

SOUTHWESTERN UNION

# Record

MAY 2012



When  
Disaster Strikes,  
We're There!

ADVENTIST COMMUNITY SERVICES AND DISASTER RESPONSE





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**On the Cover**

When natural disasters strike, such as floods, tornados, and hurricanes, Adventist Community Services disaster response volunteers are among the first to arrive on the scene. Such was the case when a series of tornados struck the Dallas-Fort Worth area in early April. ACS volunteers, donned in yellow shirts, handed out blankets, water, food, and clothing outfits to displaced (and grateful) residents of the Lancaster, Texas, area. [Photo by Kenn Dixon]

# Point of View»

BY JOE WATTS » DISASTER RESPONSE NATIONAL COORDINATOR



## Christians Show Compassion

**I have the distinct privilege of working with Adventist Community Services (ACS) volunteers.** These men and women regularly give unselfishly of themselves, assisting people in need in a variety of situations. They are making a difference in the communities where they live, and are following the example of their Savior, Jesus Christ. Their lives manifest a love for people around them because a heart of compassion is a distinguishing feature of true Christianity. Compassion means to feel deep sorrow for a person who suffers misfortune, and to desire to alleviate that suffering. Whether it is assistance following a disaster, helping a student with their schoolwork, helping a senior citizen, or giving food or clothing, these are some of the ways that ACS volunteers show compassion in their communities.

Every church has opportunities for their members to become involved in service. In this issue, you will find ministry ideas that will help you to envision ways that you can serve the Lord. God desires that His people have compassion for their families, friends, neighbors, and strangers. Through our caring, we can make a real difference in the lives we touch. Compassion has been described as “your pain in my heart.” Compassion is both a divine and human quality. Scripture shows us the tremendous compassion of Jesus that led Him to give His life for us. In turn, He desires that we also show compassion to others.

My wife, Sherry, and I spent a week in the disaster warehouse in Jeffersonville, Ind., near the tornado-devastated towns in Southern Indiana. Several children came in to the warehouse, bringing gifts of notes and money. One Indianapolis toddler, when he heard the news, gave his mom all his money, \$2.43, and



asked her to give it to the children to help. Twin, 4-year-old girls brought in \$25 gift cards that they had received for Christmas, along with decorated notes that read, “Hope you get your house fixed.”

How can one not be touched by the innocence of children, who give all they have to help another child? It is not about the gift, but the heart of the giver.

Jesus says, “Until we become like little children.” Could this be what He was talking about? Do we care about those that God has allowed our lives to touch? Are we willing to give of ourselves, to even be inconvenienced to give assistance to those in need? Do we care enough to show others the compassion that Jesus showed

to us in giving us the gift of eternal life?

**Joe Watts**, Disaster Response national coordinator





# CREATION Health

BY LYNELL LAMOUNTAIN

## The Healing Power of Caring

**In his book**, *The Pursuit of Excellence*, Ted W. Engstrom tells a story about Babe Ruth and a particular game he played just before retiring from baseball. The Babe was a baseball legend, hitting 714 home runs during his career.

But during one of his last full major league games, between the Braves and Cincinnati Reds, it was obvious that he was no longer the player he had once been; his speed and agility were noticeably off.

In fact, he had trouble fielding the ball, and many of his throws were off target. In just one inning alone, his errors allowed Cincinnati to score five times.

When the inning was finally over and Ruth was leaving the field, he walked toward the dugout to the deafening roar of yelling and booing because of his poor performance.

Just then, a little boy, who couldn't take it anymore, jumped over the railing onto the field. With tears streaming down his cheeks, he wrapped his arms around the legs of his hero.

With a big, old smile, Ruth scooped him up into his arms and hugged him.

A sudden hush fell over the entire park.

In that brief moment, baseball fans saw two heroes: Babe Ruth, who despite an abysmal day on the field, cared about the little boy;

and the small kid, who cared about the bruised feelings of another human being. Both melted the hearts of the crowd and showed everyone what truly matters most in life.

People know when they're cared for—when they're loved. In

fact, people who feel cared for and loved, heal more quickly. In his book, *Love and Survival*, Dean Ornish, a physician known for his work in reversing heart disease, speaks about the power of love and intimacy. "I am not aware," he writes, "of any other factor in medicine—not diet, not smoking, not exercise, not stress, not genetics, not drugs, not surgery—that has a greater impact on our quality of life, incidence of illness, and the premature death from all causes.

"In short," he observes, "anything that promotes a sense of isolation often leads to illness and suffering. Anything that promotes a sense of love and intimacy, connection and community, is healing."

Research from the University of California at Irvine reinforces this point. Its studies indicate that loneliness and lack of emotional support can cause a threefold increase in the odds of being diagnosed with a heart condition.

Interestingly, the study also shows that having just one person available for emotional support serves to be enough to reduce the risk of heart disease. Remember the story of the Indian woman named Mata Amritanadama? She was called the "hugging saint." It is estimated that Mata hugged more than 20 million people in countries all across the globe. People lined up by the thousands and waited in lines for hours just to experience her caring embrace. When asked where she gets all her energy, she replied simply, "It takes no energy to love. It is easy." As she hugged people, she would whisper in their ears and say, "My son, my son, my son, my son" (or daughter), while rocking them back and forth. She would finish by saying, "Love you, love you, love you," and then kiss them on the forehead.

We were created to give *and* receive love. So show people that you care—let them know that they matter, for no other reason than that they are a sacred child of God.

*That's CREATION Health!*

Lynell LaMountain writes from Florida Hospital in Orlando, Fla.

-  **Choice** 
-  **Rest** 
-  **Environment** 
-  **Activity** 
-  **Trust** 
-  **Interpersonal**  
RELATIONSHIPS 
-  **Outlook** 
-  **Nutrition** 

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# Lead Your World »»»

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



## Coming Up for Air

**IN ASIA, THE REMARKABLE WATER SPIDER IS ONE OF NATURE'S AMAZING PARADOXES. IT LIVES IN ONE WORLD, BUT BREATHES THE ATMOSPHERE OF ANOTHER, TEACHING US AN AMAZING LESSON IN SELF LEADERSHIP.**

In Asia, the remarkable water spider is one of nature's amazing paradoxes. Like all other spiders, it breathes air, but lives and has its web under the surface of the water. The unusual web-home is bell-shaped, and in a potentially hostile environment. The spider brings in its air supply by trapping bubbles on the hairs of its body, and then releasing them into its bell-shaped web. This spider lives in one world, but breathes the atmosphere of another.

There's an important lesson the Asian water spider can teach us about self-leadership. We, too, function in two different worlds. Most of our time, effort, talent, and skills are consumed in the normal pursuits of life, such as work, career, and school. At the same time, we live with the conviction and hope that another world, drastically different from what we know is tangible and coming soon. The challenge we have is learning how to thrive in a potentially hostile environment and maintain hope in the wonderful promise of Jesus' return.

The secret to the water spiders' successful life under the water's surface teaches us a great deal. This creature literally brings in its air supply from another atmosphere. One of the most important lessons in leadership is learning to lead yourself and thrive in your everyday environment. For people of faith to be successful, we need to be intentional

about cultivating the right atmosphere in our lives. Christians must learn to live in one world, but breathe the atmosphere of another.

Romans 12:2 gives sound advice on how to handle our dual existence. First, never lose sight of which world you truly belong to. We may live "in" the world, but

are advised to "not be conformed to this world." Second, we are given a key for figuring out how to make choices that please God, "be transformed by the renewing of your mind, in order to prove what is that good and pleasing and perfect will of God."

Where do we start with this transformation? By coming up for air! Spending quality moments in simple prayer, reading, and reflection are the ways to live in one world, but breathe the atmosphere of another. This paradox is the secret to our success.

It sounds so simple, but being consistent in this area of self-leadership is challenging for most of us. If we're truly serious about leading our world, the practice of "coming up for air" promotes our growth in two important areas of leadership:

### **Thinking Differently:**

Leaders think deeply about their world and the positive influence they can have. They take responsibility for their world and those within it, whatever that may look like. They often believe that things could and should be radically different, and are willing to step up and help others achieve more.

### **Caring Deeply:**

Leaders care deeply, not just about their immediate circle of family and friends, but they learn to enlarge their hearts to become concerned about the well-being of others. Leaders see life differently, understanding that the visible world we occupy is temporary, and they challenge those around them to "come up for air," and strive for more.

As you seek to thrive in difficult or hostile environments, embrace the lesson of the Asian water spider, which lives in one world, but breathes the atmosphere of another. Come up for air, and carry with you the atmosphere of heaven.





# Pass it On...

A Monthly Focus on Evangelism in the Southwest

BY JESSICA LOZANO » ASSOCIATE COMMUNICATION DIRECTOR, SOUTHWESTERN UNION

## Called to Community Service

For several years, the Arlington, Tex., church has been cultivating an attitude of community service. Recently, the church formed Revive Community Care, which encompasses all of the church's community service ministries, which had been working separately. It all began when a young adult member approached the church's senior pastor, Kevin Wells, and asked if it would be all right to bring some homeless people to church. With this catalyst, and with the emphatic support of the pastoral staff, members became excited about community service. Within two years, many new and exciting, member-led ministries have cropped up.

"We take the approach of Ellen White," says Josue Murillo, associate pastor, "in that we minister first to the physical needs of the community, knowing that once their needs have been met, there will be opportunity to minister to their hearts."

The latest opportunity to serve the community came when tornados touched down in the Dallas-Fort Worth area on April 3, devastating another denomination's church near the Arlington church. While members were in the community, helping clean up debris and bringing food and clothing to the areas of need, Wells saw another need. He approached the pastor of the devastated church and offered to allow their congregation to meet at the Arlington church, as they worship on Sundays, at no charge. This fact was later reported in the local news, with the grateful pastor saying that the Arlington church was "charging what Jesus would—nothing."

The church's main community service is Revive Street Ministry, for which members bring food, drink, and care packages to Fort Worth's Unity Park to aid the homeless. The homeless population was once mainly adults, however, the church has seen a dramatic increase in the number of children among the homeless. According to Murillo, in 2011, church volunteers distributed 2,500 plates of food, 500 care packages, 3,000 bottles of water, and 1,500 bottles of Gatorade.

"It's a real privilege and a blessing to work with young adults who are committed to serve the community," says Murillo. The items are all provided as donations from church members and volunteers, and according to Murillo, "It's not cheap, but it's worth it."

Members have also recently begun volunteering at the North Texas Food Bank, packaging meals for families in need. Since Sep-



Top: The Arlington church's Revive Street Ministry shares meals, beverages, and love with the homeless in Fort Worth.

Above, left and right: Arlington church youth fill sacks with donated items for meals for the homeless.

tember of 2011, groups of 100-150 volunteers have gone four times to the food bank, packaging more than 16,000 meals on each visit.

A ministry that is special to the church members is one that provides foster children with a unique Christmas gift. For the past two Christmases, volunteers have taken foster children to the mall in Arlington, to the Build-a-Bear store. Each child is then able to pick out, build, and dress a plush animal of their very own. "It's wonderful to be able to show these children that someone cares about them in this way," says Murillo. "We know the kids feel loved through this activity."

Murillo says that these ministries are strong in the Arlington church because members keep their eyes open for opportunities to serve. "We have to remember that there are a lot of churches out there, but it's not about competition; it's about helping those in need. As a church, we have been called to make a difference. People won't care about our doctrine unless they know that we actually care. Not every opportunity will result in baptism, but we have reached out and made contact from the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and they will remember that we care about them."





## No Tengo Talentos Para Servir a Dios

**P**ero no se predicar, dar estudios bíblicos ni hablar con extraños. ¿Entonces, cómo puedo ser parte de los que comparten el mensaje de la venida de Jesús? Yo prefiero que lo hagan los que saben y los que tienen esos dones.

Una vez, al igual que muchos, yo pensé no tener talentos para servir a Dios. Sin embargo Dios nos provee con situaciones día a día en las que podemos servirle individualmente o en grupo. Por

con gran emoción le afirmaba que ¡Dios decía eso! Las bellas promesas que un día yo necesité estaban allí a la mano de este cliente. ¡Fue posible que yo le sirviera a Dios! Y tú también puedes.

Otro ejemplo de servicio lo podemos encontrar en los hermanos de la iglesia de Cleburne First. La inspiración de servir llegó al hermano Ed Barcelona, por medio de un artículo publicado en la revista *Record*, de servir puerta a puerta. Un grupo se unió en la

visión de compartir el evangelio saliendo a regalar volantes sobre el Séptimo día Sábado, libros de *El Camino a Cristo* y orando por las necesidades de las personas que encontraban. ¡Esta muestra de servicio a Dios fue tomada de otras personas que compartieron su historia en el *Record*!

Puede ser que en tu corazón haya planes, inquietudes, ideas innovadoras o sueños para servir al Señor, compártela con otros. Recuerda que todos hemos sido creados con un propósito mayor del que creemos y vivimos, pero no nos sentimos capacitados para desarrollar tan importante papel en el plan de salvación. Hemos sido creados para servir, lo sintamos o no, créelo y abre la puerta al Espíritu Santo. Hermanos laicos, padres de familia, jóvenes, mujeres, y niños han unido sus fuerzas y talentos con el Poder Divino para llevar el amor de Dios a personas en los hogares y centros de trabajo.

