

SOUTHWESTERN UNION

Record

DECEMBER 2012



*Mingling
with Purpose*

CHRIST'S WAY OF WINNING SOULS



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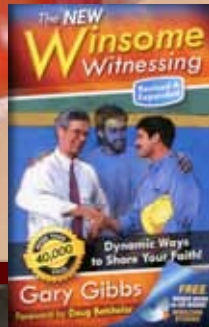
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On the Cover

“Christ’s method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Savior mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, ‘Follow Me’” (*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 143). In another source, Ellen White tells us that we should cultivate sociability, not for amusement, but for a purpose. This issue of the *Record* focuses on witnessing, and on the pages inside, you’ll find plenty of ideas for sharing your faith. May God bless you as you share the best Gift with others—all year long. [Photo by Eva Diana Iguaran]



Point of View»

BY LEAH JORDACHE » PASTOR, WIFE, AND MOM



Transcending Our Differences—Within and Without

On November 1-2, 2012 the North American Division hosted a diversity celebration entitled “Crossing Divides by Transcending Our Differences Through Jesus.” This was only the second meeting of its kind in our division, the first one being held 12 years ago. As you can imagine, a lot has changed in our world, in our country, and in our church during the last 12 years, so there was much to discuss. The celebration was attended by union and conference officers, and two young-professional representatives from each union. At the invitation of Southwestern Union president, Larry Moore, I had the privilege of representing the Union, and now of sharing that experience with you in just a few words.

The two days were packed with presentations and the speakers were diverse, including men and women, pastors, business people, church leaders, and other astute professionals from varied backgrounds and experience. The sheer volume of content and the relevance of the thoughts and ideas that were presented were almost overwhelming, but we still found time to enjoy the camaraderie and fellowship that are so often characteristic of gatherings of our church family.

We were not discussing the questions often raised about women’s ordination or regional conferences, but the topics of gender differences and racial harmony were two of several areas of diversity, including disability, age/generational, and cultural/ideology, that were being discussed. As an observer and a participant, I was struck with the loving and Christ-centered tone with which the North American Division is approaching these

sometimes-sensitive topics. The main emphasis in all areas was to increase awareness of both the needs and contribution of these diverse groups represented in our division, and to celebrate the wholeness of our unified identity in Jesus. The leaders also clearly communicated that they want to be intentional about leading in a direction that truly recognizes and celebrates these diversities in a way that will affect our church positively for the future, bring glory to God, and increase the kingdom of heaven.

We were all reminded that our practice of grace and love can make a difference and reveal God’s love to others. If we expect this to be true of us in the world around us, it must be true of us within our own church community. In John 13:34, 35, the Bible records Jesus saying, “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” This

question was posed by the North American Division leadership to those who attended: “How do we keep this commandment when we live, work, and worship with people who are so different from us?”

I believe this is an important and personal question for each of us to consider. If we cannot find and celebrate love, acceptance, and unity within the ever-expanding diversity in our own church family, how will we ever expect to share it with those who are still waiting to hear of God’s love in the world around us?

Leah Jordache is a pastor, wife, and mom living in Dallas, Texas.

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Praying for GLOBAL RAIN



CREATION Health

BY LYNELL LAMOUNTAIN » SENIOR MANAGER OF MISSION DEVELOPMENT, FLORIDA HOSPITAL

Sharing The Gift Of A Better Life

Eugene Lang was a successful self-made millionaire who had graduated from P.S. 121 Elementary School in Harlem. He was humbled and gratefully accepted the invitation of the 1981 graduating sixth-grade class to be its commencement speaker.

He knew life in Harlem—the challenges that these particular students faced. What sage words could he share with these beautiful young minds that would shape the course of their lives for the better?

The long-awaited day finally came. He had worked on his message for weeks and knew exactly what to say. Shortly into his commencement address he realized that very few of the students were listening. They were polite and respectful but not engaged.

His message of a future was not getting through.

So he laid aside his notes and shared from his heart. No script. No notes. Just one Harlem-educated student talking to another.

He reminded them of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech. He told them that everyone must have a dream and to go after it, if his or her life is to go anywhere and become something.

He noticed that their interest increased and they were more engaged.

So he continued by emphasizing the value of education and of going to college. But as soon as he said the word "college" he sensed that he was losing them again. It dawned on him that most of them could not afford college.

Mr. Lang yearned for a better life for these students. His heart went out to them. He so desperately wanted to

make a difference in their lives and see them succeed that he said, "Don't think for a minute that you can't go to college, because you can. I promise today that I will personally pay the college tuition for each of you who graduates from high school."

He had their full attention now. For the first time, these young people had hope—the hope of a better life, and were given something to live for.

One student said, "I had something to look forward to, some-

thing waiting for me. It was a golden feeling."

Although Mr. Lang sat down that day to a cheering audience, he knew that money alone was not the answer. So he created a support structure of teachers, parents, and community people who all worked together with the students to help them manifest a bright future for their lives.

Past history had predicted that of the 52 sixth-graders in that class, only 25 percent would graduate from high school. And of that 25 percent, almost none would go to college.

But, thanks to Mr. Lang and the support of others, 48 of the 52 sixth-graders graduated from high school, and 40 attended college.

One person can make a difference by sharing the gift of hope. But Mr. Lang did not just share information or his financial blessings, he shared *himself*. And *that* made the difference.

This story reminds me of another wealthy individual who shared a gift beyond comparison. His name is God. And the gift was Jesus.

"Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins" (Matthew 1:20, 21, NKJV).

The gift was so amazing that heaven was unable to remain silent. For on the night that Jesus Christ was born, angels found a group of shepherds—a humble group of people living a life of challenge with a future that was not so bright—to say:

"Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger" (Luke 2:10-12, NKJV).

What a gift! The gift of a new life overflowing with hope! The gift of living life to the fullest, not just for a few years, but forever! Something to live for and something to look forward to. Wow. What a golden feeling.

Jesus did not just share information (though He did); nor simply share His blessings (which He does); He shared Himself. And in giving Himself, He gave us life.

This holiday season, praise God for the most wonderful gift one could ever hope to receive. And let us share this precious gift of life, *eternal* life, with others.

That's CREATION Health!

Lynell LaMountain writes from Florida Hospital in Orlando, Florida.

- C
- Choice
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- Rest
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- Environment
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- Activity
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- Trust
- I
- Interpersonal
RELATIONSHIPS
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- Outlook
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- Nutrition



Lead Your World >>>

BY PAUL HUNT >> PASTOR, ACTS TWO CHURCH, PLANO, TEX.

Values Matter

The CEO of an automobile company was informed by the company's engineering department that one of their most profitable models has a serious defect. After reading the exhaustive report, she discovers that at least 200,000 cars need to be recalled. The accounting department informs her that each recall will cost an average of \$300. The total cost of the recall will be \$60 million. The engineering report also indicates that the chances of a fatal accident are one for every 3,000 cars, potentially representing the deaths of 66 people. After consulting with the legal team, the CEO is informed that each lawsuit will cost an average of \$200,000, if litigated successfully.

Later that night, the CEO pours over the grim facts in her home office:

First, she knows it will cost the company \$60 million for a full recall. Second, she's also aware that 66 people may die if the company does nothing, not to mention the backlash of negative publicity. Each death will cost an average payout of \$200,000, a total cost of \$13 million to the automobile company; \$47 million less than a full recall.

The following day, the CEO calls an emergency board meeting to recommend a way forward. The board considers the facts, and after lengthy deliberations, the board decides *not* to recall the defective model. They knowingly decide to permit 66 deaths, at a savings of \$47 million to the company's bottom line.

Anyone can declare their values verbally, but ultimately, the truth about what's really important to us is revealed in our behaviors and decisions. Most people rarely think consciously about their values, but knowing and prioritizing them can make a big difference.

Many of us keep ourselves in a state of continual confusion by not deciding which values should come first in our lives. Do you value time with family? Is service to others important to you? What about your career? How you prioritize makes a big difference if your dream job or promotion is offered to you, but requires that you spend long stretches away from home. Your decision would depend on whether family time was a priority, or whether your career came first.

It has been said that if you really want to know what your true values are, you'll find everything you need to know by looking at your bank statements. Matthew 6:21 tells us that; "where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." Whatever we value most takes our full attention. Whenever money becomes a sole priority, we may sacrifice time,

energy, and important relationships to chase it! In the case of the automobile board, their bottom line was far more important than their reputation or human life. Moral decency can take a back seat when we get our priorities wrong. Values matter!

THREE THINGS TO KNOW AND DO ABOUT YOUR VALUES

- 1. Find your values.** Everyone has a set of values, and it's important to know them intimately. Discover the things that matter most to you. Write them down honestly and be prepared for some surprises. Ask a trusted friend to review them with you. Make sure that what matters to God is still important to you.
- 2. Prioritize your values.** What comes first—family, relationships, service to others, stability, education, and personal development? List your values in order of importance, beginning with your top three.
- 3. Commit to live your values.** Life will always present us with challenges. Prioritizing your values removes the angst, uncertainty, and confusion over which choices are best for you. Values act as filters for what is truly important to us. Commit to live your values.



Every day we face important decisions as part of a family, team, leadership group, church committee, or school board. Perhaps you run a business or have friends and family who rely on your judgment. When you live out your values—on purpose and with humility—you can touch the lives of others and make a powerful difference.

Paul Hunt writes from Plano, Texas.



Pass it On...

A Monthly Focus on Evangelism in the Southwest

RESOURCES FOR SHARING

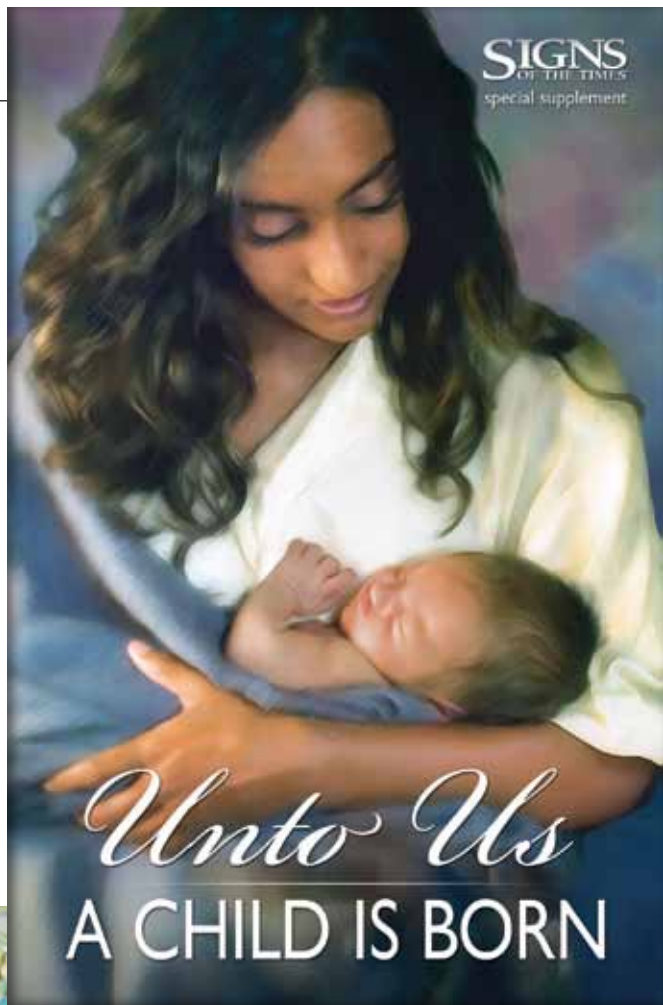
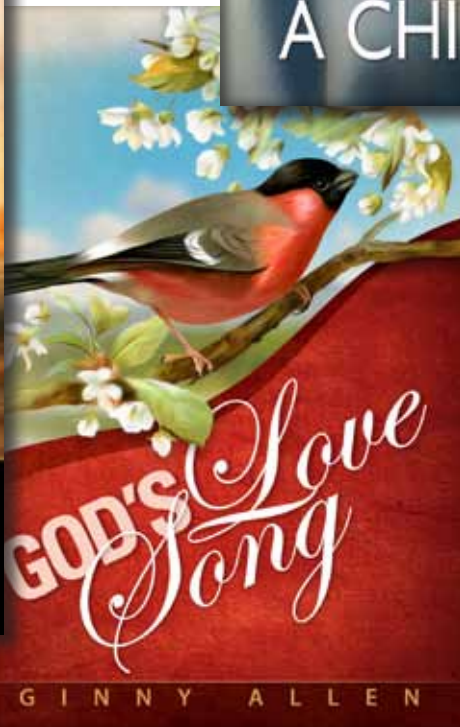
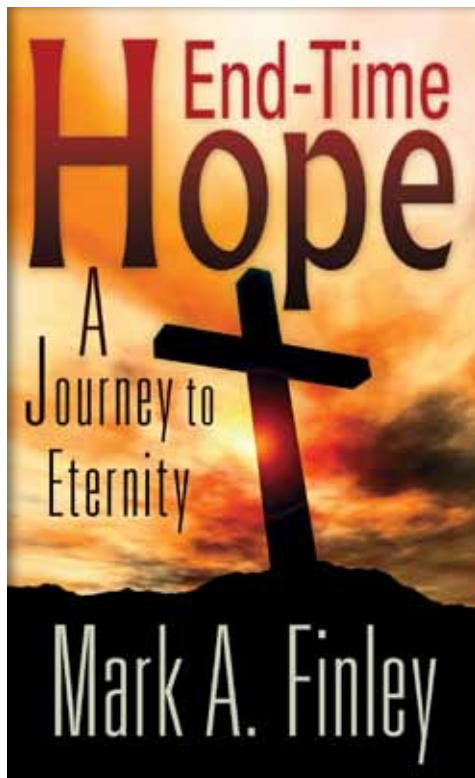
Time to Share

This issue of the Record is devoted to the topic of witnessing. To help you with your outreach efforts, we're sharing a few tools from Pacific Press, which are available at your local Adventist Book Center, and where you'll find many others. Happy sharing, and be sure to send us your witnessing stories! —The editors

Our thoughts turn naturally toward sharing at this time each year. But *what* to share? Here are three meaningful and affordable suggestions.

God's Love Song by Ginny Allen tells of God's love through both the joyful and painful circumstances of life. These stories will resonate with women everywhere, inspiring them with confidence in a God who loves and rejoices over them with singing.

Mark Finley's *End-Time Hope* explores the biblical teaching of the Lord's return and examines how we can prepare for Christ's appearance. In spite of the chaos all around, *End-Time Hope* will help read-



ers face the future with courage.

