward to seeing the Statue of Liberty.

► Senior, Weston Hostetor and Lucas Zambrano, OAA Juniors, enjoying the afternoon in Philadelphia.

Philadelphia we came across Benjamin Franklin's grave site, which had many pennies lying on the stone. At the end of the first day, we loaded onto the charter bus and stayed at Blue Mountain Academy. We really appreciated their willingness to graciously share food and lodging with us.

The second day we headed for the "Big Apple," New York City. As our bus pulled into the city, we could see "Miss Liberty," with her proud arm raised high. When we got off the bus, we felt like we were paparazzi, and we had a blast. We took a boat to Ellis Island, where immigrants had arrived in America



▲ Jade Hermling-Beck, Bridget Darmody, and Corbin Gilbert, OAA juniors, take a break on a bench near Harvard University.

After sunset, we boarded a subway and traveled underground to Times Square. There we saw the famous Times Square view that everyone sees on television on New Year's Day. The students gaped at the site and I shouted, "I've never seen so many lights in my life!"

After passing thousands of people that day and seeing things that most of us will never see again, we rode an elevator to the top of the Empire State Building and looked out over much of the city. The view was breath-



of the Mist" tour boat, which took everyone very close to the falls. It was so beautiful and inspiring! That night our sponsors ordered pizza for us and let us swim in the hotel's pool. It was a wonderful, fun, and refreshing way to end a memorable day.

The next morning we loaded into the charter bus and started the journey back to "home sweet home." Ozark is a place where the streets are not crowded and where Wal-Marts are abundant. We were sad to end our adventure, but now we have stories to share and memories that will last us a lifetime.

Sylvia Westgate, Ozark Adventist Academy junior

God's Exciting Love Stories

ROGERS, ARK. » During the evangelistic crusade held by Pastor Cesar Cardenas at the Rogers Spanish church last November, we witnessed many wonderful miracles. While Pastor Cardenas preached the gospel and appealed for people to accept Jesus as their Savior, the Holy Spirit's presence entered the hearts of members and visitors alike and shone out with love and kindness for one another.

Jose Luis Cruz was struggling with his life after his bitter divorce in Florida. He felt far away from God, sad, disoriented and without hope. He found a job in the northwest Arkansas area and tried to pick

up the pieces of his shattered life, but he knew he needed a stronger power to help him reorganize his priorities. Work was a solace and he soon found that one of his coworkers was different from the other men. Conversations were always interesting and deep and he exuded a peace that went beyond the circumstances. Eager to know the reason Marco was different from the others, Jose Luis asked him to share his faith with him.

At lunch time, Marco started giving him Bible studies and later invited him to visit his church. Jose Luis attended the Adventist church in Tulsa, Okla., for about four months and when his new friend, Marco, invited him to some evangelistic meetings taking place in the Rogers, Ark., Spanish church he decided to go. He took his girlfriend, Erika Penwell, and they attended every night. He was convinced that Jesus was the one he was looking for.

Pastor Pedro Ledezma had a special talk with him to discuss the need of put-

ting his life in harmony with God's will, and marrying Erika or leaving her. He had to decide. On the last night of the meetings, he surrendered his life to the Lord and asked to be baptized. He knew he couldn't wait any longer, and then Erika, having a Baptist church background, but being convinced of the Adventist message, asked to be baptized too. During the last meeting a special baptism took place and at the end of the baptismal ceremony, something extraordinary happened. In front of everybody at church, Jose Luis asked Erika to marry him. And Erika, with tears in her eyes, said, "Yes!" She couldn't believe what was happening. All the church members were so excited to see the Holy Spirit transforming lives, and many of them offered to help with the wedding plans. Jose Luis and Erika Cruz were married November 12, 2011, and are now starting a new life united with Jesus as their guide. They have great hope and faith in God's promises, "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well," (Matt. 6:33).

Pastor Pedro Ledezma



▲ Jose Luis and Erika Cruz united by Jesus, start a new life together with a wedding before God. Jose had asked Erika to marry him after they were both baptized during a baptismal ceremony at one of the evangelistic meetings at the Rogers, Ark., church.

► Pastor Cesar Cardenas, Jose Luis Cruz, Pastor Pedro Ledezma, and Erika Penwell at Jose's and Erika's baptism.



Thanksgiving Canned-food Drive

Benton Pathfinders and Adventurers collect canned goods for Thanksgiving baskets

BENTON, ARK. » What a pleasure and blessing to work with the youth of our church. Their enthusiasm to help others is a lesson I learn from continuously. On Sabbath, Nov. 12, the Benton Jesus Warriors' Pathfinder Club and the Little Warriors'

Adventurer Club distributed bags in a local neighborhood in order to collect canned goods for Thanksgiving baskets. The response from this community was great as we collected 438 canned good items. These canned goods were given to the food bank

working so hard for someone else, we had five Adventurers and four Pathfinders participate in the canned-food drive. On Saturday they went door to door for more than two miles, knocking on each one, without complaining. Even though they had a few people turn them down, their attitudes remained upbeat. On Sunday we all loaded into the back of a truck and went around the neighborhood picking up the bags. Each young person looked intently at each porch for a bag. When they saw one, they would start yelling, bag, bag, bag! It was an awesome weekend in which they were able to be Jesus' hands and feet and shine for Him!

at the Benton church and went toward making 70 Thanksgiving baskets, which were distributed to those in need.

Just to give a little praise to these young people for

Francis Caple



Adventurers: Micah Wilcox, Julian Gomez, Emily Gomez, Kylee Light, and Kara Light. Pathfinders: Devin Wilcox, Laiken Gallucci, Andrew Caple, and Camry Clark (not pictured).

Thanksgiving in a Can

Batesville members collect food for distribution to the needy at Thanksgiving

BATESVILLE, ARK. » Every year the members of the Batesville church go to the community and ask them to help with food to be put in Thanksgiving food baskets. On Sabbath afternoon, Oct. 29, they passed out 2000 bags with a piece of literature and a request for the recipient to place some non-perishable food items in the bag. Sunday afternoon, the members went back to the areas and picked up the bags that had food in them. This year they received about 1500 items. After stacking the food, the workers enjoyed some hot chocolate, fellowship, and popcorn.

Pastor Laurie L. DeWitt



Happy participants in the food drive with some of the food collected.

Let's Partake of the Divine Nature



OKLAHOMA CONFERENCE

As I study the experience of God's people in the Old Testament I am reminded of a ride on a roller coaster, with exhilarating highs, stomach-churning drops, and dismal periods of spiritual lows. Also, I've noticed that the spiritual condition of the people, to a great degree, was a reflection of the spiritual condition of their leaders (kings and priests.) We are often tempted to think that we are so far removed from those times that surely we could not be guilty of the attitudes and practices that brought them to their low spots. We might think that we are more enlightened and spiritually aware than they were and that somehow our situation

is different. However, we are not different; we are very much the same, because we have a common affliction. It is called human nature.

In like manner, I have talked with some who long for the old days of our church because "things are not what they used to be." I often wonder who we think that Ellen White was writing to when she said that "a revival of true godliness among us is the greatest and most urgent of all our needs." Those words were first published in the *Review and Herald* of March 22, 1887. What I am saying is that our current condition is nothing new, but our need is every bit as great. It seems to me that if our problem is human nature, then the solution

is another nature. I have good news! God offers it to us: "by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (2 Peter 1:4). I believe that is the same as reflecting the character of Christ. God's servant said that when that happens, then Jesus will come. Don't we want that? If so, "let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith" (Heb. 12:1, 2).

John Moyer, president

A New Life in Christ

WEATHERFORD » February 2011 is a month that will live forever in the memory of Seth Randal Spain. On February 11, he turned 17. On the twenty-second, his sweetheart, Courtney, gave birth to his baby boy, Rylan William. And within days of that event, he surrendered his life to his Savior.

At a young age, Seth began choosing friends who led him astray. He didn't do well in school and was put on probation three times. His mother begged him to get a job, but Seth didn't want to work. His life consisted of partying with friends, then coming home angry and depressed to treat

his mother with total disrespect. He made her life miserable and she didn't know what to do with him.

As Seth looked into the face of his own baby boy, he felt like he, too, was reborn. He was very excited about being a father. He and Courtney went to parenting classes, where he received a New Testament for men, which contains pointers on how to live and how to cope. Within two days, Seth had read the entire New Testament.

Seth has a beauti-

ful testimony. "Once I started reading the Bible, I couldn't stop," he says. "I was drawn to the Savior with the overwhelming realization that I had been trampling all over the One who died to bring me salvation."

After reading the New Testament, Seth immediately started reading the Old Testament. "Every day I felt closer and closer to my Savior. I learned to pray and I learned to listen and obey."

Before this time, Seth had taken the GED test and failed it. After his conversion experience, he passed the GED without a problem, which shows the healing power of the Word on his mind. He enrolled in a welding class at Job Corps in June. He loves welding and is doing very well. He looks forward to graduating next spring and to taking his place in the world as a welder.