Querido hermano, hermana, joven y niño(a) próximamente un recurso trimestral

saldrá de nuestra Unión del Suroeste llamado *La Visión*. En esta publicación se compartirán herramientas que otros hermanos han utilizado en sus hogares, iglesias y vecindarios compartiendo el amor de Dios y el mensaje de Salvación. Básicamente donde fueron plantados allí están floreciendo, igualmente tu y yo podemos hacerlo. Comunícate con tu líder hispano en la Conferencia para compartir la herramienta que utilizas para servir a Dios.

Rocio Rodriguez



De izquierda a derecha: Mark Ward, De'Leon Waldrop, Ed Barcelona, y Thomas Hood.

ejemplo, un día llegó un cliente a mi lugar de trabajo y al escuchar su tragedia me olvide de temores, dudas, y mi incomodidad de hablar de religión; no pude evitar compartir al Dios que me salvó. Necesitaba expresarle que Dios le amaba y sentía su gran dolor. A pesar de nuestras diferentes creencias su sufrimiento y mi disposición de ayudarlo nos unió. Estaba al lado de un ser amado que necesitaba del amor eterno que yo conocía y sabía que le podría dar la paz que anhelaba. Su mirada insólita se posaba sobre mí al preguntar “¿tu crees esto?” “¿pero es verdad lo que dice aquí?” y

# ACS DISASTER RESPONSE IN LANCASTER, TEXAS



Photos by Kenn Dixon



On Tuesday, April 3, more than a dozen tornados ripped through the Dallas-Fort Worth area, destroying 200 homes and damaging 650 others. The following day, the Texas Conference Adventist Community Services Department dispatched its mobile distribution unit to Lancaster, Tex., an area that was particularly hard hit. Adventist Community Services volunteers from the Garland, Mesquite, City Temple, and Lancaster churches joined hands to serve more than 600 tornado survivors in the Lancaster area over a two-day period.

The ACS truck was very visible in the parking lot of the Minyards grocery store on Pleasant Run in Lancaster. When the truck pulled up, lines of people were there waiting to be helped, even before volunteers could set up. Then the waiting people pulled out their cell phones and started calling—family first, then friends. Volunteers provided displaced residents with pre-packaged clothing outfits, personal care kits, blankets, and sheets. Many people also helped themselves to the *Steps to Christ* books, in both English and Spanish, that were placed on the tables.

The McDonald's restaurant across the street from the mobile distribution unit, which had some windows boarded up from tornado damage, offered to feed the volunteers lunch. The restaurant graciously complied with the many requests for sandwiches with no meat, and the volunteers were thankful for their generosity.

*If you'd like to make a contribution to help with meeting the needs of disaster victims, place your offering in a tithe envelope and turn it in at your local church or send a check directly to Adventist Community Services at your local conference. Be sure to designate the funds for **disaster response**.*











# ADVENTIST COMMUNITY SERVICES: SERVING COMMUNITIES IN CHRIST'S NAME

Joe Watts, ACS Disaster Response national coordinator

Matthew 25:35-40 says, “For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in. I needed clothes and you clothed me. I was sick and you looked after me. I was in prison and you came to visit me. Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’ The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me’” (NIV).

Adventist Community Services (ACS) is the nonprofit, humanitarian agency for the Seventh-day Adventist Church that works within the United States and Bermuda, through more than 1,100 localities, and upholds the beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

ACS has been established as a humanitarian relief agency, as well as an individual and community development ministry to fulfill the mission of the church to “serve communities in Christ’s name.” ACS provides services through the ministries of disaster response, crisis care, Youth Empowered to Serve (YES!), tutoring and mentoring, elder care, and community development.



## Disaster Response

Disaster response volunteers provide disaster response services to assist individuals, families, and communities affected by natural disasters and unforeseen tragedies. Adventist Community Services Disaster Response (ACS DR) provides the following services to assist disaster survivors and their families in cooperation with ACS DR partners:

- Emergency distribution of relief and recovery supplies—a service that provides goods to survivors and responders, such as drinking water, personal care items, groceries, clothing, and much more.
- Warehouse operations—a service in which volunteers receive, sort, package, store, and deliver donated goods for distribution.
- Community collection centers—locations where goods are collected to assist communities affected by disasters.
- Mobile distribution—ACS DR volunteers delivering essential emergency supplies to disaster survivors, as some may no longer have transportation due to the disaster.

## Crisis Care

Crisis care provides trained emotional and spiritual caregivers.



Crisis intervention is a type of psychological first-aid used to defuse emotional trauma for survivors of a disaster, terrorist attack, assault, or other traumatic event. It is not counseling or therapy, but may assist survivors in regaining control and successfully integrating the trauma into their life story. Who may become crisis interventionists? Crisis interventionists are multi-disciplinary professionals, including pastors, educators, nurses, and other medical personnel, social workers, mental health workers, counselors, law enforcement officers, fire and rescue personnel, victims' advocates, and other professional volunteers who are trained in the principles of critical incident stress management.

## Youth Empowered to Serve!

YES! is a ministry that engages and networks youth and young adults in service ministries (ministries of compassion). The mission of YES! is to develop an active spirit of service among youth and young adults. An important part of YES! is the network of young people throughout North America who engage in random acts of kindness, strategically planned service events, disaster response, and emergency relief. These young people demonstrate compassion, and follow Christ's example in meeting the needs of others. This network consists of affiliations with various schools, youth organizations, youth ministries, and community service.

## Tutoring and Mentoring

The ACS tutoring and mentoring program mobilizes voluntary, charitable organizations to meet the learning needs of America's children and youth, particularly those living in low-income households, single-parent families, and neighborhoods where violence and other factors not conducive for learning exist. Other services include tutorial sites, English as a second language (ESL) classes, computer training, and mentoring programs.



## Elder Care

This is a service for seniors and caregivers coordinated by ACS in cooperation with other departments of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. This ministry promotes Christ-centered, practical, and sustainable solutions to successful holistic aging. ACS Elder Care Ministries provides services to seniors and those who work with seniors that nurture body, mind, and spirit.

## Community Development

This program provides vital help to individuals and families who are unemployed, working-poor, uninsured, and disadvantaged in poverty-stricken and urban areas. It offers relief services, promotes individual and community development, including equipping community members with skills



to become self-sufficient, and engages public advocacy. These services are made accessible to communities by being in the heart of neighborhoods and becoming familiar with residents to nurture their hope, self-value, and ability to succeed. Some of the services provided are:

- Food pantry services
- Clothing services
- Housing assistance
- Substance abuse awareness and prevention training
- Medical and health care services
- Job skills training

ACS community development also offers training on how to lead a nonprofit operation that effectively meets social needs in local communities through the Nonprofit Leadership Certification program. For more information, visit [www.communityservices.org](http://www.communityservices.org).

Adventist Community Services is active in many of our churches in the Southwestern Union. A few of the areas where they are “Serving Communities in Christ’s Name” include:

The Kerrville, Tex., ACS volunteers have made “Bags of Love” for the past five years. The bags include a homemade quilt, personal toiletry items (toothbrush, toothpaste, hairbrush and comb), a new toy, and a soft, plush, huggable, stuffed animal or doll, and they are all placed in a cloth bag. Each bag is age-appropriate and gender-specific. The volunteers provide the bags to child protec-



tive services, which keeps them on hand to use as needed. When a child must be removed from a home, especially in drug situations where they cannot bring anything with them, they are able to provide the children with some comforting items that are theirs to keep.

The four churches in the Santa Fe, N. Mex., area combined efforts to sponsor a one-day “Stand Down,” event for homeless veterans. They provided meals, clothing, hygiene kits, sleeping bags, hair cuts, opportunities for a hot shower, and many thanks for their service to our country. Other organizations also provided services, such as medical services, chaplain services, veteran’s benefits briefings, and human services information. They were of-



ferred a hand up, not a hand out. Nearly 100 homeless veterans participated in this event. A local newspaper featured a photo of an ACS volunteer polishing the shoes of one of the vets.

In Norman, Okla., the U.S. Postal Service letter carriers conduct a food drive in May. The Norman ACS is one of the nonprofits that benefit from this food drive, and last year they were given four pick-up truck loads of canned food. This helps stock their food pantry, giving them supplies that will last many months. Sometimes pallets of snack items from Feed the Children in Oklahoma City are donated to ACS. These snack items are shared with the ACS food pantries in the area, helping to further stock their supplies.



One church became aware of a single mom needing assistance, so they decided to help in a unique way, with an “adopt-a-baby” program. They “adopted” her baby for one year, providing diapers, formula, clothing, bedding, toys, and whatever else was needed. When asked what this was going to cost, the reply was, “We don’t care, because it is *our* baby.” The young mother was bringing the little one to Sabbath School each week.

For quite some time, there has been growing concern regarding the possibility of an earthquake along the New Madrid Fault (St. Louis to Memphis). Arkansas-Louisiana ACS conducted a weekend emphasizing earthquake awareness and preparedness. Classes were offered in knot tying, preparedness kits, how to put out a fire, how to use a compass, how to cook without electricity or gas, what kind of food would be needed for survival, and how to find water sources.

The Bowie, Tex., church has been collaborating with other local nonprofits to provide transitional housing in their community. They lead out in a collaborative effort to help families who are

striving to improve their housing situation. Their community is very supportive of the efforts to help people who need a helping hand.

In another location, a hospital called to see if there was anyone who could build a wheelchair ramp at a lady’s home. She was a recent amputee, and did not have the resources to hire someone to build the ramp. She could not go home from the hospital until she could enter her home with a wheelchair. ACS volunteers built her a ramp, and she was safely in her home by sundown that day!

Is the Lord laying a burden on your heart to help others? There are innumerable ways to be of service to others in our communities. Consider volunteering with your local ACS center, look around your community, let the Lord lead you, and ask Him to open your eyes to the needs of others. You may see a new and innovative way to meet needs of others.

# VOLUNTEERING: CAN YOU AFFORD NOT TO?

Seán K. Robinson, Texico Conference association secretary

**K**ate had never been married and didn't have any children. It wasn't that she was uninterested in a husband or children, but between her teaching career and taking care of her elderly, sick father, there just wasn't an opportunity. Now in her old age, when she most needed friendship, she was without any close family to care for her. Some in her position might have turned to a church or other civic group for help, but Kate was quiet and introverted. She enjoyed reading books, looking after her animals, and tending the array of plants growing in her colorful garden. No one really noticed when it started or how long it had been going on, but one day it became apparent that Kate wasn't as well kept as usual—her hair and clothes had always been so immaculate. Her house was unkempt and her garden was gradually becoming overgrown with weeds. The gutter hung off the house in one place and the paint had begun to peel. Eventually, long after others had already suspected, Kate was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease.

Jack was a soldier—not a front-line warrior, but a patriot none-the-less, who had served in several wars. He had been in transport, moving equipment and supplies where they were needed. It was nothing glamorous—some might have questioned if he was true military at all. After being decommissioned, he was excited to return to civilian life. Maybe he would find that special someone, even get married. As he headed west across country by Greyhound to California, where his family was from, he had an overnight layover in Oklahoma City. Shortly after getting off the bus, he was mugged. With all his money gone, Jack had nowhere to turn. Now Jack, the proud warrior, had no choice but to sleep on the street.

Jane lived in one of the “poorer” neighborhoods of the town. She never had what many would describe as regular work. She would bounce from one employer to another. When things got tight, Jane couldn't always keep up with her utility bills. Now, it was the middle of the summer and Jane's water had been cut off—

for two weeks. The heat and misery were unimaginable. The irony was that this time she was current with her payment—she had been cut off as the result of an administrative error. But Jane didn't have much of an education and was not articulate enough to fight for herself. Without an advocate to fight for her, Jane didn't have a chance for sorting the situation out.

We have all heard stories like these. All across our prosperous nation, there are millions of people who need a helping hand. Whether suffering the effects of abuse, unemployment, mental or physical disability, or natural or man-made disasters, many just

need the loving assistance of one person to make a difference in their lives. Who is going to help the suffering among us?

Maybe it is the government's responsibility to help those in need. After all, isn't that why we pay our taxes? Or maybe the world's major corporations should be responsible for reaching out. While government and business have a part to play, it is evident that these efforts are woefully inadequate to meet the needs of the world's suffering. Recent natural disasters,

such as Hurricane Katrina, are a vivid reminder that political will alone is not enough to prevent the human devastation caused by a major crisis.

The answer to the world's suffering lies much closer to home. Each of us has the opportunity to reflect God's love to those around us in our churches and communities.

The greatest example of true volunteerism is Jesus Christ. Before the very foundation of the world He laid the blueprints for salvation. He volunteered His life in exchange for ours. In this, Christ was the first volunteer! Ellen White describes Christ's commitment to us: “Jesus consented to take human nature, that he might know how to pity sinful, erring mortals. He volunteered to become acquainted with the temptations that beset us, that he might know how to deliver those who are tempted, and that he might know how to plead with his Father in their behalf. If our







the least of them, you did it to Me.” We don’t have to wait until Jesus returns to receive the blessing of feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, or visiting the sick. The highest reward of all is knowing that we are living just like Jesus would have us live.

