

SOUTHWESTERN UNION

Record

FEBRUARY 2013

STEWARDSHIP

my children

my possessions

my education

MY CAR

my money

my house

my job

my treasures

MY PROPERTY

my body

my life

my talents

my family

MY WEALTH

my time

my relationships

IT ALL BELONGS TO GOD



STEWARDSHIP: UPON FURTHER REVIEW

Record

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WHAT EVERY CHRISTIAN SHOULD KNOW ABOUT MONEY

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On the Cover

Make a list of the things that matter to you—family, home, possessions, hobbies, friends. Your management of these things is your measure of their value. When you remember that something belongs to God, you will realize its true value. Giving your life and your resources into God's care is the best strategy for successfully managing what matters most.



Point of View»

BY LARRY MOORE » SOUTHWESTERN UNION CONFERENCE PRESIDENT



God Will Provide

In the late 1970s, I was pastoring the Lake Charles/DeRidder district in southern Louisiana. My wife and I were used to paying our tithes and offerings first thing after receiving our paycheck. One particular month, we were running a little short of cash to buy groceries. We went to the store and bought a few things we needed, but forgot to purchase bread. When we discovered our error, we realized we didn't have enough money to buy a loaf of bread. We weren't too worried; we had returned our tithe and offering. God would provide, if necessary.

One Sabbath during that month, I preached first at Lake Charles and then we headed up to DeRidder. On the way, I noticed a perfectly preserved loaf of Roman Meal bread—our brand—laying in the median of the busy highway. I don't know how it got there. I thought about it, wondering if I should go back and retrieve it. Maybe God was providing it for us. Then I wondered if I could get fined for trying to get it, and drove on to the DeRidder church for the afternoon service. At the end of the service, we had a fellowship lunch. Afterward, a woman came up to me and held out a loaf of homemade bread and said, "Here, take this. I think

you need it."

I was speechless, except to say "Thank you." That has never happened to me before or since. I think God enjoys blessing His children.

And yes, I looked for that other loaf of Roman Meal on my way home. Someone else had gotten it—I hope they needed it.

Larry Moore

The Little Things

Friday afternoon, October 26, 2012, my wife Beverly and I did what we have done almost every Friday for 18 years. I took her to her weekly beauty shop appointment, and afterwards ate at Sammy's Italian Restaurant. As we drove home through the little town of Joshua, Beverly said she would love to have an ice cream cone. I wheeled into the Dairy Queen. As we each enjoyed the special treat, Beverly suddenly dropped her cone, and her head hit the table with a resounding thud. I raised her head back up, and it was clear she wasn't breathing.

Although strangers, who seemed like angels, did all they could for Beverly, she never regained consciousness, and I lost my beloved wife of 49 years and 2 months. We were looking forward to a cruise on our 50th anniversary, provided by our sons. But that cruise won't happen now.

My sweetheart told me, "I love you," at least ten times a day. I thought she overdid it a little—but now I wish I could hear her say it again. There is only one TV program that I really like, and invariably she would interrupt the program, asking me to explain some scripture to her. She read her Bible diligently, and she somehow had faith in my interpretations of Scripture. I used to secretly wish she would wait until the program was

over. Now I have no interruptions. I would love to see her coming through the door, and hear her ask me to explain some verse while I'm watching my program. But I will never have that privilege again.

What is the point of sharing this? It is this: value your spouse, your children, your parents, your siblings—anyone that you love. Appreciate them, even when they cause interruptions or overdo something. You never know when you might lose that opportunity, and wish you could see them again. I have always believed in the Second Coming, but now I am extremely eager to see Jesus come again. Of course, I want to see Jesus—and I know that when I see Him, I will be reunited with my precious Beverly. I can hardly wait.



Steve and Beverly Gifford

Steve Gifford, former Texas Conference president



CREATION Health

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

7 Tips For Making Better Choices, Starting Today

“Far too many people have no idea of what they can do because they have been told what they can’t do.” – Zig Ziglar

YOUR BIRTHRIGHT

Here is some of the most wonderful news you will ever hear: You, my friend, are in charge of your life.

Choice is one of God’s greatest gifts; He gave this amazing power to you and me—and He does not want to see us give it away.

The power of choice is our birthright.

HEADING SOMEWHERE?

Consider the direction of your life. Are you satisfied?

If nothing changes, where will you end up? And is that the place you want to be when everything is said and done?

If so, then great! But if not, then you need to know that you are only one choice away from living a better life right now—one choice away from choosing a better direction.

YOU ARE IN CHARGE

You are in control. But it all begins with the power of choice because choice is the first step toward improving your life mentally, physically, relationally, and spiritually.

So here are seven tips for making better choices (since the power of choice resides within the brain’s frontal lobe, some of these tips are tied to brain health).

body to strengthen your brain. Physical activity increases blood flow to the brain, which increases brain function. If you want to make better choices, then put yourself into motion!

2. Stay focused—don’t be distracted by the chaos.

There will always be chaos, but that does not mean you have to be distracted by it. Be aware that a lack of sleep and the demands of others are chaos creators. Do yourself a favor by promising to stay focused on the real issues and choices before you.

3. Remember H.A.L.T.

Do not make important decisions when you are **H**ungry, **A**ngry, **L**onely, or **T**ired.

4. Take charge of your thoughts.

Happy thoughts help to decrease activity in the right frontal lobe. This part of the brain tends to be over-dominant when a person is depressed. Thinking optimistic or hopeful thoughts gently puts the brakes on the right frontal lobe relative to the left, which helps to balance the brain and enhance one’s mood.

5. Welcome good counsel.

Inviting input from others places things in a different perspective, which often improves the decision-making process, because new options are discovered or created.

6. Get a massage—and don’t feel guilty about it.

Massage increases blood flow, which the body naturally prioritizes to the brain. University of Miami researchers learned that 15-minute massages done twice weekly for five weeks decreased anxiety and levels of the detrimental hormone cortisol. The frontal lobe functions best when not under stress.

7. Get some sunshine therapy.

Sunshine stimulates the whole body and helps you to sleep better. Sunlight increases serotonin production, which helps prevent fatigue. So if you feel weary and exhausted, get into the sunshine for deeper rest and sharper thinking.

ONE CHOICE...

Make one choice right now while reading this article that you will start doing today. You can take charge of your life by developing your power of choice, and start living life to the fullest.

That’s CREATION Health!

Lynell LaMountain writes from Florida Hospital in Orlando, Florida.

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

SEVEN TIPS FOR SUCCESS

1. The brain and body should be thought of as one.

The brain and body are one. This means you can use your

My "Mission" in Life

TIME FROZE. Everything was silent as I sat and sobbed uncontrollably. Then I heard a gentle whisper, so faint, but it brought me back to reality. "Oh, teacher." I looked up. My ninth-grade students were looking at me. It was going to be my last time teaching them. Soon I would be leaving India, perhaps never to return. I took a deep breath and continued with the lesson. Today's lesson was simple. It was a summation of the three things that I wanted them to remember from my year in India teaching them Bible class in the Adventist English school.

No. 1: I loved them more than they could ever comprehend.

No. 2: God's love was greater still than mine.

No. 3: If I never got to see them here on earth again, I wanted to see each of them in heaven.

You see, when I first started college I made it my "mission" (pun intended!) to go on a mission trip every year. So far, I've been pretty faithful in keeping to that, and have gone to such places as Guatemala, Mexico, India, and Haiti, to name a few. But India has always stood out in my mind because I was there for about a year with more than 200 students from kindergarten through tenth grade. I had immersed myself entirely in the culture.

I spent my time teaching my students Bible stories and answering questions about salvation, faith, spiritualism, and friendship. I also spent time teaching my students games, watching films that I didn't understand in their Malayalam language, running around fields in a sari (traditional dress), and playing soccer with the boys and tag with the girls. I spent time listening to my Hindu students tell me about their gods, watching my Muslim students go to their mosques for the call of prayer, and hearing my Christian students tell me of their lives. I spent my time learning the art of eating with my fingers, boiling water in the mornings to take a "shower" with a bucket, and learning such important phrases as, "Andi! Enikku vishakunnu!" (roughly translated: Aunty, I'm hungry so please feed me!). I spent my time with my students downloading Malayalam songs onto my computer, straightening girls' hairs (after trying to convince them for nearly half a year that it was not going to electrocute them!), and watching their delighted expression after trying S'mores for the first time. I spent my year with my students sharing their sorrows and their joys. I spent my year loving my students.

These are memories that I will cherish forever and still have nostalgic feelings for. These are memories that I've begged God to take me back to in dreams just so that I could see my students one last time. These are memories that were only possible because I gave my time to God. For one year, I set aside my ambitions and my college work load to dedicate to God in service. And for one year, He blessed me in more ways than I can count. Are you willing to give *your* time to God?

When **Janina Irving** isn't on a mission trip, she's busy running her tutoring business in the Fort Worth/Burleson, Texas area.





Pass it On...

A Monthly Focus on Evangelism in the Southwest

BY STEVEN DENCE

God's Way is Best

My wife and I have been married now for nearly 40 years, and we have been blessed to see God work in our lives in many different ways over the years. We have learned that whenever we have done things in the way that we think they ought to be done, rather than how God has shown, He often has a gentle reminder for us.

We had just such an experience 38 years ago in Harlingen, Texas. I was working for the woman who owned the house that we were living in. She had 32 houses that she rented, and I would do all of the maintenance. I made minimum wage, \$3.50 an hour, and we could hardly make ends meet.

Then things got worse. A couple that we knew convinced us not to pay our tithe to the conference, rather, we would use the tithe to buy Bibles and give them out to people that we thought might need them. About this time, I'd seen an ad in the newspaper claiming a "guaranteed" income of \$700 a month with training provided. I thought that this would be much better than what I was making, so I went and applied.

They immediately employed me as a vacuum cleaner salesman.

At the end of the first week, I innocently asked my supervisor how they were going to pay me the \$700. He said, "What \$700? The only commission you get is on what you sell. You'll only get \$700 if you show the machine 72 times a month."

Well, I was determined to do just that. Needless to say, I worked for one month straight, leaving home each day at 6:00 a.m. and getting home around nine or ten at night. I didn't make a single penny!

One evening, my wife and I were talking about what was happening. Inspiration came to both of us at the same time. Perhaps it was because we were not paying tithe! Yes, we had bought a box of Bibles and we were handing them out, we were convinced that is not what we are told to do in Malachi, 3:10, which says, "Bring all

the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house. 'And try Me now in this,' Says the Lord of hosts, 'if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such a blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it.'"

We got on our knees and asked God to forgive us for robbing Him and to give us another chance. While we were still on our knees praying, the phone rang. I answered it and it was someone

offering me a job as an orderly in a nursing home at \$6.50 an hour.

We thought we'd learned our lesson, but we didn't learn it well enough, because about three years ago we felt like we should support some independent ministries of our selection with our tithe, rather than the church.

And again, God taught us a lesson. For the next two months, our business didn't have very many paying clients. We were in financial dire straights. Again, we were convinced that we weren't doing right with our tithes and asked God to forgive us and promised Him that we would once again faithfully return the tithes to the "storehouse." Immediately, we saw God's blessings return

to our home and our business.

"God requires no less of us than He required of His people anciently. His gifts to us are not less, but greater, than they were to Israel of old. His service requires, and ever will require, means. The great missionary work for the salvation of souls is to be carried forward. In the tithe, with gifts and offerings, God has made ample provision for this work. He intends that the ministry of the gospel shall be fully sustained. He claims the tithe as His own, and it should ever be regarded as a sacred reserve, to be placed in His treasury for the benefit of His cause, for the advancement of His work, for sending His messengers into 'regions beyond,' even to the uttermost parts of the earth" ("God's Claim Upon Us," E.G. White, *Review and Herald*, December 8, 1896).



Steven and Rosie Dence



Dios Nos Comisionó Mayordomos

Recuerdo la alegría que sentí al manejar mi automóvil convertible de color rojo brillante hacia mi casa. Era un verdadero vehículo en la categoría de coleccionistas, todo un auto clásico, por el cual esperé y ahorré por varios años antes de obtenerlo. Mi esposa y yo estábamos entretenidos y sorprendidos por la reacción de nuestros hijos. Ellos celebraron el convertible como si fuera para ellos. Nuestro hijo mayor tenía su licencia para conducir y antes de que él me preguntara le arrojé las llaves diciéndole que tomara las llaves y llevara a su hermano a pasear. Siempre he dicho a mis hijos que lo que es mío es de todos en la familia. Mi hijo mayor me recuerda mi dicho cada vez que quiere llevarse el coche a dar un paseo con su hermano o amigos. El les dice a sus amigos que el auto es de él, pero de hecho está registrado en mi nombre. Hay por lo menos tres cosas que este relato que nos enseña sobre la mayordomía.