Unto Us a Child is Born is a beautifully-illustrated 16-page booklet that tells the Bethlehem story: Heaven's most precious Gift.

Guaranteed to keep on giving—long after the Christmas season is over—these three gifts are perfect for anyone who wants to grow in their walk with Jesus. Available at your local Adventist Book Center, online at AdventistBookCenter.com, or toll free, 800.765.6955.

La Pasión por Llevar el Mensaje Lanza una Nueva Ola en la Literatura Evangelista

Danilo Orlando tuvo una oportunidad de testificar con lo que sólo se puede soñar. Él trabajó en Brownsville, Texas, vendiendo libros de puerta en puerta. Un día le vendió un ejemplar de *El Conflicto de los Siglos* a un pastor evangélico. Luego Orlando “un poco preocupado de que a él no le gustaría,” volvió a ver al pastor para obtener su reacción sobre el libro. “Este libro es muy bueno,” le dijo el pastor. “De hecho, ¿por qué no vienes a mi iglesia y lo promueves?” Orlando no perdió la oportunidad. El domingo él predicó sobre la gran controversia entre Cristo y Satanás. “Dios tiene un mensaje especial para este tiempo,” dijo. Además les instó a que leyeran el libro y exhortó a que lo compartiesen. Ellos aceptaron el reto, y algunos tomaron hasta 20 copias para dar a sus amigos y vecinos. Durante su estadía en Texas, Orlando visitó tres iglesias dominicales y promovió *El Conflicto de los Siglos*.

Esteban Griguol, líder del trabajo de la literatura, dice sobre este libro “Estamos tratando de compartirlo lo mas que podamos,” y junto con su equipo han distribuido 300,000 copias en el último año. Primero hacen los arreglos para visitar una iglesia, llevan hasta 5,000 ejemplares de *El Conflicto de los Siglos* y predicán un sermón sobre la importancia vital de compartirlo. Al final, se anima a cada familia a hacer un pacto, a compartir 10, 20 o 30 libros al mes. Griguol no busca “que la gente distribuya 10 libros y crea que *ha cumplido con su deber*,” dice, “Este no es un evento de una sola vez. Este es un estilo de vida.”

Griguol trabaja también con estudiantes de Southwestern Adventist University, una parte muy importante del ministerio de literatura. La universidad tiene un club de colportores, bajo el liderazgo de Mabio Gomes, que trabaja todo el año vendiendo “Ma-

gabooks” a bajo costo. Durante las vacaciones del Día de Acción de Gracias, unos 32 estudiantes enfocaron sus esfuerzos en la ciudad de Waco, Texas. “Estamos dispuestos a trabajar con las iglesias,” dice Gomes. “Somos misioneros, así como trabajadores. Visitamos hogares, compartimos libros y oramos con las personas, y las inscribimos en estudios bíblicos y seminarios de salud,” alrededor de 10 a 15 personas por semana.

Sabemos que el Espíritu Santo está trabajando para abrir los corazones al mensaje Adventista. “En Houston, un hombre musul-

mán fue tan impresionado con el libro que compró 200 copias para compartir,” nos dice. En otro caso, el pastor de una iglesia evangélica compró una copia para cada uno de sus miembros. Griguol cree saber que estas oportunidades extraordinarias de testificar se están abriendo por que “Jesús viene.”

Luis Biazotto, director del HHES de Review and Herald, supervisa el trabajo en gran parte de la Unión de Southwestern, dice que “Una de nuestras tareas es el entrenamiento de nuestros miembros para compartir literatura. Hay más potencial si trabajamos juntos.” Griguol recluta a cualquiera que desee

colportar. Actualmente, alrededor de un 25 por ciento trabajan tiempo completo y con las ganancias proveen para sus familias. “No es fácil,” dice. Implica sacrificio. Una persona necesita sentir el llamado en su corazón.

Contacte a Griguol al 210.862.3322 para obtener información sobre los seminarios en su localidad que sirven como una introducción a la obra.



Cuando Luis Hernández (Izquierda) descubrió *El Conflicto De Los Siglos*, compró 80 copias del evangelista de literatura Denys Ponce (Derecha) para poder compartirlos con sus amigos. Ahora, como miembro bautizado Adventista del Séptimo día el continúa compartiendo cientos de copias del libro.

Kim Peckham

SOUL WINNING: A RECIPE FOR SUCCESS

Gary Gibbs

I became a Christian through a series of Bible lectures on prophecy sponsored by the Seventh-day Adventist Church. God found me at a very receptive time. I had recently graduated from school and was contemplating my future. That's when I recalled meeting a man in my childhood who introduced me to the concept that God has revealed the future to mankind in His Word.

Looking back, I can see how God used this man to plant this seed of truth in my mind. It led me to rationalize, "If I can understand what God says about the future of this world, then I will know how to plan my future." At the time, I had no interest in

becoming a Christian. In fact, I was studying Buddhism and practicing an ungodly lifestyle. Even still, prophecy interested me and I attended some Adventist meetings on prophecy.

The meetings turned out to be truly life-changing. Not only did I learn about last-day events, but I discovered that God has a plan for my life. Most importantly, I met Jesus and accepted Him as my Lord and Savior. He has been leading me ever since into an exciting life of ministry and much more.

When I was baptized, I am sure that no one in the church that day dreamed how God was going to lead this 17-year-old kid. By all appearances, I didn't look like a budding pastor, evangelist, or television ministry leader. I had long hair down my back and rode a motorcycle to church. My speech was unrefined and my manners were far from Christian.

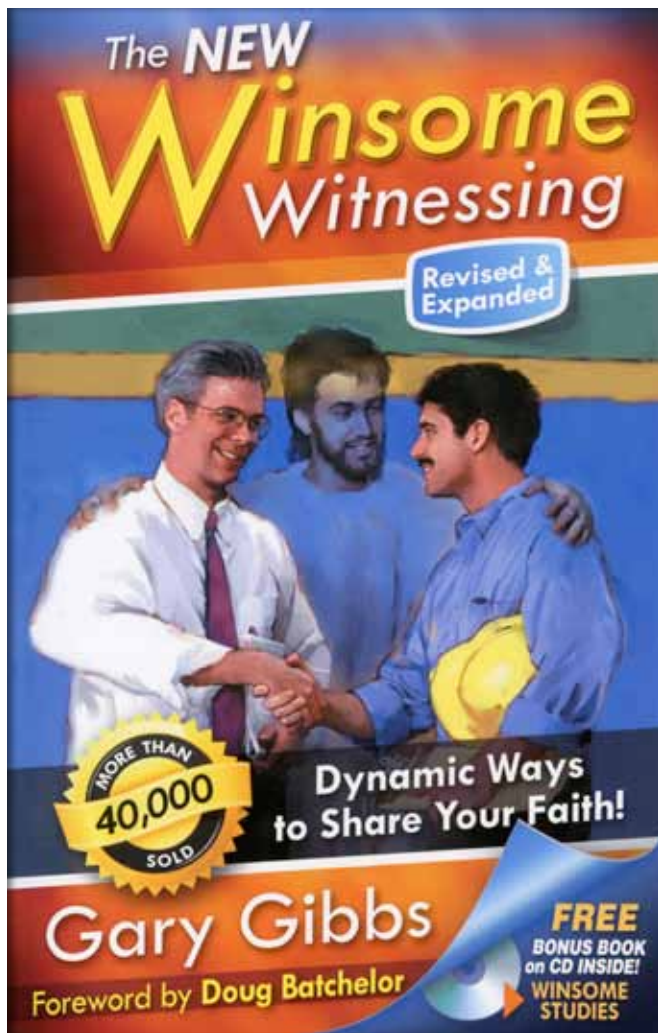
However, this didn't discourage Dickey, the personal ministries leader in my new church. A week or two after my baptism, he invited me to tag along with him to visit people who attended the Bible seminar but had not made decisions to join the church. Little did he know he was being used that day to start me on a lifelong path of evangelism.

Dickey continued to minister to me with invitations to his house each Sabbath afternoon where I was introduced to vegetarian food and how to keep the Sabbath. Soon, I was spending Friday nights and all day Sabbath at Dickey and Deborah's home. We spent many hours studying the Bible and talking about the faith, as I transitioned from one lifestyle to another.

Shortly after this, God used several others to disciple me. I met Robert Wagley and Steve Vail at camp meeting one month after my baptism. The three of us grew up just a few miles from each other in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, but since they were a few years older, we had not met before. When they first saw me at camp meeting, I still looked like a hippie. That didn't stop them from inviting me to stay with them at their friends Don and Karen Ryder's house during camp meeting. When I accepted their generous invitation, I didn't realize that a relationship was being formed that would bless me to this day.

Over the next several years, they, along with their wives, Peggy and Connie, taught me the importance of daily devotional time, how to study the Spirit of Prophecy, the call to witness for Christ, healthful living, and a whole lot more. There were many others, like O.J. and Millie Mills, whom God used in a huge way to grow me as a new Adventist Christian. In fact, it would take another page to mention each person by name.

Here is the point that I want you to get from my story: people



Recipe for Soul Winning

Care. If your church is committed to the Great Commission, you will care about making disciples.

Educate. Discipling new members is an educational process—it takes time. New members don't learn everything overnight. We need to be patient with them. They need time to fully understand how Bible truth is to integrate with every aspect of their life.

Befriend. Don't leave new members to themselves. One excellent way to stay close to new members is to pair them with an existing member to mentor them. It is vital that new members develop multiple meaningful relationships in your church.

Teach faithfully all that Christ has commanded. Once a person joins the church, they need to go back through another series of Bible studies, perhaps in a small group setting so that the new member can interact and learn from others as they form more friendships. Regular Sabbath School attendance is an important part of this.

Train to act some part in the great work. Do not wait for your new members to either become perfect or lose their zeal for Christ before you get them involved. Get them involved in ministries that are low stress and where they can safely develop healthy relationships. If they have special gifts, begin to involve them where they can use their God-given talents to bless others.

As you care, educate, befriend, teach, and train for ministry, you will also keep your eye on helping your new members develop the ten character qualities and skills mentioned earlier. Be sure to enlist your new members in this process by inviting them to commit to spiritual development. Explain to them what it means to be a disciple and share how you are there to help them enjoy their newfound faith in this world and throughout eternity.

disciple people. I would not be the Christian I am today if these people had not reached out and allowed me to share their life and passion for God. This is disciple-making in its purest sense. And it is what God wants you to do for the new members who join your church.

But just how are you to disciple people? The answer can be found in this statement where the five ingredients of good disciple-making are described. “Care should be exercised to educate young converts. They are not to be left to themselves, to be led astray by false presentations, to walk in a false way. Let the watchmen be constantly on guard, lest souls shall be beguiled by soft words and fair speech and sophistry. Teach faithfully all that Christ has commanded. Everyone who receives Christ is to be trained to act some part in the great work to be accomplished in our world” (*Evangelism*, p. 367).

Care. If your church is committed to the Great Commission, you will care about making disciples. Your care will be expressed in laying specific plans to disciple new members. You will not leave disciple-making to chance, because you care for people and their eternal welfare.

Educate. You will also recognize that discipling new members is an educational process—it takes time. New members don’t learn everything overnight. One Sabbath evening, shortly after my baptism, I returned to church for the evening service. Dickey and some others asked me how my afternoon had gone. With abundant enthusiasm, I described how my family had enjoyed a crawfish “boil” (a “meal” for everyone not from Louisiana). Then I announced, “Those were the best crawfish I have ever eaten.” Everyone grew quiet for a moment and then the conversation continued on to something else.

Wisely, no one lectured me on the perils of eating unclean foods, saying, “Son, don’t you know better than to eat unclean foods? Didn’t they teach you this before you joined the church?” Instead, Dickey invited me to his house every Sabbath for lunch and afternoon fellowship—effectively taking care of the crawfish problem!

We need to be patient with new members. They need time to fully understand how Bible truth is to integrate with every aspect of their life. I had studied about clean and unclean foods prior to baptism. I also went through a baptismal class that reviewed it in detail. But somehow, I had not connected the dots in my head.

The truth that I learned in the evangelistic meetings became practical, however, when people spent time with me. That’s when I saw truth in action. They taught me by precept and example how to live the biblical lifestyle.

Befriend. Don’t leave new members to themselves. One excellent way to stay close to new members is to pair them with an existing member to mentor them. The pastor can introduce the mentor by saying, “John and Mary, we are so happy you have joined our church. We want you to get the most out of being a church member. To help you grow in your walk with Jesus, we have asked Michael and Susan to be your hosts in our church. We think you have a lot in common and that you will enjoy their fellowship.” Of course, if you are the person who gave them Bible studies, you will definitely be at least one of their mentors.

In fact, it is vital that new members develop multiple meaningful relationships in your church. This is one of the most important factors in their spiritual growth. In the context of safe relationships, people will open their heart to learn how to walk with Jesus as their eternal friend.

Teach faithfully all that Christ has commanded. We already said that becoming a disciple is an educational process. Once a person joins the church, they need to go back through another series of Bible studies. It can even be the same material that first attracted them or it can be something new. I prefer to do this study in a small group so that the new member can interact and learn from others as they form more friendships. Be sure to also involve your new members in regular Sabbath School attendance. If you have a large influx of members after an evangelistic meeting, you should seriously consider a special class for them. It will go a long way to encourage regular Sabbath School attendance, personal devotional habits, and church friendships.

Train to act some part in the great work. This is what Dickey and others did for me when I first committed my life to Christ. Do not wait for your new members to either become perfect or lose their zeal for Christ before you get them involved. Get them involved in ministries that are low stress and where they can safely develop healthy relationships. If they have special gifts, begin to involve them where they can use their God-given talents to bless others. They may not do things the traditional way the first time around, but give them time and coaching and you will see a wonderful return on your trust.

One of the most useful things you can do is involve your new members in giving Bible studies with you. New members have family and friends who are curious about their new faith. Teach them how to turn their family’s questions into sit-down Bible studies. You can coach them how to give the study by going with them. Why not give them their very own copy of *Winsome Witnessing* to read? If someone had given me a book like this, perhaps I wouldn’t have made so many embarrassing mistakes and more souls would have been won.

As you care, educate, befriend, teach, and train for ministry, you will also keep your eye on helping your new members develop the ten character qualities and skills mentioned earlier. Be sure to enlist your new members in this process by inviting them to commit to spiritual development. Explain to them what it means to be a disciple and share how you are there to help them enjoy their newfound faith in this world and throughout eternity.

As you win souls, you have a wonderful opportunity to create a disciple-making culture in your church, where everyone is committed to personal growth in Jesus Christ. Not only will you find that your new members stay in the church, but you will also see your church become a vibrant body of believers living out what it means to be Jesus’ disciples.