Watch the ACS video “To Touch a Life” by scanning this QR code or follow the link at [www.swurecord.org/videos](http://www.swurecord.org/videos)



## HOW CAN I VOLUNTEER?

There may not be always be a disaster in your area for you to help with, but the opportunities to volunteer in your community are endless! Here are a few ideas:

- **Start a “Bags of Love” group.** Ask members of your church to donate care items for children who have been removed from unfortunate circumstances. Other members can sew cloth bags to place the items in, which you can then donate to Child Protective Services or other such entities.
- **Use your skills to teach.** Do you have a special skill, such as computer training, that can empower others? Create a mentoring and tutoring program in your church!
- **Sponsor a child.** Gather members in your church together to “adopt” a child in your community for a year, providing for needs such as clothing, diapers, food, or even school fees.
- **Train for disasters.** Get in touch with your local Adventist Community Services director to ask about how you can become trained in disaster response, or if you have a special skill, how you can provide a class in disaster response.
- **Prepare meals or care packages for the homeless.** Find out where the homeless are in your area. Have a special day each month for members of your church to prepare and then distribute meals and care packages for the homeless.
- **Ask your church.** Ask members in your church to keep their eyes open for needs in the community, then get involved in helping out! Don’t wait until someone asks for help!
- For more ideas, go to [www.communityservices.org](http://www.communityservices.org).

perceptions could be quickened to take in this wonderful work of our Savior for our salvation, love, deep and ardent, would burn in our hearts. Apathy and cold indifference would disappear.”

John reminds us we need to follow our Savior’s lead by giving of ourselves to help others. “This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth. This then is how we know that we belong to the truth, and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence” (1 John 3:16-19, NIV).

Jesus Christ is waiting for us to follow His example. When we care for those around us, we open ourselves to receiving the blessings that He is longing to bestow. Christianity’s central theme of redemption hinges on Christ’s voluntary gift of His life. Accepting His gift in turn requires that we do as He did and lovingly give of ourselves in service to others. It leads us to repeat Isaiah’s motto, “Here am I! Send me” (Isa. 6:8, NKJV).

How do I get started, you may be asking? Why not pick up a pen and piece of paper and make a list of people in your community who are hurting. In a second column, write down their needs. In the third column, write down your suggestions for how those need might be met. Chances are, you will find many ways that you can lend a helping hand to the people in your church and community. Rarely will someone in need turn away a helping hand, especially if it is offered with a smile. Your pastor is also always looking for help with different church ministries, such as Bible studies or youth and children’s ministries. Adventist Community Services is another excellent resource with many opportunities to serve others. This department equips people in six key ministry areas designed to ease suffering and reestablish pride as victims and survivors begin to take charge of their lives again.

The importance of how God views the way we treat others is evident in the words of Jesus in Matthew 25:34-46: “Truly, I say to you, to the extent you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even

## Lending a Helping Hand



ARKANSAS-LOUISIANA CONFERENCE

**SHREVEPORT, LA. »** Adventist Community Services. What does this mean to you? Is it giving someone a Thanksgiving food basket once a year, some money for gas, or perhaps helping your neighbor cut up a downed tree? Do you know a person who is struggling? Is there a way to lend a hand? Adventist Community Services (ACS) is all of this—and so much more. It means getting involved with people.

The Bible says, “We know how much God loves us because He sent His Son to die for us; therefore, we ought to be willing to die for our brothers and sisters. When

you who have material possessions see a brother or sister in need but you don’t help him, how can you say that you love God? My dear children, to love someone doesn’t mean just saying so, it means helping him. We should do this whether we like what he does or not” (1 John 3:16-19, CW).

ACS is really a variety of things. Some examples of things that ACS is known for are: city and neighborhood clean-up, singing at nursing homes, clothing distribution, helping with a food pantry, and helping during disasters. Some examples of other ACS activities that are not as widely known include: participating in advocacy to end abuse, sending letters or care packages to

military personnel, grief recovery seminars, or phone-a-friend programs. There are still many more things that members of ACS do, from the small communities to the large conferences and unions. ACS is made up of people, young and old, who show their love for Christ by their actions, giving and caring for others in every way that they can.

Romans 12:13 says, “Take care of your brothers and sisters in Christ ... but don’t restrict your kindness only to church members; be ready to help everyone in need.” Are you doing your part in your community?

**Lavida Whitson**, Arkansas-Louisiana ACS director

## 33rd ARKLA Constituency Report

At the 33rd regular Constituency Session of the Arkansas-Louisiana Conference, held on Sunday, April 15 at the Shreveport South church, 406 regular delegates and 98 delegates-at-large met to elect officers for the 2012-2015 quadrennial term. Re-elected were Stephen Orian, president, and Rodney Dyke, treasurer. Juan Borges, executive secretary and Hispanic ministries coordinator of the Southern New England Conference, was elected to serve as the new executive secretary for Arkansas-Louisiana. Departmental directors and associates who were also re-elected include Carlos Portanova, associate treasurer; Ray House, youth director; Terry McCormick, associate secretary/religious liberty; and Stephen Burton, education director. The offices of coordinated ministries/ASI; Hispanic ministries coordinator; and health/temperance/NSO/evangelism/ministerial were referred to the conference executive committee.

Two new churches were accepted into the sisterhood of churches: the Baton Rouge Spanish church and the Arkadelphia church. The conference objectives for 2012-2015 were voted by the constituency, which cover the areas of revival and reformation, evangelism and soul winning, youth ministries, Christian education, conference finance and stewardship, and church leadership development.

A video report of the conference’s work over the past four years highlighting the areas of education, Camp Yorktown Bay, Ozark Academy, youth ministry, membership growth, trust services, and finances depicted healthy growth, faithfulness among church members, and the strong evidence of God’s blessings. Conference president Stephen Orian praised God for the blessings and attributed the success of the past four years to the local church members who worked hard to make it happen. “Ministry does not take place at the conference office,” he said. “It happens in the local church because of your [the members’] involvement and influence.”

Presiding over the session was Larry Moore, president of the Southwestern Union. Ken Denslow, assistant to the president of the North American Division, delivered a powerful devotional message based on Acts, chapter 4. Quoting Dwight Moody, Denslow said, “I wish that Christians

would be like Artesian wells—so full of God’s Word that they can’t help but spill it out.” At the conclusion of the session, Buford Griffith, executive secretary of the Southwestern Union, prayed a prayer of dedication as the newly-elected officers and executive committee members gathered around him to ask for God’s blessings over the next four years.

**Pat Humphrey**, Southwestern Union communication director

For more photos of this event, please visit [www.southwesternadventist.org/photo\\_albums/1189](http://www.southwesternadventist.org/photo_albums/1189)



◀ The newly elected Arkansas-Louisiana Conference officers and executive committee members praying together after the constituency meeting.

▼ Constituents voting at the Arkansas-Louisiana Constituency meeting.





# God Evangelizes the Church

**MANDEVILLE, LA. »** In January 2010, the little church in Mandeville, La., had dwindled to about four attending members—but God still had plans for this church.

After finishing their education at Amazing Facts Center of Evangelism (AFCOE) and spending a year in mission service, Michael and Dominique Magee had moved back to the New Orleans area, and were looking for a church to attend. Dominique had grown up attending the Mandeville church, and after much prayer and seeing the condition it was in, felt that God was calling them back to this little church. Although they lived about 45 minutes away, they began attending each Sabbath, looking for something they could do to help the struggling little church. There were no children, no music, and no live sermons or speakers. In years past, the church had put away some funds dedicated to church expansion, but it didn't seem necessary to expand when there were only two cars in the parking lot most Sabbath mornings.

The first eight months were full of disappointments and discouragement, but Michael and Dominique persisted and prayed. They began visiting previous members, getting acquainted and reaching out in the community, touching people's lives as they found needs. Also, every Friday night, one faithful couple hosted a fellowship meal and Bible study in their home. The Bible study had about 10 people attending on a regular basis, and in just a few months, the study grew to more than 25 people. During this time, the Magees began praying that

the Lord would send someone to play the beautiful piano and organ that sat silently in the church. Within three weeks of praying earnestly for someone with musical abilities, a young man, who had just graduated from Andrews University with a major in music, began attending the home Bible study and soon the worship services. His mother, who played the organ in churches for years, couldn't pass up the opportunity to join her son in praising the Lord with their music. The home Bible study was a beautiful tool that allowed the Lord to transition people into attending and growing his church. The little church grew to 22 members attending each Sabbath.

The members were ready to focus on evangelism and decided to begin distributing *The Great Controversy* and *The Ten Commandments Twice Removed*, with a Bible study offer in each book, to the surrounding area. Every church member got involved—filling bags, driving cars, placing books on doors, and praying for God's Spirit to be with the endeavor. Books and information cards were left at more than 2,500 homes.

In January 2012 the church began five weeks of evangelistic meetings with Tyler Long, an evangelist with Amazing Facts.

The New Orleans Marrero church was planning a series of meetings at the same time, so the two churches pooled their resources for advertising on both TV and radio. Members advertised on Facebook, along with the door hangers and personal Bible studies, and the Lord blessed mightily. During the meetings, 72 non-Adventists

attended, and former Adventists attended, as well. At the end of the meetings there were 10 baptisms, with others taking more Bible studies and still attending faithfully. In two years, the four-member church has grown to 30 adult and five to 12 children each Sabbath. Every elder and deacon is teaching and preaching, and has an active part in the mission of the church. The parking lot is more than full, and the church has actually outgrown their facility. Plans are being laid before the Lord for expansion and they are looking at making a master plan that will give them a vision for the future.

An interesting detail is that the church sits on 22 acres of prime real estate. It is situated in a suburb outside of New Orleans that is comprised predominantly of families. A mega-church of over 5,000 members is right next door, bursting at the seams and looking for more land to expand. They have contacted the Mandeville church, seeking to purchase some of their property. God had a place picked out for His people many years ago when He prompted a lovely Christian couple to deed these 22 acres for a church in Mandeville. However, the deed stipulates that the land cannot be sold and must be used for an Adventist church or school, or a medical facility of some kind. These expectant members continue to pray faithfully with grateful hearts as they seek God's will for further development of this beautiful acreage.

**Sylvia Downs and Dominique Magee**



Several of the soon-to-be new members wait to be submerged in the baptismal waters.

## Adventist Radio in West Helena Reaps Rewards

**WEST HELENA, ARK. »** When Perry Hadden called Adventist radio station KIH-WLP to request a favorite Christian song, he was told by Betty Hoag, Discover Bible School director, that there was a free Bible course that he could take. He was interested, and after finishing the Discover Bible course, he enrolled in the Daniel and Revelation course. At the end of his studies, he asked how he could become an Adventist.

Hadden is the first person from the radio station Bible classes to join the church since Clarence Hoag, pastor, began broadcasting in 2004. Hoag never knew the joy of meeting Perry; he passed away in August of 2010, but in heaven he will meet Perry and hear the story of his journey to God. We must do what we can, while we can, and leave the harvest up to God. "For thou knowest not whether shall prosper" (Eccl. 11:6).

**Betty Hoag**



Perry Hadden holding his diploma and Jerry Kenyon, pastor, poses with him.

## Hot Springs Church Dedication

**HOT SPRINGS, ARK. »** The Hot Springs church celebrated a dedication weekend on February 4. The dream-come-true church facility, including a sanctuary, fellowship hall, and church school, had previously been completed in 2001, but now it was debt-free. The inspiration-packed

weekend began with Friday-evening vespers with Arkansas-Louisiana treasurer, Rodney Dyke.

Stephen Orian, conference president, in his Sabbath message, challenged the church members to make their church home "a house of prayer for all people"—a place to serve Jesus with renewed dedication. Rheeta Stecker shared the history of God's lead-

ing in the Hot Springs church, which was followed by the mortgage burning.

To conclude the activities, Richard Hall presented "Give Me This Mountain," on Sabbath evening, encouraging members to go forward in God's strength, ready to climb new mountains for God.



Steven Orian, president of the Arkansas-Louisiana Conference, gave an inspiring message on the day of the Hot Springs church dedication.

## Designing God's Women

May 19, 2012 | Pocahontas, Ark. | Featuring Kay Kuzma

**Dr. Kay Kuzma** is an outstanding author and inspirational speaker and we feel privileged to have her share her message of "Designing God's Women: Success strategies for becoming incredible women serving an incredible God." Expect to learn practical applications for our everyday situations and also how we can become that incredible woman that God intended us to be all year long.

**For more information**, such as registration and hotel information, please visit the event Web site at [www.GodKnowsYourName.org](http://www.GodKnowsYourName.org) or contact Melody Radde, Arkansas-Louisiana Conference women's ministries director at 479.283.7537 or [mldyrd@aol.com](mailto:mldyrd@aol.com).



**Kay Kuzma**



# Springdale's Great Giveaway!

**SPRINGDALE, ARK.** » Four times a year, the Springdale church gathers toys, clothes, and other items from its members, businesses in the community, and anyone else who wants to donate something, and holds a "great giveaway" in the church's gym for the community.

More than 700 people came out to receive something from the church at the last giveaway. Karen Jackson, community service leader said that she has never seen so many people come out. "There were so many that responded that there was not enough room to receive them. They started lining up around the parking lot about an hour before we opened the doors."