1. Dios posee todo. Incluso nuestro aliento de vida le pertenece a él. Pero a menudo pensamos que nuestras posesiones nos pertenecen a nosotros. Incluso he oído muchos hombres decir con confianza, “esa es mi casa, mi esposa y mis hijos.” A pesar de que esta declaración puede tener algo de verdad, lo cierto es que nada nos pertenece a nosotros, todo le pertenece a Dios. El Salmo 24:1 decididamente declara que la tierra es de Dios y todo lo que hay en ella. Esto significa que tú le perteneces. Pablo declara en 1 Corintios 6:20 que nosotros somos Suyos doblemente, primero por creación y segundo por salvación en el Calvario. Tu cónyuge es de Dios, tus hijos son de Dios, tus coches, tu dinero, tu comida, tu energía, e incluso tu fuerza.

2. Dios se complace en compartir sus bienes con nosotros. Colosenses 1:15 nos dice que Cristo es el creador de todas las cosas y que todas las cosas fueron creadas por Él y para Él. ¡No para nosotros! ¡Para Él! Pero Él se alegra al compartir las cosas buenas de Su creación con nosotros. Por ejemplo, Dios espera que proteja a mi esposa y la presente ante Él mejor que cuando me bendijo con ella. Lo mismo ocurre con nuestros

hijos. Decimos que son nuestros y que pueden tener nuestra apariencia y actuar como nosotros, pero de hecho, Dios nos comisionó su cuidado.

3. Dios nos considera responsables de nuestra mayordomía. ¡Todos somos mayordomos! Incluso los no creyentes son mayordomos. Somos fieles mayordomos o infieles mayordomos, pero cada uno de nosotros somos mayordomos. Cuando mi hijo toma el auto y lleva a sus amigos, le hago ciertas preguntas, tales como: “¿Dónde fuiste? ¿Cómo condujiste? ¿Fuiste cuidadoso? ¿Llenaste el tanque de gas nuevamente?” a menudo solía decir: “sí, llené el tanque, con tu tarjeta bancaria.” Ahora mis hijos son mayores y tienen sus propios vehículos y propiedades, pero siempre les recuerdo que todo lo que tenemos es un préstamo de nuestro Creador y Redentor. Somos simplemente los mayordomos para administrar estas pertenencias con dignidad y sabiduría como los principios bíblicos nos indican. Esta responsabilidad no es sólo un porcentaje, como lo es el diezmo, esta mayordomía es el cien por ciento de todo lo que somos.

De manera que los invito este día a regresar todo al dueño de “nuestras” propiedades, conyugues e hijos. Les aseguro que una vez que pongamos todo en las manos de Dios, tendremos paz y pidámosle sabiduría para poder administrar todos aquellos seres amados en nuestra familia y las posesiones de las que Él nos ha brindado.

Dios les bendiga.

Minner Labrador



El auto de Dios, y todo lo demás.

STEWARDSHIP: UPON FURTHER REVIEW

Orville Ortiz, associate IT director, Southwestern Union Conference

Sometimes, hearing the word “stewardship” in church is like hearing a flight attendant tell passengers to find the nearest exits in case of an emergency before take off. Unfortunately, this happens because stewardship time is usually focused on asking for money; however, that is only one aspect of stewardship.

Merriam-Webster’s online dictionary reveals the broader meaning of stewardship: “the conducting, supervising, or managing of something; especially: the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one’s care.”

In the popular game of American football, there are plays that are considered reviewable because of their importance to the outcome of the game. The referee reviews the play, captured at many different angles, in slow motion so that he can make the correct call. He then announces the outcome, beginning with the phrase “upon further review.” The definition of stewardship merits further review because it adds an important dimension to the life of the Christian. We must discover who is doing the trusting and what has been entrusted.

The first two chapters of Genesis give the account of God creating the world, everything in it, and humanity—us. God then told Adam what he could eat to provide sustenance to his body, and entrusted His full creation to him by putting “him in the Garden of Eden to

work it and take care of it” (Genesis 2:15, TNIV). God entrusted to Adam his own body, as well as all the land, seas, vegetation, and animals that were created. Later “the Lord God made woman from the rib He had taken out of the man, and He brought her to the man,” and Adam was entrusted with a family.

God, the Creator and Redeemer, is so amazing that even after Adam and Eve failed and disqualified themselves from trust, He did not take it away. God said “everything under heaven belongs to me” (Job 41:11, TNIV), yet, David tells us “you made them rulers over the works of your hands; you put everything under their feet” (Psalms 8:6, TNIV). In fact, He added the trust to “preach the gos-



pel to all creation” (Mark 16:15, TNIV), and Paul adds that there is a greater reward when that trust is carried out voluntarily (1 Corinthians 9:16-18).

Being careful and responsible managers bears an important outcome because it reveals whether we have been faithful to the trust we have received. He kept us as stewards because it gives us a healthy relationship with God and keeps His role as our Creator, Owner, and Savior at the forefront.

“Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful,” (1 Corinthians 4:2, TNIV). I define faithfulness as doing everything “for the glory of God,” according to 1 Corinthians 10:31, TNIV. This means doing good things that will magnify, exalt, and bring attention to God’s name. Because we know that He cre-



ated us and saved us, we can now voluntarily be careful managers of all the things God has entrusted to us.

An example of stewardship that I recently saw was in a report on NBC’s *Rock Center with Brian Williams* about Rick Warren, senior pastor of the Saddleback church and author of *The Purpose Driven Life*. Warren had been impressed that it was not spiritual to be at an unhealthy weight. As a result, he started what he called the Daniel Plan, based on the first chapter of Daniel, for his church members. Now, thousands in his church are exercising and eating healthfully because Warren saw that Daniel honored God with his body.

Another example came in the form of a letter to the wife God has entrusted me with. She is a graphic designer, and the letter came from one of her clients, an entrepreneur who is developing a new product. The letter said, “I love looking at established brands that look weak in comparison to what we have! It’s thanks to your stewardship in making sure everything we do embraces the spirit and purpose of the brand.”

As I read that, it jumped out at me. Her client encapsulated the meaning of stewardship. Everything must embrace the spirit and purposes of God, and everything else must look weak in comparison. We honor God by taking care of our bodies and practicing habits that promote health, and enable us to have the energy to preach the gospel.

We honor God with integrity and honesty in the workplace that



will open the door to share Jesus. We honor God by developing a budget in our households to help manage the resources that bring food and other items to help care for the family, and also include collaborating to spreading the gospel through tithe and offerings.

We honor God by using the resources acquired, such as a house and a car to become avenues to bring others to the feet of the Savior. We honor God by caring for the family He has entrusted us—with love, compassion, and kind words that keep the family unit together because God is at the center of the home.

Upon further review, I invite you to become a steward for the Lord, and be a responsible overseer and protector of this trust that is worth caring for and preserving.

WHAT EVERY CHRISTIAN SHOULD KNOW ABOUT MONEY!

Paul and Petronella Hunt

More than in any preceding age, personal finances have become an enormous challenge. Often our closest relationships cannot escape the tensions and disputes money can bring. Debt tends to raise the level of stress between couples, experts say that this is particularly the case for women. According to *Psychology Today*, conflict over money is still the leading cause of divorce. Families are facing enormous burdens that threaten to break apart even the most committed couples. In America alone, "...more people will file for bankruptcy than will graduate from college" (Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Expenditure Survey). Sadly, even on the job we are hard-pressed to escape financial pressures—according to *USA Today*, personal finance is the number one personal stress factor in the workplace.

Thankfully, whatever your situation, status, or family structure, you can find hope and relief. Let the Bible be your instruction manual for wise money management.

These three, vital keys can move you toward financial stability. Implement the suggested challenge at the end of each key and watch the tension and crises in your finances fade.

Key 1: Save!

"Go to the ant, O sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise" (Proverbs 6:6-9).

One of the most important habits we must develop is that of saving, on a regularly basis. The Bible uses the picture of the ant to illustrate this important principle. Since 2000, personal savings have fallen to -2.2 percent, the lowest in 60 years. This means that not only are many Americans failing to save but they are accumulating debt. Currently, around 78 million Americans have no savings at all.

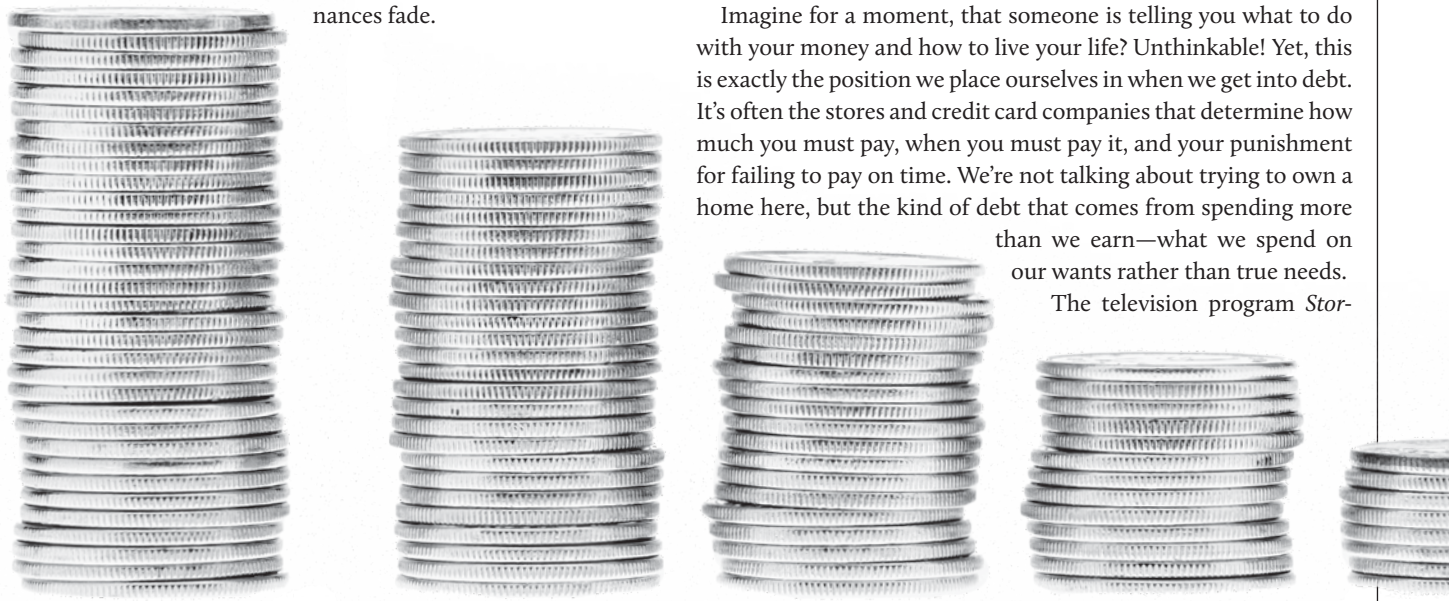
Challenge: Save something every pay period. Someone who is faithful in saving every month, no matter how small, over time, will build wealth. Read Proverbs 28:20.

Key 2: Debt—Get Out and Stay Out!

"The rich rules over the poor, and the borrower is the slave of the lender" (Proverbs 22:7).

Imagine for a moment, that someone is telling you what to do with your money and how to live your life? Unthinkable! Yet, this is exactly the position we place ourselves in when we get into debt. It's often the stores and credit card companies that determine how much you must pay, when you must pay it, and your punishment for failing to pay on time. We're not talking about trying to own a home here, but the kind of debt that comes from spending more than we earn—what we spend on our wants rather than true needs.

The television program *Stor-*



age Wars details the growing phenomenon of excess and consumerism that is plaguing American families. Romans 13:8 counsels us to “owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law.”

Challenge: Stop borrowing money! We can never be free from financial pressure by continuing to do the same things that got us into money trouble to begin with.