This article was excerpted from The New Winsome Witnessing by Gary Gibbs. It is available from Seminars Unlimited at 800.982.3344. For more information and resources on making disciples, visit HopeNETonline.org. You can also visit GrowingFruitfulDisciples.com.

TAKE THE WITNESSING CHALLENGE!

Eddie Canales, Southwestern Union personal ministries director

If I were to ask, “What is the mission of the church?” I believe most of us would agree on the answer: Jesus’ commission for us is to go and preach the gospel.

So, if we are clear on that, why is it that most of us are not engaged? The sad reality is that only about 15 percent of church members are involved in witnessing. More church members would like to get involved in preaching the gospel, however, among the many reasons I hear for not getting involved, two come to the surface most often: “I would like to do it, but I don’t have the time.” And, “I don’t have the ability to do it.”

We need to recognize that all of us have 24 hours a day and only those things that are a priority in our lives get done. Unless soul winning is a priority in your life, you will never find the time to do it, even though you might recognize that you should be witnessing to others.

If there’s anyone who could use the excuse of not having the time for witnessing, it was Magdalena Lozano, a church member I met when I pastored in Arlington, Texas. She had her hands full by being the mother of three children. But despite that, she was committed to witnessing. One day she was coming back home from dropping her children to school, when she drove by a garage sale. She was impressed to stop, even though she didn’t have the intention of buying anything. There she noticed a lady looking at the things in the

garage sale. She approached her and introduced herself. Magdalena noticed that Elma looked sad. As she got into a conversation with her, Magdalena discovered that Elma had many problems. Her husband had left her, her daughter was sick, and she had financial problems. Magdalena offered to follow Elma to her apartment. Once there, and after listening to Elma, Magdalena gave her encouragement through Bible promises and prayed for her. At this point Elma told Magdalena about the intentions she had had of murdering her daughter and later committing suicide, because she couldn’t see the way out in life. Magdalena continued visiting Elma, giving her Bible studies, and invited her to attend church with her. Three months later it was a joy for me to baptize Elma!

If you have the desire to witness, God will give you divine appointments.

Most of us think that we don’t have the ability to give Bible studies and to witness to others, but I say that God doesn’t call the qualified; rather, he qualifies the ones He calls. The disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ received the call to go and preach the gospel, but they felt they were not able to carry out that commission. So the Lord promised them the Holy Spirit to empower them to fulfill the mission. “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

Who should you witness to? Begin in Jerusalem—with relatives; continue in Judea—with your friends; go to Samaria—with your neighbors; and to the ends of the earth—with foreigners. If you make the commitment to witness, God will empower you with His Holy Spirit.

If you don’t know where to begin, get a series of simple Bible study lessons and start a small group study with your family, and later, invite friends and neighbors to join you. You will be surprised how many of them will accept your invitation. Dedicate your home for God’s service and you’ll experience God’s blessings in your life and in the lives of others.

I challenge you to be a witness for our Lord, Jesus Christ!



A CHALLENGE FOR CHRISTIANITY

Buford Griffith, Jr., Southwestern Union executive secretary

The October 9, 2012 edition of *USA Today* posted on its front page a most gripping headline: “As Protestants decline, those with no religion gain.” The article revealed a startling statistic in the United States—only one in five Americans have a religious affiliation. “In the 1960’s, two in three Americans called themselves Protestant. Now the Protestant group—both evangelical and mainline—has slid below the statistical waters, down to 48 percent, from 53 percent in 2007.”¹

“Where did they go?” is the question. “Nowhere, actually. They didn’t switch to a new religious brand, they just let go of any faith affiliation or label.”² The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life has revealed that a group called the “Nones” is now the nation’s second-largest category, surpassed only by Catholics.

What is disturbing is the how the “Nones” are defined. They are individuals who say they believe in “nothing in particular but they are still open to spirituality.” In the Pew Forum’s survey some people stated that they “are not sure truth exists at all.” Others stated that they are turned off by the “rules” of institutional churches. The troubling point of the article was not that the “Nones” are No. 2 now in the United States. It is the diversity among the estimated 46 million people. “They’re everyone. They’re everywhere. They’re gone and they’re not coming back.”³

The Pew Forum’s survey is a great challenge, not only for Christians but also for this nation. The United States is a nation that was founded on religious faith and freedom. A person’s religious faith has played an important role in shaping their worldviews and their outlook on life. How will this trend of those who “believe in nothing in particular” and who want no affiliation with established churches or denominational labels impact society and the course of this nation? Also, what impact has this trend had or is it having on the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America?

As executive secretary for the Southwestern Union Conference of Seventh-Day Adventists, I see the effects of this trend in our own churches as I review the monthly reports of attendance that come into my office from our local conferences. Clearly one half or fewer of those listed on our church membership rolls are missing from our pews on any given Sabbath. The reasons for the absenteeism are many:

- The church not meeting a member’s felt-needs.
- Church services not being relevant.
- Loss of interest in spiritual things.
- Worship services being unexciting and boring.
- Church infighting.
- Lengthy church services.
- Members not feeling a part of the faith community.
- Assumed hypocrisy in the church.

The finger of blame can be pointed in many directions, but that will not solve the problem the church faces or give those who stay away justifiable cause. Can we do a better job in making our worship services more interesting and more relevant? There is no question that the way we “do” church in many of our churches has to change. Every congregation should give study to their services and ask some hard questions to determine if the church is meeting the needs of its congregants. However, that is only one area that needs to be investigated. As the local church studies whether or not it is meeting the needs of its congregants, there must be a deeper study as to the needs of the community where that church is located. What involvement does the local church have in that community? Is the local church knowledgeable of the issues facing the community where they reside? And, more importantly, is the local church willing to get involved?

The point being made is how are we, as Adventists, articulating the gospel? Boldly, we proclaim possession of the truth of God’s Word and aptly disseminate it to those we can get to hear it. However, as the number of Americans who do not identify with any particular religious organization continues to grow at a rapid pace, how do we arrest their attention? They will not come to our churches to hear the gospel, which suggests we must

take a deeper look at how we conduct many of our evangelistic campaigns and provide felt-need services. We want them to come to us, but we must study and put into practice better ways of taking the gospel to the public. What face have we given to this great gospel message? These are challenging questions for the times.

As students of biblical prophecy we are not to be surprised at the ambivalence of society regarding a relationship with God and God’s body, the church. We are confronted with the fulfillment of last-day prophecy events. Ellen White has written, “The work of bringing the



message of present truth before the people is becoming more and more difficult. It is essential that new and varied talents unite in intelligent labor for the people” (*Evangelism*, p. 31).

The Lord has instructed us from His Word, “Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 2:5). We are to show Jesus Christ to the world and its inhabitants by our lives and lifestyles. Ellen White comments, “Christ’s method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Savior mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then

He bade them, ‘Follow me’ ” (*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 143). With renewed urgency, let us follow the example of Jesus Christ.

Although the challenge of reaching the world with the gospel is a large task, we must always remember that we serve a God whose purposes and plans for mankind will be realized. “So let’s not allow ourselves to get fatigued doing good. At the right time we will harvest a good crop if we don’t give up, or quit” (Galatians 6:9, *The Message*).

¹ *USA Today*, October 9, 2012

² *Ibid*

³ *Ibid*, p. 3.

Breakdown of U.S. Adults by Religious Affiliation



Source: *Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life*, aggregated data from surveys conducted by the *Pew Research Center for the People & Press*, 2007-2012. Number of respondents: 9,443 in 2007 and 17,010 in 2012.

BY GIVING WE RECEIVE

Sue Hinkle, Texico Conference communication director

From the time I was a child, I was told that it is better to give than to receive, although when I was young, I wasn't always convinced of that when anticipating gifts at birthdays and Christmas. But as the years have gone by this adage has proved to be very true as I have found the joy of sharing with others. You probably understand what it's like to find that extra-special gift for someone and then to be so excited about it that you can hardly

wait until the appropriate occasion to give it to them. You want to share it with them right away.

We do have the perfect gift to share with those around us, and that is Christ's love. God has been teaching me what a joy it is to become acquainted with my neighbors. For those of you who are regular readers of the *Record*, you may remember an article I wrote last year entitled "Evangelism by the Loaf," which described a proj-



Sue Hinkle (center) began a friendship with a woman and her daughter who live upstairs from her. Through their friendship, Sue's neighbors began Bible studies and were eventually baptized this past June into the Rio Rancho Adventist Church.

ect I have been doing in my apartment complex of making loaves of bread and giving them out one by one to my neighbors. This endeavor has brought such joy to my life, as I have had the privilege of not only meeting new people, but getting to know them on a personal level.

One day I saw a lady struggling to move a large box from the moving truck to her newly-rented apartment. I quickly put on my shoes and went across the parking lot to see if I could be of assistance. When asking her if I could help, she looked blankly at me and responded with a phrase in Spanish. I realized she could not speak English and to say I am very limited in Spanish would probably be an understatement. After a few gestures of something like playing charades, she understood I wanted to help. Together we safely deposited the box inside her door to which she said, "Gracias," and some other words I couldn't comprehend. Later that week I baked a loaf of bread and delivered it to her and her husband.

This has begun a friendship, and even though we have difficulty communicating verbally, somehow God is helping us to get to know each other. She is now taking an English class, so her vocabulary is increasing in English. She is also attempting to teach me Spanish, and I am picking up some words and phrases. As we take walks together, we are helping each other to learn to communicate in the other's language.

She knows that I am a Seventh-day Adventist and recently said she would like to come to my church, so I pray this will start a journey of her learning the truth from God's Word. It's so beautiful the way God brings people into our lives so we can share His love with them. During this process, it gives an opportunity for God's love to shine out, and sometimes people are interested in learning what makes us different.

Another very special friendship has developed with a woman

and her daughter who live upstairs from me. We seemed to "hit it off" from the start. It wasn't long before I learned they were Christians and interested in studying the Bible together. This began a weekly meeting for not only studying the Bible, but also becoming friends. It was so much fun seeing the two of them learning truths from the Bible they had never known were there. After about a year and a half of studying together, they both made the decision to be baptized into the Seventh-day Adventist Church. What an exciting day that was on June 23, 2012 to see them go into the watery grave of baptism and come up beaming in their new life with God. The daughter is excited to be attending an Adventist school for the first time in her life. It's wonderful to see them growing in Christ, becoming active in the church, and being happy to share God with others.

As God has given me opportunities to share His love with those around me, I think I am the one who is the most blessed. What a privilege and honor it is to be used by God as His spokesperson in sharing the greatest message of all, His wonderful love for each of us.

It is definitely better to give than to receive, but when we share God's love with others, we end up receiving so much joy it's hard to contain. It makes me think of the passage in Isaiah 3:10 which says, "I will throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it." This is referring to returning our tithes to God, but it also applies in other ways as we serve God. Sometimes He blesses us so greatly it can almost take our breath away.

May we share this wonderful gift of love with our dying world and enjoy God's many blessings that He is anxiously awaiting to bestow on each of us.



The Rio Rancho, New Mexico, Adventist Church.

PASSION FOR OUTREACH LAUNCHES A NEW WAVE OF LITERATURE EVANGELISM

Kim Peckham

Danilo Orlando had a witnessing opportunity so extraordinary that people will probably talk about it for years. He worked in Brownsville, Texas, selling books door-to-door. One day, he sold a copy of *The Great Controversy* to an evangelical pastor. Then Orlando did something unusual. He went back to see the pastor and get his reaction to the book. "I was a little worried that he wouldn't like it," he says. But when he met the pastor, the reaction was wholly positive.

"This book is very good," said the pastor. "In fact, why don't you come to my church and promote the book?" Orlando didn't miss that opportunity. He went to the church on Sunday and even preached a sermon on the great controversy between Christ and Satan. "God has a special message for this time," he said. He made an appeal that people read the book. Then, he took the appeal a step further. He asked the members of this non-Adventist church to share the book. They accepted the challenge, some of them tak-

ing as many as 20 copies to give to friends and neighbors. During his time in Texas, Orlando visited a total of three Sunday-keeping churches and made his pitch for *The Great Controversy*.

This story is part of a union-wide emphasis that literature evangelists have put on sharing *The Great Controversy*. Esteban Griguol, who directs the literature evangelism work in most of the Southwestern Union, says that his team has distributed a staggering 300,000 copies of the book in the past year. "We are trying to share it in every way we can," he says.

Griguol, or one of his literature evangelists, will arrange to visit a church, stack as many as 5,000 copies of *The Great Controversy* in front of the congregation, and preach a sermon on the vital importance of sharing the book. At the end, every family is encouraged to make a covenant promise to share 10, 20, or 30 books a month.

"I don't want people to distribute 10 books and think, 'I've fulfilled my duty,'" says Griguol. "This is not a one-time event. This



This family baptized into the Oakcliff Spanish church in Dallas was first contacted by a student literature evangelist.



prayed with her the sweetest prayer she ever heard and that her life was changed in 20 minutes. Facebook had opened the way for de Oliveira and gave him a new reason to praise the Lord for His blessings.

Besides the student program, Griguol also recruits young people and retirees, men and women, as literature evangelists. He calls them Waldensians of the

▲ The student literature evangelism club at Southwestern Adventist University is active all year long. “We are missionaries as well as workers,” says leader Mabio Gomes.

► About 150 literature evangelists gathered in Camp Yorktown Bay for a spiritual retreat focusing on *The Great Controversy*. Their slogan was “Now is the time to raise the banner of Christ.”



is a lifestyle.” Griguol follows the lifestyle himself, sharing two or three books a day, as well as supervising about 200 literature evangelists at any one time. “Sometimes you don’t need to talk,” he says. “It’s enough to take it in your hand.” At the post office recently, a person read the subtitle “The storm is coming” on the book Griguol was holding. The man began asking about the book. “Where can I buy it?” he asked. “Amazon.com?”

“Don’t worry,” said Griguol. “I’ll give it to you.”

Griguol’s literature evangelism workers are giving away every day 10 or more copies of *The Great Controversy*, usually in consideration of a donation.

Students are a big part of literature ministry in the union. Southwestern Adventist University has a literature evangelism club that works all year selling low-cost magabooks. During Thanksgiving break, about 32 students went to Waco to cultivate interests for the church there. “We’re willing to work with churches,” says Mabio Gomes, director of the student program. “We are missionaries as well as workers. We visit people’s homes, share books, pray with them, and we sign them up for Bible studies and health seminars.” Gomes says that his group usually brings in 10 to 15 Bible study interests every week.