Even those who arrived 30 minutes before the doors opened had a difficult time finding somewhere to park. Gary Ford, the church's pastor, could be seen mingling among the people and reminding them to come back for church services on Saturday morning.

**Gary Ford**, pastor



Arkansas-Louisiana Conference  
**SW ARKANSAS  
CAMPESTRE HISPANO**

## ¡Restauranos SEÑOR!

**22 - 23 DE JUNIO, 2012**

Ven y participa de los mensajes y seminarios inspiradores de reavivamiento y restauracion que ofreceran nuestros oradores invitados:

 <b>PR. RUBEN BULLON</b> <small>Orador para adultos</small>	 <b>PR. JULIO CHAZARRETA</b> <small>Seminario</small>
 <small>Orador para Jóvenes</small> <b>PR. JOSE PAGAN</b> <small>Orador para Jóvenes</small>	 <b>ROCIO ROJAS</b> <small>Oradora para niños</small>

**CANTANTE INVITADA**

  
**YSIS ESPAÑA**  
Y OTROS MAS

**PARA RESERVACIONES LLAME A:**  
 Ozark Adventist Academy  
 20997 Dawn Hill East Road  
 Gentry, AR 72734  
 (479) 736-2221  
**\*\* Cuartos: \$35.00 y \$45.00 p/noche \*\***

**HORARIO:**  
 Viernes 22 7:00 p.m.  
 Sábado 23 9:00 a.m.  
**LUGAR:**  
 Adultos - Gimnasio  
 Jóvenes - Auditorio  
 Niños - Distribución de varones

• Habrá atención para niños con invitada especial  
 • Por la noche tendremos convivencia social para jóvenes, adultos y niños

Tickets de comida se consiguen con su pastor local: Adultos \$6.00 | Niños \$4.00

# Summer is here! Where are you?

Where would you go to zip through the tree tops like a squirrel, survive a night on your own deserted island, or climb a pyramid to jump on a blob? Whether it's rock climbing in the Ouachita National Forest, or catching air behind a ski boat, you are going to find something new and exciting at Camp Yorktown Bay this summer. Don't miss our new ultra camps—**survival camp, golf camp, music camp, basketball camp, horse-pack camp, mountain bike camp, gymnastics camp, and rock climbing camp.** [www.campyorktownbay.com](http://www.campyorktownbay.com)



# Community Services



OKLAHOMA CONFERENCE

“Thank you, thank you,” cried the little boy as he leaned out the car window. The community services volunteer had just given several bags of food to his mother. “We have absolutely no food in the house,” the grateful mother whispered.

In another instance, a young man called, asking for food. He had no transportation, so a community services volunteer delivered the food to his house. When she delivered the food, the young man informed her that he and his wife desperately needed some clothes and a pair of shoes. She returned to the community services center, picked out some appropriate clothing, and again visited the young couple. They were delighted with the clothes. The young man then saw the pair of shoes he had requested; he needed a nice pair for an important appointment. When he tried them on, they fit perfectly and looked very nice. He was so thrilled that he danced for joy in his living room.

We live in a hurting world. Even in America, thousands of people struggle for daily existence. Isaiah 58 points out the work God would have His church do in these last, difficult days.

“Is this not the fast that I have chosen: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, and that you break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and that you bring to your house the poor who are cast out; when you see the naked, that you cover him.” (Isa. 58:6,7, NKJV).

There is probably no service more

needed today than selfless acts of love to the suffering. And yet, when the subject of community services is brought up in board meetings or planning sessions, a number of objections are often voiced.

The first objection: “These people got themselves in their dire straits through their own wrong choices.” This is probably true in most cases. But didn’t Jesus Himself say he came to seek and save the lost, those who were in dire straits because of their own wrong choices? And besides, in what condition would any of us be if heaven took that attitude toward us? Aren’t we all unworthy?

The second objection: “We should give those who come for help only the bare minimum—a few cans of beans at most.” Matthew 25 places an interesting perspective on our service to the suffering. Verse 40 states, “Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.” Ellen White, in her comments on this chapter, states, “When you doled out the pittance of bread to the starving poor, when you gave those flimsy garments to shield them from the biting frost, did you remember that you were giving to the Lord of glory?” (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 640).

What a thought! What we do to those in need we are doing to Christ! Given that perspective, is it wrong to give the best? Is it wasteful and extravagant to give out fresh fruits and vegetables as well as canned foods?

The third objection: “Most of the people who come for help are scammers. They

don’t need the help—they are just looking for free handouts.” Undoubtedly, those types exist, and we should do our best to screen them out. However, my experience with community services is that these types are a small minority. Most of those who come for help really need it. Nevertheless, no screening process will be perfect, so it is inevitable that some people will take advantage of our benevolence.

Shall we then stop helping the needy because some will get help who don’t need it? My reading of the Bible and inspired counsels leads me to believe that the greater danger is that we will not help enough, not that we will help too much. It is instructive to note that the disciples often felt that Jesus was far too free and generous with His favors and blessings. Who was right?

The fourth objection: “These people just want our help, they never come to church.” In many cases this is true. However, we cannot measure success by immediate results. Jesus saw very few tangible results of His ministry until after the resurrection. Likewise, we will never know the results of our service until the latter rain is poured out upon the earth. We serve in faith.

There is no limit to the good that church members can accomplish through community services. Let us never forget the words of the apostle Paul, “Let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart” (Gal. 6:9, NKJV).

Mark Eaton, treasurer

## Hispanic Camp Meeting Expected to Grow

**WEWOKA** » Wewoka Woods Adventist Center has become a second home to Hispanic church members. They enjoy the spiritual blessings they receive every year, as well as fellowship with other church members during Hispanic camp meeting. It is like an oasis in the middle of the year. Everyone appreciates the speakers,

the food, recreation on the lake, and the horses. Much planning has been done so that all ages will be blessed. The plans for this next camp meeting are even better than the last. We expect the attendance at the meetings to continue to grow as they have been. The Oklahoma Hispanic camp meeting will meet this year at the usual

place, Wewoka Woods Adventist Center, on July 26-29. We believe that there are special blessings awaiting all those who make an effort to attend this camp meeting!

Ciro Castillo, Hispanic Ministries director



# A Flame Rekindled

**ENID** » I stood in the hallway with a bottle of sparkling apple cider and a fistful of balloons. It was February 14. My mission for the evening was to create a romantic atmosphere for my wife and myself. It would not be easy. A mere 24 hours earlier, I had pulled into our driveway from a long weekend of pastors' meetings. I'd had time to plan, but no time to act. Tuesday began unraveling, and my time continued to slip away. As my final Bible study had come to a close, I saw that it was 7:15 p.m. Half an hour later, I found myself standing in an unlit hallway, unsure of whether the mis-

sion could still be accomplished.

As life continually moves forward, and hours become days that turn into months, we find ourselves wondering how we will accomplish what we originally set out to do. The truth is that we can only do so much before our flames flicker out. This applies not only to our physical life, but also to our spiritual life.

May I take this a step further? Dare I ask how this applies to our mission as a church? As life moves us forward, the time to accomplish our mission shortens. And, metaphorically, as day turns to night, our

flame must be rekindled. This year, leaders, pastors, and church families from all across the Southwestern Union have been challenged to become revived. But as the final hours of this earth's history come to an end, many of us are asking, "Can our mission still be accomplished?"

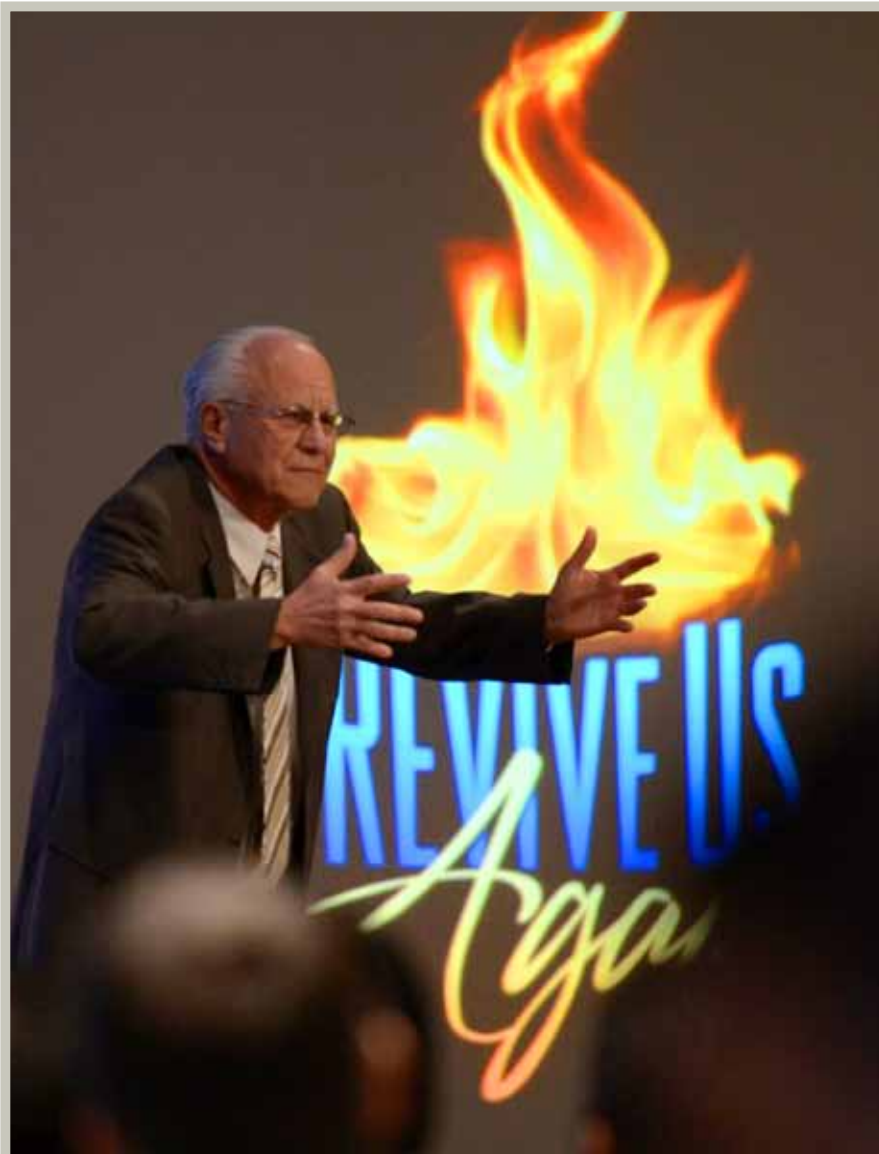
Now, you and I know very well we cannot force a revival. We cannot make people become revived. This is not our work. It is the work of the Holy Spirit. The most we can do is create an atmosphere in which He can work. This past January, the Southwestern Union held a pastors' retreat for the entire union. Pastors congregated in Fort Worth, Tex., for seminars, fellowship, and prayer. As I sat listening to George Knight, José Rojas, and many others, I began to feel an awakening in my heart. As I sang hymns with hundreds of other voices, prayed heartfelt, honest prayers with some of my closest colleagues, I became empowered. And as our time came to a close, I realized something very important: the Holy Spirit was at work, and it was an atmosphere where He was allowed to come and revive our hearts.

You know something? After the candles were lit, the balloons hovering in their rightful place, and the sparkling apple cider bubbled in our glasses, my mission was almost complete. The atmosphere was set, and with the day not yet over, I leaned in close to my wife and whispered, "I love you." Mission accomplished!

"The last rays of merciful light, the last message of mercy to be given to the world is a revelation of His character of love. The children of God are to manifest His glory. In their own life and character they are to reveal what the grace of God has done for them" (*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 415).

**Walter Martinez**, pastor

George Knight was a speaker at the Southwestern Union's pastors' retreat.



## Four Teams Move Ahead to Conference Bible Bowl

**OKLAHOMA CITY** » The Tulsa Twisters, Arbuckle Warriors, Southern Hills Orions, and the Edmond Eagles Bible Bowl teams all recently scored high enough to participate at the conference-level Bible Bowl on March 3. Congratulations to all of the clubs that participated and put forth the effort to learn God's Word. It has been and will continue to be interesting to watch Bible Bowl this year, with its new "Bible Experience" format. It is amazing to see the content that the Pathfinders are learning through their study.

**Apple Park**, Oklahoma Conference Pathfinder director



OKLAHOMA CONFERENCE

## Planning for the Future

**OKLAHOMA CITY** » Revelation 13:7 tells us that at some time in the future, "no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name." What will Christians do when they are persecuted for their faith and no longer permitted to participate in the economy?

In an attempt to answer this question, the Oklahoma City Central church invited Mountain Media Ministries to provide a weekend of spiritual and practical advice to help God's people in these last days. Beginning on Sabbath afternoon, Craig and Nancy Meissner, their son, Nick, and his fiancé, Lisa Puffer, provided information about how to properly respond to the prophetic counsel

of Ellen White to move to the country. Subjects included property selection, water and heating systems, solar power, food canning, and natural health treatments.



- ▲ Nancy Meissner gives a cooking demonstration.
- ◀ Nick Meissner talks about solar power.

noon, and nearly all of them returned for the Sunday lectures and demonstrations. The weekend proved to be spiritually uplifting as practical instruction was coupled with prophetic counsel.