Four Practical Steps to Reduce Debt:

1. List your debts with the smallest balance first, regardless of interest rate.
2. Pay the *smallest* debts off first. Some of us will have a challenge with this approach. It may seem illogical to pay the smallest debt first, but if we’re in serious debt, it’s likely we’ve made a few bad choices or been impulsive with money. The uncomfortable truth is that our financial challenges did not come about by practicing good math or logic. We need to experience success as we work to improve our finances and change our habits. These quick wins are indispensable, helping to keep us encouraged and moving forward.
3. Clear the clutter and commit to sell anything you can live without and apply it to outstanding debts.
4. When a small debt is paid, take that payment and add it to the next debt. The extra payment will create momentum, helping to rapidly eliminate debt.

Key 3: Create a Plan.

Proverbs 21:5 tells us that, “The plans of the diligent lead surely to plenty, but those of everyone who is hasty, surely to poverty.” Managed money goes farther. People usually don’t plan to fail, they just fail to make a written plan. Having a written budget removes crisis management from your finances and can eliminate many money fights from your marriage and other close relationships.

We are told in Proverbs 27:23; “Be diligent to know the state of your flocks and attend to your herds.” We may not think of wealth in terms of flocks and herds today, but the timeless principle being taught here is to always know the state of your finances; what you own and what you owe.

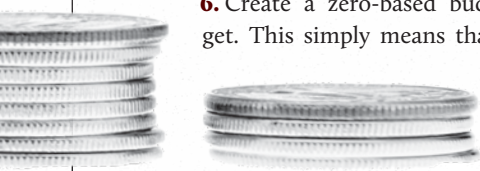
Challenge:

5. Once you have listed all your debts, diligently list all your income.
6. Create a zero-based budget. This simply means that

you must allocate *all* your money on paper until nothing is left over. Spend all your money *first* on paper. Decide where every penny should go, and include not just bills and expenses but save something too. (Suggested Resource: <http://lifelinefinancialcounseling.com/pdf/lfc-quickie-budget.pdf>).

7. Stop impulsive shopping—plan the use of your money.
8. Don’t write post-dated, hot, or even slightly, “warm” checks.
9. Commit to spend only what you have. Usually, 40 percent of families overspend every month, (Christian Financial Concepts).

The road to better finances is not easy. It takes determination, commitment, and prayer. God wants us to be free from the pressure that money challenges can bring. It’s important to keep the lines of communication open with your spouse. Remember to set aside regular time to discuss your financial goals and follow the biblical principles of financial freedom. If necessary, seek professional, Christian financial counseling. Above all, remember that even in our finances, God “will never leave or forsake us” (Hebrews 13:5,6).



THE MIRACLE OF TITHES AND OFFERINGS

Harvey J. Byram, director of planned giving, Southwestern Adventist University

Where do my love offerings and tithe go? Are they used properly? Giving support to the work of the church to spread the gospel is one of the tremendous blessings God has allowed us to share. “Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you” (Luke 6:38). When we give to the Lord’s church, a miracle takes place.

As faithful managers, it is natural for members to question, at times, “Is my gift being used wisely?” Before we church members ask this question, we must analyze our own management of God’s

the vessel was being filled, it was packed tight and running over. It would have been unthinkable for an Israelite family to enter the temple without bringing their love offerings. The question each family member must ask is, “Have my gifts been pressed down and packed tight until running over?”

After carefully analyzing our own giving, we may then ask the question, “How are my gifts being used?” For 18 years I worked as an academy principal, teacher, and business manager, and was asked on a number of occasions how we were using our money. I always welcomed these questions. When people discovered what we were really doing, they simply shook their heads and as one parent said, “I never knew so much could be done by so few with so little.”

U.S. Government statistics show that 97 percent of

Miracle Growth

Let us compare our official church organization in 1863 with today.

	1863	Today
Membership	3,500	16,923,239
Churches	125	70,188
Tithe	\$8,000	\$2.9 B
Assets	\$30,712	\$26.1 B
Schools	0	5,816
Students	0	1,659,892
Employees	30	220,760

Any discerning observer of these growth facts would have to conclude that the Seventh-day Adventist church has been tremendously blessed and divinely guided. The gospel is truly being proclaimed around the world and Jesus will soon come. The statistical data is based on the 148th statistical report of the General Conference.

possessions that He has entrusted to us. When we give our tithes and offerings to support the various programs of the local church, conference, or union, do we do so with a feeling of gratitude or servitude?

As we analyze Luke 6:38, we find that the children of Israel brought their love offerings to the temple in the form of agricultural products. These offerings were for the support and maintenance of the priests and temple. This produce was not just poured into a container until full, but by packing and pressing down as

Seventh-day Adventist Church Operations Worldwide

Food Industries/plants	20
Publishing Houses	62
Nursing Homes	168
Medical Clinics	216
Hospitals	173
Elementary Schools	5,816
Academies	1,823
Colleges and Universities	111

The church’s largest operation is the worldwide educational program. As of 2010, there were 1,659,892 students enrolled in Adventist schools, and 86,151 teachers were employed. As members of the Southwestern Union, we can be proud of our elementary and secondary schools. However, we do not stop with the senior year of high school. Our conferences and union provide Southwestern Adventist University for students to continue higher education in the areas of ministerial, educational, business, science, and a host of other majors.

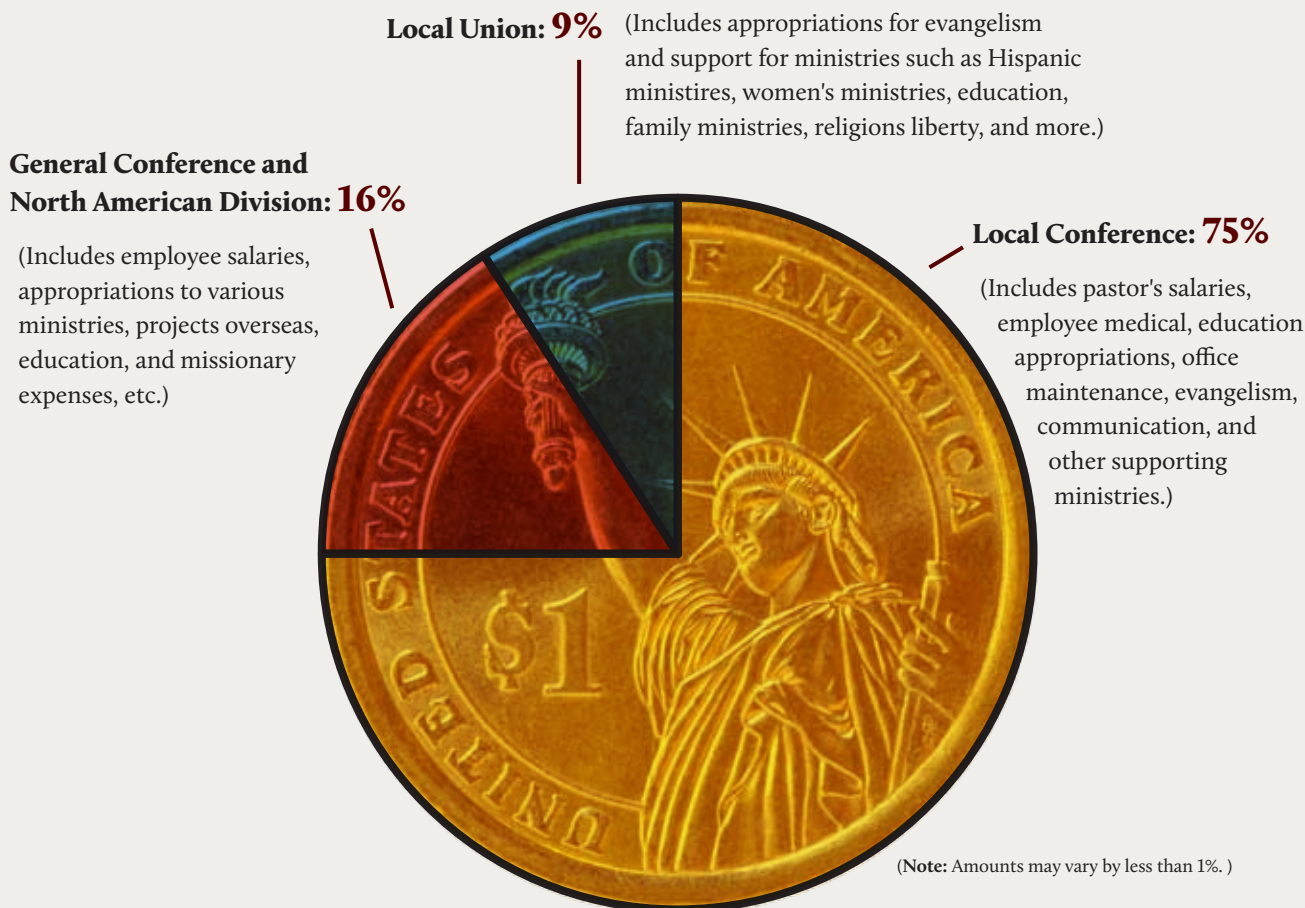
all money collected by Protestant churches remains in the local church, and only three percent is actually reaching out to help people. The same study found that 90 percent of all gifts to the church came from people over 55 years of age. One can only speculate as to what will happen to the Christian church in North America as the population continues to age. We can be so thankful that the Seventh-day Adventist Church has adopted the biblical tithing system and liberal love offerings.

The church is constantly monitoring and evaluating the use of the Lord's resources that He has given it to manage. Sometimes members have suggested that the tithes and offerings are not used as they think they should be. They then begin to support some other organization. No one ever preached to a more corrupt church than did Jesus during His earthly ministry. Yet, Jesus admonished the people to return an honest tithe and a liberal love offering for the support of the temple operation. We do not know

how the widow's coin was used. But Jesus watched her give it, and her offering became the most proclaimed gift ever given. Jesus looked at her motive, not at how her gift would be used by the selfish priests of His day.

Are our tithes and offerings being spent wisely? The answer is absolutely "Yes." However, if mistakes are made, let us remember that God is still in control. My greatest concern in examining my own life is the question, "Are my tithes honest and my love offerings thoroughly pressed down and packed to overflowing?" Our Saviour asked for our time, talent, energy, and possessions. When the books of heaven are opened, what we gave while on this earth will be revealed. "I was shown that the Recording Angel makes a faithful record of every offering dedicated to the Lord" (*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 518). May God continue to bless every church member and our official leadership as we pray and work together to hasten Jesus' soon coming.

Conference Use of Tithe



The local conference sends 25% to the union, division, and the General Conference. It is estimated that the 2013 tithe worldwide will be \$3 billion, an astonishing amount when compared to the 1863 tithe of \$8,000. Even the most adamant skeptic would have to say the church is divinely guided. Our church membership is now 17 million with approximately 15.5 million outside the United States.

STEWARDSHIP JACK TEACHES KIDS IMPORTANT LESSONS

Janice Mathews

What do you have in your hand? All Moses had in his hand was a rod, but with that rod and with God's power, Moses did remarkable things. God doesn't call us all to do *remarkable* things, but He calls us to be good stewards of what He has given us.

I discovered that what I had in my hand was a cuddly black puppy, a camera, and some rhymes. I soon became engaged in an ongoing, practical lesson on stewardship, and my dog, Jack, became Stewardship Jack.

Stewardship is realizing that God owns everything and He asks us, as His stewards, to take care of the resources He has entrusted to us. The consciousness that we are actually managing the assets of almighty God will have a profound impact on what we do with our lives. The effects of good stewardship will have a positive ripple effect on our families, churches, and communities, and we will, in the process, find ourselves funding the mission to finish God's work in this weary planet.

So, what does this have to do with a goldendoodle dog named Jack?

It all started on a ranch in Oklahoma, where a little black goldendoodle was born. He was the last of his litter. No one wanted him—at least not until I saw his adorable puppy picture on the Internet. I named him Jack just from looking at his photograph and immediately made plans to get him. He rode on my lap all the way from Oklahoma to where I lived in Fort Worth. Jack became not only a great pet, but a working dog.

This puppy has a propensity for posing, which led to funny photos, rhymes, and online photo books. When the importance of stewardship dawned on me, it occurred to me that this affectionate pooch could go to work attracting children and their young parents to topics on stewardship that would be a blessing to them.

So on came the hats, the rhymes, and lots and lots of poor photos—followed by photography lessons. Then, even more photos, and finally, a series of books designed to show, in a biblical, non-threatening, and whimsical manner, the benefits of stewardship.