In the summer, about 100 students work with churches throughout the union. Last summer, Gilson de Oliveira came all the way from Rhode Island to canvass in Tyler, Texas. He will never forget the experience he had as he knocked on the last door at the end of an exhausting day of canvassing. “A woman opened the door, I introduced myself, and began presenting my books,” recalls de Oliveira. “When I was presenting the last one, *Peace Above the Storm*, I noticed a change in her face. I asked her what was going on. She replied, ‘I saw that same book on Facebook this morning.’”

A friend had posted a message that she was going through a hard time when a young person knocked on her door and presented the book, *Peace Above the Storm*. She was surprised, for that was what she needed at that moment. She also said that the student

21st century, referring to the French mountain people who shared portions of scripture door-to-door during a time of persecution. Currently, about 25 percent are full-time workers and Griguol says they make enough to support their families. “It’s not easy,” he says. “It involves sacrifice. A person needs to feel the calling in their heart.” (Contact Griguol at 210.862.3322 to find out about seminars in your location that serve as an introduction to the work.)

Whether or not people choose to make literature evangelism a profession, Griguol’s team will teach them to share literature. Luis Biazotto, director of the Review and Herald Home Health Education Service, which oversees the work in much of the Southwestern Union, says that his workers see their responsibilities as going beyond just canvassing. “One of our tasks is to train our members to give away literature. There is more potential if we work together.” Mickey Johnson manager of the Texas Adventist Book Center has been part of the witnessing wave, supplying hundreds of thousands of copies of *The Great Hope*—a condensed version of *The Great Controversy*—to churches in the region. “We have the largest volume of any Adventist Book Center in the country when it comes to distributing *The Great Hope*,” says Johnson.

“We have got to get the church members involved,” says Griguol. Church members who are eager to witness are critical to his goal of sharing a total of three million copies of *The Great Controversy* before the end of 2013. He even wants children involved. Pathfinder clubs are invited to take the book to homes and ask for donations to fund the distribution and other special projects.

He knows the Holy Spirit is working to open hearts to the Adventist message. “In Houston, a Muslim man was so impressed with the book that he bought 200 copies to share,” he says. In another case, the pastor of an evangelical church bought a copy for every one of his members. Griguol thinks he knows why these unusual opportunities for witnessing are opening up. “Jesus is coming!” he says.

TRIBUTE TO A LASTING LEGACY

Harvey Byram

Revelation 14:13 says, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them." It is not often that we are blessed with a leader that has left such a lasting legacy as that of Cyril Hasty Miller.

On February 11, 1928 a true leader was born in Preston, Oklahoma. Three years later Cyril moved with his family to a small suburb of Tulsa, Oklahoma. Shortly after this move his mother began to keep the Sabbath and joined the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Fortunately, all three children were able to attend church school, and Cyril said, "This is the very foundation of my love for the church."

After eighth-grade graduation Cyril attended public high school and showed a natural leadership ability. For two years he was a member of the debate team and never lost a debate. He received special recognition at the Annual Awards Assembly as the best debater on the team. At the close of his senior year in high school, Cyril had a decision to make that would be very difficult. He had been offered a contract for spring training with the Pittsburgh Pirates to play professional baseball. He also had an opportunity to attend Southwestern Junior College in Keene, Texas. He had just attended the North American youth rally in San Francisco as a delegate for the church and was convinced that he could serve the Lord as a minister much better than playing professional baseball. Cyril once said that leaders are not trained or taught; they are born. And all those who knew Cyril would have to agree that he was a born leader.

After graduation in 1953 Cyril became a pastor in the Oklahoma Conference serving for four years

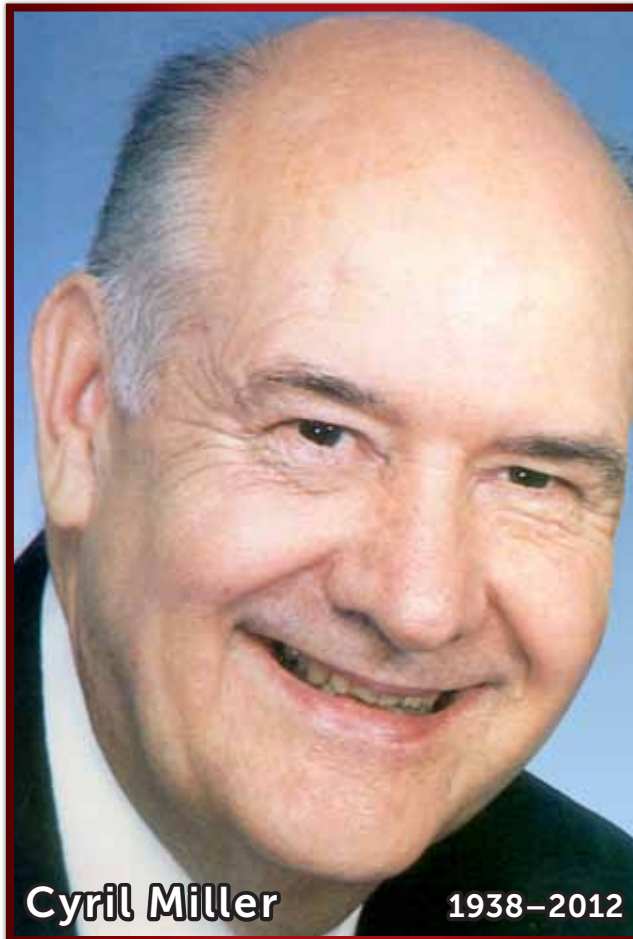
before being called in 1957 to be the pastor of the Ozark Academy church in Arkansas. After serving one year as pastor, his organizational and leadership qualities were quickly recognized. He was then asked to serve as departmental director of Stewardship, ASI, and Religious Liberty in the Southwestern Union Conference. In 1962 the Miller family moved to the Columbia Union Conference in Maryland, where Cyril continued in Stewardship, ASI, and Religious Liberty. While serving there he developed the religious liberty bonds, which were popular in raising money to support *Liberty* magazine.

At the age of thirty-five Cyril became the Chesapeake Conference president, making him the youngest president in the North American Division. He believed highly in Christian education and

felt the conference would never grow until it had a boarding academy, consequently, Highland View Academy near Hagerstown, Maryland, was born. By having every pastor conduct evangelistic meetings, the conference doubled its membership from 3,000 to approximately 6,000 within six years. Also under his leadership, a new conference office was built in Columbia, Maryland.

After listening to the Voice of Prophecy, which was a very soft-sell religious program, he visualized a radio broadcast that would attract people with a hard-sell, blunt speaker who would give the facts of Christianity. First he called Bill May and asked him to develop Amazing Facts Bible Study Lessons. When these were ready, he chose Joe Cruz to be the Amazing Facts speaker. Joe became the voice of Amazing Facts for the next 27 years.

In 1969, Elder Miller was called to come back to the Southwestern Union as secretary. While in this capacity he served as chair-



man of the board to build Huguley Hospital. Cyril was instrumental in leading the fundraising of approximately \$14 million to build the hospital, of which \$7 million came from the Dr. Huguley Estate.

In 1974, Cyril was elected president of the Texas Conference. One of the first things he decided was that the conference needed to grow in membership, and under his leadership, 40 new churches were raised up. He promoted the move of the conference office from Fort Worth to Alvarado.

He was very much concerned about the youth of the conference and led in purchasing land and developing the Nameless Valley Ranch youth camp. To save on the high cost of printing pamphlets for evangelistic series, he felt the need for a printing press and Revelation Seminars was developed.

He believed the church would prosper more if it could have a real interest in a mission area outside the U.S., thus Belize was chosen as the Texas Conference special mission project. Laity and pastors from Texas went to Belize and built a church and school for the people and the youth worked on a hospital building. However, Cyril was not satisfied with just this one project. He soon discovered a hospital in Africa that could not open until they received the needed equipment. He started raising funds and soliciting doctors to donate equipment and soon the hospital in Africa was up and running.

In 1985, he was elected president of Southwestern Union Conference in Burleson, Texas. This made him board chair of Southwestern Adventist University. Under his leadership a new library and boys' dormitory were built.

In 1995, Cyril was elected as vice-president of the North American Division where he chaired a number of boards, including Loma

Linda University and Andrews University. Cyril retired in Burleson, Texas, in the year 2000; however, in retirement he served as a promoter and fundraiser for Paul Holbrook Indian School in Holbrook, Arizona, and under his leadership the new boys' dorm was built, as well as some other much-needed buildings. It is estimated that he raised \$1.2 million for our Native American school. He also continued to work part-time as a promoter for ADRA, our worldwide famine and relief organization.

2 Samuel 3:38 says, "Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen this day in Israel?" Truly, today one of the great leaders has fallen. He loved his family, his church, and his God. His legacy lives on as he now sleeps, awaiting the coming of Jesus.



Top: Cyril Miller, second from left, at the groundbreaking of Miller Hall, a men's residence named for him, on the campus of Southwestern Adventist University in the early 1990s.

▲ Leonel Sousa (left), a native of West Africa, thanks then Texas Conference president Cyril Miller for remembering him and other African church workers by starting a "Bicycles for Africa" campaign. Miller, who visited many parts of Africa during a five-week tour, found a great need for transportation for church workers. According to Miller, bicycles would be the most practical means of filling the need at the time.

◀ Cyril Miller in his office as president of the Southwestern Union.

A Powerful Witnessing Moment



ARKANSAS-LOUISIANA CONFERENCE

I was in a motel breakfast area and had just sat down to eat my breakfast when my cell phone rang. I really didn't want to take the call with an audience of strangers around me, but decided that I would stay at my table rather than walk away to answer. It was one of our church elders calling to thank me for being with his church the previous week and sharing the Sabbath-morning message. In the course of the conversation, I referenced "Sabbath" and where I was for an area ministers' meeting that day.

It was just a moment later when another minister joined me in the breakfast area and we spoke briefly about our upcoming ministers' meeting. That was when I discovered that one couple was indeed my audience and had been curiously listening in

on my phone conversation and to my conversation with the other pastor, because they asked us, "Are you ministers?"

"Yes," we said. Then the lady asked, "What church do you belong to?" "Seventh-day Adventist," we answered. "I thought so," she said, "because you made reference to Sabbath."

Now I was really intrigued. It's not that often that someone engages you in conversation about the Sabbath. But I didn't have long to wait to hear what was their Sabbath connection. "We've started keeping the Sabbath at home," they said. They went on to explain they had been watching 3ABN as well as the Hope Channel and had become convicted that Saturday was the true Sabbath. They hadn't started going to a Sabbath-keeping church yet, but it seemed that would become a natural next

step for them because of their enthusiasm and joy in discovering the Sabbath message.

For a moment we were mere strangers. Yet, in just a few minutes it was as if we had known each other for years. As I reflected on that moment, I wondered how different things might have been if I had left the breakfast area to take my phone call. What if I had not taken time to offer a prayer of thanks over my meal before eating, which I know they observed? What if I had avoided any reference to the Sabbath on my end of the conversation? Such a simple setting had truly become a powerful witnessing moment.

Steve Orian, president

90-year-old Continues to Serve the Lord

HOT SPRINGS, ARK. » When we see a low-profile, high-output Christian working steadily for Jesus, it inspires and motivates us all. But what if that Christian turns 90-years young, and just keeps on serving? And what if she has crocheted more than 1,150 sweaters for the children of the world? Yes, Emily Laue of the Hot Springs church cannot stop serving her Master. Beginning to crochet sweaters in 1987, Emily has continued her project for 25 years. Her sweaters travel to Indiana Academy, then to the Adventist Disaster Relief Agency, then to needy little ones around the globe.

Emily grew up in New Orleans, the youngest daughter of Arthur and Miriam Stumpf, who were baptized into the Adventist faith in 1920 by Taylor G. Bunch and

were among the first Adventists in New Orleans. Emily married Bob Laue, a pastor, and they served together in the Southern Union until his retirement in 1996, when they moved to Hot Springs. There, Bob and Emily just kept on serving—in the church, in the library, and anywhere they could.

After Bob's passing in 2000, Emily knew what she should do. She would keep on cheerfully serving Jesus. In addition to crocheting for the world's kids, she has served as both assistant and associate treasurer, keeping a very accurate count of the church funds, week by week, as only Emily can. What has been her strength? It is in lifting her heart in prayer to her heavenly Father. In Emily's words, "I can't believe how many prayers have been answered!"



Emily Laue continues to serve the Lord by crocheting sweaters.

Her life is more than an inspiration to her friends. It makes us all ask, "What can I do for the Master?"

Juanita Bissell



Bonnerdale Pathfinder of the Year

BONNERDALE, ARK. » This fall, Madison Cox was awarded the Pathfinder of the Year Award at the Bonnerdale church. Madison is a Bonnerdale Brave, and is the

daughter of Paul and Mandy Cox. The award was presented by Pathfinder director Jerry Mooney.

Madison Cox (left) receives the Pathfinder of the Year Award from Pathfinder director Jerry Mooney at the Bonnerdale church.

Shirley Mooney

The Sky's The Limit!

DERIDDER, LA. » “Everything is possible with God. The sky’s the limit!” In mid-August, the Deridder church held its annual Vacation Bible School under the direction of the church’s children’s ministry leader, Angel Tucker, who did a great job coordinating the 2012 “SKY” VBS Program.

Every day the children learned new and exciting scriptures about the love of God. A tremendous world of love opened for all of God’s little ones! Terrific games, Bible stories, great adventures, fun-filled lively music, and delicious snacks made for a perfect time to fellowship with old friends as well as meeting new ones!

One of the games brought surprising results. A piece of rope was wound back and forth between two broom handles. Each broom handle was held by a strong boy, while a small and much younger girl pulled on the

During the Deridder church’s 2012 Vacation Bible School held in mid-August, kids sang songs, participated in skits, ate snacks, and had fun while learning that with God, there are no limits.



Sabbath was a day filled with Bible stories, great activities, and many spiritual skits to lift everyone’s spirits and to show how much God loves us. Sunday was the grand finale, with more super skits with Sky, our mascot, and beautiful music and songs loved by both young and old. Lunch was provided Sabbath and Sunday along with healthy snacks each day.

The VBS invitation was extended to everyone, especially the “young at heart” and Deridder’s 2012 “SKY” VBS was a smashing success. The church praises God



end of the rope. The boys were surprised to find that no matter how hard they tried, they could not keep the broom handles apart; the little girl always succeeded in pulling them together.

for every child who participated and for each helper who had the strength to help.

Nelderine Newhouse

First-ever Collegiate Retreat Held

MOUNTAIN PINE, ARK. » The Arkansas-Louisiana Conference's first-ever collegiate retreat kicked off on August 24. Forty-four students in public universities and adults working within college ministries came to Camp Yorktown Bay for a week-end dedicated to prayer and commitment to stand firm in faith and reach out in love on public university campuses.