"One of the first things I had to do after begging God's forgiveness was to apologize to my mother. I told her over and over, 'Mom, I'm sorry for all the bad things I ever did to you. I have been an awful son, but I love you and will be good to you from now on.' Perfect peace came into my heart as I continued reading the Word. I felt that I walked hand in hand with my Savior."

Seth was on probation at this time and possibly would have gone to juvenile court. He and his



Seth Randal Spain was baptized at the Oklahoma Camp Meeting in July 2011.

mother checked on Job Corps at Guthrie, Okla. The probation officer told them they would drop all charges if he would go to Job Corps and do well.

Immediately after taking residence at Job Corps, Seth started a Bible study group. He and several young people meet almost every day to study their Bibles. When false doctrines are presented, such as a forever-burning hell or a secret rapture, Seth enjoys presenting truth, although it isn't always accepted. But he has made an impact

on the school because young people often ask him to pray for them.

He attends the Guthrie church every Sabbath and goes on Wednesday nights to prayer meeting. The members plan to involve him in their outreach programs.

Seth came to Oklahoma Camp Meeting on a weekend in July and was baptized in the Wewoka Woods swimming pool by Pastor Dan Johnson. The Weatherford church was thrilled to add his name to the church roll.

Seth testifies to the continued power of the Word in his life: "I read my Bible daily. I don't watch TV, because I think it is a tool of the devil to pull people from the Lord. I earn a little money at Job Corps and after I pay tithe, I give money to Courtney to help with our baby." Weatherford church members rest in confidence that this young man has found the answer: "The Word saves and the Word keeps us saved!"

Donna Nicholas

A Busy Month for Arbuckle View Warriors

ARBUCKLE » November was a very giving and sharing month for the Arbuckle View Warriors Pathfinder Club. The month's activities began on a Friday evening with a two-week evangelistic series conducted by Brandon Clay and Avery Bokovoy. The other Pathfinders gave special music and served as greeters during the meetings. The young people did a fantastic job. Two full-page articles, one about

Avery and the other about Brandon, appeared in the local paper.

The first Sabbath of the month was Pathfinder Sabbath, which also coincided

with the evangelistic meetings. The Wewoka War Ponies joined us for an Induction service and were there to witness the baptism of Austin Clay. Brandon and Avery

shared experiences from their recent ShareHim trip to Africa, and along with the special music and other highlights, it was a high Sabbath. Later that day we visited homes, delivered food baskets, and handed out literature.

Carol Baker



◀ Austin Clay was baptized on Pathfinder Sabbath, November 5, 2011.

Top: The Arbuckle View Pathfinders participated in Operation Christmas Child, helping to provide gifts for needy children.

▲ Avery Bokovoy and Brandon Clay presented a series of evangelistic meetings and also shared their experiences in Africa.

Outdoor School 2011

CORPUS CHRISTI, TEX. » For quite some time now it has been a tradition for the Oklahoma Conference Office of Education to host an annual Outdoor School for our students. Usually we target grades 5-8, but for our smaller schools, we invite grades 1-8. The upper-grade students from the smaller schools often come to help in the kitchen. This year we returned to Corpus Christi, Tex.!

The journey began Tuesday, November 8, 2011. After many, many hours of driving, divided into a two-day trip, 52 students and 20 sponsors from Ardmore Adventist Academy, Bristow Adventist School, Pioneer Adventist Christian School (Guymon, Okla.), Ketchum Adventist Academy, Parkview Adventist Academy (OKC) and Tulsa Adventist Academy arrived safely at our camp—just minutes from Corpus Christi Bay and the Gulf of Mexico! We took our schools there in 2007, so this was a return trip for some. The camp is designed specifically for special needs children and the fact that we were able to rent it for our group was indeed a blessing! The director was delighted to accommodate us once again, with a shared desire to do wonderful things for God's children!

On Wednesday our group spent the day at the Texas State Aquarium. There the students enjoyed dolphin shows and other live presentations with otters, reptiles, and other marine life. The afternoon also included a trip to Port Aransas to feed the sea gulls!

And what would a trip to Corpus Christi be without a trip to the ocean? Well, a trip to the bay, at least! Thursday afternoon we went to Woody's Sport Center where we were greeted by Captain Steve and First Mate/local hero and celebrity T-Joe who took us aboard the Mustang for a two-hour tour of Corpus Christi Bay. Many of our students had never seen the ocean before. What a treat to watch the dolphins in their natural habitat, leaping and playing in the water! While we were on the boat, a large shrimp net was lowered into the water and dragged along the ocean floor for about 10 minutes. The students were on "pins and needles," waiting to see what the net

would bring in! As T-Joe sorted through the catch, he would identify and place the safe marine life in a very large trough for the students to handle. The "unsafe" captives were identified, then released back into the ocean. Shrimp, puffer fish, star fish, and a few other types of small fish swam about in the trough while the students took turns catching them with their hands and getting an "up-close and personal" look at them. Sting rays were also among the cap-



tives. After they were identified and carefully de-barbed, they too were placed into the trough for the students to examine more closely. What an exciting science class that was!

Friday morning the group prepared for their history lesson aboard the USS Lexington CV-16, a floating museum of a United States Navy aircraft carrier that served in WWII. In the morning the students

partook in the Hunt for History program, a scavenger hunt designed for students to learn about the events that took place during WWII. Information packets were sent to the schools in advance for the students to familiarize themselves with the causes of the war, including vocabulary lists, important leaders, and a scavenger hunt activity sheet for the students to complete during their tours. After lunch there was

a choice for the students to either watch a movie about heroes in flight or to continue making their way through the hangar deck, flight deck, bridge, sick bay, engine room, and more aboard the 42,000 tons of museum in their search to complete the "hunt." In addition to all that, the fact that we were there on Veteran's Day, 11-11-11, made it the highlight of the day! That afternoon there was a very special Veteran's Day program that everyone onboard was invited to attend, which included addresses given by local dignitaries, live music performed by a veteran who was recently wounded in

Afghanistan, and slideshow presentations. The program concluded with a very moving laying of the wreath ceremony, where a wreath is dropped into the water in honor of our war veterans and in remembrance of the prisoners of war.

After our trip, Amanda Phillips from the USS Lexington called to say that she and her staff could not say enough nice things about our group of students and how well behaved and respectful they were during the program. The staff was absolutely amazed at the reverence and respect shown by our students. Amanda also said

that there was one veteran present in a wheelchair and they (the staff) took notice that when the program was over, nearly all of our students went to shake his hand. She said they were deeply touched and moved and appreciated our visit very much! They are looking forward to many more visits from us in the future!

Sometimes the very best lessons learned are outside of the classroom.

Caroline Thomas



Students from the Oklahoma Conference had an exciting hands-on learning experience, where they made many discoveries about marine life during Outdoor School in Corpus Christi, Tex.



Revive and Reform



SOUTHWEST REGION CONFERENCE

The General Conference has chosen for this quinquennial the theme “Revival and Reformation.” As a part of this great Advent Movement, we as a conference of churches where the work of Christ takes place, really can’t do better in defining our mission. Thus, the Southwest Region Conference will work with a theme for the next four years of “*Revive for His Work, Reform for His Coming.*”

The Scriptures are rife with events when God’s people strayed from His ideal. From Genesis to Revelation, God’s Word is a call for His people to return and reform. Revival and reformation are evidenced on each page, and in each case where revival

and reform took place, it started with repentance, which is the most overlooked element of this process. Repentance implies turning from sin to righteousness. A clear example of this concept appears in 1 Kings 8:47, where Solomon pleads with God to hear the prayers of a repentant people who return to God. Repentance often involves reverting from idolatry to true worship of Yahweh and its corresponding moral behavior (Isa. 1:10–17; Ezek. 14:6; 18:30; Amos 4:6–11). In response to this repentance, God forgives and restores. ^[1] Hallelujah!

When and where the prefix “re” is used it is indicative of coming back to something. As a people we have a crucial need for godliness and holiness in this most serious

stage of earth’s history. We are being called back. As we look to future events—the call out of Babylon, the loud cry, the time of trouble, and The Second Coming of Jesus—time is counting down, revival and reformation must happen in order to be saved.

We are facing a monumental crisis for a *finished work*. Therefore, my prayer for every member is to “Revive for His Work, Reform for His Coming.”

Samuel L. Green, president

^[1] Freedman, D. N., Myers, A. C., & Beck, A. B. (2000). *Eerdmans dictionary of the Bible* (1118). Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans.

14 Students Receive Bible Study Diplomas

ALEXANDRIA, LA. » The Maranatha church is busy and on the move with Bible studies taking place in the homes of some of its members. Sylvester and Valarie Dotson started The Amazing Facts Bible Study in their home and, as a result, eight students from their class received diplomas. Four students of Elbert Jackson received diplomas, and two students of Alfred Hudson, Sr., received diplomas.