In the first book, *Jack Gives Back*, tithing is introduced in a simple and biblical context for young children. *Jack and the 10 Rules*,

teaches that a faithful steward loves and obeys the Master. In *Jack's Hats*, Jack models various hats to discover that everyone has different talents and that

each should happily use that gift for the Master. These books are the beginning of a series of resources for children that I believe can aid parents and teachers of young children to incorporate the principles of stewardship in their lives.

The stewardship principles of tithing and giving that were common and accepted when I was a child are not as accepted now. Indifference or disagreement with the concept that

there is absolute truth has emerged. The very reason for the existence of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is to proclaim and acknowledge God as the Creator and the Truth, which in turn engenders a sense of responsibility, which is uncomfortable to a heart untouched by God's grace. I hope that the Stewardship Jack series can reintroduce the blessing of stewardship, and that we can work together and fund the mission to finish the work.



*You have been a good steward
throughout your life...*



What next?

*Please remember your church
in your estate plan.*

Arkansas-Louisiana Conference, Ken Simpson,
318.631.6240

Oklahoma Conference, Vialo Weis, 405.721.6110

Southwest Region Conference, Joe Ellis,
214.943.4491

Texas Conference, Lynette Ecord, 800.847.2792
www.texasconferencelegacy.org

Texico Conference, Sean Robinson, 800.759.7851

Southwestern Adventist University, Harvey Byram,
817.433.2240, www.swau.edu

SOUTHWESTERN UNION WELCOMES MINNER LABRADOR

Pat Humphrey, editor



The Southwestern Union is delighted to welcome Minner Labrador to the union office family. Joining us from the Carolina Conference, where he served as director of men's ministries, Labrador will serve the union as director of church ministries, which includes stewardship, Sabbath School, and men's ministries. "I'm humbled with this opportunity that God has afforded me to serve in this wonderful capacity," he says. In his primary role as church ministries director, Labrador will work with union leaders, conference presidents, and conference directors to provide and coordinate training venues for the frontline leaders and pastors around the Southwestern Union. "Over the next few years I also hope to accumulate excellent and bountiful resources for these faithful leaders," he adds.

As director of stewardship, Labrador's goal is to help others to understand God's plan for our finances. "We are already working

The Southwestern Union welcomes Minner Labrador, joining us from the Carolina Conference where he served as men's ministries director. Minner will serve as director of church ministries, stewardship, Sabbath School, and men's ministries for the Southwestern Union.



to prepare videos and training material on stewardship. We will interview well-known authors and speakers to provide multiple resources.”

Labrador’s philosophy of ministry embodies the concept of discipleship, and Sabbath School and men’s ministries provide the perfect context for both. “Sabbath School is the best place for discipleship and equipping the body of Christ,” he says. “I believe this is our best venue for continuous evangelism.” Through men’s ministries he hopes to enable men to effectively lead their families through knowledge of the Word of God.

Another area of Labrador’s responsibility will be to plan and direct the Southwestern Union ministries conventions. Off to a quick start, he has already begun making plans for the upcoming ministries convention in 2014 in Frisco, Texas.

How fitting that Minner Labrador would arrive just in time to be introduced in the stewardship issue of the *Record*, a theme that was chosen many months ago. With that in mind, I asked him to share a few thoughts on what stewardship means to him. Here is what he had to say:

“Stewardship has always been one of my favorite areas of study. Over the years I have seen how the biblical principles of stewardship have saved and strengthened marriages, families, and churches. Another word for steward is administrator. This is one who manages the property and assets of another.

“Stewardship affects every part of our lives. It is the administration of that which the Lord entrusts to us. Consider your life. Our very breath belongs to God. Psalm 24:1 tells us that when we die, even our breath goes back to God who gave it. In other words, even our breath is on loan from Him. Therefore, we are

going to be held accountable for our use of time.

“The Bible says that it all belongs to God. Yes, even your money and properties are His. We return the tithe, which He calls for, but the 90 percent is also His. The Bible tells us how do to manage our finances God’s way.

“Consider the fact that the Bible mentions 500 verses on prayer and fewer than 500 on faith, yet there are over 2,350 verses that deal with money. Sixteen of the 38 parables of Christ dealt with money. Christ spoke about finances and money more than about heaven and earth combined. God has outlined principles in Scripture that will help us to be successful when the stock market is up or down. We need not be victims to these financial fears.

“Learning these Bible principles has freed me from many burdens that I once carried. Wherever I teach these principles to God’s people and they practice what they hear, they prosper. When members prosper, the church prospers.

“Most importantly, stewardship to me is an act of worship. When I follow the biblical principles and God prospers me, I enjoy bringing my special gift to church as an offering to the Lord. In worship I present my life and my treasures, in holiness and gratitude I place it at the altar.”

Labrador says that his greatest joy is the time he spends with his wife, Evelyn, and his grown sons, Minner III and Mario. We look forward to the rich blessings he will bring, not only to our office, but to the entire Southwestern Union field. “We welcome Minner and Evelyn to the Southwestern Union. Please pray that God will bless their ministry here,” says Larry Moore, president.

Taking Care of Missy



When I was just a little boy, my dad entrusted the care of our family dog to my brother and me. We were to make certain that Missy was fed each day, and that fresh water was put in her water bowl daily. We were to keep the doghouse clean and to make certain that everything that pertained to the care of that canine was just what would be in her best interest. I didn't realize it at the time, but I had actually become a "steward" of the family dog. My "stewardship" would determine not only how well our pet would fare, but also whether I could be entrusted with additional responsibility. This was a part of my initial experience in stewardship.

To discover the foundations of man's stewardship, we have to go all the way back to the creation of this earth. At the conclusion of God's creative activity on the sixth

day, He entrusted to man the responsibility and care of all that He had created. Referring to Genesis 1:26, the psalmist says, "You put us in charge of everything you made, giving us authority over all things" (Psalm 8:6 NLT). What my Dad did in a personal way with me, God did on a universal scale with Adam and Eve. They were given the responsibility of life. That is what stewardship is all about—taking care of life and everything else that came from the hand of the Creator.

Unfortunately, most people have a very narrow view and understanding of true stewardship. For too many, stewardship is only about money as it pertains to their returning of tithes and offerings; and while tithes and offerings make up a significant test of our stewardship, there is so much more to the whole of life for which we bear accountability. Stewardship is about re-

specting life and health, managing well my use of time, using wisely and carefully my God-given talents and abilities, utilizing the resources of planet earth in a responsible way, and yes, taking good care of Missy.

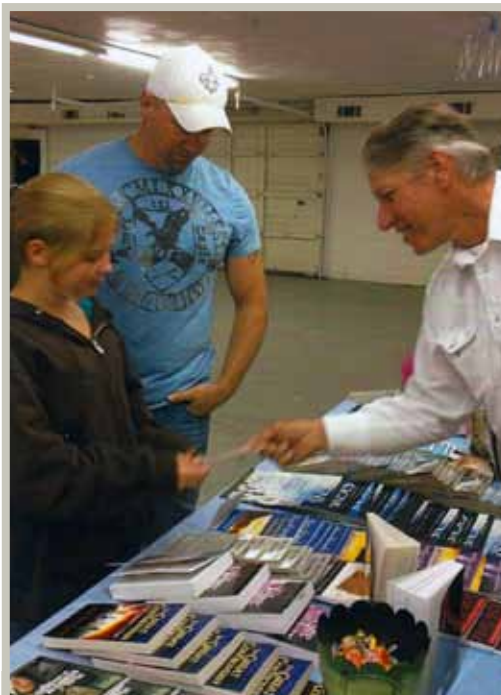
"The gold and the silver are the Lord's; and He could rain them from heaven if He chose. But instead of this He has made man His steward, entrusting him with means, not to be hoarded, but to be used in benefiting others. He thus makes man the medium through which to distribute His blessings on earth" (*Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 15). As God has made me His steward, how can I be anything but faithful to His trust?

Steve Orian, president

ARKANSAS-LOUISIANA CONFERENCE

Fall Fair Booth Outreach

LEESVILLE, LA. » The Marthaville church recently sponsored a booth at the Fall Fair in Leesville. The church has participated for many years, and the church members were able to visit with people from years past who had received a blessing from the literature. They always seem excited to see the church participate again. Reaching people with God's Word fills one's heart with joy. Carol Roshong assisted everyday. Cherri Peavy worked the booth part time, and Karl Hocke worked the weekend. The church members were so grateful that they were able to be a part of the outreach, and for all those who donated the literature and books.



A Marthaville church member hands out literature at the Fall Fair in Leesville, Louisiana.

Pauline Keohokapu

"God Is Our Refuge" Ps.46:1

Weekend Retreat... March 1, 2, 3, 2013

For MEN and WOMEN! (separate meetings)
Take a journey with Marquita and David Klinedinst as they expound upon God's Word and the meaning of Him being our Refuge.

Have you ever gone through a time where you had more questions than answers? We all long for safety and security.... Is it possible? The answer is yes. No matter what you have faced, are facing now, or face in the future, **God is there.**



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Ask for "God Knows Your Name Retreat" for the discount. Go to www.godknowsyourname.org for Registration and additional information.

Health Presentations at the Lafayette Church

LAFAYETTE, LA. » Last fall, the Lafayette church was pleased to have Miguel Fresse, a doctor of naturopathic medicine, spend a week presenting a series of health presentations. He shared tips on how to make simple changes to our lifestyles to help our bodies heal themselves. The church was full for each of the ten presentations.

During the week, Fresse offered a free live-blood analysis to those attending the presentations. With just a finger poke and a look in the microscope, he was able to see red and white blood cells, bacteria, candida, and the overall general health of each person's blood. The microscope was hooked up to a monitor so each person could see exactly what was being explained to him or her.

Because of the information presented and the visual image of impurities and other problems visible under the microscope, many members have begun to make changes in their daily menu and are on a road to better health. One of the things Fresse recommended for nearly everyone

was probiotics. These can be purchased in capsule form, but a much cheaper way to obtain them is through homemade yogurt.

Elizabeth Fresse, wife of the church's pastor, Juan Fresse, has done several follow-up cooking presentations to assist members in finding healthier options that are both tasty and easy to prepare. Of course, everyone enjoyed getting to taste the food after each presentation, and several people have added some of these recipes to their regular menus. Elizabeth did some research and made some soy yogurt, which was well-liked and not too hard to make. More cooking presentations are planned for the future, since good health is a long road with continual room for improvement.

Elizabeth Fresse



To follow up the health presentations at the church, cooking classes were held where homemade yogurt was made.

Slidell Church Prophecy Seminar Brings New Members

SLIDELL, LA. » The Slidell church recently held a prophecy seminar with Tommy Blount as the guest evangelist. Although Hurricane Isaac swept through southeast Louisiana earlier that week, the Slidell church started the seminar as scheduled on Friday evening with a small group of members and visitors. Each night the attendance grew a little more. Blount taught the Word of God and explained prophecy truths using the Bible as his guide.

Each evening, a drawing was held,

and Amazing Facts booklets, musical CDs, Prophecy Seminar DVDs, inspirational books and Bible concordances were given to those who attended faithfully each

night. The final seminar session was on Sabbath morning with a baptism service and a fellowship meal afterwards. Blount's seminar brought the Slidell church nine

new members and two re-baptized members. Another member joined by profession of faith. It is such a blessing to welcome new members as they make their decision to follow Christ.

Vernella Rogers



New members Chandler and Brandon Acosta, Tony Anderson, Dylan and Cole Deroam, Fidelia Estrada and daughter, Jennifer Navarro, Patty Hall, Kody Kingston, Kim Acosta, Danny Hermann, and Sylvia Rodriguez.

Miracles from a Prison

ANGOLA, LA. » I was raised to know God and to study His scripture. My family surrounded me, and as a church-going and law-abiding person, I felt that all was well and I was strong enough in God to face any obstacle. I was wrong. Unfortunately I was more arrogant than humble.

In April of 1995, my younger brother was murdered—just around the corner from where I stood. I felt that I should have been there protecting him. I blamed myself and then I became obsessed with hating God. I began to participate in criminal activity, trying to hurt God, or at least hurt His creation. My actions only brought more hurt and pain to those I loved. Eventually, I found myself incarcerated. I lost all sense of emotions and became like a stone.