The conference, with the theme "Battle Plans," was envisioned and organized by A Peculiar People (APP), the collegiate division of the Conway, Arkansas, church. APP's prayer coordinator, Juanita Montelongo, said, "When I look at the growth in our own class over the last year and how we get excited about each other's testimonies, it's natural to want to share. Every time we have a retreat we get more motivated to do what God is calling us to do, and this is all about sharing those ideas and inspiration."

The conference events ranged from a "traveling the narrow way" group obstacle course, united prayer, and a brass-tacks "how-to" roundtable session about campus evangelism and collegiate ministry planning. Speakers included Melody Mason from ARME Ministries; Brandon Westgate, pastor of the Bonnerdale church; Victor Snead, youth pastor of the Little Rock church; Ron Holloway, an elder at the Conway church; and Izhar Buendia, student leader of the Henderson State University Bible study group, Going Deeper.

Chris Espinoza, a senior at Henderson State University, particularly liked the obstacle course, and said, "It was awesome, because it was early in the retreat when a lot of us were just arriving or hadn't really gotten to know each other. We had to learn from the very beginning to trust the person guiding us. There were people on each team with opposing goals, 'baggage' they were supposed to carry, and other communication challenges. It was a great example of how we are to be working with each other

for the kingdom. Learn to listen, learn to follow, and learn to be guided by the spirit."

Even amidst the information-packed sessions, the attendees still had time to fellowship, explore the camp's hiking trails, paddle out in kayaks, and cool off in the water. One participant decided that Lake Ouachita afforded the perfect opportunity for her baptism, and asked Brandon Westgate to do the honors. "I went through all the Amazing Facts studies a while back, and meant to get baptized over winter break last year, but I just couldn't arrange it," said Lizzie Goodwin-Horn, a sophomore at Hendrix College in Conway. "Then, when Pastor Westgate mentioned that he packed his swim suit just in case—I knew that was for me. I decided to take the opportunity."

This year's conference was sponsored by the Conway church and the Arkansas-Louisiana conference, partially in response to the growing interest in public university campus ministry. "I'm so grateful to be surrounded by passionate, college-aged

classmates and progressive leaders on our church board. I'm also buoyed by the conference's generosity and interest," said Amie Register, APP director. "We still need to do more, though! If we were to wait for the public campus ministry initiatives to trickle down to our local church, we might as well be waiting for missionary pigs to fly in with loads of Stripples. This needs to be student-led, because students are way more influential than adults on campus. We need to be like the Transcontinental Railway. We'll start here; church leadership can start there; and let's see how fast we can lay down tracks to the middle!"

Izhar Buendia echoed Register's hunch that big changes are in the works for the public university ministries in Arkansas and Louisiana. "Good things are happening. Amidst the secular atmosphere, there is a group of young people that don't want to be part of the crowd—they want to be the ones standing apart like the three Hebrews. They want to be leaders, committed to doing right. Most importantly, these individuals encourage their peers to join them in taking the stand. This is public campus ministry, and this year the Lord is calling you to start something on your campus."

For more information on APP, or to schedule a speaker to inspire your college ministry start-up, contact Amie Register at A Peculiar People, 1265 Robins Street, Conway, AR 72034; e-mail apeculiarpeople28@gmail.com, or call 501.613.7732.

Amie Register



Top: Lizzie Goodwin-Horn made her decision for Christ and was baptized at the retreat.

► Brandon Westgate leads a roundtable discussion on public campus evangelism. From left: Brandon Westgate, April Looney, Moise Duzukimana, Abby Agatep, and Joed Lopez.

Vacation Bible School at Shreveport First

SHREVEPORT, LA. » The Shreveport First church held its Vacation Bible School this year with the theme “Babylon,” in their former school buildings. The program was a lot of fun for the kids, and because there was so much room at the old school, they got to move from room to room as they participated in each activity. The willingness of John, Becky, and Jonathon Porteous to work so hard to bring all the trees and greenery really set the stage for authenticity for the program.

Barbara Pierce started the program in the music and tribe room. The kids were assigned to one of the 12 tribes of Israel, and learned a lot about what each tribe represented. They sang the lively songs with hand motions and moved around the room as the songs directed. The next stop was the “palace courtyard,” where Kathy Farmer, accompanied by Pastor Farmer and one of his puppet friends, told the Bible story for the day.

Pastor Farmer designed the courtyard, complete with a “fiery furnace” and a den of “lions.” Some of the kids were thrown into the “fiery furnace” and oth-

ers went into the “lions’ den.” Once outside the courtyard, there was laughter and singing, as the children enjoyed game time under the tent awning. When they were hot from running and playing, there were snow cones ready to enjoy.

During craft time the children went to the marketplace with “Miss Achoo” (Deborah Ray). Deborah’s marketplace area was very authentic, and the kids enjoyed making Babylonian crafts each day. After working up an appetite, they moved into the hallway where they visited with Kathy Farmer about the Bible foods they were

going to taste: lentils, brown rice, honey, flat bread, yogurt, and much more. After trying out all the Bible food, Brenda Ebey and Becky Gifford gave them more modern food for their actual snacks.

At the end of the day, the children gathered back in the tribe room for a mission story and a closing song or two. The young people took on the mission of raising money to buy mosquito nets for the children in Mali to sleep under and be protected from the disease-carrying mosquitoes. During Vacation Bible School, the children brought \$57.29 for their mission. They also



▲ Vacation Bible School participants listen to a Bible story in the “courtyard.”

◀ Participants in Vacation Bible School at Shreveport First in the “marketplace.”



made many decorative cards to send with the money. Following VBS, the church designated a special offering, taken by the children each week for a month, to go toward the mosquito nets. The total sent to Mali for the children was \$2,000.

Kathy Farmer

Just Tell What the Lord Has Done for You



OKLAHOMA CONFERENCE

It seems to me that there are several things that ought to come naturally to one who has accepted God's love as revealed in the sacrifice of Jesus and is daily enjoying the experience of walking in the light.

One of those things is Bible study. Shouldn't it be natural for us to want to know more about the messages that He has sent us in His Word and the guidance that He has promised to those who seek it?

Another thing is prayer. How much do we enjoy visiting and fellowshiping with our earthly family and friends, and how much more eager should we be to converse with the One who loves and cares more for us than any other friend ever could?

And then there is sharing what we have gained through prayer and Bible study. Some would call it soul winning, the nor-

mal reaction to something so wonderful that we cannot keep it to ourselves and must find someone to share it with. I say it ought to come naturally, but how many of us struggle with all three of these things? With the prayer and Bible study, the enemy of our souls tries to keep us so busy that it becomes difficult to find time to devote to Bible study and prayer. Sharing seems to give us a different problem; we are timid and reluctant to be seen as pushing our beliefs on others.

Why is sharing our beliefs any different than sharing a bargain price, or a good book, or pictures of our grandchildren? Perhaps we preachers have misrepresented witnessing as a duty rather than a privilege. Maybe we have heard too many stories of the wonderful way that others are working and feel that we could never do that. Let

me call your attention to a story in Mark 5. A man had been healed and delivered from a horrible existence and, quite naturally, wanted to stay close to the One who set him free. Mark 5:18,19 says, "And when He got into the boat, he who had been demon-possessed begged Him that he might be with Him. However, Jesus did not permit him, but said to him, 'Go home to your friends, and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He has had compassion on you.'"

That's what it's about folks. We are not asked to share what others know, but what we have experienced, and He has had compassion on us all.

John Moyer, president

LEGAL NOTICE

Oklahoma Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

Notice is hereby given that the Sixty-eighth Regular Session of the Oklahoma Conference of Seventh-day Adventists will be held at the First Seventh-day Adventist Church of Tulsa, located at 920 S. New Haven Avenue, Tulsa, OK, on Sunday, April 21, 2013. The purpose of this meeting is to elect officers and directors for the ensuing quadrennial term and to transact such business as may properly come before the session. The meeting will convene on Sunday, at 9:45a.m.

According to the bylaws, each church is entitled to one delegate for the organization and one additional delegate for each thirty (30) members or major fraction thereof. Delegates must hold membership in the local church which accredits them.

.....
John H. Moyer, President | **Trevor W. Thompson**, Secretary | **Karen L. Senecal**, Treasurer

Antlers and Hugo Churches Work Together to Raise Funds



ANTLERS » The church's building fund got a big boost this summer, thanks to our sister church in Hugo. The Hugo church asked if the two churches would like to have a joint yard sale, with all the income to go to the building fund.

The day was perfect and the weather was just glorious. The sale was held at one of the church member's home, which was also in the direct path of visitors attending the Indian Nation Festival. Needless to

The Hugo and Antlers churches held a joint yard sale to raise funds for the Antlers church's building fund. They also held Bible studies at the yard sale, and gave away biblical literature.



say, there were quite a few visitors. Members set up a table of literature, and Thurman Tyson, Antlers church pastor, also gave a Bible study. The sale raised nearly \$900, which was an incredible blessing to the Antlers church building fund.

Marlene Medina

Baptisms at Three Angels

OWASSO » In June, Darrin Bartell of Amazing Facts held a prophecy seminar at the Three Angels church. Attendance was good with about 25 guests per evening. Among these, three demonstrated a readiness for baptism early on.

One young couple, Chris and Tiffany Joyce, told of how God had miraculously rescued them from an experience with Satanism and other false religions. Bible worker John Carcano conducted Bible studies with them and invited them to the seminar. They were very interested in the meetings and did not miss a single night. The points of the Adventist faith were shown from the Bible to be true, and they readily accepted each one. Chris and Tiffany were attending prayer meet-

ing and Sabbath services regularly before the meetings ended.

Shirley Catt, another interested guest, stated that she really appreciated the depth of the truths she was learning. She also didn't miss a single meeting. Seeing the truth come alive from the Bible, she accepted each point. She, too, was regularly attending prayer meeting and Sabbath services before the meetings were over.

On August 25, these three children of God were baptized.

Chris and Tiffany were so excited with their newfound faith that they wanted to tell their families. Just a few days after their baptism, they moved back to their home in New Hampshire. Their families

do not yet share in their love for the new truths they had found, but the couple's faith is strong. Their church family at the Three Angels church is praying that they will remain strong in the faith and eventually lead others to Jesus.

Shirley is now leading out in an outreach program of keeping in touch with missing members and other contacts. She is an encouraging addition to our church family.

David Qualls and Nelita Martin

New members holding their baptismal certificates. From left: Chris Joyce, Tiffany Joyce, and Shirley Catt.



Pathfinders and Adventurers Inducted

ANTLERS » The Antlers church's Pathfinders and Adventurers recently held an induction service for three new Pathfinders and three new Adventurers. The group camped out during the weekend, and introduced the newest members to basic camping skills honors. One of the Path-

finders inducted was from Antlers' sister church in Hugo. Members of the Antlers church feel blessed that both churches are working together to encourage the youth.

Marlene Medina

Below left: The Antlers church recently inducted three Pathfinders and three Adventurers into their respective groups.

▼ The group went camping to introduce the newest Adventurers and Pathfinders to basic camping skills.



Oklahoma Women's Ministries Present at Broken Arrow

BROKEN ARROW » The focus of the Oklahoma Conference's Women's Ministries Department is to nurture, to empower, and to provide outreach. That's exactly what they did in October when several members of the ministry graciously gave of their time and talents to present Sabbath service and afternoon workshops for the Broken Arrow church. For the the Sabbath service, the women presented a drama titled, "Four Women at the Cross," which was narrated by Becky Joyner.

The church was also blessed with special music by Frances Rivera. Other members of the ministry contributed to the pro-

gram, but were not in attendance at the meeting. At the afternoon workshops, the topics included: how to start a women's ministry, available resource material, craft ideas, friendship evangelism, hospitality ideas, and women's Bible studies.

Elizabeth Glovotsky of the Broken Arrow church acted as church elder for the day. Roberta Glovotsky was in charge of the program and the lovely fellowship dinner.

The Broken Arrow congregation was very grateful to the women's ministries department for presenting a memorable Sabbath service.

Judy Marquette



From left: Linda Francisco, director of women's ministries for the Oklahoma Conference; Betty Lynn Holley, member of the women's ministries conference committee; Marjorie Green, member of the women's ministries conference committee; LaVerna Beltz, member of the women's ministries conference committee; Becky Joyner; and Frances Rivera.

To Do or To Be?



We are reminded often that the purpose of this church is to fulfill God's command to preach the gospel at home and to the uttermost parts of the world. We are asked to witness about Jesus' love and to be right examples. What we sometimes fail to discern is the difference between doing witnessing acts and being a witness. You see, as Christians it is easier "to do" than "to be."

The young ruler couldn't discern it. All of his life, he had practiced doing what was right and he had become an expert at do-

ing so. We are not sure what prompted him to ask Jesus, "What must I do to be saved?" He may have wanted Jesus to use him as an example because he was very sure that what he had done all his life was all that was needed. Maybe he felt that in spite of everything that he had done right, there was something still missing and he needed to check with Jesus on that. Whatever the reason, his problem was that he had only focused on the "doing."

Nicodemus had a similar question. Yet Jesus gave him what seems to be a clearer

answer. Jesus did not talk to Nicodemus about keeping the law, giving his possessions to the poor and following Him. Like the young ruler, Nicodemus had lived all his life witnessing. Nicodemus needed to be born again. They both needed "to be"—be born in order to be a witness.

Have you been busy witnessing all your life and haven't learned how to be a witness?

Samuel Green, president

Xtreme Praise Ministry and Maranatha Church Commit to Being Tobacco-free

ALEXANDRIA, LA. » Congratulations to Xtreme Praise Ministry and the Maranatha church family in Alexandria for successfully completing the Southern University Agricultural Research and Extension Center Communities of Color Network 100% Tobacco-Free Church Initiative.

Regional coordinator Shawntell Lewis-Harrell conducted several educational awareness activities with youth and adult members on the dangers of tobacco use

and secondhand smoke exposure. As a result of the information learned, congregates have adopted and implemented a tobacco-free policy that prohibits tobacco use on the grounds of the church during all events.

Johnathon E. McCottry, Sr., pastor, and his members received a mayoral proclamation, a church plaque, and signage recognizing their facility as a tobacco-free entity. For more information on how your

church can participate and make a difference, call Shawntell Harrell at 318.473.6501 or 318.473.65011.

Valarie Dotson

The Alexandria Maranatha church's Xtreme Praise Ministry and church family successfully completed the Southern University Agricultural Research and Extension Center Communities of Color Network 100% Tobacco-Free Church Initiative, showing their commitment to a tobacco-free lifestyle.