The groups meet every Monday at 7:00 p.m., and there will be another graduating class in March 2012. Please pray for the students who are learning some Amazing Facts about the Bible and what God expects from us.

Valarie Dotson



Pictured from left are Brittney Frazier; Tiny and Clyde Smith; LaForest Johnson; Vivian and David Weaver; Destiny Dotson; Floyd Foster; Janica, Rodney, and Aaliyah Jones. Not pictured are Delpedic Johnson, Shirley Coleman, and Peggy Schereal.

Committee Retreat 2011

DALLAS, TEX. » In the history of the Southwest Region Conference there had never been an Executive Committee Retreat until 2011. At its regularly scheduled meeting in September 2011, the committee chairperson, conference president Samuel Green, called the committee members together for a weekend of prayer and training prior to the business meeting on Sunday.

Elder Green outlined the objectives of the retreat, setting the tone for the weekend on Friday evening, after a delicious meal was served. Dr. Harold Lee, executive director of the Bradford, Cleveland, Brooks Leadership Center in Huntsville, Alabama, was the facilitator for the weekend. Elder Lee, with his with more than 40 years of church administration experience, shared the role, responsibility, relationship, function, and accountability of

the executive committee under the title "Governance as Leadership." The committee members heard that the skills needed in leadership are love, listening, learning, and leading, which leads to change in modality. One of the roles of the executive committee is to ask "why." It was also brought out that the gospel is always to be communicated through culture. Throughout the presentations the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy were used as a foundation to help members of the committee to learn of their role.

Everyone who attended agrees that the weekend was excellent and fruitful. The consistent response was, "We are glad

this information was shared." Members of the executive committee come from different areas of the conference and bring to the table a diverse assortment of experience and skills. The committee received training that called for a standard of excellence that, when practiced, will cultivate a healthy committee that is balanced and informed to lead the Southwest Region Conference through the final and exciting times before the imminent return of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

Roger R. Wade



Roger R. Wade



Roger R. Wade



Roger R. Wade



Roger R. Wade

Top left: Executive committee meeting on Sunday morning.

Top right: The executive committee spent time in prayer.

Left: Dr. Harold Lee facilitating the committee retreat.

Above: Committee members fellowship over a meal at the retreat.

“Go Thou and Do Likewise”

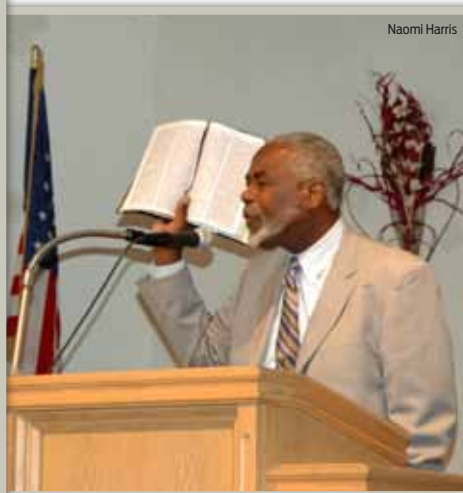
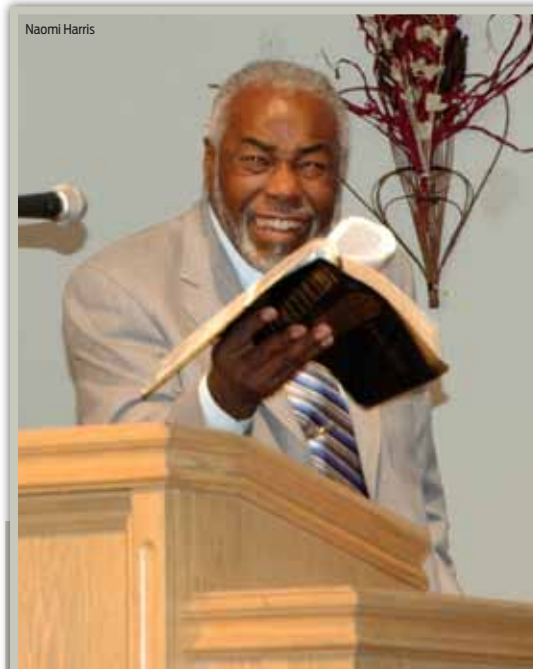
Hebron Church Celebrates Community Service Day

HOUSTON, TEX. » Through the years the community service outreach of the Hebron church has made a significant impact on the Acres Homes community and the greater Houston area. Under the leadership of church elder Noel Chandler, members have delivered food to the homeless in the downtown area, provided annual community dinners, and distributed food and clothing each week to those in need.

Pastor James Best, our guest speaker for Community Service Day, graced us with eloquent words in a sermon entitled, “Go Thou and Do Likewise,” based on Luke 10:25, 30-37. Pastor Best emphasized how important it is not to allow our rules, regulations, and doctrines to separate us from being the “bridge to save those who are in need of Christ.” He also shared how people are often turned away from God (such as the man who was on his way to Jericho, who was often passed

by, neglected, or overlooked) because we are either too busy doing “good” to see the need, or trying to make others adhere to rules when we should be loving them first. The Adventist Community Services department meets both the physical and spiritual needs of the less fortunate in the church and the community. Hebron has been a beacon of light in the community and continues to offer its helping hands and committed services, not only to those with physical needs, but to those with spiritual needs, as well. The day was a wonderful worship experience in celebrating what God has called us to do.

Naomi Harris



◀ Pastor James Best was the guest speaker for Hebron’s Community Service Day.

▼ Elder Noel Chandler, Adventist Community Services leader for the Hebron church.

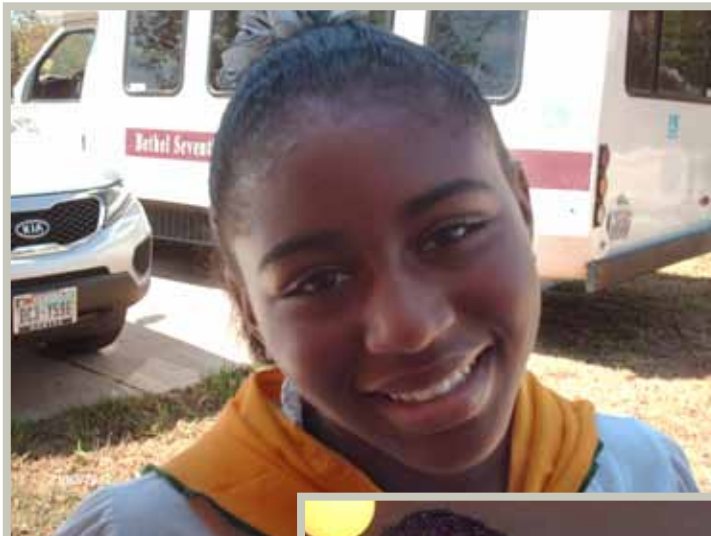


SOUTHWEST REGION CONFERENCE

News From the Bethel Church

Big Bible Revival Health Series

CORSICANA, TEX. » Norman Stiggers, pastor, began the Big Bible Revival last October and continued for eight weeks preaching the Word of God and the health message with power and conviction. Janelle Hart, a registered nutritionist, came from Mississippi to share healthy meal planning, food preparation, nutritional information, and vegan meals each Sabbath. Lorraine Stiggers emphasized the value of implementing the eight laws of health in the life for holistic development, disease prevention, and maintaining vitality in the last days. Pastor Norman Stiggers, head elder Richard Sneed, Cyrus Stiggers, Elaine Newhouse, and Janelle Hart reached out to participants through community outreach, Bible studies, and home visits. Several people were baptized during the revival as the Holy Spirit worked on hearts and minds.



young adults for the NAD Family Ministries Emphasis Week this year. We had special guests, participants, and visitors from Los

Angeles, Calif.; Desoto, Arlington, Mesquite, and Dallas, Tex., as well as people from the surrounding areas. Only children, youth, and young adults were participants on the program for the day, with the exception of our speaker, Rawdon Brown, who is still young at heart. Desmond and Alleta LaGrange, Jonathan and Ginger Lewis, Kendall and Kathy Shackelford, and Cyrus James Stiggers were our Sabbath School teachers for the day, who talked about the importance of youth ministry. Our junior youth ushers were our newly-baptized twins, and soon-to-be Pathfinders, Kyvon and Kynia Franklin. Quayonte Kemp, an eleventh grader who was baptized a few months ago, gave his personal testimony and promoted *Message* magazine during

the Personal Ministries Spotlight. The family ministries director, Lorraine Stiggers and the youth director, Alleta LaGrange, have teamed up to schedule regular Youth Day programs in the coming years.



Lorraine Stiggers

God's Army of Youth Rightly Trained

Our Family Ministries Day program was held on September 24, 2011. The theme was "God's Army of Youth Rightly Trained." The speaker, Rawdon Brown, emphasized the importance of the responsibilities and duties of our youth as Christians. The family ministries team was compelled to focus on the



The Bethel church in Corsicana, Tex., has been busy with community outreach, Bible studies, and young adult ministries.