**Terry Lawlor**



# Oklahoma Campmeeting 2012

OKLAHOMA CONFERENCE

Please join us for a spectacular time of spiritual blessings!

**Keynote speakers:**

July 13 and 14 — Randy Roberts, senior pastor  
Loma Linda University church

July 19-21 — Abraham Jules, senior pastor  
Mt. Vernon church

**Concert:** Saturday, July 14, 4:00 p.m.

Experience a concert to remember, featuring  
16-year-old, world-renowned violinist,  
Meclen Lai Pang.

**WHEN:** July 13 -21, 2012

**WHERE:** Wewoka Woods Adventist Center  
36242 Oklahoma 59, Wewoka, Okla.

**CONTACT:** 405.721.6110 or 405.257.5404  
[www.oklahomasda.org](http://www.oklahomasda.org)



*Abraham Jules*



*Randy Roberts*

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# The Ultimate Helping Hand



Man's greatest character flaw is selfishness, and man's greatest sin is inhumanity to humanity. When you listen to the news broadcast, you have to say to yourself, "What's wrong with us?" The cure for our selfishness is a proper understanding and practice of stewardship. Other than Jesus Himself, the best example of a steward of God's blessings is Job. We see God affirming Job in conversation with Satan, saying, "There is none like him on the earth," (Job 1:8, NKJV).

Job's miserable comforters told him the reason for his suffering. According to them, he had to be living a life offensive to God. In Job 31, Job sets forth his deeds and

actions toward humanity, by using an interrogative method of discourse in defense to their accusatory speeches. What this chapter shows us is that Job was the ultimate earthly steward, and a pattern for us as Christian stewards today. Job evidently sought out ways to use his blessings to help others. How Job helped others demonstrated his understanding and practice of stewardship.

Fast forward to Jesus' time. In Matthew 25:32-46, we find Jesus using the standard for separating "the sheep and the goats," at His coming by describing the sheep as those who lent a helping hand in feeding the hungry, gave drink to the thirsty, took in the stranger, clothed the naked, and vis-

ited the sick and those in prison. The goats pled ignorance to the fact that they were neglecting Jesus by neglecting those who needed a helping hand. Again, these are stewardship practices at work.

The ultimate "helping hand" as a Christian is sharing the blessings given by the hand of God to us with those that we see in need. As stewards of the most high God, He expects no less, and we can do no less if we expect to inherit the heavenly kingdom.

Samuel L. Green, president

## Rewards of Managing Resources

Stewardship is a theological belief that humans are responsible for the world, and should take care of it.

Paul says, "We are stewards of the mysteries of God," (1 Cor. 4:1).

A biblical worldview of stewardship can be consciously defined as, "Utilizing and managing all resources God provides for the glory of God and the betterment of His creation" (*Holman Bible Dictionary*, Charles Bugg, p. 1303, 1304).

The central essence of biblical worldview stewardship is managing everything God brings into the believers' life in a manner that honors God and impacts eternity.

Simply put, stewardship begins and ends with the understanding of God's ownership of all.

In the parable of Matthew 25:14-30, the master goes away on a long journey. Before leaving, he gives his servants a portion of money, based on their abilities, to manage in his absence. When the master returns,

the parable reveals the attitudes and faithfulness of each servant.

The parable basically teaches that people are accountable and responsible to God for the way they use the resources they

are given. We are expected to "steward," or "manage," these for the One who owns them.

There are a few lessons we can learn from this parable.

Things given to us to manage never becomes ours. They are supplied to assist us while we serve and represent the Kingdom. Stewardship is not a destination, but a journey. It's not a location to arrive at and then unpack our bags, but a joyful journey of love and sacrifice. We are constantly receiving so we can give and live to represent God's kingdom as ambassadors.

Stewardship is not just about what we do; it is ultimately about who God is and who He desires us to become.

Let's manage the resources faithfully and be ready to receive our Master with joy when He returns to inspect His investment and give us His divine blessing, "Well done, faithful servant."

Charles Sanders, stewardship director





# A Weekend of Training

**BATON ROUGE** » South Louisiana's youth recently participated in a weekend of leadership training, the purpose of which was to "provide leaders in each ministry with the necessary tools to take back to their

The session began on Friday evening with a vespers service presented by Roger Wade, who gave an overview of the Pathfinder program. Vespers was followed by a breakout session, and Leonard Cade

as creativity and resource development, club programming and planning, camping and outdoor education, children's and youth evangelism, drilling and ceremony, and spiritual gifts.

Wade's youth ministries workshop was filled to overflowing as his PowerPoint presentation provided youth leaders with ideas on how to improve their ministries.

Through the manual and a computer-generated presentation, singles' coordinator Vera Ragland reacquainted state and area coordinators and church directors with the purpose of their ministry, along with their operating schedule for the year. "Our theme 'Fully Committed to His Will' and its corresponding song 'I Give Myself Away'



Evelyn Edwards

▲ Youth ministries attendees listen intently to Roger Wade, conference youth director. From left: Federation president Herman Smith, Robyn Oguinye, Paula Adams, Ericka Jones, and Earnisha Lott.

▶ Elaine Harrington conducting a Pathfinder class.

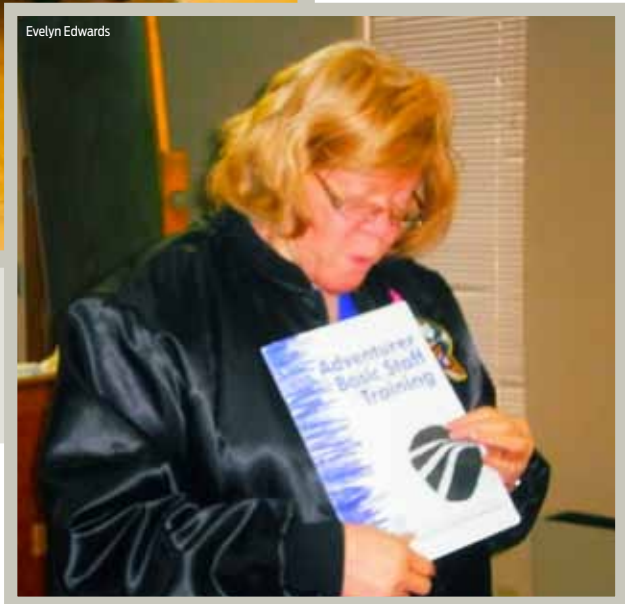
respective ministries," according to the Covington church's Pathfinder director, Leonard Cade.

The Southwest Region Conference youth director, Roger Wade, singles' director, Vera Ragland, and Pathfinder director, Rogers Johnson, as well as many others, convened at the Baton Rouge Berean church to lead the training. Most of the trainers were from South Louisiana, however, Pathfinder Master Guides Bonnie Jackson from Texas, and Kenneth Candelley from Oklahoma, also helped with the training.

was presented with a Pathfinder leadership award.

Wade also gave the Sabbath message, titled "Already Done," based on the account of Joseph in Exodus. Wade's lesson in the message was that "God is already calling the church out, in order to bring His church back."

Training resumed on Sabbath afternoon with Pathfinder, youth, and singles' department leaders and team members attending workshops and activities on topics such



Evelyn Edwards

are a testament to what this ministry is about," Ragland said. The door prizes and other freebies made for an enjoyable afternoon. The singles' gathering resumed that night with an old-fashioned church social.

Evelyn Edwards

## A New Perspective

**ALEXANDRIA, LA. »** Isaac Olatunji, who teaches religion and theology at Oakwood University, recently visited the Maranatha church in Alexandria. As a part of his presentation, he showed a video called “The Truth Behind Hip Hop.” The young people of the church and of the group Xtreme Praise Ministry were fascinated by what they saw and heard. When an alter call was made for prayer, rededication, and baptism, many youth took a stand. As a result of this video, nine young people were baptized and there are more studying and preparing for baptism.

Many of the youth are still talking about how the video has impacted their lives and how everyone should view it. A number of youth have changed their listening habits. In addition, they have also made changes in the clothing styles they choose, the programs they watch, and the musical artists that they admire.

Valarie Dotson

Isaac Olatunji presented some new perspectives to the youth at the Maranatha church.



Valarie Dotson

## The Kingdom in You

**HAMMOND, LA. »** On February 18, the Emmanuel church hosted its first Community Guest Day of the new year. The Spirit was high at Emmanuel as the praise team led the congregation in the praise and worship period. The service was well attended by both the membership and visiting guests, and a fellowship potluck dinner followed the service.

Christopher Manuel, pastor, introduced the guest speaker, Robert Davis, pastor of the Berean church in Baton Rouge, La. Davis’ sermon was, “The Kingdom in You,” was based around Luke 17:20,21, and there was not a dull moment in the house as, layer by layer, he unfolded his message. As a result of his powerfully delivered message, seven people took their stand for baptism.

Linda Hodge

**Immediate right:** The praise team leading worship and praise on Community Guest Day at the Emmanuel church.

**Middle:** Christopher Manuel, pastor, addressing the congregation at the Emmanuel church in Hammond.

**Far right:** Robert Davis, pastor, revealing his biblical topic, “The Kingdom in You.”





# A Help in the Storm

**LANCASTER, TEX.** » On April 3, tornados touched down and wreaked havoc on the lives of many in Lancaster, Tex., a suburban area near Dallas. Roofs were stripped to bare plywood, and flying two-by-fours impaled homes. About 300 buildings were damaged in Lancaster, according to the city's mayor. The city put a cur-

interior room before the tornado blew the windows out.



[http://report.cnn.com/docs/DOC771817.html#hp\\_bnr8](http://report.cnn.com/docs/DOC771817.html#hp_bnr8)

Kenn Dixon

**Top photos:** Damaged home in the Lancaster area.

▲ Durandel Ford, Southwestern Region Conference Disaster Relief director, helping a Lancaster resident in need.

◀ Tyrone Boyd, pastor of the Agape Fellowship church, discussing the situation with a volunteer.

lief director, to bring help to the community. The church, led by Tyrone Boyd, pastor, was able to supply dedicated volunteers along with donated items.

The disaster relief effort was a blessing to those affected in the area. The Southwest Region Conference was present in Lancaster less than 24 hours after the tornado hit. Teamed with the Southwestern Union to distribute complete changes of clothing, personal care items, blankets, food, and water to those who were affected by the devastation, the group served a total of nearly 600 individuals.

Roger Wade

few in place, and opened a shelter. "It was like *The Wizard of Oz*," said a Lancaster resident, who was unable to make it to an

the church joined with Southwest Region Conference Disaster Relief, under the leadership of Durandel Ford, Disaster Re-

SOUTHWEST REGION CONFERENCE

[http://report.cnn.com/docs/DOC771817.html#hp\\_bnr8](http://report.cnn.com/docs/DOC771817.html#hp_bnr8)

Kenn Dixon

# Channels of Light



TEXAS CONFERENCE

As Adventists, the thought of ministry or outreach is not a foreign idea or concept. In fact, we are taught acts of kindness at a young age, acts such as giving away clothes, toys, and food to those in need, singing to the elderly, making pretty cards for the sick, or cleaning someone's yard. As we grow, our ideas get bigger. We cook meals for the family that lost a loved one, clean the home of some who is bedridden, or perhaps mow the lawns of those who cannot do it for themselves. Some even fly across the world to positively impact the lives of others. We send an army of volunteers to build a church for those worshipping under a tree, or a medical team to meet their health needs.

It is easy to look beyond our borders for a chance to make a difference, and we often forget how much we can do here at home. There are churches within the Texas Conference that share a pastor. There are some churches that have watched kids come and go, and now long for a young face to grace them with a smile, a song, a sermon, a testimony, or just a chat.

Those who are filled with the love of God have a way of bringing a breath of fresh air to an old, musty church. They

have a way of inspiring those who have lost hope and are perhaps stuck in a rut in their religious experience. They can be the spark that reignites one's love for the Savior. As we look around us, we find the needy, the disoriented, pregnant teens who need big sisters, at-risk young men who need father figures, or young people who have gotten lost in educational circles—who need common folk like ourselves to take a little time to give much-needed direction about the core values and principles of life.

Notice the words of the servant of the Lord: "All who are consecrated to God will be channels of light. God makes them His agents to communicate to others the riches of His grace. Our influence upon others depends not so much upon what we say, but what we are. Men may combat and defy our logic, they may resist our appeals, but a life of disinterested love is an argument they cannot turn away. A consistent life, characterized by the meekness of Christ, is a power in the world" (*Christian Service*, p. 21).

It is encouraging to see the youth of this generation committed and enthusiastic about service to others and their communities. It was prophesized in the Old Testament that prior to the return of our Lord,

many would have hearts that would be led by the Spirit to minister to those in need—psychologically, emotionally, physically, and of course, spiritually.

This nation is dying socially and spiritually. An active presence that addresses both aspects is desperately needed. Could it be that the Lord of the Harvest is calling out to us to respond to that call of duty? Perhaps the phrase "The fields are white and ripe with the harvest," covers much more than simply those who hunger and thirst for the Word of God. Perhaps it includes those who hunger and thirst for humanity's care, for a helping hand, for an encouraging word along the mundane paths of everyday life. We, the Seventh-day Adventist Church, who believe ourselves to be God's chosen people, a royal priesthood, must find our way into God's plan to reach the brokenhearted and struggling; to bring comfort and joy into the lives of so many that surround us. The end approaches—there isn't much time left. Let's use it to make a difference every day, wherever we are, whatever we're doing—let's be His hands and His feet. Let's be His channels of light.