Southwest Region Bible Bowl Teams at the Championship Games

DALLAS, TEXAS » The Southwest Region Conference was proud to be represented by five teams at the October 2012 Black Adventists Youth Directors Association (BAYDA) National Bible Bowl Championship held in St. Petersburg, Florida.

The teams came from all over the conference and were the Pre-Juniors and Junior Youth from the Fondren church in Missouri City, Texas; Senior Youth from the City Temple church in Dallas, Texas; Young Adults from Alpha church in Austin, Texas; and an adult team from Memorial church in Mansfield, Louisiana.

From the very beginning, the games were exciting and everyone was blessed by the turnout. Teams from Northeastern

Conference, South Central Conference, Allegheny East Conference, Georgia Cumberland Conference, Southwest Region Conference, and Southeastern Conference (the host conference) went “head to head” for the coveted title of National Champion for their division.

Bible Bowl is a very special event for our young people. In a world where there are so many distractions that are pulling our youth out of the church, Bible Bowl is a strong force against it. For 30 years, Bible Bowl has been there to empower youth to know the Word of God and “be ready to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear” (1 Peter 3:15).

At the end of the weekend, the young people “rightly divided the Word of Truth.” Southwest Region teams were the champions in the Pre-Junior and Young Adult divisions, first runner-up in the Senior Youth division and second runner-up in the adult division.

Start planning now for next year’s championship games, which will be held in New York and hosted by the New York Conference. Let’s continue to encourage our youth, young adults, and everyone to make the Bible a part of our daily bread.

Kenn Dixon, communication director

Left column, top to bottom:

- The Southwest Region Conference (SWRC) Pre-Jr. Team from Fondren church in Missouri City, Texas, answers a question during the Bible Bowl that was held in St. Petersburg, Florida.
- Members of the Southwest Region Conference (SWRC) Senior Youth Team from City Temple church in Dallas, Texas, participate in the Bible Bowl.

Right column, top to bottom:

- The SWRC Pre-Jr. Team from Fondren church in Missouri City, Texas.
- The SWRC Senior Youth Team from City Temple church, Dallas, Texas.
- The SWRC Young Adult Team from the Alpha church in Austin, Texas.
- The SWRC Senior Adult Team from the Memorial church in Mansfield, Louisiana.



Kenn Dixon



Kenn Dixon



Kenn Dixon



Kenn Dixon



Kenn Dixon



Kenn Dixon

SOUTHWEST REGION CONFERENCE

Veterans for Christ

DALLAS » Veterans for Christ (VFC) is a nonprofit organization for veterans and active soldiers and their families in the Dallas-Fort Worth, Texas, area, of which Robert Johnson is the director and founder. A native of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and the middle son of a family of six, Robert came from an at-risk neighborhood. As a youngster, he was part of the “Big Brothers, Big Sisters” program.

Robert joined the U.S. Marines in 1985 and served for about eight years. His last active duty station was at Camp Butler in Okinawa, Japan, and his remaining time was spent in the reserves in New Orleans.

VFC provides services to veterans and to the community.





▲ Veterans for Christ has been helping the Urban League of North Texas Veterans for four years.

Previous page, top: Johnson had the privilege of meeting President Obama in 2011 when he was honored by Texas State Representative Yvonne Davis for his work with veterans.

Previous page, bottom: Part of Veterans for Christ's work includes comforting bereaving families.

Every year, the organization participates in Armed Forces Service Week, Memorial Day, and Veteran's Day by giving out care packages to troops and presenting roses and cards to the families of the

fallen veterans.


A portion of Robert's time is committed to conducting benefit seminars. He says, "many veterans are unaware of how to receive their benefits or whether they are eligible for services." He provides training to organizations and churches on how to reach out to veterans, has a "breakfast outreach" so that he may assess the needs of the community's veterans. He performs Honor Guard duties and acts as speaker for funerals as well as provides Honor Guard service

for events. In addition, VFC participates in the area's Martin Luther King, Jr., parade and mentors youth about growing up in a high-risk area.

Since its launch, VFC has been contacted for comments and interviews by many local media organizations and have also received recognition from local community groups and politicians.

Robert says his ministry, faith, and charge come from *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 47: "He who reads the hearts of men knows their characters better than they themselves know them. He sees that some have powers and susceptibilities which, rightly directed, might be used in the advancement of His work. In His providence He brings these persons into different positions and varied circumstances that they may discover in their character the defects which have been concealed from their own knowledge. He gives them opportunity to correct these defects, and to fit themselves for His service. Often He permits the fires of affliction to assail them that they may be purified."

Robert Johnson



*Always
in His
Presence*

What does it mean to always be in the presence of God? Find out.

Southwestern Union
Women's Spiritual Retreat
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\$99 Registration Now Open
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Do I Possess a Gift Worth Sharing?

TEXAS CONFERENCE

John 4:10 (NKJV) says, “Jesus answered and said to her, ‘If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, ‘Give Me a drink,’ you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water.” The question that comes to me, as well as to you, is, “Do I possess that gift?”

The apostle Paul in his attempt to describe the gift states in 2 Corinthians 9:15, “Thanks *be* to God for His indescribable gift!” Just think about that for a moment. A gift so wonderful that it’s indescribable! This is the time of year when our thoughts turn to choosing gifts that will be “just right” for our loved ones. The greatest and most cherished gifts seem to be those that are laden with deep emotion and care. We treasure these gifts because of the cherished memories that they bring.

Several years ago on Good Morning America, co-host Joan Lunden featured gift ideas that could be called “indescribable” in the minds of some. One of those gifts was an expensive automobile, the Jaguar 220. Ordering such a vehicle would require a cool \$80,000 deposit, with the measly additional balance of \$507,000. Jaguar only makes 250 of these limited edition classics each year. Would that be an inde-

scribable gift? It would be for many in this world.

But the Word of God speaks of a gift so grandiose in nature that it has impacted every person who has ever been born. “That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world,” (John 1:9, NKJV). A gift so important, so vital, so transformational, that the Word of God simply refers to it as light. Jesus is that gift. It is our privilege to share Him with everyone with whom we come into contact. Sharing is easy when you love what you’re sharing and your life has been amazingly impacted by what you’re sharing. On the flip side, there is no desire and no way you can share something you don’t possess.

There’s an old saying that states, “possession is nine tenths of the law.” The Bible backs this statement with one of its own in 1 John 5:11,12, NKJV: “And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.” When we have Jesus, we have eternal life, and that’s something that is quite simply too good to keep to ourselves. If we’re not sharing it, it’s simply because we don’t have it!

Among the very first words of the Gospel of Matthew, the heavenly messenger tried

earnestly to convey to mortals then and now of the importance and significance of the Gift by referencing it as “Emanuel” (God with us). When He is truly with us, we need nothing else. By the same token, when He is not with us, we continually search for any and everything to fill that void, and at the end of the day we have no story to tell.

When God looked at this fallen world, He knew that our greatest need was not money, beauty, intelligence, or even welfare. He knew that we needed a Savior. And even more important than being saved from Satan and sin, we needed salvation from ourselves. Thus, He sent the only One who could possibly bridge that gulf between heaven and earth. He sent His Son. Oh, what a Savior! If someone in this world would have given me the incomparable gift of saving my life by giving theirs, you can believe I’d be telling that story wherever I went. But then again, Someone did do that for me; and Someone did that for you! And that, above all other reasons, is why we should get on with the business of sharing the Good News with everyone we encounter.

Carlos J. Craig, president

Houston Central’s Sabbath Afternoon at Clear Lake

HOUSTON » Our Creator created the heavens and earth and all living things. The Houston Central church recently spent the afternoon enjoying nature at Clear Lake. One couple shared their testimony about how they met at Clear Lake 20 years ago, but had not been back until the church’s fellowship time, and were there with their two teenage daughters. The time the church took to fellowship was well worth it. We needed the time to remind each other about the beautiful creation God has given us to enjoy. What better way than to enjoy a Sabbath afternoon than at Clear Lake contemplating

Houston Central’s church members recently spent an afternoon in fellowship at Clear Lake, where they enjoyed God’s creation and each other’s company.

the Creator’s masterpiece? We get so caught up with ministries, Sabbath rest in our comfortable homes, so busy working with our minds, that we forget to stop and “smell the roses,” so to speak. Clear Lake was just the right spot for our Sabbath rejuvenation, spending time with fellow believers. The children fed ducks and the teenagers played the guitar and



praised God through song.

Paul and Coni Bartholomew

Austin Participates in 'Let's Move'

AUSTIN » In September, the Austin Central church clocked in 90 miles at the Adventist Church's nationwide initiative to fight childhood obesity, "Let's Move Day."

Members from the church showed up to participate wearing "Let's Move" T-shirts and walked or ran three miles around Lady Bird Lake in downtown Austin. Among the participants were many first-timers. From the youngest to the oldest, members of the church joined in, all walking at his or her own pace and enjoying the scenery around the lake and each other's company.

The trail was busy while the group was there, and many members were stopped by curious strangers along the trail who asked about the "Let's Move" T-shirts. The group handed out 400 bottles of water and 120 books after the walk. One passerby said she really appreciated the effort

to make an impact on others.

Amy Wan

Participants of Austin Central's "Let's Move Day" walked or ran three miles in downtown Austin wearing their "Let's Move" T-shirts and passing out water and books.



The Power of Hiding God's Word in Your Heart

TYLER » “Having been away from my heavenly Father and the church for at least 30 years, I returned like the prodigal daughter—an empty vessel longing to be filled. When I was invited to join a small group of ladies for Bible study, I accepted and began an amazing journey that I hope never ends.” This is the testimony of Pat Genoway, a recently-returned member of the Tyler church who just turned 70.

“We started in March 2012 with a five-week series called *Survival Kit*,” she continued. “This series is designed to give a taste of what it means to be a joy-filled Christian and gives keys to memorizing Scripture. God’s Word is powerful and when we store up that kind of power in our heart our life will begin to change!”

Lexa Arante, 16, is one of the youngest in our groups so far. “My favorite thing is hiding God’s Word in my heart,” she said. “It’s really cool when you can encourage someone or reference something in the Bible and you aren’t stumbling because you have verses memorized. I really like our small group too. You get different perspec-

tives and views. You’re renewed and held accountable in your group and it’s more helpful than going it alone.”

I, Jessica Anderson, have personally found these lessons to be life-changing. I was struggling with my Christian walk, not really knowing *how* to have that personal relationship with Christ. But now, because of the FAST Missions discipleship program, I know *how* to have and *do* have a personal relationship with Christ that is practical and real. I credit that to the Holy Spirit working in me through His Word that I am engraving in my heart and applying to my life.

These are just a few of the testimonies of members of the Tyler Seventh-day Adventist Church who have been going through lessons from FAST Missions.

“I went to a seminar on small groups at Generation of Youth for Christ (GYC) in December 2012,” said Eva Houghton. “I remember sitting there thinking ‘Wow! These people have been trained really well to be effective workers. They *know* their Bible, they know *how* to love and integrate

people easily. It seemed like second nature to them. What can our church do to get that kind of training?” She went home and went through the materials from the seminar. She found the FAST Missions Web site listed as one of the resources.

“It was such a blessing to discover the FAST Missions Web site,” she said, “because it was so easy to access. It was free. Is an online community that gave me worldwide interaction with other people who were desiring to be more effective disciples and workers for God.”

Eva invited her discipleship partner, Meghan Boyd, to join her and they started going through the FAST Missions studies. Because they had really not seen a huge success with the traditional evangelism approaches in their community and church, they wanted to be effective disciples and share it with others.

Once they started to feel empowered themselves from what the Bible study and scripture memorization was doing in them, Eva and Meghan felt they had something they could share. “For the first time,”

said Eva, “we had something to share with other people that was practical and that they could implement right away that was non-threatening and that trained them to think for themselves and to know what they believed. We couldn’t *not* share it.”

For more information about the FAST Missions discipleship program, visit www.fast.st.

Jessica Anderson

Members of the Tyler community who are participating in Bible studies and small groups.



GODencounters Compels Young Adults to “Be Present”

ARLINGTON » “GODencounters opened my eyes to the fact that there’s so much we miss out on when we disregard each moment by dwelling on the past and future,” said Beryl Quaye, an 18-year-old biology major at the University of Texas at Arlington. “I’ve been thoroughly encouraged and uplifted by this conference. Now I feel strongly urged to make the most of each moment. ‘Being present’ has become a life motto for me.”

For the second consecutive year, the GODencounters conference was held at Arlington’s Younger Generation (YG) Church, with hundreds of young adults attending the conference and experiencing the KNEEL prayer room, “Encounters Cafe,” and nightly messages from Sam Leonor, chaplain at La Sierra University.

“Pastor Sam’s messages really resonated with me, especially the part about joy being a virtue of the faithful,” continued Quaye. “Since my dad passed away earlier this year, I’ve wondered whether I can really every be happy again. But now I know that it’s not happiness I desire—it’s joy. And knowing Jesus is the only way to achieve it.”

Distracted by our regrets of the past and worries of the future, we too often fail to be where we are right now. The conference, especially Leonor’s talks, gave focus to Matthew 6, emphasizing “Be Present” as a call to enjoy God today, to dwell in His presence right now. Attendees were challenged to see what God is doing today, leaving the future and the past in His hands.

“Thank God for GODencounters!” exclaimed Jascilyn Same, an 18-year-old accounting major at Tarrant County College. “Attending GODencounters reminded me to take things one day at a time and not worry about the future, because God’s already there.”

“Honestly, I was very nervous about coming to the conference, and was very undecided about attending until a friend invited me,” confessed Hope Wise, an 18-year-old student from Fort Worth. “But

after the first session, I was very intrigued and I felt my fire for God reignited, and kept coming back for more.”

Broadcasting each session live on the internet, GODencounters welcomed thousands to the conference Saturday morning, enjoying three full worship sessions. Throughout the weekend, the YG worship band led the attendees in heartfelt musical worship experiences.

Culminating the conference, Leonor shared a closing challenge and the YG worship band shared a full concert debuting selections from their first full-length recording, “ALL IN,” which they released that same evening.

GODencounters is a movement of next generations pursuing a “24/7” experience of Christ Jesus. This year’s conference marks a decade of gatherings, expressions, and initiatives—all intended to deepen the devotion of young adults to God and challenge them to live for His renown.

“This conference was amazing. I couldn’t have asked for a

greater blessing. I certainly felt God’s presence around me all weekend,” said Allen Tom of Houston. “And the best part is, it was all for God.”