The Rules of Revival and Reformation



TEXAS CONFERENCE

I had just finished a devotional thought in a meeting for young people, and was making my way toward the rear of the auditorium when she caught up with me. She had a look of anxiety and consternation on her young face. She whipped around in front of me and blurted out the words: “Pastor Carlos, you mentioned in your sermon that we need to change. So, do we need to change just for change’s sake?” The question was legitimate and loaded with expectation, as most questions from young people are. I thought for a moment before answering, then replied: “No, change, merely to change can be misguided. When we love Jesus, and spend time with Him, we are changed naturally by association. And then there comes that day, when we look into the mirror of grace, and we are astonished that somehow, we resemble the only true model—Christ!” Revival and reformation are the words of the day. But, revival and reformation without a cause and void of direction are pointless. The Word of God states in 2 Corinthians 3:18, “But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into that same image, from glory to glory by the Spirit of the Lord.” Therefore,

true revival and reformation require four key steps.

REALIZATION: Understanding that we are sinners, void of both the knowledge and the know-how to grow in grace. Those who depend on works never pass this first base. It’s the realization that both my ticket and my fitness for heaven are in Christ, and ratified by my constant association with Him. I desire for our people and our churches in Texas to come unto the Lord while there is still opportunity.

RELOCATION: There is absolutely no way that we can find ourselves on the road to sanctification where we are. True reformation is positive, spiritual change. When we allow ourselves to be piloted by “self-serving” agendas, we not only stunt our own spiritual growth, but we stymie the spiritual growth of the church. We certainly have challenges here in Texas, but Christians are not defined by their challenges—rather by their direction. The Spirit of God is the only one who can direct our path. Hebrews 11:8: “By faith Abraham went out, not knowing where He was going.” We don’t set the course, the Holy Spirit does.

REASSURANCE: It is amazing how, once we understand the charted direction of revival and reformation that the Spirit of God lays out before us, we are assured

each and every day that God is with us. The Bible says in Psalm 117:2, “And the *truth* of the Lord endures forever.” In this world, the one and only platform that we can safely stand on is truth. We are united in truth. We are established in truth. We are protected by truth.

REDEMPTION: Finally, as God’s people seek legitimate revival and reformation, the ultimate product must be redemption. How do we truly know that we are redeemed? Notice the words of Psalm 107:1, 2: “Oh give thanks to the Lord, for He is Good! For His mercy endures forever. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, those whom He has redeemed from the hand of the enemy.” If we are redeemed indeed, we should say so! Not so much to each other, but to a lost world that surrounds us. To me, the core of revival and reformation is displayed and played out in our actions as a people. Who do we represent? Our people, our churches, our schools, medical institutions and so on, should be known not only worldwide, but in the communities they serve. After all, in the wise words of Sir Winston Churchill, “Sometimes it’s not enough to do great things, sometimes we must do what is expected of us.”

Carlos J. Craig, president

Groundbreaking for the Arlington Southern Worship Center

ARLINGTON » It has been said that “it isn’t over until God says it’s over.” At the Arlington-Southern Worship Center we say “it doesn’t start until God says it starts.” That’s just what happened in September 2011, when we had our groundbreaking ceremony for our new church. It was a great day as community members, Texas Conference officials, our church builder, church members, and friends joined us in such a joyful occasion.

“It is good to finally see our vision coming to fruition,” explained Pastor Spencer Anderson. “There have been many sacrifices made in order to make this happen,

but the end result makes it all worthwhile.” Over a four-year period, members raised \$225,000 for the erection of our edifice, which will be a godly light in the heart of the south Arlington community. Our distinctive ministries in prison ministry, health and temperance, community service, men’s and women’s ministries, and family life ministry are already having an impact in southern Tarrant and Dallas counties. We are firm believers that little will become much when we place it in the Master’s hands.

Alice James



The Southern Worship Center held a groundbreaking ceremony for the new church facility that will be built in Arlington.

Tres Angeles Connects with Laredo Community

LAREDO » As a new company in the Texas Conference, the Tres Angeles church plant in Laredo has been blessed with many activities during its first year. The activities involving our youth have been especially strong, due to our Pathfinder program and the church's focus on getting our young people involved. During the month of October, we had the opportunity to share food, as well as the gospel of Jesus Christ with our community.

The following Sunday, our Laredo Knights Pathfinders were in charge of preparing, preaching, singing, and sharing God's mes-

sage to the people at the Jarvis Plaza in downtown Laredo. While it was a blessing to the public, it was particularly moving for our church members who invested time preparing food, serving over 100 people, and spending more than three hours in the plaza singing and sharing Christ's love.

All the fun the day yielded was nothing compared to the joy of seeing our youth sharing the message of Jesus.

Pastor Ervin Ortiz



The Pathfinder Club at the Laredo church has been very active in the community.

From Tavern to Temple

TEXAS CONFERENCE

FLORESVILLE » The members of the Wilson County Seventh-day Adventist company had been renting a building a few miles outside of town and were looking for something closer. They finally found what they thought was an answer to prayer, but as they and trust services director, Mike Doucoumes, were looking it over, word came of another building that was for sale. They went to inspect and found out it was a famous Floresville tavern. The members, along with Mike, saw the potential that this building and location had as a future church. The building was purchased and the members began transforming the property.

As they were remodeling the building, many people came in asking if the tavern was going to be opened again. They were told the building would open

again, but as a church. Needless to say, the people were surprised and a few mentioned that they had been praying that it would become a church. The local newspaper ran a front-page article of the transformation of this well-known establishment. They titled it, "What a Conversion!"

On November 5th, 2011, the Wilson County Seventh-day Adventist Company met for the first time in their newly-purchased, newly-transformed building and had Mike Doucoumes as

the guest speaker. The members and visitors praised God for the powerful way He brought everything and everyone together to get the building ready, and they now look forward to a mighty harvest in this once-famous tavern.

Marshall Gonzales, pastor



A building once known as the Floresville Tavern has now become a house of worship for a company of Seventh-day Adventist believers.

Pathfinder Field Day

EAST TEXAS » The Longview, Palestine, and Tyler Pathfinder clubs met to work on earning their camping skills honor on Sunday, October 9. The Pathfinders were divided into five different groups and went from station to station to check off their Friend, Companion, or Ranger requirements.

At one station they learned about hygiene and camp sanitation. At a second station they learned eight steps to take if you get lost, about camping etiquette, and how to safely light a gas stove. A third station demonstrated different techniques for purifying water,

and although the Pathfinders didn't like the taste of iodine, they

all agreed they would drink it to save their lives. A fourth station demonstrated how to pack the different kinds of sleeping bags, and discussed how to stay warm. The fifth and seemingly most popular station demonstrated fire building and fire safety.

Overall, the groups had a good time making new friends and look forward to seeing them again. Kyle Vick of Palestine said it well: "It was sweet, because we learned all kinds of new things." Kudos to the leaders and helpers of each club who made the day possible.

Niki Lorenz



Pathfinders from the Longview, Palestine, and Tyler clubs work together on their camping skills.

Spiritual Resolutions



TEXICO CONFERENCE

There is something about the start of a new year that brings renewed hope. It's a time for evaluating our lives, for putting off the old and bringing in the new. It's a time when many make New Year's resolutions. We can start the year with a clean slate and determine to live healthier, happier, and more spiritual lives.

Most of us can eat healthier, get more exercise, spend more time with our families, and better prioritize our time. But how about a spiritual resolution?

Let me suggest a resolution to draw closer to our Lord Jesus this year. That comes by spending quality time with Him daily in prayer and Bible study, and completely submitting to His will for our lives.

As we become more acquainted with our Creator and Redeemer, our love for Him will deepen and we will be compelled to share that with others. *"A revival of true godliness among us is the greatest and most urgent of all our needs. To seek this should be our first work"* (Selected Messages, p. 116). In other words, our greatest need is for a worthy spiritual resolution.

Can you imagine the impact of a spiritual resolution on our families, friends, neighbors, and coworkers? If each of our 11,600 members would dedicate their life to the spiritual work of knowing and sharing Jesus, the gospel would go to our territory in record time, and thus hasten our Lord's coming.

This year the Texico Conference's theme

is "12 in 12," meaning it is our goal to reach the 12,000-member mark in 2012. As you make plans for a new year, prayerfully consider what God would have you to do to reach this worthy goal. Let's unite our efforts and work toward the common goal of reaching people for Jesus. Can you imagine the possibilities—a new year, a spiritual resolution, and new members joining our family?

As we see the signs of Jesus' imminent return happening all around us, we may never find a better time for a spiritual resolution. May your first resolution for 2012 be a spiritual one.