Things did not get better upon my release, they seemed to get worse. One day my mother spoke to me. “I want my son back,” she said. Whether she was talking to me or God didn’t matter. Those words burned into my soul and I felt a longing to be a son again. I no longer wanted to hurt anybody, but I did not know how to get

back. I decided to use my college skills and start a business. The business prospered and grew, but there was still a struggle within me and ever so often there were violent outbursts.

I wanted to ask God to help me, but I knew I was not living right and I was afraid that I had gone too far. After all those years of Bible study, I should have known better, but I listened to the devil telling me that I was hopeless. One day I broke down and asked God to help me, to stop me before it really was too late. Days later I was arrested. I almost laughed when they recited the charge of armed robbery; surely they had picked up the wrong guy. I was sure I would be out soon, but days turned into months and the months kept passing. The same old bitterness rose up in me full force.

During this troubled time someone reached out to me in friendship. He was a Seventh-day Adventist that visited the prison, hoping to help someone like me. I began participating in cognitive-behavioral programs. I also studied scriptures with my new friend and, although the behavior-

al programs helped me to reach out, it was God that changed my life. I am no longer bitter and sad. I am a Seventh-day Adventist, and the church leader at the prison where I’m incarcerated. I know that God will prevail on my behalf. I am working on getting my master’s degree in rehabilitative counseling. I want to be able to help others too.

The Baton Rouge church is sponsoring the spiritual recovery program that I started in prison. The goal is to assist individuals in erasing the criminal and addictive thinking that has dominated their lives and to think more positively in Christ. I believe that God will grant my wish to accomplish my educational goal and to assist in my freedom, but for now I am concerned with doing His will. I want to pass on to others the assistance and assurance that I receive, to show the love and compassion of Christ. This is my testimony and God is my life.

Demetrius Bradley, church leader, Louisiana State Prison

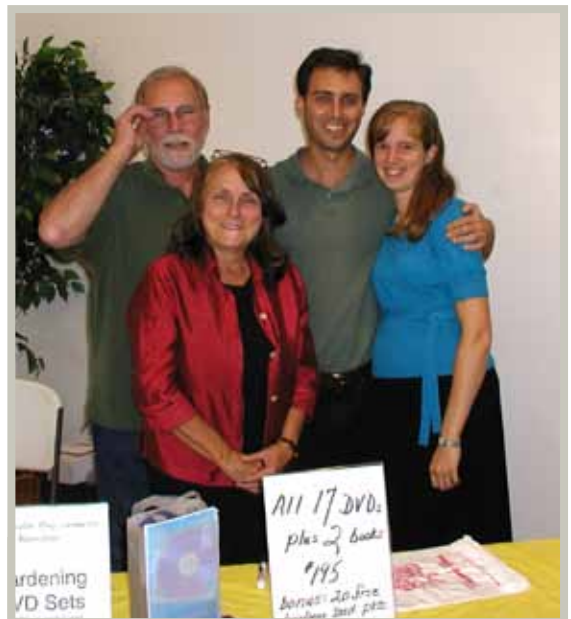
Texarkana Church Hosts Sustained Preparedness Seminar

TEXARKANA, ARK. » The Texarkana church hosted a sustainable preparedness seminar last fall presented by Mountain Media Ministries. Special emphasis was given on low-cost solutions to use during economic instability, natural disasters, and other end-time events. Craig and Nancy Meissner, along with son, Nick, and his wife, Lisa, use their knowledge from years of living off the power grid to help others learn and develop some practical aspects of setting up a homestead that will provide life’s basic necessities for a sustained time.

The seminar began on a Sabbath afternoon with a program more oriented for an Adventist audience, and then continued on Sunday with a presentation that included the whole community.

Nancy and Lisa presented live demonstrations on canning, bread making, health preparedness, and natural remedies in the kitchen area, while Craig and Nick shared what to look for in land or in building a homestead. They talked about developing independent water systems and alternative energy systems. For more information, visit their website at www.MountainMediaMinistries.org.

Loretta Johnson



Craig and Nancy Meissner, left, and Nick and Lisa Meissner, right.

The Cobbler



Change comes hard for some, and as one ages, change can be most difficult. And so it was, as the cobbler stood in his shop, looking over the many shelves lined with new shoes. He was content. He worked in the back of the shop where he repaired shoes for the families living on nearby farms. His wife and children helped manage sales of the new line of shoes. Yes, he was blessed with a family that pulled together, especially during the hard financial times they were in.

Last summer, his wife asked him to join her to hear the pastor talk about Bible prophecies of the day in which they lived. He attended. Everything the pastor said all made sense, even the Bible verses. But when the day came to take a stand for Jesus, his family all stepped forward without him. He didn't even attend the service, saying there was no way he could close his shop on Saturday, the busiest day of the week.

Now, Christmas was coming and business was very slow. People wanted their shoes repaired, but no one was buying new shoes, which was where the main source of income was generated. His wife had pleaded with him to come to church with them to see his children in the Christmas play. The cobbler hesitated. He was trying to make sense of it all.

Close the shop on Saturday? It made no sense! Pay ten percent of his income? And "thank offerings" on top of that? He thought that he should be locked up

just for thinking such irrational thoughts!

But then, his little girl came into the shop dressed as an angel and invited him to the program. His heart melted. He put up a sign in the door that read "Closed till 2:00 p.m.," and went to church. Something wonderful happened during that program, and the cobbler finally gave his heart to Jesus! The decision came at a critical time, as money was tight and business was very slow, but the cobbler made the decision to trust God and close his shop on Saturday—the very Saturday before Christmas.

The pastor assured him that God was faithful, but the cobbler was still a little concerned. That Saturday during church, it began to snow and quickly developed

into a heavy snow storm. The snow plows were working overtime trying to keep the streets cleared. That evening, the cobbler headed to the shop to see if anyone would be out shopping. Fortunately, the plows had the roads cleared and as he pulled up to his shop he heard a voice saying "Trust Me."

He entered his shop, looking at the rows and rows of shoes and trying not to think about the lack of money. Suddenly, he was filled with a deep sense of peace in his heart. The next thing he knew, he had customers wanting to purchase new shoes! And they just kept coming! He called his wife and said "Quick, get the family and get here as fast as you can. I have a feeling God

is going to keep us very busy tonight!"

The doorbell continued to jingle, and then the pastor came in. The cobbler told the pastor, "This is my miracle from God! Go help some customers!" So the pastor turned into a shoe salesman for the evening.

Late that night, as the last customers left the shop, the cobbler, his family, and the pastor stood in the middle of the shop looking around. There was not a single shoe left on the shelves.

After Christmas, other business owners in town told him that they had not a single customer on that day. They wanted the cobbler to tell them more about a God that cared so much for an old shoe cobbler that he provided a Christmas miracle, just for him!



Jack Francisco, education superintendent

The Case of the Forgotten Lasagnas!

MOORE » On the third Sabbath of each month, a team of loyal volunteers from the Moore Hope church feed hundreds of people in the downtown area. Most of the individuals being fed are homeless, some are traveling, and others are down on their luck. They do have at least one weekly constant in their lives, though—one of the area Adventist churches will supply them with good, home-cooked food.

On the third week of November, that constant was put to the test—and God delivered!

With the volunteer leader, Jennifer, on vacation, the cooking of the lasagnas fell to Jumana and Johnny. Usually, 20 lasagnas are needed to feed the crowd that gathers downtown, so Jumana cooked eight, and Jennifer sent a very detailed e-mail to Johnny, telling him that there were 12 lasagnas in the church's freezers. Yet when Johnny looked in the freezer, there were only six! He cooked the six without hesitation. Time to load up and head downtown! As he was loading the truck with cups, plates, and lasagnas, he glanced in the kitchen and saw another freezer. That's right, another freezer!

Time seemed to freeze as he crept toward the freezer. What would he find? Did he cook the right amount of lasagnas? As

the freezer door swung open—there they were! Six additional frozen lasagnas! It was time to panic! The cooked lasagnas would feed approximately 168 hungry people. Without the other six lasagnas, 72 people might not get the main course!

Church members David Jennings and Jan Wilson gave wise counsel, though. "It will work out," they said.

Setting up tables and food at the downtown site, the volunteers saw that the crowd was small, and thought that 14 lasagnas just might work. Whew! After a few minutes of setting up, though, more people arrived and the volunteers knew they were in trouble. They gathered and prayed that God knew the needs of the crowd and asked if He would make up for the missing lasagnas.

As the crowd began to go through the line, the volunteers served the normal servings of lasagna. They began keeping watch on the lasagnas. Only 48

people had been served; more than 100 were still in line, and others were still arriving. As time went by and the empty lasagna boxes began to pile up, the volunteers thought that there was no way that the food would last.

It seemed like the longest serving time we ever had, but the group members kept commenting, "God will provide," "We still have lasagnas," and "I think we will make it."

The last lasagna was opened and there were people still arriving and several that wanted second helpings. As the pieces of lasagna were being placed on plates, the volunteers thought that the people remaining in line would not get lasagna. But,



The Moore church serves meals to those in need on a regular basis. They recently saw a miracle happen when God provided just enough lasagna.



to the volunteers' unbelieving eyes, the very last person to be served took the very last piece of lasagna!

Without cutting portions, somehow God multiplied the lasagna enough to feed the crowd. Lasagna miracle or coincidence? We know what we saw. Miracles happen around us every day, and the biggest one is coming very soon!

Johnny Flores

Three Angels Church Witnesses On Busy Streets

OWASSO » The Three Angels church is always looking for new ways to witness. Recently, members Mauricio Guevara and Tonya Newton came up with an idea of something to do on Sundays. They decided that they would stand on a busy corner in

north Tulsa and pass out evangelistic literature to people in passing cars. Members Bruce Johnston and Shari Jones soon joined them. They had signs advertising spiritual books or a table for people to choose what books or magazines they would like.

When they reported their success, others volunteered to join them. Soon, there were two groups going out on Sundays. One group goes to north Tulsa, and the other group, with members Judy Oxley, and Pedro and Emily Soto, found a busy intersection in their town, Skiatook. Every book or magazine handed out has a card offering free Bible studies from the local Bible School. Bible worker John Carcano is always with one of the groups. Some of the cards have already been returned.

Other outreach activities included leaving literature in unusual places for people to find. The church members are very anxious to get this wonderful message to everyone so Jesus can come take us home soon!

Nelita Martin



Members of the Three Angels church have been handing out literature and offering Bible studies to people on busy streets.



Whole Stewardship



SOUTHWEST REGION CONFERENCE

A definition of the word “whole” is “equal to the sum of its parts.” Stewardship has parts. The parts are defined as time, talent, treasure, temple (body). We call these the “four Ts” of stewardship, and I like to add a fifth item—*influence*. When God created man and placed him in the Garden of Eden, He gifted him with the five elements in order to care for all of His creation.

When God created man, He gave him dominion over all of creation (Genesis 1:26).

Dominion here means management, not ownership. We see what the world has come to because man, a created being, has assumed that he is an owner on this earth of all things created by God’s hand.

Everything comes to us as a gift from God and He wants us to manage it to His glory. It always disturbs me when I hear individuals using the pronoun “I” prolifically in describing their work, “*I built, I made, I gave, I raised up.*” It reminds me of another creature in scripture that had “I” trouble that we read about in Isaiah 14:12-15 and Ezekiel 28:1-19.

The net effect of mankind practicing the God-driven model of stewardship is to create a relationship with our Heavenly Father. This relationship is to produce in us an unselfish character, which is the only thing that we will take from this earth to heaven.

The Spirit of Prophecy tells us that “selfishness is the root of all evil” (*Education*, p. 226). Let us each endeavor to practice the whole of biblical stewardship in order that we might make heaven our home.

Samuel Green, president

Southwestern Union Women’s Spiritual Retreat

August 2-4, 2013 in Frisco, Texas

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Find out.**

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City Temple Provides Holiday Meals for the Homebound

DALLAS » On Thanksgiving Day in November 2012, the City Temple church did its best to meet a goal of ensuring no disabled, sick, shut-in, or elderly citizen in need of a nutritious meal and human contact went hungry and or was forgotten.

Eunice Bailey, the church’s disabilities leader, partnered with other church departments—community services, health,

silver wisdom (seniors), and children’s ministries to provide a nutritious, hot, home-delivered holiday meal to suffering individuals who were unable to provide or prepare their own meals due to illness, advanced age, or disability.