To obtain YG Worship’s debut album “All In,” or to view the GODencounters conference sessions on iTunes, go to www.YGchurch.com

For more information on GODencounters, a growing young adult movement that is celebrating a decade of recklessly living for God’s renown, go to www.GODencounters.org.

A. Allan Martin



Sam Leonor, chaplain at La Sierra University, challenged attendees of GODencounters to “be present.”



Guess what? We are going to have a baby!

TEXICO CONFERENCE

Some of the things we look forward to at the holidays are phone calls or visits with family and friends. We remember getting such a phone call from our friends, a couple, ages 52 and 46. They had been married almost 30 years and had two boys in their 20s who were unmarried.

"Guess what? We are going to have a baby!" said the husband. My mind went to his two sons, one of whom must have been the "father to be." "No," the husband said, "We are going to have a baby." His wife went to the doctor with a growth that she thought must be cancer, but the doctor told her it was nothing that three months would not cure. What a surprise to everyone! They had another son and he has been a joy to them.

There were two surprised couples recorded in the Christmas story found in the New Testament. In Luke 1, Gabriel, the angel of the Lord, was sent to an old man and woman with the words, "Guess what? You are going to have a baby!" Zechariah and Elizabeth were blessed in their old age with a son, John, who was to prepare the way for the Lord. It was a surprising event for this couple, but this was nothing compared to

what was to come.

In Luke 1:26-37, Gabriel came to a young woman and said, "Guess what, Mary? You are going to have a baby!" Can you imagine her surprise and wonder? She probably wondered, "How could this happen? I am a virgin. What will my fiancé think?" Joseph was surprised, and at first decided to leave Mary, but God showed him it was of divine origin, so he stood with her. If God can cause a virgin to have a son, nothing is impossible for Him.

Luke chapter 2 records that when Jesus was born, the angels made the announcement to the shepherds. "We bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today, in the town of David, a Savior has been born to you. He is Christ the Lord." Guess what? You've had a baby and He will save the world!

The glory from God manifested in the presence of these angels lighted up the whole plain. "When the angels left them and went to heaven, the shepherds said one to another, let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing which the Lord has told us about." The Bible says, "Then the shepherds returned glorifying and praising

God for all the things they had heard and seen, which was just as they had been told." These people could not keep quiet. They had just seen *the baby*.

When people have a baby, they are never quiet. We see signs in yards, birth announcements, and plenty of pictures. Over these past two months throughout West Texas we have had approximately 200 new babes in the faith become a part of our family during our West Texas for Jesus evangelistic emphasis. We cannot be silent. We are excited and can't quit talking about it!

This is the time of year when we celebrate God giving us His baby, Jesus, who saves us from our sins. We should also celebrate the birth of those who have united with Jesus and our church, for God sent *His baby* into this world to seek and save the lost. "For to us a Child is born, to us a Son is given and the government will be upon His shoulders. And He will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace" Isaiah 9:6. Praise God for sending us *His baby*!

James L. Stevens, president

Baptism Inspires Others to Take Their Stand for Christ

LAS CRUCES, N.MEX. » The Las Cruces Spanish church had a delightful Sabbath recently as they witnessed the baptism of three people who received Jesus Christ as their Savior, and another person became a member of the church through profession of faith. It was a very moving moment as the Holy Spirit touched the people who witnessed the act, and as a result, six souls also made their decision to receive Christ into their hearts and plan for baptism in the future. They will begin studying the Bible and learning about God's love in anticipation of this wonderful event. These were the first baptisms for Hector Quinones since becoming pastor of the Las Cruces Spanish church earlier this year. May we all be diligent in reaching out to find people who are searching for truth, hope, and love, and direct them to our loving Savior.

Mayra Diaz



It was an exciting day as four new members were added to the Las Cruces Spanish church family.

Texico Women Gather in Albuquerque and El Paso

ALBUQUERQUE, N.MEX. » Women from all over the Texico Conference recently gathered together for this year's regional women's retreats. Retreats were held August 18 at the Albuquerque Heights church and August 25 at El Paso Junior Academy.

The Albuquerque Heights church hosted the English retreat by rolling out the red carpet! David Merling, pastor, welcomed 170 women to the church on behalf of the gracious congregation. The women enjoyed the beautiful facility and the wonderful lunch prepared by the Heights congregation.

Ladies enjoyed the "prayer closet" provided by At the Cross Ministries with Lorene and Russell Ballew. The spiritual journey though the "prayer closet" always proves to be a moving experience for those who participate.

Wendy Redic provided Sabbath School with a workshop titled "Power of Prayer." The participants took many notes as they diligently listened to Wendy's insight and wisdom on how to better communicate with God. Wendy closed her session by singing Lora Story's "Blessings."

The keynote speaker, Janet Page, (ministerial associate secretary for prayer, pastoral

spouses, and families at the General Conference), spoke on many different aspects of prayer. Her personal testimony was moving as she told of the tragedy of losing her first husband in a drowning accident. Janet found that she could praise God even through the loss, trusting God to see her through a very difficult chapter in her life. Janet was personable and caring, and we all had the sense that she deeply loves the Lord and lives life well by "being always on her knees before the Lord."

El Paso Junior Academy was the site for the Spanish retreat. Cathie Workman, Lidia Ruiz, and the entire crew at the academy worked hard to make it a special event for the 130 women who attended. The setting was beautiful, the fellowship was inspiring, and the messages were meaningful and spiritually nourishing.

Lidia Ruiz, the Spanish coordinator, opened the event with a Friday evening vespers service. Carmen Griffith, Southwestern Union Conference women's ministries director, was the Sabbath speaker. Carmen has a wonderful way of connecting on a personal level, sensing the pain and struggles each is going through, and giving inspiring

messages to build trust, faith, and hope in God. The theme for Sabbath was "The Power of Prayer."

Many women were uplifted and encouraged during these local events as their hearts were drawn heavenward through the messages in word and song.

Roxanne Smyth, Texico women's ministries coordinator



▶ Janet Page, ministerial associate secretary for prayer, pastoral spouses, and families at the General Conference, inspired the attendees with touching stories of God leading through prayer.

▼ Ladies gathered at the Albuquerque Heights church for the regional women's ministry event, "A Matter of Prayer."



TEXICO CONFERENCE

A.O.K. (Acts of Kindness) Corral: Pastors' Wives Retreat

LOS LUNAS, N.MEX. » What do you call it when you place 25 wives in the space of a ranch home, and add in home-cooked meals, fellowship, prayer, and other fun activities? We called it the Texico Teammates A.O.K. (Acts of Kindness) Corral Retreat. The Texico pastors' wives came together for this special weekend planned just for them. Thanks to the generosity of one pastoral family (the de Graaffs) we were able to hold our bi-annual retreat with minimal expenses and the wives appreciated the more relaxed atmosphere and activities.

The retreat began with arrival at the sprawling ranch-style home and the collection of our weekend "goodie" bags. Items included slippers, toiletry extras just in case we might have forgotten to bring something, along with paper tablets and pens. The ladies signed up ahead of time to help with specific meal preparation and clean-up. Prior to our meeting, Rita Stevens, Texico ministerial spouses coordina-

tor, had settled on a menu and spent significant time shopping and gathering food items. Some of the wives also volunteered to make soup and breads, along with other items to add to the very full pantry!

Nelva Chacon led the song service on Friday evening and then told of some of her life experiences. Each woman received the book *Heart Connection* or *Chosen* by Nancy and Ron Rocky. We heard all sorts of amazing and humorous stories from a variety of wives and a special harp duet by Tricia Graaff and her daughter, Lexie (the host family).

Sabbath morning, Southwestern Union ministerial spouses and prayer ministries coordinator, Kathy McKey gave a special presentation about loyalty, identity, and hospitality in the pastoral home. It was a great encouragement and a healthy reminder of things to consider as we go about taking care of our homes, husbands, and participating in ministry activities.

The primary activity for the afternoon was a Round Robin of breakout sessions, in which we broke into three small groups and participated in each of three activities.

The first activity, titled "Inspired by Acts of Kindness for Others" included an opportunity to pack a care bag for a woman who would be housed at a local shelter. There were also handcrafted cards, which were signed for those wives unable to attend our retreat.

The second activity, "Inspired by the Written and Shared Word," allowed those in the group to share about a book they had read which had inspired them, and why.

"Inspired by the Acts of Others," turned out to be a real hit, especially when performed later for vespers. We asked each group to put together something to be presented later as part of the program, such as a charade, skit, or special music. The only requirement was that everyone in the



▲ Pastors' wives (left to right) Josie Green, Nelva Chacon, Catherine Robinson, and Angila Milam sing together with their conductor, Clemencia Calvo.

Above right: Among the many activities, the wives enjoyed the great food and fellowship together.

► The Texico pastors' wives all loaded up for the Saturday-night hayride, thanks to local church members who made the activity available.



group had to participate.

Following the Round Robin, our pre-selected panel convened, and after introductions, the five-member panel, with a moderator, addressed previously-written questions related to counsel for new pastors' wives. For a little over an hour, we discussed pertinent issues and also took comments and questions from the audience of wives.

To start off Sabbath-evening vespers, each of the groups acted out their talent, and it turned out to be a very refreshing time. One group was quite large, and included the children of the hosting household, and others, so there was quite a mix of musical instruments played by four children, and the song was sung in three languages by the wives, including sign language. Another group performed a silent skit that showed how things might happen, and how that same activity might take place in a better way.

Just as it turned dark, we donned our cowboy hats and jumped onto a hay wagon and sang our way along the arroyo on a fun hayride. We finished the day outside, roasting and grilling our dinner, along with S'mores and other great food.

For some of those seasoned pastors' wives, rooming together at a retreat like this provides a great opportunity to share heart-to-heart, and pray together. In one room where we were bunked 5-6 deep, we closed the day by gathering, knee-to-knee, sharing from our hearts, what we wished others would pray about for us, and then spent a season of prayer together. Despite the lateness of the hour, this continued to be a special part of the weekend and a treasured hour in time!

We finalized some teammate business—selecting officers, newsletter editors, and shared excitement as Kathy McKey had more ministry news and opportunities for us to embark on. More than two-thirds of

the wives present signed up to conduct a reaping meeting in one of their district churches next year. We also had been gifted by the presence of a licensed massage therapist on Friday and again on Sunday, so that the wives were able to receive a special half hour of added relaxation throughout the weekend.

While Rita Stevens continually surprised us in a variety of ways over the weekend, we tried to turn the tables and share a surprise of our own in appreciation for her years of service, love, and interest in us as pastoral wives. As a token of our love and care for her, we presented her with a signed picture page, which was framed, and included a group picture. We experienced acts of kindness throughout the weekend, and look forward to passing on the same to others.

Terri Gibson

Special Day for Father and Son

ALBUQUERQUE, N.MEX. » A baptism or a child's dedication is always a special occasion for any church family, but one church had the opportunity to witness an occasion that was extraordinary, as a father was baptized and a son was consecrated to the Lord—both from the same family, both on the same day.

Lorenzo Peña had been receiving weekly Bible studies from Three Angels church pastor Manuel Rodríguez, which ended with Lorenzo wanting to be baptized and also wanting to dedicate his baby son to the Lord. The pastor was overjoyed, and on Sabbath, November 10, 2012, Lorenzo was baptized. Then, when the baptism came to a close, Lorenzo quickly changed out of his wet baptismal robes and, within minutes, as the congregation was singing, "Whiter than Snow," the young father was seen standing next to his wife, Ashley, and son, Cain,

as Rodríguez began the child dedication, tenderly reminding the young parents of their responsibilities to the Lord and to their child. The dedication came to a close with the pastor encouraging the church to

keep this young family in their prayers.

Margaret Vasquez



▲ The Peña family during their son's dedication just minutes after dad, Lorenzo, was baptized. From left: Lorenzo, Cain, and Ashley Peña.

◀ Manuel Rodríguez had the privilege of baptizing Lorenzo Peña, who received weekly Bible studies prior to giving his heart to God.

An Unexpected Outreach

Music has the ability to reach people in ways nothing else can. Often, words alone are lost in the air. Put those words to a tune and not only will they make a meaningful impact, but the impact will stay with someone all day long.

Many people don't consider choir a form of outreach or community service, but I know for a fact that it is. It's made a difference in my life and I've seen it make a difference in lives around me.

I'm an alto in Southwestern's University Singers. We're a choir that tours locally as well as around the world.

Every day at lunch, while most students walk to the cafeteria, the Singers walk to the choir room. The music we sing ranges in difficulty, and some practices go better than others. Over all, we work hard to sound the best that we can.

When I came to Southwestern I had no intention of joining choir. I had my mind set on trying out for SWAT, Southwestern's Acrobatic Team. In high school, choir and gymnastics were my favorite parts of the day; now I had to choose between them!

It might seem trivial to some, but I lost hours of sleep, for weeks on end, trying to decide what to choose. Finally, I decided to join gymnastics. I had my mind made up and wasn't looking back. I prayed about it one last time and went to bed.

In the morning, I woke up with a completely different mindset. I could feel a

strong impression to try out for the University Singers. That day at lunch I walked into the choir room. I haven't regretted the choice a single time.

Something about singing, especially with a choir, brings me closer to God. There are so many different styles of music with such varying messages. My favorite song last year, *A Gaelic Blessing* by John Rutter, reminded me that no matter how hectic life gets, you can turn to God. He'll give you peace.

The group is like a large family. We share our experiences, and create memories together. At the start of each practice, there's usually worship. People share their favorite Bible verses. They also share problems and praises. It's been a real blessing to me countless times. It's become a part of who I am.

While choir has been a personal blessing, I've also seen it bless those outside of our group, and not just in the concert setting. We work hard to sound professional, but more importantly, we try to do everything with a mission mindset.

Recently, the University Singers traveled to New Mexico for the annual Society of Adventist Communicators convention. On our way to sing at the meeting, a car in front of us ran out of gas. There was a boy pushing it to the side of the road while his mom steered.

Mr. Wall, our director, stood up. All he said was, "Six men, let's go." I'll never forget watching many more than six men, dressed

in their tuxes, run up to that car. They pushed it to the nearest gas station and then got back on the bus without saying a word.

Another incident was when we were on tour in Puerto Rico last spring. During a sound check a tenor had to run out for a phone call. His grandma was sick and in the hospital.

He came back in, still on the phone, and shared that she had requested we sing to her. The group formed a circle around the phone and sang *A Better Resurrection* by Craig Courtney. It's about giving your all to God in the most daunting of situations and how He will take care of you. I could feel the Holy Spirit move as we sang the song.

It can be difficult to hear a testimony from those who might have been touched by a choir singing during a concert. I know we've often felt the Holy Spirit move as we sing in different venues and we pray that our music will touch those listening. Music is such an amazing tool for God to use. With a group dedicated to God, there's no doubt that God will use the group to change lives.