Jim Stevens, president

Operation Christmas Child

LUBBOCK, TEX. » A room at Lubbock Junior Academy had four tables filled with toys, children's underwear, socks, hygiene items, and school supplies. Some students wrapped shoeboxes while others walked from table to table gathering items for a needy girl or boy. When our classroom looks like this, you know it has to be Operation Christmas Child time. The mission of Operation Christmas Child is to demonstrate God's love in a tangible way to needy children around the world, and together with Christians worldwide, to share the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Every November around Thanksgiving time we get a chance to help a child to have a happier Christmas. On Monday, November 21, we spent most of the morning filling shoeboxes to the brim with special gifts. One student decided to color coordinate all of the items in her box. Another one wrote a handwritten note of encouragement and placed it on top of the shoebox. Still, another student felt his shoebox should include several small cars so the receiving boy could race the cars with a friend.

The Lubbock Seventh-day Adventist

Church contributed several bags of supplies so we could experience the blessings we get when we decide to give. Our students kept packing and packing. There were always more boxes and supplies. Finally, we stopped at box number 50! Last year we packed 26 boxes. Our Operation Christmas Child project is growing. Our

deepest prayers and hopes went with the shoeboxes.

Merry Christmas to our Operation Christmas Child children all over the world!

Susan Zimmermann, Principal of Lubbock Junior Academy



Lubbock Junior Academy students packed 50 boxes for Operation Christmas Child.

Rio Rancho Church Ministries Dinner and Outreach

RIO RANCHO, N.MEX. »

Sunday, October 16th was a “High Day” for the newly elected Rio Rancho ministry and church office leaders. Organized as the first of many such annual welcoming events, Vanessa Wheeler, the 2010-11 leader graciously coordinated the dinner. Skip Biathrow, the new 2012-13 leader, a seasoned warrior serving in many church offices, is well qualified to meet the challenges of rallying the church to greater service and individual spiritual growth through training, personal devotion, and one-on-one witnessing. Pastor Eric Redic expressed his love for the ministry and the joy of working with such a diverse group of faithful believers at Rio Rancho.

Though there were many new faces in ministry positions, one novel ministry to New Mexico is a mobile health screening, education, and resource ministry. The Mobile Health Unit has already done health screening at the recent Navajo Fair in Shiprock, N.Mex., aided by local Native American Adventists Lucy and Tomara Peslakia. The unit has given demonstrations and health lectures at a local high school and



performed health screening, clothing distribution, and flu vaccination at a Homeless Veteran’s Stand Down in Santa Fe this past fall. This event was coordinated by Philip Chavez of the Santa Fe Marcy Park Adventist Church.

At Rio Rancho we are preparing to take the love of



Christ and the Three Angels’ Messages to the community, as well as attend to its physical needs. This is the goal of all ministries in the coming year.

**Rio Rancho
Communication
Department**

Top photo: Left to right: Kimberly Carney, Kimone Gardner and Dr. Robert Gardner staff the Mobile Health Unit in Shiprock, N.Mex.

Middle left: Skip Biathrow, personal ministries director, addresses the group.

Above: Present and former church officers meet together to begin a new term of leadership and service for the Rio Rancho church.

Middle right: Mobile Health Unit conducts screening at the Navajo Fair in Shiprock, N.Mex.

Adventists Host First “Stand Down” In Santa Fe

TEXICO CONFERENCE

SANTA FE, N.MEX. » “Every day, like the soldier in combat, the homeless veteran must continue to do battle,” says Veteran’s Employment Representative Phillip Chavez of the New Mexico Department of Workforce Connections. “His enemies often include lack of shelter, unemployment, physical and emotional difficulties, legal challenges, substance abuse, and hopelessness. Our homeless vets in Santa Fe deserved this Stand Down.”

The term “Stand Down” comes from times of war when exhausted combat troops were given the opportunity to re-



▲ Kimone Gardner lends a hand in conducting health screenings.

◀ Happy veteran gets ride back after “Stand Down.”

▼ One of the community booths assists a veteran.



turn to a place of relative security to rest and recover. That’s what the first Stand Down in Santa Fe was intended to do for the nearly 100 veterans in the area who participated. There are an estimated 700 needy veterans in northern New Mexico. This one-day event took place at the Santa Fe University of Art and Design gymnasium on the last Saturday of October 2011.

Event coordinators Leonard Cummings, pastor, and Marcy Park church elder, Jorge Hernandez, say that the university gym turned into a rest and relaxation post for the homeless vets. “It gave them an opportunity to get a hot shower, a haircut, a hot meal, and loads of thanks for the service they performed for our country” says Cummings.





▲ Two long-time vets found each other at the Stand Down in Santa Fe.

► Many vets were surprised by the act of foot washing—not as a religious service but as an act of compassion.

▼ Adventist Community Services clothing distribution area.



“In addition, various community and government organizations provided employment training and counseling, chaplain services, substance abuse counseling, medical check-ups, veterans benefits briefings, and human services information,” says Hernandez. “Then we presented them with thank you gifts of a sack lunch, a hygiene kit, a sleeping bag, and warm clothing for the winter.”

Chavez says this is just what the veterans needed. “The Adventists helped these vets regain their dignity and self respect. They offered a hand up, not a hand out.” The churches in Santa Fe on Airport Road, Marcy Park, Rabbit Road, and Southwest joined together as sponsors of the event. Several months of planning meetings were

required to organize, fundraise, recruit sponsors, and raise enthusiasm among church members. A local newspaper, *The Santa Fe New Mexican*, featured the Stand Down on its local news front page with a picture of an Adventist volunteer polishing the shoes of one of the vets.

Armed Forces veterans often find it a challenge to return to the everyday pattern of American society. “Battling their domestic enemies on a daily basis creates a self-destructive cycle leading to complete withdrawal from mainstream society,” Chavez says. “This help by the Adventist churches went far to sustain these veteran soldiers in their personal battles.”

Allen Steele



Voice Lessons

Three Southwestern Music Festival Participants Win Scholarships and Keep Right On Singing

Stage Fright Takes Flight

As the last notes of *The Prayer* die away, an awed hush rests over the crowd, followed by thunderous applause. The petite singer shyly smiles, bows, acknowledges her pianist, and gracefully exits the stage.

It's quite a different performance from her recital a year before when as a 12th grader, Leslie Castellanos performed as a finalist in Southwestern's Music Festival Scholarship Competition. On that night, Leslie laughingly remembers she was so nervous that she forgot to bow, forgot her pianist, and simply scurried off the stage at the end of her song.

"God has a plan for me," Leslie recounts. "I know that I am supposed to study music here. I feel a connection to Southwestern. Because of that connection, I can handle the hours of practice and all the homework."

In just her first semester of training, the young musician is much more comfortable on stage and knows the part music will play



Rose Weeks

in her future. "I want to teach music and how to communicate the love of God through music," she explains.



Rose Weeks

Music as a Ministry

Elaine McDonald is following in the footsteps of her vocally gifted father. There was never a doubt in her mind that she would continue praising God through her music.

She was hesitant to audition for the scholarship, but friends and family told Elaine she was selling her God-given talent short. So she went for it. McDonald won a scholarship, enrolled at Southwestern, and is now happily pursuing a nursing degree.

"Performing as a finalist at the Music Festival opened doors for me musically," Elaine explains. "Recently I sang at the Women's Conference in San Marcos. As I was introduced, I was thanked for sharing my music ministry. And that's when it hit me—I have a music ministry. Wow! Praise God!"

Once the young nursing major graduates, she plans to return to school for a second degree in theology and psychology. "I want to be able to help people with their physical needs and then say, 'Hey, I know this great man named Jesus. Let me tell you about Him.'"

Opera for God

Raised in a family of musicians, Halla Kalmansson sang her first solo at 18 months old. Halla heard about the audition through a music clinic she attended in Maine, put on by Southwestern music instructor Jonathan Wall.

However, when Halla won her scholarship, she was only a sophomore in high

school. Undaunted by the task ahead of her, the determined young scholar completed two years of high school in five months and was ready to start college the following fall.

"I haven't regretted my decision for a moment," Halla shares. "I absolutely love my experience at Southwestern. I know that my teachers care. And there is such an atmosphere of God here, in everything we do."

Halla is already tucking some extraordinary experiences under her belt, which she hopes will prepare her for a career as an opera singer. During the Meyerson performance last year, she sang a solo backed by the 300-member Music Festival choir. "It was an awe-inspiring experience," Kalmansson remembers.

Each year top music students from across North America are encouraged to audition for the opportunity to win a scholarship to Southwestern and to perform in both Southwestern's Annual Showcase Concert and at the Morton H. Meyerson Symphony Center.

Darcy Force



Rose Weeks

Elaine McDonald (**far left**), Leslie Castellanos (**left**), and Halla Kalmansson (**above**) each perform at one of Southwestern's student recitals, which occur several times each semester.

DISCOVERY: A Student's Research and God's Leading

The first time Summer Rose Weeks set foot on the campus of Southwestern Adventist University, she was just along for the ride. Rose's older sister was the potential student while Rose was just finishing her freshman year in high school.