**Carlos Craig**, president

## Longview Crusaders Work for Disaster Relief

**LONGVIEW** » During the summer of 2011, the Longview Crusaders Pathfinder Club made a commitment to prepare disaster relief kits for Adventist Community Services. The club began by organizing a three-day garage sale for which church members could donate items.

The Pathfinders took turns working at the garage sale, where they also sold snow cones and bottled water to potential customers. The proceeds from the sale, along with donations from church members and a local dentistry, enabled the club to assemble the kits this past December. The fellowship hall buzzed with excitement

as the Pathfinders stood in an assembly line to place 14 items into each kit.

Philippians 2:4 says, "Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others." The Pathfinders were surprised to find that they had enough donations to fill two large boxes, which contained a total of 50 personal disaster relief kits. More importantly, they were assured that they had made a difference in the lives of those who had been or would be affected



Back row, from left: Riley Bowman, club director Kim Bowman, Seth Diaz, Alison Diaz, and Malachi Windschitl. Front row, from left: Kwame Williams, Kamryn Bowman, Lauren Nermal, and Luke Campbell.

by natural disasters.

**Benjamin A. Hampton**



# The Sounds of Joy

**KEENE** » The eighth annual music festival for students in seventh and eighth grades was held on February 23 in the Keene church. The Texas Conference Office of Education hosted the one-day event, which was themed, “Spirituals: The Sounds of Joy.” According to one attendee, “The joyful sounds that arise from spirituals soothe the spirit and nourish the soul.”

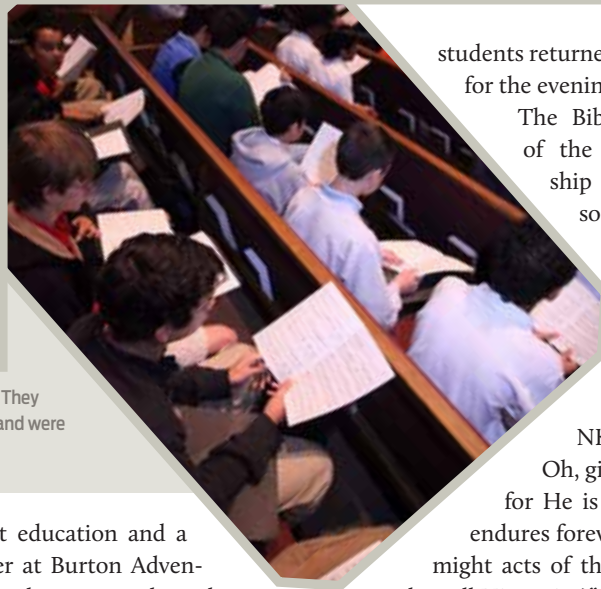
Travis Simpson, a product of Adventist education and music teacher at Burton Adventist Academy, directed the mass choir, which was comprised of 265 students from 19 schools across the conference. Dian Simpson was the accompanist.



TEXAS CONFERENCE



Seventy-five students performed in the band at this year's event. They practiced all day in order to prepare for the evening performance and were excited to be involved in the annual music festival.



students returned to the Keene church for the evening performance.

The Bible often reminds us of the importance of worship through praise and song. Psalm 149:1 says, “Sing to the Lord a new song, and His praise in the assembly of the Saints.” David says in Psalm 106:1-2, NKJV, “Praise the Lord! Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever. Who can utter the might acts of the Lord? Who can declare all His praise?”

The mass choir performed Althouse’s “Follow Me to Jordan,” Emerson’s “Didn’t My Lord Deliver Daniel?” Schrader’s “Thy Word,” Perry and Perry’s “Elijah Rock,” and Fettke and Grossi’s “Love.”

In addition to the 265 choral students, 75 students participated in what was the event’s first-ever mass band. Steve Hubbard, an experienced musician and instructor, served as the festival’s band director. The band performed Bortniansky’s “Cherubim,” arranged by Yoder, “Go Down Moses,” a spiritual arranged by Yoder, Pachelbel’s “Famous Canon,” arranged by Andrew Balent, and Dykes’ “Hava Nagila,” arranged by Ployhar.

Damon Gilliam, also a product of Ad-

ventist education and a teacher at Burton Adventist Academy, served as the master of ceremonies for this year’s festival. Gilliam’s strong devotion to, and insight into, Adventist education enhanced the evening’s presentation.

Practice began at 9:30 a.m., and continued throughout the day. In the afternoon, students enjoyed a break for some physical activities. Steve Bradley, physical education teacher at Keene Adventist Elementary School, supervised volleyball and basketball in the Chisholm Trail Academy gymnasium. An evening meal was served at the campus cafeteria immediately following the activities, and afterward the

The wisdom and doctrine of Scripture teaches that the experience of celebrating God is the core of worship. Praise God for the opportunities for the youth of the church to lift their voices in glorious harmony and dedicate their musical talents through their musical instruments to praise God, for indeed, “From the rising of the sun to its going down the Lord’s name is to be praised” (Ps. 113:3, NKJV).

**Carol Bradley and Raul Aguilar,**  
associate superintendents

# San Marcos Groundbreaking

**SAN MARCOS** » Members of the San Marcos church, along with community members, have long awaited the construction of new Adventist school and gymnasium buildings, for which they finally broke ground on February 26. The \$2.4 million campus will house San Marcos Adventist Junior Academy, along with a community outreach building, and will be located on the San Marcos church property. The new school will have large classrooms, a music room, laboratory, full kitchen, and an expanded library.

The groundbreaking drew a large crowd of church family and officials, including Daniel Guerrero, San Marcos' | mayor, and Sam Huenergardt, president and CEO of Central Texas Medical Center. Also in attendance were Texas Conference president Carlos Craig; treasurer, Edwin Romero; executive secretary, Gary Brady; association and trust services director, Mike Doucoumes; and associate education superintendent, Carol Brady.



The groundbreaking for the new school and gymnasium took place on February 26.

awarded the contract for construction.

Construction is scheduled for completion in time for the fall school session, and early enrollment for Pre-K will begin on May 1. The school is planning a Pre-K and kindergarten preview for prospective students and parents to be introduced to the campus and faculty. There are presently 54 students enrolled at the junior academy, which has a staff of four teachers. Next year, an additional staff member will be added in order to strengthen the upper-grade program.

The school maintains high scholastic standards, and student rankings are well above average on standardized tests. In addition to the teaching staff, there is a support staff to assist students who need a little "hands on" help, and parents volunteer to provide hot lunches two days a week. With the high student-to-teacher ratio, students at the school are privileged to have the advantage of one-on-one training.

**Adelle Turpen**

## COWBOY Camp Meeting

presented by the Crossroads Fellowship Church  
October 5-6, 2012



Speaker:  
Dr. Bill Kilgore



Speaker:  
Carlos Craig



Pastors:  
Henry and Bunny Reid



Pianist:  
Kelly Mowrer

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For more information, call 817.426.5037

Other attendees included the buildings' architect, Eric Nunnally, as well as Jason Lillard, Lowell Langford, and Jesse Gober, of the Ridgemont Commercial Construction Group, which has been



# Health Evangelism a Success in Paris

**PARIS** » Members of the Paris church recently felt convicted by the Holy Spirit to pray for guidance about opportunities to meet the local community's health and spiritual needs. After some time of prayer, the Lord providentially opened the way to conduct an evangelistic series combined with a health seminar. On January 14, with the help of Jay Sloop, health ministries director from the Upper Columbia Conference and Darrin Bartell, of Amazing Facts, the church launched a four-week campaign.

Health screenings were conducted after the first full week of meetings. The attendees paid a \$15 fee for the cost of supplies, and were asked to fill out a lifestyle questionnaire. The health screening included tests for body mass index and body fat percentage, waist and hip measurement and ratio, hand grip strength,



Darrin Bartell (left), of Amazing Facts, and Jay Sloop, health ministries director for the Upper Columbia Conference assisted with the Paris church's health evangelism campaign.

TEXAS CONFERENCE

## Health Avenue for Explosive Church Growth

*Empowering Members to Lead*

**May 19-20, 2012**

### The Link Between Health and Evangelism

Katia Reinert, NAD Health Ministries Director, MSN, CRNP, FNP-BC, PHCNS-BC (InStep for Life)

### Is Health Relevant to Winning Souls?

Larry Moore, M.Div., President, Southwestern Union

### The Brain + Emotional Scarring + Evangelism = Healing

Errol Bryce, M.D., F.A.C.P. (New Steps to Health)

### Inspiring Community/Small Groups

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Fort Worth First Seventh-day Adventist Church  
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For more information, call: 817.915.0323

En Español

blood pressure and pulse, blood glucose and blood lipids (including total cholesterol, HDL, LDL, triglycerides, and risk ratio), and a timed, one-mile walk to measure maximal oxygen uptake.

Sloop then consulted with each participant, offering valuable counsel to several who were affected by diabetes, high blood pressure, or other health issues. It is not an overstatement to say that this service was life-saving.

When Christ

ministered on earth, the results were not calculated by the "how many," but by the "how." The divinely ordained combination of the gospel presented with the health message, each strengthening the other, proved powerful for the Paris church's local series in several ways. First, many guests decided to attend primarily to hear the health seminar, but ended up staying for the evangelistic series. Second, the seminars experienced a remarkable guest retention rate of nearly 80 percent. Finally, both the attendees and the church members received tremendous physical benefits from the health lectures, reinforcing an overall commitment to health and fitness.

Even though planning for the series was more comprehensive and costly than originally intended, for the Paris church, meeting the practical needs of the people and ministering to both the body and soul through Christ's gospel was worth it!

Jill Cobb

# Jesus Sets Us Free



TEXICO CONFERENCE

The evangelist Dwight L. Moody was invited to preach in a prison. He chose repentance, conversion, forgiveness of sins, and accepting Jesus as Savior as his subjects. His sermon was powerful, but he wasn't satisfied. He asked the warden to let him visit the cells so he could personally see the prisoners.

As he visited with the first prisoner, he asked, "Why are you here?" The prisoner said, "I'm innocent. My wife framed me. She had a boyfriend. They wanted to get rid of me, so they framed me. I shouldn't be here at all. I didn't do anything wrong. I don't know why I'm here, Pastor Moody."

Moody went to the next cell and asked, "Why are you here?" The next prisoner said, "Well, the police hated me. They had it in for me. They framed me. I didn't do anything wrong. I don't know why I'm here in this prison, Pastor Moody."

Moody then went to the next cell. "Why

are you here?" The reply, "The reason I'm here is because my partner cheated in business, and made it look like I was the cheat. The books were audited, and I got the blame. I didn't really do anything wrong, and I don't know why I'm here." Dwight Moody turned to the warden and said, "I've never seen so many righteous people in all my life."

Finally he came to a prisoner who was sitting on his bed with head bent down, weeping. Dwight Moody said, "What's wrong?" The prisoner sobbed, "I realize that I'm a sinner, and I am lost. I've done wrong things. I don't believe God can forgive me. I don't know how to give my life to Jesus Christ. My case is hopeless." Moody looked at the warden and said, "Finally, I've found an honest man."

He asked the warden to open the cell. Moody went in, opened the Bible for the young man, showed him the beautiful plan of salvation, and asked him to kneel, pray,

and to give his life to Jesus Christ. He went down to his knees a sinner, and he came up from his knees saved by the blood of Jesus Christ, with a full pardon and guaranteed freedom when Jesus sets up His Kingdom. The prisoner was saved when he admitted he was lost. His sins were forgiven. His pardon was secure.

All of us are sinners, whether we want to admit it or not. We are prisoners in this world of sin and suffering. We are waiting for the day when Jesus opens the prison door of mortality and gives us true freedom, which is immortality. This will happen when He comes. Even though we are prisoners, when we have Jesus we have our pardon. Praise God! Our job is to visit those without pardon in the prison house of sin, and introduce them to the sin-pardoning advocate, Jesus, who only has immortality and who can make us all truly free in Him.

**James Stevens**, president

## Central Sentinel Pathfinders Use Christmas Parade to Spread God's Love

**ALBUQUERQUE, N. MEX.** » This past December, the Central Sentinel Pathfinder Club participated in Albuquerque's annual Christmas parade. The theme of the Pathfinder float, "Mary Had a Little Lamb," contained the nativity scene. Two goals were accomplished with the float. First, it was an opportunity to spread God's love to others. The Pathfinders passed out candy canes, with a Christian message attached, to the parade's spectators. Second, the Pathfinders were able to fulfill requirements for the Pathfinder's parade float-building honor.

The Pathfinders constructed the float over the course of several weeks on church member Porky Martinez' trailer, and stored it with another member, Hector Ramos.