City Temple’s Meals On Wheels program helps relieve isolation and loneliness for the elderly, disabled, and

homebound who are unable to provide nutritious meals for themselves. For more information, contact City Temple Disabilities and Community Services Ministries at 972.559-4572, or e-mail ct121events@gmail.com.

Lesile Smith

Hammond Church's Community Health Expo

HAMMOND, LA. » The Emmanuel church recently sponsored its first annual health expo, offering health screenings, blood pressure checks, body mass index (BMI) assessments, health/age assessments, anti-stress massages, and more. All of the church's ministry departments helped the health ministries department with the event, coming together for a day of health and fellowship.

About 45 medical and non-medical volunteers helped with the event. North Oaks Hospital personnel performed stroke risk assessments and blood pressure checks. Local podiatrists were available to discuss foot care; a local physician specializing in diabetes and obesity management was able to assess individuals who were at risk for hypertension and diabetes. Local providers performed free eye and hearing exams, and a local registered nurse was on hand to educate individuals on wound healing.

The health expo's participants were also able to obtain information from local community agencies that offered free health advice, including guidance on health insurance, organ donation, and senior services. The American Red Cross offered CPR demonstrations. A local blood mobile held a blood drive and offered free prostate anti-gen testing for males who donated.

Men were offered a "men only" session

with a local urologist; they enjoyed an open and informative discussion on prostate health. There were also presentations on mental



Many of the Hammond church members collaborated to conduct a health expo in their community.



health of the family and information on maintaining family and individual health records.

The church came together to make the event a success. Each department played a role—children's ministries put on programming for the children; the community services department and the deacons board worked diligently to beautify the church building and grounds before the expo; the hospitality department wowed the participants with homemade granola, kale salad, and mouthwatering meatless meatballs; the Hammond Knights Pathfinders empha-

challenged the participants to commit to one "NEWSTART" principle to incorporate into their lives. Many others also helped in various ways.

The church's vision is to promote optimal health in the community through health education, health screenings, and a greater knowledge of Christ through His message of healing. The church desires to be a health resource and aims to identify individuals who can benefit from improved health and an intimate knowledge of Christ.

Emilye Grant



Front row, from left: Hilda Pursley, 76, was baptized by W. J. Cleveland in 1962 in a tent effort; Irma Bates, 75, baptized under Elder C.E. Bradford in 1947; Bertha Patin, 85, baptized by W. J. Cleveland in 1959 following a tent effort; Margaret Milton, 82, baptized under J.H. Williams in 1941 in Baton Rouge; Audrey Cloud, 85, baptized at the Ephesus Church in 1962 under D.J. Williams; Doris Gilliam, 87, baptized by J.H. Williams in 1941; Bernice Johnson, 82, baptized under W.J. Cleveland in 1959 following a tent effort; Bertha Stewart, 75, baptized by W. M. Rice in 1971; Edith Johnson, 75, baptized under C. E. Bradford and W. W. Fordam in 1950.

Back row, from left: Lionel Milton, 92, husband to member Margaret Milton and although not a baptized member of Berean, is regular in attendance at all worship services; "non-senior" Robert Davis, pastor; and Sherman Stewart, 77, husband to Bertha Stewart, and like her, was baptized in 1971 under W.M. Rice.

Berean's Seniors Honored

BATON ROUGE, LA. » Together, they are 1,311 years old. The "youngsters" in the group are three 75-year-old women, and the lone "old-timer" is a 92-year-old man. Because they have

been blessed with such longevity, and because the church members wanted to recognize the contribution of the church's seniors, they honored them on a recent Sabbath. The seniors then posed with Robert Davis, pastor, for a group picture. A framed copy of the photo was later given to each senior. When asked for the "secret" of their longevity, each responded in his or her own way with "God is rewarding our faithfulness!"

Evelyn M. Edwards

Caught in the Sway

HOUSTON » In an effort to have the youth of the church more involved and prepared for their future as leaders, the Hebron church has instituted a youth Sabbath once a month. On these Sabbaths, the

youth take over every aspect of the service.

In a new twist for one service, the youth eliminated the traditional church service, and under the direction of Gabrielle and Tristan Birl, performed a play titled, "Caught in the Sway." The play depicted the life of a fictitious character named Jamal, a young man who grew up in the church, but was caught up in the sway between the world and Christ. Jamal, played by Rodney Wells, battled with the daily struggles of family, bills, depression, and his bothersome conscience. Just when Jamal decides to give everything to God and go back to church, he finds that the church

people are nothing but hypocrites. Jamal finds himself back in the world, battling between hypocrisy of the church, and the sinful, yet welcoming ways of the world.

After Jamal has a dialogue with Satan, he prays to God, confessing his sin and repents from all unrighteousness. He is given the assurance of his salvation as the youth ended the play, singing, "I won't go back, can't go back, to the way it used to be, before Your presence came and changed me."

"Caught in the Sway" was for the young and old, as well as the new in Christ, and the old in Christ. Struggling between serving God and man is something everyone deals with, and the play spoke volumes and prompted everyone to think not only about giving their struggles to God, but how we treat one another as brothers and sisters in Christ. God blessed every aspect of the day and we are looking forward to watching God use the youth again and again in a mighty way to further the gospel.

Naomi Harris

Youth at the Hebron church presented a play entitled "Caught in the Sway."



When We Give, We Live



It seems like the spirit of freely giving has significantly diminished in the church over the course of the last several years. Many do not consider returning to the Lord that which is rightfully His—an important part of our spiritual experience and development. Yet, it is clear that as we give to the Master, we live.

Someone once said, “Plenty of people are willing to give God credit, but few are willing to give Him cash!” We often measure stewardship in terms of money, yet the Bible is clear that stewardship is a holistic theme in terms of how we live our lives. Former senator and Secretary of Transportation Elizabeth Dole said, “Life is not just a few years to spend on self-indulgence and career advancement. It is a privilege and a responsibility, a stewardship to be lived according to a much higher calling!” As we live for the Master, we discover that stewardship is the proper management of one’s resources, for the glory of God. All of those divinely-given resources, life, health, meaningful relationships, time, talents, and money (1 Corinthians 10:31). “Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or what-

ever you do, do all to the glory of God!” It seems apparent that the “doing all” would encompass every aspect of our lives.

When a man or woman of God lives their life under the overriding influence of the Holy Spirit, our priorities, our health, our marriages, our family life, our business, the way we spend our time, and even our money are governed by the fundamental principle of heaven, which is that we don’t live to ourselves, but we live to honor God and to help our fellow man in any way, shape, or fashion we possibly can! Thus, stewardship is not some classroom exercise in fractions, it is a homework assignment in total living!

Christ warned us about the peril of selfishness in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. I find Ellen White’s comments in *Christ’s Object Lessons* quite soul stirring: “Like the rich man in the parable, many of us have no inclination to war against the lust of the flesh. We long to indulge appetite. We choose the atmosphere of sin. Thus, we are suddenly snatched away by death, and we go down to the grave with a character that has been formed during a lifetime of partnership with satanic agencies. In the grave, there is no power

to choose anything, be it good or evil, for in the day when a man dies, his thoughts perish. When the voice of God awakes the dead, he/she will come forth from the grave with the very same appetites and passions, the same likes and dislikes that he/she cherished while living. God works no miracle to re-create a man who refused to be re-created when he was granted every opportunity to do so.”

We are living in times and circumstances which dictate that each of us ask ourselves, What things in my life could ultimately separate me from my God and keep me out of heaven? Does the way in which I am living my life give God the glory or am I taking that glory for myself? Stewardship is simply living for the Master, without penny-pinching or short-changing the Creator, whether it be with our life, talents, or money. Therefore, when we give to the Master, we’re living for the Kingdom. And while we live for the Lord, our lives are given continuously, not as some one-time donation, but a daily offering of all we are, for His Name’s honor and glory!

Carlos J. Craig, president

Marvelous Grace

HOUSTON » The Houston Central church recently honored the senior and pioneer members of the church with a worship service themed “Marvelous Grace.” The theme demonstrated how God has moved through the lives of these members. Family Life Ministry



◀ Travis Patterson, pastor, spoke about grace as the Houston Central church honored its seniors.



honored them with a special message from General Conference President Ted Wilson, who praised them for living committed lives in service to the Lord.

He also encouraged the seniors to continue trusting in the Lord’s wis-

dom as they work together to influence and guide the younger generations. Travis Patterson, pastor, spoke about grace. He stressed how each person and family should seek God’s guidance and grace, and place Him in the center of their home.

Paul and Coni Bartholomew

Laredo Youth Host Drive-through Prayer

LAREDO » Young people from the Laredo North and Laredo South churches were recently involved in an outreach project that they called “drive-through prayer.” They divided into groups, then walked the few blocks around the church to gas stations and invited people to stop and pray or come back to the church for prayer. They also gave away copies of *El Centinela*, and

Signs of the Time. It was wonderful to see the youth praying for people, sharing magazines, and talking about Jesus and His return.

Ervin Ortiz



As an effort to reach out to the community, Laredo youth held a “drive-through prayer” project.



Scenic Hills Church Holds Prophecy Seminar

SAN ANTONIO » For five weeks last fall, Adventist World Aviation and Adventures in Prophecy united to present an astounding prophecy seminar in San Antonio at the Scenic Hills church. Led by Ric Swaningson, president of Adventist World Aviation, the meetings opened the first night with approximately 75 people. These people were interested in learning what the Bible says about prophecy and end times. For many, the things they heard over the next several weeks were entirely new to them. Even those who had former knowledge received new insights.

Several of those who attended the meetings came because they had received a flyer in the mail advertising the event. Others

had been attending the church for a period of time, and were interested in learning more.

One attendee was very impressed by God’s perfect timing in bringing him to be part of the seminar. He shared that he and his wife had started attending church at the same time that the meetings began. He had been in Afghanistan for the last couple of years and had just recently returned to the U.S. His wife was an Adventist. It was by chance that they chose the Scenic Hills church, because it wasn’t the closest one to where they live. But once they began to attend, they had to continue!

The meetings were streamed live to the local 3ABN network, where many more

people could watch in their own homes. Comments from attendees included praise for Swaningson’s use of Bible texts, and for his understanding of people in the “real” world.

Some of the interesting things that people learned from the seminar were as varied as the people who attended! When church members considered what impact the knowledge gained would have on the lives of those who attended the meetings, they felt motivated and inspired.

Marjorie Alcorn Steinger

Trini Torres Joins VGAA as Principal

In July of 2012, Trini Torres became the principal of Valley Grande Adventist Academy (VGAA). He has taught and served as an administrator in the public school system for 30 years, and now VGAA is delighted to have Torres leading the way.

Trini and his wife, Susana, are raising three boys, Josh, Andrew, and Benjamin. While Josh and Andrew have already graduated from VGAA, Benjamin is in eighth grade there.

Immediately upon college graduation from Southwestern Adventist University, Torres was employed by the Harlingen Independent School District as a middle school teacher, and maintained his position in the district for 13 years. He then began work at Cuellar Middle School in Weslaco as assistant principal. Cuellar is located directly across the street from Valley Grande Adventist Academy.

Torres says, "I used to stand outside, look across the street, and wonder what it would be like to work where my sons attend school. Could I make a positive difference?"

"Last spring, I stopped a fight at Cuellar, and really messed up my knee. Then two different pastors came to me saying the same phrase, 'Isn't it time that you allow

the Lord to use your talents by giving back and helping VGAA?' That shook me and I knew in my heart that I must take this job."

Even with 30 years of experience, Trini anxiously expected many new and different challenges at VGAA.



Trini Torres and his family. His three sons are either graduates or current students at Valley Grande Adventist Academy.

"Now I wear many more hats. I am principal, teacher, class sponsor, bus driver, landlord, mentor, counselor, human resources director, and sometimes even the janitor! Sometimes, I look back across the street, now in the opposite direction, and long for the 'fleshpots of Egypt.' But I absolutely love being at VGAA and am honored

to be serving here. I feel that way 99 percent of the time," he says with a smile.

And what has Torres concluded regarding the difference between public and Christian education?

"It is wonderful to now be able to pray with a struggling student or parent. The atmosphere is completely different. Christ is at the center of what we do here. Our Adventist beliefs set the foundation for all of our programs and decisions. The kids are much more respectful to each other and to the staff. We have had no fighting, gang activity, much less bad language, and no drugs.