But when the campus tour took them into the Paleontological Museum lab, Rose knew she'd found her calling. Watching a handful of students cleaning and cataloging bones carefully removed from Southwestern's Dinosaur Excavation Research Project site in eastern Wyoming, the teenager became enthralled with the process, and the implications for creation. "It made geology so real to me," she explained.

"This wasn't some show on television. These were real bones, with real stories to tell. I understood then the impact geology has on our understanding of creation."

One of their campus tour guides was Art Chadwick, Southwestern's geology research professor and founder of the Dinosaur Excavation Research Project. After meeting Dr. Chadwick, witnessing the processes taking place in the lab, and listening to several of his presentations over the next few years, Rose became more and more convinced that she had found her career path. When she volunteered to clean bones after school, Chadwick offered Rose a scholarship to attend the next summer's excavation project.

The summer following her junior year in high school found the enthusiastic young scholar on the Wyoming plains, by far the youngest student at the dig. "I was nervous," she laughs, "because the only person I knew was Dr. Chadwick. But it turned out that everyone was very friendly, which I should've expected since that's the Southwestern way."

For her senior year of high school, Rose decided to homeschool so she could take as many of Chadwick's college credit classes as possible. Her family was planning to move back East as soon as her father finished his doctorate and Rose wanted to learn as much as she could from Chadwick while she had the chance. As another summer approached, Rose was facing some big deci-

sions: go back East with the family or stay at Southwestern?

But Rose was confident she would find her answers over the course of the summer. "It's hard to fully explain, but the whole dinosaur trip is a very spiritual experience. It's had a big impact on my life. You live in such close proximity to each other that you become like a family. It's almost like being in church everyday, a community church. You're around people who study both science and the Bible and it has a profound influence on your thinking. And it gave me an entirely new view of Sabbath; it's all about sharing, singing, discussing ideas, fellowship, and just enjoying nature."

Rose's future was further impacted when, with Professor Chadwick, she made an important discovery. After days and miles of hiking far afield of the excavation site with the GPS system, their hard work was rewarded. With her teacher, Rose had discovered a 2 meter thick seismite (sedimentary beds disturbed by seismic shaking) that could be traced continuously in outcrop for distances of up to a mile at several locations over 20 square miles. This discovery is significant because the Lance Formation, where the excavation site is located, is notoriously difficult to decipher stratigraphically.

"It was an exciting experience," Rose said. "I had just finished taking a class on Stratigraphy. It was a lot of fun to be applying everything I'd just learned in the field."

This fall Rose will be the co-author of a presentation at the 2011 Annual Meeting of the Geological Society of America, with approximately 6000 scientists in attendance. And she will be doing so as a Southwestern Research Fellow under the tutelage of Art



Rose enthusiastically demonstrates her quarrying techniques at the excavation sight in eastern Wyoming.

Chadwick.

Chadwick explains, "Rose Weeks has been an active force in moving forward our understanding of the sediments in which we are finding the dinosaur bones in Wyoming. She has been able to pinpoint, for the first time, the stratigraphy of the bonebeds we are working in, and put them in a stratigraphic framework so we can know how the various sites relate to one another. That is a huge accomplishment, and will be a great asset as we continue to try to reconstruct the history of these sediments."

Looking back, Rose is both excited and a little astonished to see the direction her life has taken since she first connected with Southwestern. The longer she works in the field, the more amazed Rose becomes at both God's creation and His guidance in her life. "I think God is leading me to study geology, because of all the opportunities He's made available to me and all the people I've met. It's truly great to see God leading in my life."

“Remember When...”

Former Southwestern Union President Honored at Retirement Celebration

FORT WORTH, TEX. » Former Southwestern Union president Max Treviño and his wife Betty were honored at a special retirement celebration entitled “Remember When...” on the evening of November 13. Approximately 190 coworkers, friends, and family attended the event, some individuals travelling from the far corners of the country.

3ABN president Jim Gilley was the emcee, leading out with touching memories, commendations, and a lot of good-natured humor. Retired conference secretary Gary Grimes, Southwest Region Conference president Samuel Green, Adventist Health

System president and CEO Don Jernigan, Southwestern Union treasurer Deryl Knutson, Southwestern Adventist University president Eric Anderson, recently retired Southern Union president Gordon Retzer, North American Division president Dan Jackson, and current Southwestern Union president Larry Moore all added to the joyful fun and dignified praise for Max and Betty and their 45 years of service for the Adventist Church (from 1966 to 2011). Tributes were also given by Max and Betty’s son, Jason, and daughter, Andrea. Their three grandchildren Zachary, Hannah, and Ethan also attended.

Forever His, the A’MEN Quartet, and Dr. John Boyd provided music. Laughter was frequent and appreciation was heartfelt on this special night dedicated to

Max and Betty Treviño, committed friends of the Southwestern Union.

Friends and close family members honored Betty at a special brunch on the morning of November 13th. Music, tributes, blessings, and food were provided to express appreciation for Betty and to recognize the important role she has played in her husband’s ministry.



Former Southwestern Union president Max Treviño and his wife, Betty (top right), were honored at a special retirement celebration attended by approximately 190 coworkers, friends, and family. 3ABN president Jim Gilley (top left) was the emcee and one of the many distinguished friends of Max and Betty to offer adoration and delightful humor to the event.

SOUTHWESTERN UNION

NAD Day of Prayer

January 7, 2012

At the beginning of each New Year, the North American Division family joins together—setting aside the first Sabbath as the NAD Day of Prayer. Some begin on Friday night, and finish with a prayer breakfast on Sunday morning. In many places it has become a power-packed weekend of fellowship and intercessory prayer as God’s people join hearts with His family all across this vast continent on the first Sabbath (in some cases, it may be the second or third Sabbath) to pray together for our countries, our communities, our churches, and our own needy hearts. Whether your fellowship decides on the full weekend, or a special prayer emphasis on Sabbath, join with your family all across this division at this crucial time in our history. Is there a better way to begin the New Year, than to come together in dependence on our God?

The format for the Sabbath or weekend may vary according to the needs and purposes in your communities, but one component that is always appreciated, is a time of prayer and blessing for our pastors, and conference, union, and division leadership. Pray for those in your area by name, asking God for specific help and blessing. Let’s stand on His Word and claim God’s promises for the needs of our hearts and those of others.

There’s an amazing quote from the beautiful book, *The Desire of Ages*, which says, “God is well pleased when His children make the very highest demands of Him, that we may glorify His name. We may expect large things if we have faith in His promises”

(p. 668).

As you look ahead, what great prayers would God lead you to pray? Why not ask Him to help you pray really big prayers? What is on His heart? How would He like to expand your horizon to include some of the people and the needs you may not be praying for?

Your prayers profoundly affect the dark and hopeless places of the world—because prayer is great, and one person’s prayer has great effectiveness. “The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and wonderful results” (James 5:16, Touchpoint Bible).

So how can we break through the darkness in the least evangelized nations and the dark places in our nations of North America? The answer is prayer.

Here are some ideas you may want to discuss with your prayer/leadership committee. Incidentally, you’ll want to have a planning/prayer committee that meets regularly to consider the needs of the church and community.

1. Seminars on prayer walking, how to pray for an hour, or how to pray for your pastor and/or church leaders. These can precede the weekend, or be offered on Sabbath afternoon.
2. Some will have an all-night prayer service, or a come-and-go attendance through the night. If that’s your plan, you may want to begin at sundown with a special vespers to open the Sabbath, and each hour until midnight or later, could be planned by a different person, family, or department in the church.