When the evening of the event finally arrived, the Adventurer Club members dressed up as characters in the Nativ-

ity, and the Pathfinder Club dressed as shepherds and angels. Just as the group was preparing to set out for the parade, it began snowing. In a short period of time, snow covered the group and everyone had cold, wet costumes and a blanket of snow covered the roads. The snow didn't stop the group, though. The Pathfinders were excited to see all of the people cheering them on, and wishing them a "Merry Christmas" as they passed by. By the end, they were cold, wet and hungry, but the group said they had



The Albuquerque Central Sentinel Pathfinder Club on their float to spread the love of God through the town.

a good time and wouldn't mind doing it again next year.

**Michael Ramos**



# Lives are Changed in Costa Rica

**CAHUITA, COSTA RICA** » The morning had finally arrived for 24 students and six adults who met at the Albuquerque Sunport Airport to begin their mission trip to Costa Rica. Along with 22 students from Sandia View Academy, two youth from local churches also participated in the 13 evangelistic campaigns that the group undertook in the Cahuita area of Southeast Costa Rica. Twelve students and one of the adults were speakers, while the rest of the team ran children's meetings, made musical presentations, and provided technical and communication support.

Each morning began with many of the students exercising on the beach. After breakfast, the students began to prepare their sermons and children's ministry plans for the day before attending worship at the Cahuita Central church. The student preachers took turns presenting the night's topic for worship, and students gave testimonies about the previous evenings' presentations. After lunch, they continued to prepare their sermons, and also took a little free time. Vans began to leave for the campaign sites at about 4:30 p.m. Some had to drive up to an hour to get to their sites. Once at the sites, each team would set up equipment and have a quick supper or snack before presenting the evening program. They would then return to the motel, the last team usually arriving a little after 10:00 p.m.

It became apparent that there were not enough translators for all the sites, so some of the students volunteered to translate for the preachers. One site still did not have adequate translation, so the group prayed that God would provide someone. A young man named Ismael, who had been attending Daniel Quinones's site and had spo-

ken to him about feeling called by God to preach, wondered if Daniel could help him find a way to do so. Ismael became the translator for Jeremy Merling at his site in Margarita, where he continued to also hear the message. As a result of his studying and translating, he was inspired by the Holy Spirit to accept the truths of

Rica, as well as to the team members who traveled from Sandia View Academy. The students traveled back to school determined to continue sharing the message of



**Top:** A Costa Rican woman, students Olivia Gurule and Jeremy Merling, and Ismael Kurr were baptized by Derral Reeve.

**Above left:** Aimee Monge and Janelle Lira hold children's meetings at the Magdalena church in Costa Rica.

▲ Derral Reeve, pastor, baptizing Ismael

◀ Sandia View Academy student, Phillip Warfield, preaching in Costa Rica.

the Adventist message, and was baptized on the final Sabbath of the meetings. At that site, students Olivia Gurule and Jeremy Merling were rebaptized, along with Ismael and another Costa Rican woman.

There were about 30 baptisms at the different sites on that Sabbath, with an additional 15 to 20 planning to get baptized the next Sabbath. The trip was a great blessing to the Limon district churches in Costa

Jesus and His soon coming.

*For additional stories and pictures, check out the SVA Mission Trip Facebook page.*

**Derral Reeve**, Texico education superintendent and Sandia View Academy principal

# God Answers Prayers

**DEMING, N. MEX.** » Scripture assures that God answers prayer, and a recent Amazing Facts prophecy seminar held at the Deming church was the answer to a Deming member's prayers. Even though there was some miscommunication in newspaper articles about the seminar, and the fact that seminar flyers were misrouted twice to another state, most of those who attended the first night said that they had received the flyer that very day and decided to attend. Attendance remained strong throughout the five-week seminar.

Many who attended said that their faith was strengthened and their walk with the

Lord was refreshed. Attendees asked many questions as the seminar speaker, Jason Morgan, thoroughly explained biblical prophecies. A special children's class was also held, providing numerous hands-on activities as the children learned of God's love for them. Three children were given Bibles for faithfully attending all of the meetings.

One family made the 60-mile trip from their home in Las Cruces each evening. The journey was worth the sacrifice, as the mother dedicated her life to the Lord and was baptized into membership in the Las Cruces Central

Church. Six other souls were baptized and welcomed into the Deming church family.

TEXICO CONFERENCE

## 2012 Texico Convocation And Youth Festival

June 7-9, 2012

**"TRUST IN THE LORD AND HE WILL  
DIRECT YOUR PATH"**

### Main Speakers

*English:*

**Elder Dan Jackson,**

*North American Division President*

*Spanish:*

**Dr. Andres Sequera,**

*Associate Youth/Adult Pastor*

*Columbia 1st SDA Church, South Carolina*

### Special Musical Guests

*English: King's Herald's Quartet*

*Spanish: Promise Group*

**Albuquerque Convention Center**

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**Albuquerque, New Mexico**



▲ Martin Charles made the decision to follow God.

▼ It's a joyous occasion as Callyn Vance is baptized by Chuck Workman, pastor.





# Faith in Action **Women Making a Difference**

**ALBUQUERQUE, N. MEX. »** On March 3, members of the North Valley Spanish church joined millions of Adventists across the world in celebrating International Women's Day of Prayer. Women participated in activities all day, starting with Sabbath School and ending with a special Adventist Youth program. The sermon was centered on the day's theme, "Faith in Ac-

tion," and all members were asked to put their faith into action in a world where people need to see God in action and need to feel God's loving touch. According to North Valley's Women's Ministries director, Miriam Guzman, the theme "Faith in Action," was the perfect platform to urge members to unite in prayer for the church and community. The church also prayed

for women around the world who are facing different types of difficult challenges.

International Women's Day of Prayer is not the only activity in which the church participates. For more than two years,

Eileen Rivera and other women of the church have been active in a special ministry called "Tejedoras de Esperanza" (Knitters of Hope). The ministry brings women of the church together to pray while knitting or crocheting scarves, shawls, blankets, gloves, or other garments for people in need.

"As I'm crocheting each stitch on a blanket or scarf, I'm praying for a specific person," said Rivera, "My favorite thing to crochet is baby blankets, because I get to pray for a little baby." Most recently, Rivera prayed and crocheted a wrap for a woman in the community who was recently diagnosed with stage four colon cancer. "We understand that there are many similar ministries out there," said Rivera, "But this is our way of giving back and making a difference in our own community."

**Debbie Covarrubias**



Women of the North Valley Spanish church have been active in a special ministry called "Tejedoras de Esperanza" (Knitters of Hope), bringing women together to pray while knitting or crocheting for people in need.

## Three Angels Youth Preach the Word

**ALBUQUERQUE, N. MEX. »** The youth of the Albuquerque Three Angels church wanted to start off the new year by sharing what had been on their hearts. With a theme of a "Chosen Generation," taken from 1 Peter 2:9-10, the youth began putting together a Youth Sabbath program which would include afternoon break-out sessions. On Sabbath, February 4, the youth led out in all of the services, which gave great honor and glory to God. The worship service was blessed with two amazing sermons, presented by Kyler Garcia, age 15, and Alyssa Phillips, age 10. Kyler spoke about Noah, and how he was chosen of God to spread His message, and concluded the message that we are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, and must carry on with the message of the Gospel no matter what people say.

Alyssa explained how she has shared her faith at school by praying over her lunch, and how her example has led others to pray at school over their meal. Alyssa said that even though she's only 10, she has a great respon-

sibility to share the love of God with others.

To see such youth share and demonstrate how God is working in their lives was a great



Kyler Garcia, age 15, and Alyssa Phillips, age 10, were the worship service main speakers.

blessing. After the worship service was a great lunch, followed by afternoon classes. All classes were inspiring and Christ-centered. Many attendees gave great feedback and loved each class. The three classes were: "Doing it Right" with Edwin Yroc, which was a look on how to live a Christian life; a Bible question and answer class by Jeremy McCombs, pastor, and Rey Chavez; and a class conducted by Sue Hinkle, who shared about spreading the gospel overseas, and gave ideas for evangelism at home. During this time, about 30 younger children were involved in a children's program with Martin Gallegos and staff in the church gym.

To end the day, the Adventurer Club hosted a gym night, with food, games for the kids, and fellowship. God truly blessed the youth and all who stayed throughout the day. The next Youth Sabbath is being planned for May 26, and all are welcome. To reserve your spot for our next event, or for more information, please contact Rey at [reychavz1@gmail.com](mailto:reychavz1@gmail.com).

**Rey Chavez**

# A Light on a Hill

**Southwestern staff and students recognized for positive impact on local youth.**

Jeffery is from Haiti. Chantal is from Madagascar. Molitoni is from Samoa. Tam is from Taiwan.

Each of these students is currently enrolled at Southwestern Adventist University. Their majors include business administration, social science, theology, and biology. They are far from home, experiencing a new culture, perfecting their English, and they've each played a significant role in Dr. Bill Kilgore's cultural introduction program.

Kilgore, vice president for spiritual development, started the program in 2008. Every Monday night, Kilgore and an international student from Southwestern attend the East Cleburne Community Center (ECCC), an after-school program that provides a variety of evening, weekend, and vacation programs for local at-risk children. After the children enjoy a meal and receive tutoring assistance, they eagerly ready themselves for the Monday night treat—a virtual tour to another country, narrated by a Southwestern student. The program, named for the virtual trip to “their country and back,” witnesses an attendance of 35-55 children each week.

The presentations have been popular since the very beginning. “Many of the children have never been outside of Texas,” Kilgore explains. “They are curious to know about the world, and the international students have an opportunity to show their pride in their country and make a difference in the community.”

Just a few months ago it was Chantal's turn to present. Each international

student usually prepares a 15-minute slide show to present to the children, often accompanied by traditional dress and items native to their country. Most of the students start their presentation with a map of their country. Chantal decided to change things up.

“The first picture in my presentation was from the animated movie ‘Madagascar.’ When it came up on the screen, I asked the kids if they knew where this was and a bunch of hands went up right away. When I told them that Madagascar is where I was born and raised, they became so excited,” Chantal giggles. “Of course, they'd never met anyone from there.”

Tam had a similar experience. “I showed them pictures of where I grew up in Taiwan,” she recalls. “We're talking to students ranging in age from kindergarten to junior high, so I was worried about reaching them all. But they were really interested and they had a lot of questions!”

Tam continues to work with the children on a regular basis as a member of Southwestern's SIFE (Students in Free Enterprise) team. Along with team mem-

ber Jeffrey (from Haiti), Tam teaches the junior high students how to balance their budgets, be aware of the economy, and make good basic business decisions. Tam explains, “Even at the age of 12 they have an interest in learning about business. They want to create a better way of life for themselves.”

The efforts of Kilgore and his student presenters were recently recognized at the annual D.L. Barrett Award Banquet where ECCC presented Kilgore and Southwestern's president, Eric Anderson, with a community service award. Of course, a handful of international students were there to witness some of the fruits of their labor. “What a wonderful and humbling experience to be honored with so many other contributors to our community,” Kilgore said, as he accepted the award on behalf of the university. “What a blessing to be a part of this ministry.”

**Darcy Force**

Bill Kilgore and students with the community service award from the East Cleburne Community Center.





# Ministries Could Re-locate from California's Media Center

The board of the Adventist Media Center, home to productions such as Faith For Today and It is Written, is requesting from each of its ministries a business proposal that can include the option of relocating from its Simi Valley location.

The action, voted April 3, would allow ministries to move to locations with a lower cost of living than Southern California, said Warren Judd, the center's manager.

There is no indication yet of which ministries might choose to relocate, said Dan Jackson, AMC board chair and president of the denomination's North American Division.

The media ministries of the division include Breath of Life, Faith For Today, It Is Written, La Voz de la Esperanza and The Voice of Prophecy.

The board said business plans of each media ministry should be presented to division administration by June 3. The proposals will then be brought to a future AMC board meeting for consideration.

Two productions will remain at the center: Adventist Media Productions, the electronic media production unit of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America, and the Adventist Media Services Agency, which assists in media buying and placement.

The move comes nearly a year after

church officials in North America met for a summit with producers, lay members and consultants to review the effectiveness of media ministries. In a subsequent release, Jackson said awareness of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America did not match the money spent on past media ministries and required re-evaluation.

In a statement on April 6, Jackson affirmed ministries at AMC, which is home to about 125 employees.

"The media ministries' mission and messages of hope have helped to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ throughout North America and beyond. We have appreciated the tireless efforts of the many people who

have been involved with each of the ministries," Jackson said.

Also during its April 3 meeting, AMC's board voted to divest itself of LifeTalk Radio. That decision follows a January 2011 vote to move LifeTalk's administration to AMC for financial reasons. LifeTalk broadcasts to about 75 stations across North America and internationally in Guam, Saipan and England. Popular programs on the stations include Your Story Hour, Voice of Prophecy, Bible Answers Live, Breath of Life, and Science, Scripture, and Salvation.

Courtesy of Adventist News Network



The Adventist Media Center in California's Simi Valley is allowing its ministries to submit proposals that would allow them to move to areas with a lower cost of living. The center is home to five ministries, including Breath of Life and Voice of Prophecy.

AMC file photo



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**Physician Assistant Program at Union College** seeks chair for its MPAS program. Responsibilities include leading faculty and staff, guiding curricular development, program management, and some teaching. Minimum requirements include a deep commitment to Christ, enthusiasm for the College mission, three years of patient care experience, appropriate degree and certification, and abilities to communicate and lead the well-

organized team. Preferred qualities include graduate PA academic experience, familiarity with ARC-PA accreditation, and strong project management skills. A doctorate, or willingness to pursue one, is also preferred. Contact Dr. Malcolm Russell, VPAA, at [marussel@ucollege.edu](mailto:marussel@ucollege.edu), or 402.486.2501.