"I also notice that the current students and alumni are very proud and protective of their school. It's not just a pep rally; it is a genuine love and appreciation for what they experience or have experienced here.

"Academically, I believe we meet and exceed the public school system, even with our limited resources. Not only that, they are learning about Jesus and how to prepare for the Promised Land. As an Adventist Christian parent, that is the most important priority for our children!"

JoDee Overfield



The Church Was Robbed Last Sabbath



TEXICO CONFERENCE

Early one morning, the phone rang. I picked up the phone and was surprised by the words of my friend, "One of our churches was robbed last Sabbath!" He then informed me that one of the churches in an urban area was robbed by masked gunmen just after the offering had been taken. As was the church's custom, they had taken the offering to the back of the church when the armed, masked gunmen entered the vestibule and took everything. The normal attendance of the church was 600-1,000, so a significant amount was stolen. Then it happened in another urban area of the country. Soon, armed guards had to be stationed at some of the largest churches, and procedures were recommended by North American Division leadership to guard against such occurrences.

My first reaction to this was disbelief that evil people no longer have fear or respect for God's people, places, or organizations. How could someone rob God's church? Did they have no fear of the omnipotent, omniscient, and all-powerful Creator of our uni-

verse? Robbing God—unbelievable!

My parents raised me to love and revere God, so robbing God is inconceivable to me. But the Bible records the account of thieves of a different time. Malachi, chapter three, says, "I the Lord do not change. So you, the descendants of Jacob, are not destroyed ... Will a mere mortal rob God? Yet you rob me. But you ask, 'How are we robbing you?' In tithes and offerings. You are under a curse—your whole nation—because you are robbing me. Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the Lord Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it ... Then all the nations will call you blessed, for yours will be a delightful land," says the Lord Almighty ... 'But now we call the arrogant blessed. Certainly evildoers prosper, and even when they put God to the test, they get away with it.' Then those who feared the Lord talked with each other, and the Lord listened and heard. A scroll of remembrance was writ-

ten in his presence concerning those who feared the Lord and honored his name."

The application of Malachi three is both local to the time of Israel and pointing to the end of all this—that is, our time. Yet, people still think the tithe is theirs, the offerings theirs—that they have gotten their wealth by their own hard work. My friends, everything we have is a result of God's blessing and all He asks us to do is be faithful following His instructions. What a blessing it is to give according to His plan to the church He has called to carry forth the last warning messages to the world.

You don't have to be an armed, masked man to rob God. You simply have to turn your back on Him and His church in your tithes and offerings. Don't be a God-robber, be a faithful steward and when He comes bringing His reward with Him, He will reward you according to your faithfulness, saying, "Well done good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of your Lord."

James Stevens, president

Bags of Love

LUBBOCK, TEXAS » On November 1, 2012, the Volunteer Center of Lubbock, Texas, honored 17 individuals, organizations, and businesses for outstanding volunteerism and community service. The "Individual Commitment" award was given to Cindy Meason, who volunteers with the Lubbock church's "Bags of Love" project. "Bags of Love" are handmade bags containing such items as handmade blankets, clothing, toys, books, and personal care items for children who urgently need such things. They are donated to the Lubbock and Amarillo Rainbow Rooms, which are the supply centers for case workers assigned to rescue children in need.

The Lubbock church's ministry is dedicated to making these children's lives a little brighter at their time of need. Each

bag takes approximately 13 hours to construct, fill, and deliver, and is valued at about \$35. Cindy has help from church and community friends and the money comes from donations, and at times from her own pocket. Since 2007, 526 bags have been distributed. Accepting the award, Cindy said, "When you volunteer, you get to see the power of God and the good in people."

Brian Borthwick

Cindy Meason, Lubbock church member, stands with Brian Borthwick of Sudden Communications as she receives the top "Individual Commitment Award" on November 1, 2012 from the Volunteer Center of Lubbock, Texas.



Why I Like the Seventh-day Adventist Academy of Santa Fe

SANTA FE, N. MEX. » I am one of the students at the Seventh-day Adventist Academy of Santa Fe. My name is Shantae Gallegos, and I am 12 years old and in the eighth grade. Every day, I have the privilege of learning about God and growing in my relationship with Him. Along with regular studies, we also have worship in class. At my school, I enjoy being around people of my same faith.

Being a small school of 13, I feel like the school has become a family and I enjoy being a part of it. My teacher, Cheri Jenkins, is a great role model. She is a kind and wonderful teacher. Mrs. Jenkins always points us in the right direction and wants the best for us. I know she wants all of us to be successful in life and in our studies.

Our school is going to help out a family who has just lost their home



▲ Shantae Gallegos, eighth grade student, enjoys many things about the new Adventist Academy of Santa Fe.

◀ Cheri Jenkins is a teacher at the new school.



in a fire. We plan to help them in whatever way we can, and also pray for them. We also hope to do something kind for our neighbors. By showing God's love to others, we can witness about the God we serve, which is another great aspect that our school has.

This is the first year of our school and we are holding classes in the gymnasium of the Marcy Park church. Our school will be getting portable buildings, and when that happens we will use the gymnasium for physical education class. Our school is supported by four churches in Santa Fe.

Shantae Gallegos

West Texas Evangelistic Campaign A Success

TEXICO CONFERENCE

ALBUQUERQUE, N. MEX. » Excitement spread through West Texas during September, October, and November of 2012 as 24 churches partnered with pastors, conference leaders, and union leaders in the "West Texas for Jesus" evangelistic campaign.

Larry Moore, Buford Griffith, Duane McKey and Eduardo Canales from the Southwestern Union Conference, along with Jim Stevens, Sean Robinson, and Derral Reeve from the Texico Conference, each conducted evangelistic programs.

A total of 17 more helped out the effort, including Texico pastors Erwin De Graaff, Earl Robertson, Hector Quinones, Nehemias Basit, Jose Padilla, Jaime Calvo, Fernando Villegas, Carlos Arellano, Rodel Liwanag, Leonard Cummings, Gladstone Simmons, Javier Grijalva, Chuck Workman, and Ruben Rodriguez. Evangelist

of the church during this timeframe. There is nothing more exciting in the church than the addition of new friends in the faith as their eyes have been opened to God's truth.

God performed many miracles throughout the meetings in West Texas, and for that we can't thank Him enough. We appreciate all the speakers, pastors, and churches who gave much of



▲ James Milam, district pastor, performs the baptism for Delia O'Haver at the Abilene church.

◀ Buford Griffith from the Southwestern Union Conference conducts meetings at the Lubbock church.

Far left: Earl Robertson, pastor, had the privilege of baptizing his son, Dale, at the conclusion of Jim Stevens' meetings in Abilene, Texas.



◀ Duane and Kathy McKey, from the Southwestern Union Conference, had the privilege of partnering with district pastor, Abner Razon and his wife, Nefritire, to hold meetings in the Odessa church. As a result, many made decisions to give their lives to Christ.



Richard Halversen, theology student Barry St. Claire, and guest minister Arturo Quintero also joined the cause.

As baptism reports are still coming in, more than 125 new members have joined the church as a result of these meetings with many more still preparing or being visited for future follow up. Throughout the Texico Conference, we praise God that approximately 200 have become a part

of their time, energy, and money to proclaim the good news of salvation. A big welcome goes to all those who have joined our ranks. We are so glad to have you as a part of our family.

The Texico Conference remains focused on its mission of spreading the gospel, and

longs for the day when Jesus comes in the clouds of glory to take His people home. Before that time, may we each let God use our talents to reach everyone possible for His kingdom.

James L. Stevens

Letting God Be the Steward

Alan Miller left behind a lucrative job and comfortable home to study theology at Southwestern Adventist University. It wasn't an easy transition.

"We've had to sacrifice a lot to be here," said Miller, "but I know that God sees all the sacrifices we've made. It's always hard to be in a situation of 'I don't know,' but I think God just wants us to be in a place where we put our complete trust in Him."

Miller first pursued a ministry career 12 years ago. He went through two years of Seventh-day Adventist college education, but stopped because the timing didn't feel right. "I think I still had some lessons to learn before I could be a pastor," said Miller.

Instead, Miller found a job as an airplane mechanic. Everything seemed to be going well. Miller and his wife Holly bought a home and decided to start a family.

An emergency trip to the hospital changed everything. Newborn Scarlet was having seizures and she was given a 50 percent chance to live. An MRI showed a large space of dead tissue in her brain. Even if she did survive, she would likely suffer from either a mental or physical disorder.

"That really put our lives into perspective," said Miller. "We had put the job, house, and those kind of things in front. God was on the back burner. Our daughter being sick made us realize that we needed to put God first. After all, when your child's life is in danger, nothing else really matters."

A few months into the ordeal, Miller was faced with a work dilemma. His employers wanted him to work on Sabbath. Saying no would mean losing his job. This was the turning point in his career. He chose the Sabbath over his job.

Alan Miller (center) made a pledge to let God be the steward in his life, and in doing so left a lucrative job and comfortable home to study theology at Southwestern Adventist University. He is pictured with his wife, Holly, and their two children.



Miller rededicated his future to God. If God wanted him to be a pastor, that's what he would do. He pledged to let God be the steward in his life. Miller enrolled at Southwestern and began to study theology.

Nearly a year after the dead tissue was first detected in Scarlet's brain, a check up showed that the affected area was almost healed. The brain had made completely new pathways.

"Now, there's nothing wrong with her at all," said Miller. "She's my miracle baby. She had her last assessment a couple months before we got here. The doctor said there was no reason to continue checkups or physical therapy anymore."

"I can say that it hasn't always been easy since we got here," said Miller. "Times have been rough, especially financially. Those are the times when God has really shown that He's here."

Recently, the Millers had a negative \$200 balance in the bank, and \$800 in bills that they had no idea how they would pay for. All they could do was pray about it.

On a Sabbath afternoon the doorbell suddenly rang. A woman he'd never seen before stood on his doorstep. The wom-

an said that God had impressed her to give Miller the gift. Handing him an envelope, she left.

The envelope had 1 Corinthians 9 written on it, along with a few verses on the back. They spoke about stewardship, highlighting God's promise that He will provide for you if you're doing what He asks. Inside the envelope was \$1,000.

"I think that was the biggest moment for us—when God just winked and let us know He was there," said Miller. "Before, I wouldn't have put much thought into stewardship. Now it definitely has taken on a personal meaning in the lives of my family and me."

In dedicating his life to God, Miller learned an important lesson. Life wasn't magically easier. But he never doubts that God will take care of them.

Makala Coleman, sophomore journalism major



Classified Ads

REAL ESTATE/HOUSING

Summit Ridge Retirement Village is an Adventist community in a rural setting but close to Oklahoma City medical facilities and shopping. Made up of mostly individual homes, the village has fellowship you'll enjoy. An on-site church, assisted living, nursing home and transportation are available as needed. Web site: <http://www.summitridgevillage.org>, or call Bill Norman at 405.208.1289.

EMPLOYMENT

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

Adventist Health System is seeking a law student for a 6 to

8-week summer clerkship in 2013. This position is limited to students who have finished only one year of law school. Ideal candidates would be in the top 25% of their class. Duties include legal research and other projects. Please send resume and transcript to david.gordon@ahss.org.

Seventh-day Adventist Guam Clinic is seeking individuals in Internal Medicine, Family Medicine, Orthopedic Surgeon, Nurse Practitioner, Rheumatologist, Dermatologists, Pediatricians, Hospitalist, Physician Assistant, Physical Therapist, OB/GYNs, Urologist, Surgeons, Cardiologist, Dental Director and Professional Recruiter. Call to learn about the benefits and opportunities at 671.646.8881, ext. 102, e-mail hr@guamsda.com, or visit www.adventistclinic.com.

Walla Walla University seeks applicants for a full-time faculty position focusing on Medical-Surgical Nursing on the Portland,

Oregon campus to begin in September 2013. For more information and to apply, please visit <http://jobs.wallawalla.edu>.

Walla Walla University seeks applicants for a full-time faculty position as dean of the School of Education & Psychology to begin in July 2013. For more information and to apply, please visit <http://jobs.wallawalla.edu>.