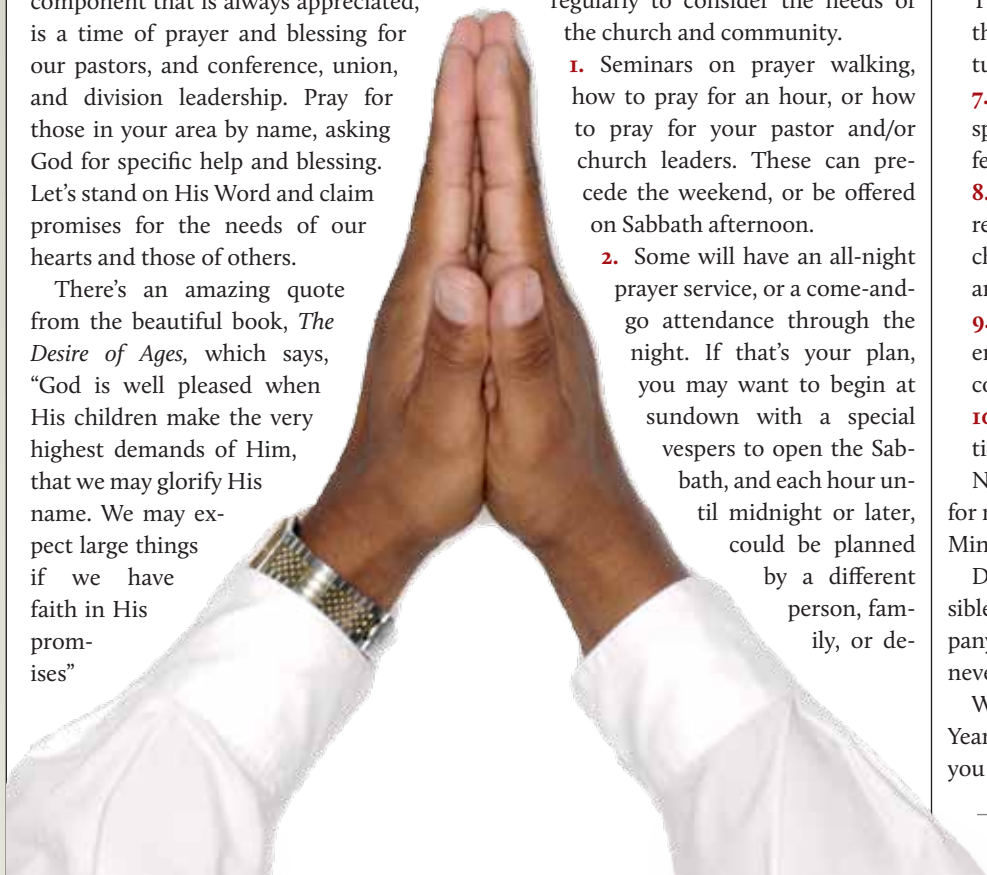
partment in the church.

3. Invite pastors of other denominations to join you for this evening service. They may even wish to help with the planning. Provide for families with children to participate early in the evening.
4. You’ll want to provide time for youth to sing, share, and pray. A personal testimony is not only an encouragement to others, but a strength for those sharing. Everyone has a story that can inspire someone.
5. Small group Bible studies with sharing and discussion of discoveries from each group is a memorable and inspirational experience. We learn from one another as we study and pray together.
6. Some will plan some form of community outreach for the Sabbath, such as prayer walking, visiting shut-ins, nursing homes, hospital patients, etc. This can be done in a small group (Bible study group, Sabbath School class, etc.) Try to randomize the groups formed so that families and friends have an opportunity to meet and work with others.
7. Some plan for a baptismal service, special Communion service, or agape fellowship.
8. Some pray through the church directory, and prayer walk through the church, praying for each department and ministry.
9. Pray for your school and/or academies, colleges, and universities in your community and conference.
10. Pray for churches of all denominations in your community.

NOTE: See Resources and Downloads for more information at www.NADPrayer-Ministries.org.

Do you have a request that seems impossible? You’re not alone; you’re in good company. Abraham was there too, but his faith never wavered (Rom.4:20).

We’ll be praying for you, that this New Year will be all that God has in mind for you and for your church.



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Announcements

"Transforming Lives Through Libraries." Association of Seventh-day Adventist Librarians 2012 Conference will be held June 19-24, 2012 at the Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies; Silang, Cavite, Philippines. Librarians and Information Professionals are invited to visit <http://asdal.org> for conference information or contact Christy at ScottChristy.Scott@walla-walla.edu or 509.527.2153.

Chisholm Trail Academy Alumni will be held March 30-31, 2012; honor classes 1972, 1977, 1982, 1987, 1992, 1997, 2002, 2007. Friday vespers at 7:30 p.m.; Sabbath services begin 9:00 a.m. and continue through potluck lunch. Saturday night vespers will be at 7:15 p.m., followed by CTA

Blazers Basketball game and honor class parties. Contact Shelly at: scastan@aol.com or through the Facebook group: CTA Alumni 2012.



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Milestones

ANNIVERSARIES

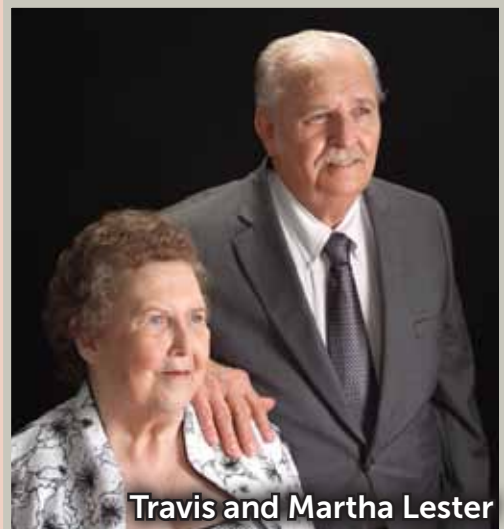
Travis and Martha Lester, members of the Tyler (Texas) Seventh-day Adventist Church, celebrated their **50th** wedding anniversary on August 26, 2011. Travis married the former Martha Dickerson in

Bertram, Tex., in 1961. More than 100 friends, family, and church family from the area helped them celebrate with a beautiful reception in the Tyler Family Life Center at the Tyler church on September 4, 2011. The couple's children, Deborah Small of Kerrville, Tex., and Janet and Jeff Whisenhunt of Tyler, as well as their four grandchildren,

Thomas and Christian Small of Kerrville and Stephanie and Chris Whisenhunt of Tyler, hosted the event.

Kenneth and Agida Henderson celebrated their **50th** wedding anniversary on June 18, 2011, at the Athens Seventh-day Adventist Church during the 11 o'clock service. After a Father's Day sermon,

Pastor Richard Rose led the couple in the renewal of their wedding vows. Ken and Agida met on the campus of Madison College in Madison, Tenn. They were wed in the Helen Funk Assembly Hall on June 18, 1961. They have two sons and three grandchildren. The Lord has blessed their marriage and their years of service teaching church school in the Carolina and Texas Conferences. They are now retired and live on their farm in Kerens, Tex.



Travis and Martha Lester



Kenneth and Agida Henderson

BIRTHS

Anthony Jack Brown was born on September 5, 2011. He arrived five weeks early and was 6 lbs., 5 oz., and 20 inches long. Proud parents are Sara and T.J. Brown of the Tyler (Texas) Seventh-day Adventist Church. Super excited is big sister Gale (10 months). Maternal grandparents are Staci and Steve Wilson, also of the Tyler church.

Obituaries

BAKER, Don, born August 26, 1930 in Indiana and died October 18, 2011 in Hot Springs, Ark. He was a member of the Hot Springs church. Survivors: wife, Kathleen Baker of Hot Springs Village, Ark.; son, Greg Baker of Hot Springs; daughter and son-in-law, Kimberly and Scott Flaughner from Edwardsville, Ind.; brother, Robert Baker; and two granddaughters.

BENDALL, Richard Walter, born August 10, 1928 in Blackstone, Va., and died August 31, 2011 in Fort Worth, Tex. He was laid to rest in Disputanta, Virginia in a family cemetery on his property. Richard was very active mentally and physically until a sudden onset and brief battle with aggressive cancer. He served in the Potomac Conference as a teacher and vice principal of Shenandoah Valley Academy. In the Arkansas-Louisiana Conference, he served as youth and education director, as well as director of Camp Yorktown Bay, and also as principal of Ozark Adventist Academy. In the Southwestern Union Conference he served in many capacities from assistant education director to vice president. Upon retirement, he founded a nonprofit mission organization, World Health Services, and spent the remaining years tirelessly traveling throughout the world serving others and showing a true example of Jesus' love by meeting the physical needs of those less fortunate. Survivors: wife of 58 years, Peggy Bendall; son, Doug (and Beth) Bendall; daughter, Barbie (and Torrence) Simons; daughter, Bev (and Don) Crain; brothers, Joseph M Bendall, Jr., Henry Bendall, and Lee Bendall; sisters, Mildred Koliadko, Marie Bendall, Leena Wood, and Ruth Ann Imbruglio;

eight grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. He was preceded in death by five siblings.

BRYCE, Beverly Jane, born September 8, 1923 and died September 28, 2011 in Fort Worth, Tex. She was a member of the Cleburne (Texas) First church. Survivors: son, Carl Bryce of Alvarado, Tex.; daughter, Janie Day of Cleburne; brother, Melvin Livingston of New York; sister, Helen Lane of Florida.

BURTON, Minnie Mae, born March 20, 1931 in Corn, Okla., and died September 28, 2011 in Wichita, Kans. A member of the Summit Ridge church, she was laid to rest in Fairview, Okla. Survivors: Minnie was preceded in death by her husband, Clarence Burton, and is survived by her daughters, Shirley Voth, Patricia Pauls, and Geneva Flaming.

DARSEY, Gloria, born April 6, 1927 in New Orleans, La., and died October 16, 2011 in Lynn Haven, Fla. She was a member of the Slidell (Louisiana) church. Survivors: son and daughter-in-law, Alicia and Edward Darsey III; daughter and son-in-law, Sharon and Grady Stanley of Lynn Haven, Fla.; sister, Carol Griffin, of Baton Rouge, La.; four grandchildren, 10 great-grandchildren, and one great-great-grandchild.