### MISCELLANEOUS

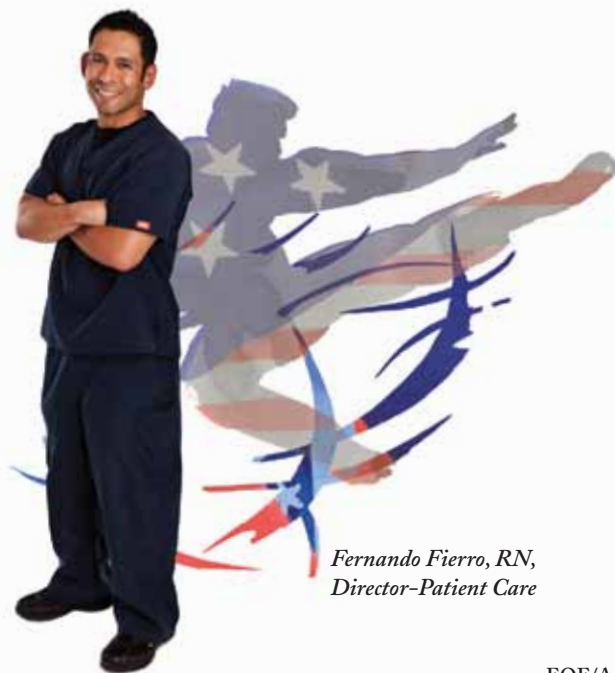
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## Announcements

**The Los Lunas church in N. Mex.**, would like to get in contact with the following persons: London Banks, Charlene Ortega, Michael Ortega, Larry Roche, Monique Roche, Gabriel Roche, Troy Bennet, Lisa Hoenigke, Dolly Raley, and Jamie Mireles. If you know a phone number, and/or address, please contact Betty Johnston at 505.861.0105, at labetjohnston@msn.com.

**Tillamook Adventist School** in Tillamook, Ore., invites past students, faculty and friends to a weekend celebration of 75 years of Christian education on May 18-20, 2012, at the school campus. Activities run Friday vespers through Sunday morning. Special rates are available at the Ashley Inn, which can be reached at 503.842.7599. To stay in touch, visit [www.TillamookAdventistSchool.org](http://www.TillamookAdventistSchool.org), join the Tillamook Adventist School Alumni Facebook group, or

call 503.842.6533.

**Ozark Adventist Academy** invites all former faculty, staff, and students to attend Homecoming Weekend, June 8-10, 2012. Plan to sing with the alumni choir, visit with classmates and friends, and enjoy the beautiful OAA campus. For more information, call 479.736.2221 ext. 1109, or visit the Website: [www.ozarkacademy.org](http://www.ozarkacademy.org).

**Madison College Alumni**

**Association Homecoming** will be June 22-24, 2012, honoring the classes of 1942, 1947, 1952, 1957, and 1962. Also invited are those who attended Madison College, Madison College Academy, and the Anesthesia School. We will have activities and meals beginning Friday evening through Sunday morning at the Madison Academy campus. For information, contact Henry Scoggins at 615.919.7767, or Jim Culpepper at 615.415.1925.

## Obituaries

**ANDERSON, Wayne**, born October 18, 1947 in Monroe, La., and died March 16, 2012 in Little Rock, Ark. He was a member of the Gentry church. Survivors: son, Brian Anderson, of Springfield, Mo.

**DEWEES, Ernest Jim**, born October 6, 1927 in Sentinel, Okla., and died December 10, 2011 in Tulsa, Okla. He was a member of the Ketchum church, and a business owner in Vinita, Okla., for more than 30 years. He enjoyed farming, hunting, working cattle, and playing the saxophone and clarinet, as well as spending time with his family. Survivors: two daughters, Vicki Toews and husband, Terry, and Mona Dewees; two grandchildren, and one great-granddaughter.

**JUSTIN, Melvin**, born March 16, 1939 in Pakistan, and died March 24, 2012 in Weslaco, Tex. Melvin was a faithful servant of God, witnessing to all he met in the name of Jesus Christ. His family and friends look forward to being gathered together again with Melvin to praise the Savior upon His return. Survivors:

wife, Nihar; son, Jimmy and wife, Jolly; daughter, Julie and husband, Immanuel; five grandchildren, Tigra, Thezia, Jewel, Jordan, and Samaira; two brothers; three sisters, and numerous relatives and friends.

**MAPLES, Barbara Jean Miller**, died February 7, 2012 in Tyler, Tex. She was a member of the Tyler church. Survivors: son, David Maples; and grandsons, Ethan, Aidan, and Dylan.

**SKINNER, Virgil C.**, born Jun 6, 1926 in Hope, Ark., and died February 17, 2012 in Sherwood, Ark. He was a member of the Little Rock church. He was an engineer for nearly 40 years. Survivors: wife, Faye, of Sherwood; two daughters, Janet McNew and Sarah Rhoads Kinder, both of North Little Rock, Ark.; son, Sid Skinner, of Lonoke, Ark.; two sisters, Iva lee Davis and Joyce McRoy, both of Hope, Ark., and seven grandchildren.

**STEWART, Jesse Jerome Jr.**, born April 7, 1925 in Porum, Okla., and died March 14, 2012. He was a member of the Central church in Oklahoma City. Jesse served in the army with the 594th joint as-

sault signal company in WWII as a field lineman and rifle sharpshooter. He served in the South Pacific and received several medals. He loved his family, being a civil engineer, camping, and golf. Jesse was a humble, proud, kindhearted, strong, and patient man. He was preceded in death by his wife, Lillian. Survivors: three sons, Jesse Stewart, James Stewart and wife, Diane, Jerry Stewart and wife, Yvonne; two sisters, Pauline and Francis; seven grandchildren, and five great-grandchildren.

**SORENSEN, Betty J.**, born August 1, 1932 in Kilgore, Tex., and died March 7, 2012 in Ravenden, Ark. Betty was preceded in death by her husband, Bill, who served as a pastor for many years, and who, following his retirement, continued to pastor in the Arkansas-Louisiana Conference. Survivors: daughter, Audrey McGrew, of Ravenden; son, Chris Sorenson, of McKinney, Tex.; grandson, Ray Sorenson, of Paxton, Ill.; and granddaughter, Ann Godsey, of Williford, Ark.

## SABBATH SUNSET CALENDAR

	May 4	May 11	May 18	May 25	Jun 1	Jun 8
Abilene, TX	8:22	8:28	8:32	8:37	8:41	8:44
Albuquerque, NM	7:55	8:01	8:06	8:11	8:15	8:19
Amarillo, TX	8:36	8:41	8:47	8:52	8:56	9:00
Brownsville, TX	8:03	8:07	8:11	8:14	8:17	8:20
Dallas, TX	8:11	8:16	8:22	8:26	8:30	8:34
El Paso, TX	7:48	7:53	7:58	8:02	8:07	8:10
Fort Worth/Keene, TX	8:13	8:19	8:23	8:28	8:32	8:36
Gallup, NM	8:04	8:10	8:15	8:20	8:25	8:29
Galveston/Houston, TX	8:01	8:05	8:10	8:14	8:17	8:20
Gentry, AR	8:08	8:14	8:20	8:25	8:30	8:34
Little Rock, AR	7:56	8:02	8:08	8:13	8:17	8:21
Muskogee, OK	8:11	8:17	8:22	8:28	8:32	8:36
New Orleans, LA	7:40	7:44	7:49	7:53	7:56	8:00
Oklahoma City, OK	8:19	8:25	8:30	8:35	8:40	8:44
Roswell, NM	7:43	7:49	7:53	7:58	8:02	8:06
San Antonio, TX	8:13	8:17	8:21	8:25	8:29	8:32
Shreveport, LA	7:59	8:04	8:08	8:13	8:17	8:21
Tulsa, OK	8:14	8:20	8:26	8:31	8:35	8:40

BY ADRIAN D. RIOJAS

## From Rebellion to Revived

**I GREW UP IN CORPUS CHRISTI, TEX.,** in a very loving, caring family. I'd grown up Catholic and had always been active in the church, but never really thought much about God or religion apart from that. Unfortunately, by the age of 16, I had become very rebellious and wanted to do things my own way. I became so difficult that I couldn't live in the same house as my mom, so I moved in with my grandparents.

After high school, I moved to Arlington, Tex., where I found a job, enrolled in college, and was a typical young adult in the world, partying and having a good time. I visited my family at Christmas after my first year away from home, and mentioned that I had been feeling under the weather. I decided to go to the doctor.

As I waited in the lobby of the doctor's office, I thought about my life. I wondered if God was trying to get my attention. I tried to ignore that though, and picked up a magazine to distract myself. That afternoon, I was given a high dose of reality. I was told that I had a cancerous tumor that would require surgery, followed by chemotherapy treatment. I couldn't believe it, I was only 19. If God was trying to get my attention, I hated Him for doing it this way. I wanted no part in a God who would do such horrible things to me.

During the months of treatment that followed, I was thankful to a friend I had made in Arlington named Brandie. She decided I needed someone to stick by me when I was sick—calling me on the phone every day and visiting me. She was the support I needed. Although I had lost my faith and thought God wasn't around, she stuck by me and would talk to me about needing to have faith.

After completing treatment, I enrolled in the University of North Texas, in Denton. I was far away from my friends, and Brandie, and I became lonely and bored. I started drinking, not sleeping, and cutting class. My grades started to slip.

One night, I was sitting in my dorm room, listening to a talk radio program about how science disproves the "theory" of Christianity. Intrigued, I opened a Bible I had sitting on my shelf that someone had brought me. I learned some things that night, but

the parables made no sense to me. I called my little brother, an Adventist, and asked him a few questions. He answered the best he could, and pointed me to a few Web sites for further exploration. A few weeks later, I decided to visit the Adventist church in Arlington. From the moment I walked in the door, I knew I was where I was supposed to be. On July 31, 2004, I was baptized into the family of God.

In order to be a fruitful believer and follower, I learned that I needed to help people any way I could. Just as Brandie, who is now my wife, had helped me those many years ago, I felt compelled to make a difference. The Lord has certainly blessed me in order to be able to serve others.

Now, as an active member and ministry leader in my church. I have the privilege of working with the Revive Community Care Ministry of the Arlington church. The ministry spends many Sabbath afternoons helping those in the community. This includes reaching out to the homeless population in Fort Worth. Revive has also had the privilege of volunteering at the North Texas Food Bank, as

well as providing Christmas gifts for foster children.

Whether you are looking the "least of these" in the face, or packing food for someone you will never meet, God's work is through you. Neither your upbringing or your background matter to God. Paul was once Saul. There is no task is too small, no idea too big. God sees your efforts, and He will bless you by saying, "Well done, good and faithful servant."



Adrian Riojas volunteering at the North Texas Food Bank.

**Adrian D. Riojas** is a graduate student at Texas Christian University, and is the LifeGroups coordinator for YG Church, the young adult ministry of the Arlington church. He may be reached at [adrian@ygchurch.com](mailto:adrian@ygchurch.com).



# On the Record »

BY PAT HUMPHREY » COMMUNICATION DIRECTOR, SOUTHWESTERN UNION



## Let's Make Music!

**WHEN WE THINK OF MUSICIANS**, what usually comes to mind is a select group of people who are especially talented—singers and instrumentalists with the unique gift of creating beautiful sounds that delight our senses. But recently I came across something that surprised me. It might come as a surprise to you too!

“Every act, every deed of justice and mercy and benevolence, makes music in heaven. The Father from His throne beholds and numbers the performer of them with His most precious treasures. ‘And they shall be Mine, saith the Lord of hosts, when I make up My jewels.’ Every merciful act to the needy or the suffering is as though done to Jesus. Whoever succors the poor, or sympathizes with the afflicted and oppressed, and befriends the orphan, brings himself into a more close relationship to Jesus” (*Review and Herald*, Aug. 16, 1881).

Recently, the office staff at the Southwestern Union had an opportunity to “make some music.” No, we didn’t sing or play instruments, although there are a few of us who have that ability. Each year, during a special time at the office, called

Home Week, we take an afternoon to do community service. Over the years we’ve been to a number of community agencies in the area, helping to fold and sort clothing, boxing food items for distribution, or doing other needed tasks. This year we headed for the Adventist Community Services Depot in Keene, Tex., where we found a long list of tasks waiting to be done. One of them was helping to prepare kits of clothing outfits to be distributed to disaster volunteers. Little did we know at the time that the very next week a series of tornados would hit the Dallas-Fort Worth area!

Though none of our staff were able to be a part of the distribution efforts in Lancaster following the tornados, each of us who helped out at the Depot the week before can feel

a sense of satisfaction, knowing that our efforts helped in some small way to make a difference in someone’s life.

Remember, you can make beautiful music in heaven, no matter what your musical talents are. Opportunities to help others are all around you. All you have to do is reach out, offer a willing hand, and ask God to show you the possibilities. So what are you waiting for? Let’s make some music!

*Pat Humphrey*



## Record

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