The University Singers has been a blessing to me. I also believe it has been, and will continue to be, a blessing to those we share with.

Makala Coleman, sophomore
communication major



Makala Coleman

The University Singers performing at a school in Puerto Rico.

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The South Pacific Division has recently acquired the worldwide rights to the CHIP program, therefore Sanitarium Health & Wellbeing is looking for a Global Manager to lead and manage their international team. The position will be based in either Australia or in the USA and will be pivotal to the success of the CHIP program globally. For more information and to apply, visit www.sanitarium.com.au.

The General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Department of Information Systems Services is seeking to hire a Microsoft SharePoint/ASP.NET application developer to continue the development and maintenance of their SharePoint document management infrastructure. Applicants should have multiple years of development and server administration experience and be able to implement complex web architectures using ASP.NET/IIS/SQL Server. Previous exposure

to SharePoint administration and development would be ideal. It is the policy of the GC to hire only SDA church members who consistently support their church financially. Applicants may apply by faxing or e-mailing their resumes to GC Human Resources at 301.680.6768, or stavenhagenr@gc.adventist.org.

Andrews University seeks a Director of International Student Services. Qualified candidates should have a Master's degree with 5 years of experience in higher education with a focus on International Student Services or Student Affairs. Must be a U.S. Citizen or Legal Permanent Resident. For more information and to apply, visit: http://www.andrews.edu/HR/emp_jobs_salaried.cgi.

Andrews University seeks a STEM Enrollment Coordinator. Qualified candidates should have a baccalaureate degree with rudimentary familiarity with the culture of science and engineering. For more information and to apply, visit: http://www.andrews.edu/HR/emp_

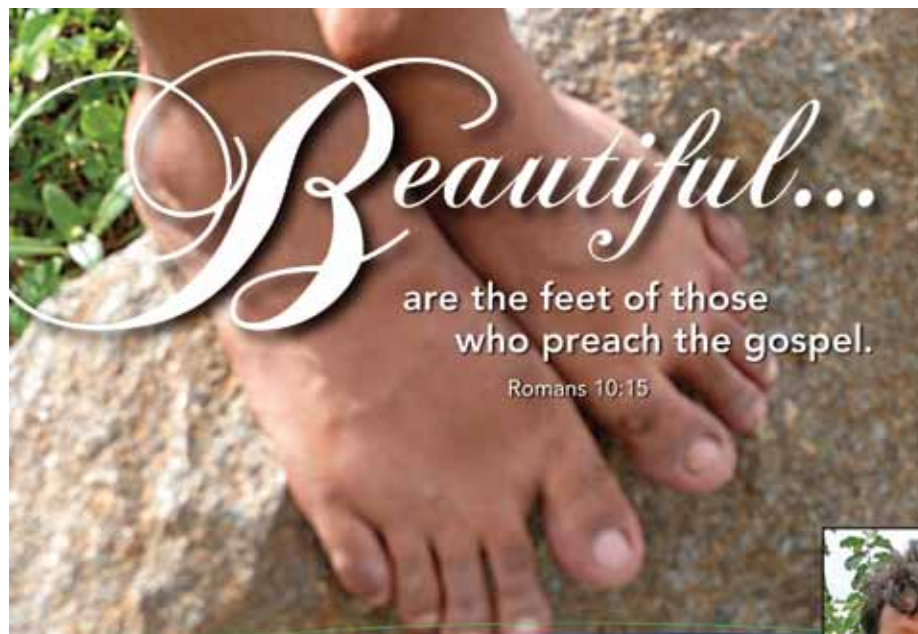
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Walla Walla University seeks applicants for a full-time faculty position focusing on Medical-Surgical Nursing on the Portland, Oregon campus to begin September, 2013. For more information and to apply, please visit <http://jobs.wallawalla.edu>.


MISCELLANEOUS

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Jerico Aldana brings tremendous positive energy to every aspect of his life – from his daily patient care interactions to his hobbies of bowling and skateboarding. He recognizes that Loma Linda is a place where people share common values and where his desire to grow professionally is supported. Jerico is one of the people who help to make Loma Linda a center of clinical excellence and supportive faith-based care.

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Jerico Aldana
Perioperative Technician



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Obituaries

BENNETT, Floy M., born September 18, 1926 in Hot Springs, Ark., and died August 27, 2012, in Arkadelphia, Ark. She was a member of the Arkadelphia church. Survivors: husband, Luther G. Bennett, of Arkadelphia, Ark.; son and daughter-in-law, Boyd and Carolyn Bennett, of Bismarck, Ark.; daughter and son-in-law, Patrice and Steve Lindstrom, of Weldon, Ill.; three grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

LOEWEN, Mary Edwina Moore-Ruebush, born February 21, 1930 in Magdalena, N. Mex., and died August 22, 2012 in Silver City, N. Mex. She was a member of the Silver City church. She was preceded in death by her husband, Calvin Ruebush and her daughter Gail Ruebush Burleson Romero. Survivors: husband, Sam Loewen, of Tyrone, N. Mex.; brother, Buzzy Moore, of Deming, N. Mex.; son, Dale Rue-

bush, of Kamiah, Idaho; son, Gary Ruebush, of Gentry, Ark.; daughter, Sherry Ruebush May, of Orcas Island, Wash.; son, Terry Ruebush, of Albert, Kans.; son; Matt Loewen, of Weslaco, Tex.; daughter, Lisa Loewen Ross, of Midwest City, Okla.; son, John Loewen, of McKinney, Tex.; and 22 grandchildren, 21 great-grandchildren, and many precious nieces, nephews, and friends.

RUSSELL, Josie Inez Smith, born February 10, 1921 in Louisiana and died August 9, 2012 in Albuquerque, N. Mex. She was a charter member of the Bogalusa church. She and others in her family became Adventist after a cousin married an Adventist. Survivors: daughter, Marion Pierce; son, Charles Russell; five grandchildren, 16 great-grandchildren, and two great-great-grandchildren.

SHARP, Linda Charlene, born September 27, 1944, in Tulsa, Okla., and died September 29, 2012, in Wewoka, Okla. She

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‘SEND ME’ ISAIAH 6:8

was a long-time member of the First church in Tulsa, where she served as treasurer, Sabbath school teacher, deaconess, and choir member for many years. She was an employee of Citgo Petroleum for 32 years. Survivors: mother, Frances Gillham, of Tulsa; daughter and son-in-law, Julie and Dewayne Streater, of Wewoka; son and daughter-in-law, Dr. Kenneth and Carissa Sharp, of Frisco, Tex.; sister and brother-in-law, Judith and Dave Garlock, of Tulsa; and five grandchildren.

wood church, where she served as treasurer, children's leader, and in many other capacities for many years. She had a love for life and people, especially young people. She is remembered fondly. Survivors: husband of 65 years, Marion Smith, of Brownwood; son and daughter-in-law Dana and Lanna Smith, of Brownwood; son and daughter-in-law, Damon and Debbie Smith of Brownwood; four grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

SMITH, Juanelle, born September 8, 1927 in Indian Creek, Tex., and died September 25, 2012 in Brownwood, Tex. She was a member of the Brown-



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SABBATH SUNSET CALENDAR

	Dec 7	Dec 14	Dec 21	Dec 28	Jan 4	Jan 11
Abilene, TX	5:33	5:35	5:37	5:41	5:46	5:52
Albuquerque, NM	4:55	4:56	4:58	5:02	5:07	5:13
Amarillo, TX	5:35	5:36	5:38	5:43	5:47	5:53
Brownsville, TX	5:39	5:41	5:43	5:47	5:52	5:56
Dallas, TX	5:21	5:22	5:25	5:29	5:33	5:39
El Paso, TX	5:02	5:04	5:06	5:10	5:14	5:20
Fort Worth/Keene, TX	5:23	5:24	5:27	5:31	5:35	5:41
Gallup, NM	5:02	5:03	5:05	5:10	5:14	5:20
Galveston/Houston, TX	5:22	5:23	5:26	5:30	5:35	5:40
Gentry, AR	5:03	5:04	5:07	5:10	5:15	5:22
Little Rock, AR	4:58	4:59	5:02	5:05	5:10	5:16
Muskogee, OK	5:08	5:09	5:11	5:15	5:20	5:26
New Orleans, LA	5:01	5:02	5:05	5:08	5:13	5:19
Oklahoma City, OK	5:17	5:18	5:20	5:25	5:29	5:35
Roswell, NM	4:50	4:52	4:54	4:58	5:03	5:08
San Antonio, TX	5:35	5:37	5:40	5:43	5:48	5:53
Shreveport, LA	5:09	5:11	5:13	5:17	5:22	5:28
Tulsa, OK	5:09	5:10	5:13	5:17	5:22	5:28

BY ARIEL HEMPEL

Ministry Begins at Home

THIS SPRING, I WAS PRIVILEGED TO TRAVEL WITH TWELVE OTHER STUDENTS TO ZIMBABWE FOR A TWO-WEEK MISSION TRIP.

Even with uncertain expectations, the immense need of the people shocked me. Yet, despite my lack of preparation for the tasks God had prepared for us, He still blessed immensely. Most of our time was spent in small towns, where we held six health expos, worked with local orphan ministries, and conducted a series of meetings at the church in Kwekwe.

During the health expos, it was my job to work with massage. Hour after hour, ladies filed over and sat down in front of me, resting tired heads on crossed arms; some relaxing in expectation, others stiff with apprehension. I asked the same two questions of each person: “Have you ever had a massage before?” and “May I pray with you?” While the first question received answers that were usually determined by social class and the city we were in, the second question was almost always received willingly, regardless of circumstances. Some simply bowed their heads, while others sought a deeper sense of blessing as they opened up and shared the burdens on their hearts. One specific young woman will forever remain ingrained in my memory.

Our brief interaction took place during one of the last health expos, which we held in the back yard of a local AIDS clinic. As the patients drifted in, we directed them to the different stations. Looking into each face, it was hard to fathom that they were struggling for their very lives, with their hopes for tomorrow fading out of sight and reality. Another thing that struck me was the age of the patients. Many of them were young people.

One such young woman came and sat down in front of me, glancing up shyly. I judged her to be a little

younger than myself. She agreed to pray, and when I asked her if she had specific prayer requests, she looked into my face, and in her eyes I read the ache of uncertainty and sadness. “Yes. Please pray for courage and strength.”

Courage and strength. This precious soul should have been looking forward to the best part of her life, and yet she did not know if she would live to reach her next birthday. Even if she did, what kind of future could she hope for? Throughout the remainder of the trip, my mind kept going back to her words, her face—realizing that in her pain she had expressed a desire to find comfort in the One Source, and contemplating that we could very well have been one of the only outlets for her to find Him.

Throughout the trip I learned in a new way that ministry is not simply about going and sharing Jesus with people. It is not simply about giving evangelistic series or holding health expos—it is so much more. True ministry can only be given when a life is completely surrendered to God’s leading and selfless sharing of His love with His children, especially the untouchables. You never know when your touch, word, or smile could be the opening of a person’s heart to Christ. You don’t have to go overseas for this kind of ministry—the best place to start is where you are right now. Let’s shine His love for all to see—beginning at home. Only heaven will tell the harvest.

Ariel Hempel, from Mountain View, Arkansas, is a second-year Education major at Weimar College in California. She is currently assistant dean at Weimar Academy and is a certified massage therapist with a passion for music, missions, and medical evangelism.



On the Record »

BY PAT HUMPHREY » COMMUNICATION DIRECTOR, SOUTHWESTERN UNION



If Only He Had Told Me

ONE DAY A PASTOR WAS SHOPPING IN A CARPET STORE when he felt a sudden urge to talk to the owner. He told him, “I’ve talked carpets, but never my business with you. Can we talk for a few minutes?” The store owner took the pastor to his office, where the pastor pulled out his Bible and began sharing text after text with the businessman. Then the pastor pleaded with him to give his heart to Christ.

Soon tears began to roll down the man’s cheek. “I’m seventy years old, I was born in this city and more than a hundred ministers and members of various churches have known me in a business way. You are the only man who has ever talked to me about my salvation.”

That story reminds me a little of my own experience. When I was a freshman in college, I was not a Christian and had never even heard of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. I remember in my Freshman English class being impressed with a young man who was a fellow classmate. He was very quiet, very polite, and somehow seemed different than the other students. One day in class the teacher invited him to share an essay he had written as a class assignment. I don’t remember the content of the essay, but I do remember the teacher

saying that it was the most beautiful piece of writing that one of her students had ever written.

Over the course of the school year I became casually acquainted with the young man, and we would have brief and pleasant conversations whenever we ran into each other on campus. But those casual exchanges never went beyond such topics as the weather or homework or other mundane subjects.

Now let’s fast-forward several years. I am now a graduate student at the same university. I’ve been through a series of rather unfortunate life experiences, and in my search for meaning in life, I discover the Seventh-day Adventist Church and get baptized. A few months later, when visiting another Adventist church, I bump into—you guessed it—the very young man who

was my classmate in Freshman English!

We exchanged greetings and spent some time catching up. Of course, he wanted to know my story of joining the Adventist Church (he had been born in the church), and I think he was just as surprised to see me as I was to see him. But one thought kept nagging me. I so badly wanted to ask him, “Why didn’t you tell me? Why did you keep to yourself the wonderful news of Jesus and all the life-changing truths of the Bible? If only you had told me, you could have saved me the pain and agony that came from my lack of knowledge and unwise decisions!”

If only he had said something As I ponder those words, I think not only about my own life and how it might have been different had my friend witnessed to me. The deeper question for me (and for you) is, How might I make a difference in the lives of those who cross my path today? Will I choose to share Jesus when the opportunity arises?

Pat Humphrey

Record

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Articles for the Record will be edited for length and content. Because space is limited, stories and articles are selected on the basis of interest and relevance to those around the Southwestern Union.

i am DEEPLY COMMITTED

"I fell in love with the place. I know God has a purpose for me here."

A freshmen, Alex is already very involved on campus. In addition to his classes, Alex is a photographer/videographer for the Marketing Department, a member of the *University Singers*, the University touring choir, has his own band for which he is the lead singer and guitarist, and is a member of one of the praise teams. His signature grin can be found all over campus as he volunteers his time to help with various programs. "God has a specific place for everyone," says Alex. **"I'm just listening to Him, happy to be where He wants me to be."**



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UPCOMING EVENTS

January 14
Openhouse

January 23-27 - Basketball Tournament
(Big Game on Saturday night)

February 4
Openhouse

March 3-4
University Experience

March 24-25
University Experience