HILL, Roy Edward, born April 13, 1961 in Guthrie, Okla., and died September 8, 2011 in Oklahoma City, Okla. He was a member of the Summit Ridge church. Roy attended the University of Central Oklahoma in Edmond. He earned a B.S. degree in math and a master's in history, with special emphasis in Irish history. He loved sharing his knowledge of Irish history with others. Survivors: Roy

was preceded in death by his eldest sister. He is survived by his wife, Jenny Hill, and son, James Hill, both of Guthrie; his mother; two brothers, and one sister of Chandler, Okla.; one sister of Stround, Okla.; and one sister of Bethany, Okla.

HOLLEY, Cecil Carl, born May 14, 1927 in Pulaski, Tenn., and died October 12, 2011 in Baton Rouge, La. He was a member of the Baton Rouge church. Survivors: Esther Pitre, the mother of his children, of Denham Springs, La.; son, Carl Holley; daughters and sons-in-law, Terresa and Larry Ward of Denham Springs, and Penny and David Russell of Fairview, N.C.; seven grandchildren, and eight great-grandchildren.

LANGLOIS, Bart Howell, born December 9, 1960 in Baton Rouge, La., and died September 2, 2011 in Baton Rouge. A member of the Baton Rouge church, Bart was a loving son and brother who loved the Lord. Survivors: mother and father, Ina and Buck Langlois, of Baton Rouge; brother, Bret Langlois, of Praireville, La.; and two nieces, Emily Ray of Albany,

La., and Megan Fails of Gonzales, La.

SAVAGE, Iva Belle, born February 3, 1922 and died November 3, 2011 in New Braunfels, Tex. She was a member of the Keene church. Survivors: daughters, Myrtle Savage Dumas of Willis, Tex., Kay Savage Morgan of Moses Lake, Wash., Lisa Savage Smith of New Braunfels, Tex., and Lynda Savage of McDonald, Tenn.

SPADY, Bernice Gemmel, born September 13, 1916 and died September 28, 2011 in Cleburne, Tex. She was a member of the Cleburne First church. Survivors: son, Frank Philbin of Cleburne; brother, Lester Gemmel of Overland, Ohio; sister, Ruth Ann Griffen of Willard, Ohio; sister, Bettye Long of Houston, Tex.

WYNN, Dorothy Lee, born November 29, 1935 and died September 23, 2011 in Cleburne, Tex. She was a member of the Cleburne First church. Survivors: daughters, Vickie Anderson of Joshua, Tex., and Linda Adams of River Rouge, Mich.; son, Robert Wynn of Leon, Kans.

SABBATH SUNSET CALENDAR

	Jan 6	Jan 13	Jan 20	Jan 27	Feb 3	Feb 10
Abilene, TX	5:47	5:53	5:59	6:06	6:12	6:19
Albuquerque, NM	5:08	5:15	5:22	5:29	5:35	5:42
Amarillo, TX	5:49	5:55	6:02	6:09	6:16	6:23
Brownsville, TX	5:53	5:58	6:04	6:09	6:14	6:19
Dallas, TX	5:35	5:41	5:47	5:54	6:00	6:06
El Paso, TX	5:15	5:22	5:28	5:34	5:40	5:47
Fort Worth/Keene, TX	5:37	5:43	5:49	5:56	6:02	6:08
Gallup, NM	5:16	5:22	5:29	5:36	5:43	5:50
Galveston/Houston, TX	5:36	5:41	5:47	5:53	5:59	6:05
Gentry, AR	5:17	5:23	5:30	5:38	5:44	5:52
Little Rock, AR	5:12	5:18	5:25	5:32	5:38	5:45
Muskogee, OK	5:22	5:28	5:35	5:42	5:49	5:56
New Orleans, LA	5:14	5:20	5:26	5:32	5:38	5:43
Oklahoma City, OK	5:31	5:37	5:44	5:52	5:58	6:05
Roswell, NM	5:04	5:10	5:17	5:23	5:29	5:37
San Antonio, TX	5:49	5:55	6:01	6:07	6:12	6:18
Shreveport, LA	5:23	5:29	5:35	5:42	5:48	5:55
Tulsa, OK	5:23	5:29	5:37	5:44	5:50	5:58

He Knows Better Than I

SOME PEOPLE CAN RECALL MOMENTS THAT HAVE CHANGED THEIR LIVES. Most of these people really only mean that something has changed their lives momentarily. But others truly know what it means to experience something that changes their lives forever.

Even though this isn't exactly the case with me, a traumatic experience did change my life. I remember that Friday as if it were yesterday. I was at the church with my schoolmates practicing for our Christmas performance that night. My Dad walked in and I was so excited, thinking he had come to watch me practice. I ran off the stage and gave him a hug but told him that I didn't want to spoil the show for that night. Then I realized that wasn't the reason he had come. . . .

My aunt and uncle had a perfect life, you might say. Both were very successful in their careers and with a new addition to their family, they couldn't be happier. But a few months later, when my aunt was diagnosed with cancer, while at the same time being the mother of a new baby girl, life became very difficult.

For a year they tried everything from chemotherapy to natural remedies. My aunt's health would improve remarkably, only to get terribly worse again. After a year of struggling, the Lord finally let my aunt rest. She was 34 years old with a husband, a one-year-old daughter, and another baby on the way. You can't imagine the impact this had on my whole family. My aunt passed away a week before Christmas on my aunt Rose's birthday, and no one really wanted to celebrate Christmas that year.

For the longest time I thought, *Lord, how could You let this happen to my aunt and uncle? Everything was falling into place for them and now suddenly she's gone and my uncle is devastated.*

She was too young, Lord, You just don't understand.

I questioned God's plan and authority until one day, I heard God voice. He replied, "How old was Jesus when He died for you? I let that happen. You are the one who doesn't understand, can't you see? She was the closest to Me right before I took her."

That Friday when my dad took me aside and told me that my aunt passed away that morning, it didn't exactly sink in until he left. Afterward I remember lots of tears and pain, but after a time of grieving, it all became clear to me. I don't know what might have happened later in her life had she lived, but God knew. It took something like my aunt's death to get my whole family to

fully surrender our lives to God and let Him direct them for His purpose.

This jump-started my relationship with Christ. Before, He was someone that I heard and sang about in Sabbath School, not an actual Person you can talk to and depend on. He became real to me, and once that happened, other people's needs and concerns seemed more important.

I still stop and question His purpose for me and I still mess up at times. But I never question His love and grace, and the best part is, I know that no matter how badly I mess up, He always accepts me back and forgives me. Now when I think of that Friday when I lost my aunt, I can also remember the Friday that Jesus died for me and the Sunday on which He rose so I can see her again soon someday. And that is truly life-changing.





On the Record »

BY PAT HUMPHREY » COMMUNICATION DIRECTOR, SOUTHWESTERN UNION

There is Hope!

A WEEK BEFORE I LEFT FOR AFRICA this past September, I celebrated a birthday. Knowing how much I love plants, my husband surprised me with a beautiful, lush, green plant. I asked my daughter to be sure to water it for me while we were away. But when I arrived home almost a month later, I was quite dismayed to find an ugly, dry, brown, wilted mess of leaves slumped over the sides of the pot. “Oh, I forgot,” she said sheepishly when I inquired about it.

Surely I can revive this plant, I thought, as I proceeded to pour generous amounts of water into the pot. Days went by, but nothing happened. I gave it a little more water, cut off the dead leaves, and waited some more. Still, nothing happened. “Well, I’m just going to throw it away; there’s no hope,” I said to myself. But wanting to save the pot and the soil for future use, I set it aside, fully intending throw the roots away when I could get around to it. The abandoned pot sat there for days, it seemed.

Then one day, to my surprise, I noticed a tiny green sprout emerging from the soil. I couldn’t believe it! Had my precious plant actually come back to life? Indeed it

had. Though it hasn’t yet grown back to its original size, I now have a lovely little green plant that is bursting forth with 20 or 30 new leaves. And to think I had come very close to throwing it away!

I believe there’s a spiritual lesson in this for all of us. How many times have we been tempted to give up on others—or even ourselves—ready to cast them into the “trash heap” of damnation because there was just no hope? What I didn’t realize about my “dead” plant is that I could only see what was on the surface, and what I saw wasn’t very pretty. It was dry and brittle and worthless, seemingly without the hope of life. But underneath

the surface, where I couldn’t see, there was budding new life, just waiting to emerge into a beautiful green plant.

Perhaps there is someone in your life who appears to have no hope. You might be thinking about giving up on him or her. Maybe it’s a loved one, a wayward child, or the prodigal who never returned home; maybe it’s a struggling church member who just keeps stumbling and falling over and over again; or maybe it’s that “dead” church that just seems beyond the hope of revival. Whenever you are tempted to give up on someone, or even a whole congregation, remember this verse: “If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land” (2 Chron. 7:14). That’s a promise!

Pat Humphrey

Record

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