MISCELLANEOUS

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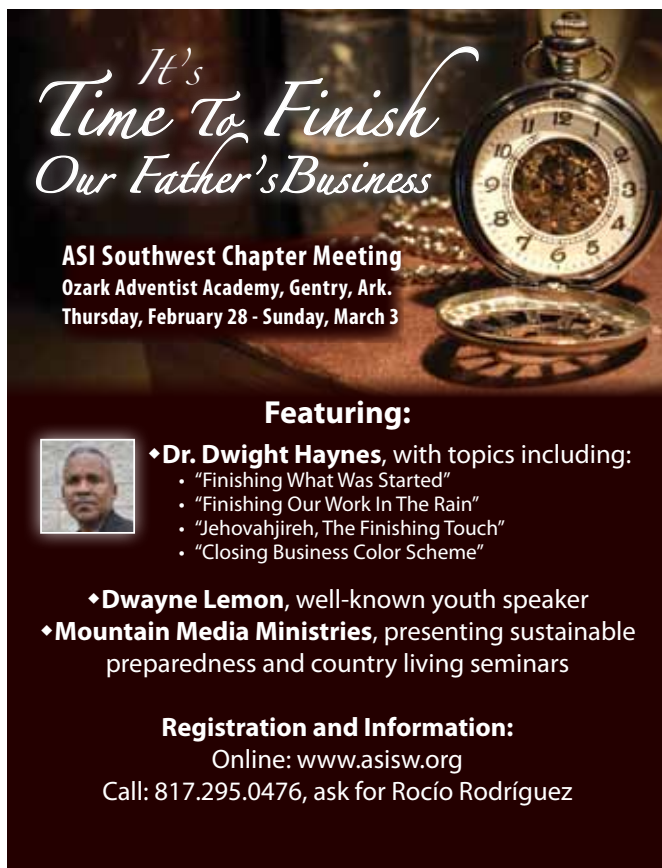
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It's Time To Finish Our Father's Business

ASI Southwest Chapter Meeting
Ozark Adventist Academy, Gentry, Ark.
Thursday, February 28 - Sunday, March 3

Featuring:

- ♦ **Dr. Dwight Haynes**, with topics including:
 - "Finishing What Was Started"
 - "Finishing Our Work In The Rain"
 - "Jehovahjireh, The Finishing Touch"
 - "Closing Business Color Scheme"
- ♦ **Dwayne Lemon**, well-known youth speaker
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Obituaries

ABSTON, Veda, born September 4, 1926 in Hitchcock, Okla., and died November 23, 2012 in Harrah, Okla. She was a member of the Summit Ridge church. Veda worked in Oklahoma City at Kaiser's Ice Cream store. She also worked as a PBS operator and as a secretary for a day care. She and her husband, Elbert, moved to Summit Ridge Retirement Village in 1990. She was preceded in death by her husband in 1992. Survivors: daughter and son-in-law, Donita and Phil Lawless, of Harrah; son and daughter-in-law, Phil and Donna Abston of Okla.; three grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren.

BERMAN, Maeola, born May 15, 1921 in Golden, Tex., and died October 4, 2012 in Harrah, Okla. She was a

member of the Summit Ridge church. Maeola was a nurse who blessed the lives of many people during her nursing career. Survivors: son and daughter-in-law, Wayne and Ellene, of Harrah, Okla.; and several nieces and nephews.

COLLINS, Bette, born May 4, 1929 in Aurelius Center, Mich., and died October 3, 2012 in Keene, Tex. She was a member of the Joshua church. She was preceded in death by one grandson, Marc Simpson. Survivors: husband, Theron Collins of Keene; sister, Donna Wade, of Eaton Rapids, Mich.; son and daughter-in-law Clark and Karen Collins, of Haslett, Mich.; daughter and son-in-law, Chris and Ken Simpson, of Keithville, La.; daughter, Teresa Collins, of Keene; five grandchildren, and five great-grandchildren.

PAGE, Mary L., born March 15, 1933 in Memphis, Tenn., and died December 14, 2012 in Little Rock, Ark. She was a member of the Little Rock church. Mary was a happy, committed Christian, and was a life-long member of the Little Rock church. She was always on the watch for visitors, and welcomed members each Sabbath morning. She was married to Wilbur Page for 52 years. She was preceded in death by her son, Gary Joe Adams. Survivors: husband, Wilbur Page, of Little Rock; daughter, Lisa Hirsch, of Little Rock; a daughter and son-in-law, Deborah and Jim Borg, of Little Rock; brother and sister-in-law, Clyde and Sue McCulley; and four grandchildren.

SHANNON, Douglas Wayne, born August 12, 1959 in Big Springs, Tex., and died Octo-

ber 28, 2012 in North Little Rock, Ark. He was a member of the Sherwood church. Survivors: wife, Nancy Shannon, of North Little Rock; two daughters, Patricia Shannon, of North Little Rock, and Jessica Shannon; step-son, Anthony Pye, of North Little Rock; two step-daughters, Amber Pye and Courtney Pye, of North Little Rock; and five grandchildren.

TRUITT, Denzil J., born September 8, 1915 in Hill County, Tex., and died October 10, 2012 in Kerrville, Tex. He practiced family medicine for more than 40 years, primarily at Petersburg, Menard, and Ingram, Texas. He was noted for his gentle Christian manner and willingness to care for all regardless of their ability to pay for services. He was an active leader in the Lubbock, Menard, and

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Kerrville churches. His wife, Lola, preceded him in death in 1996. Survivors: wife, Silvia, of Kerrville; daughter and son-in-law Carolyn and Wayne Longhofer, of Kerrville; daughter and son-in-law Loretta and Larry Hugues, of Ketchum, Okla.; son and daughter-in-law Dr. Norman and Kristen Truitt, of Kerrville; brother, Donald Truitt, of Bryan, Tex.; brother, Travis Truitt, of Sebastian, Tex.; sister, Veda Carpenter, of Weatherford, Tex.; seven grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren.

WOLCOTT, Maxine L. Lambeth, born June 28, 1923 in DeQueen, Arkansas, and died November 15, 2012 in Grandview, Texas. She was a well-loved, lifetime member of the DeQueen church. She was always full of life and enjoyed playing pranks and having fun. She worked at a nursing home in the laundry department for many years, and she loved to have church members and friends over to her home for homemade lemonade and popcorn. She loved the Lord and desired that all her family and friends rejoice in the return of Jesus. She was preceded in death by her husband, Floyd Wolcott; two daughters, Marcie Davis and Lavonne Hagood; her parents; two brothers, Robert and Raymond Lambeth; and her sister, Lois Cook. Survivors: daughter, Gail Davis, of Keene, Tex.; daughter, Wanda Faye, and husband, Dwight Blackwell, of Grandview, Tex.; a son, Leonard Wolcott, and wife Cathy, of North Pole, Alaska; son, Hershall Wolcott, and wife, Donna, of DeQueen.; a son, Wayne Wolcott, and wife, Carrie, of Keene; 16 grandchildren, 18 great grandchildren, and two great-great-grandchildren.

Announcements

Union College Homecoming April 4-7, 2013. Alumni, friends, and former faculty are invited to Homecoming, April 4-7, 2013. Honor classes are 1943, 1953, 1958, 1963, 1973, 1983, 1988, 1993, and 2003. Special events for those who studied science and math—remembering the people of Jorgensen Hall. For more information, contact the alumni office at 402.486.2503, or 3800 S. 48th St, Lincoln, NE 68506, or alumni@ucollege.edu.

Washington Adventist University: You are invited to attend Washington Adventist University's Alumni Weekend, April 12-14, 2013. Visit www.wau.edu/alumni, or call 301.891.4133 for more information. We look forward to seeing you!

"Ye Olde" Cedar Lake Academy Reunion will take place June 7-9, 2013 for alumni and warmly welcomed school-mates of 1963 and earlier at Great Lakes Adventist Academy, Cedar Lake, Michigan. Honor classes: 1933, 1943, 1953, and 1963. Details will be forthcoming by postal service. Also, you may contact GLAA Alumni Office at 989.427.5181, or visit <http://www.glaa.net/> for further information. Please pass the good word.

Christian Record Services for the Blind Annual Offering Sabbath. Unwanted: You don't like the feeling. Neither do blind adults and children. If you miss the video April 13 at your church, find it at www.CRSBGift.org. Reach out with a tax-deductible gift to: Christian Record Services for the Blind, Box 6097, Lincoln, NE 68506.

Southwestern Adventist University's Alumni Homecoming is April 11-14, 2013 and will

be honoring years ending in 8 and 3. For the latest information, contact Bev Mendenhall, alumni director, at 817.202.6232, or e-mail her at bevm@swau.edu.

Southwestern Adventist University's A Night at the Meyerson concert is on April 7, 2013. Please visit www.swau.edu/meyerson for more information.



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SABBATH SUNSET CALENDAR						
	Feb 1	Feb 8	Feb 15	Feb 22	Mar 1	Mar 8
Abilene, TX	6:10	6:17	6:23	6:29	6:37	6:42
Albuquerque, NM	5:33	5:40	5:47	5:54	6:02	6:08
Amarillo, TX	6:14	6:21	6:28	6:35	6:43	6:49
Brownsville, TX	6:12	6:17	6:22	6:26	6:32	6:35
Dallas, TX	5:58	6:04	6:11	6:17	6:25	6:30
El Paso, TX	5:38	5:45	5:51	5:57	6:04	6:10
Fort Worth/Keene, TX	6:00	6:07	6:13	6:19	6:27	6:32
Gallup, NM	5:41	5:48	5:55	6:02	6:11	6:17
Galveston/Houston, TX	5:58	6:03	6:09	6:14	6:21	6:26
Gentry, AR	5:42	5:50	5:57	6:04	6:13	6:19
Little Rock, AR	5:36	5:43	5:50	5:57	6:05	6:11
Muskogee, OK	5:47	5:54	6:01	6:08	6:17	6:23
New Orleans, LA	5:36	5:42	5:47	5:53	5:59	6:04
Oklahoma City, OK	5:56	6:03	6:10	6:17	6:26	6:32
Roswell, NM	5:28	5:34	5:41	5:47	5:55	6:01
San Antonio, TX	6:10	6:16	6:22	6:27	6:34	6:38
Shreveport, LA	5:46	5:53	5:59	6:05	6:13	6:18
Tulsa, OK	5:49	5:56	6:03	6:10	6:19	6:26



On the Record »

BY PAT HUMPHREY » COMMUNICATION DIRECTOR, SOUTHWESTERN UNION

Give Him All You've Got **It's All His, Anyway!**

ONE DAY MY HUSBAND, ART, SHARED WITH ME HIS SURPRISE at hearing a discussion of stewardship—of all places!—on public radio. The moderators were talking about taking care of the planet and referred to that effort as stewardship. That was Art's first encounter (and mine) with a discussion of stewardship outside of a spiritual context. I can also remember my amazement a number of years ago upon hearing someone express the idea that stewardship involves more than money. What a concept!

So what is stewardship, anyway? According to Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, it is "the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one's care." For sure, good stewardship involves managing well the financial resources God has entrusted to us. But when you think about it, is money the only thing God has blessed us with? And is it the only thing we are responsible for as stewards? We don't have to think long and hard to answer those questions. What are some of the blessings that God expects us to handle carefully and responsibly? I can think of a number of things besides money, and I'm sure you can too. For starters, here are just a few: our health, our time, our talents, our children (if we are parents), our property, our relationships, and the list goes on.

According to Ellen White, "A good steward identifies himself with his master. He accepts the responsibilities of a steward, and he must act in his master's stead, doing as his master would do were he presiding. His master's interests become his. The position of a steward is one of dignity, because his master trusts him. If in any wise he acts selfishly, and turns the advantages gained by trading with his lord's goods to his own advantage, he has perverted the trust reposed in him" (*Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 246).

You have probably experienced, as I have, the disappointment of loaning a treasured possession to a trusted friend or relative, only to have it returned to you damaged or broken. Even worse, the person to whom you made the loan may have lost or carelessly discarded your belong-

ing. I imagine that when we fail to care for the gifts God entrusts to us, He must experience the same kind of hurt and disappointment that we feel when someone is reckless with our possessions.

Another concept that struck me as I read the passage above is that the steward is managing property that actually doesn't belong to him. In reality, it belongs to the master! So then, all the things that we think we own—including cars, and houses, and clothing—aren't really ours at all! I got amused when I once heard someone pray, "Lord, Your car just broke down and You need to fix it." When you think about it, that person actually got it right. When we recognize that everything is His anyway, we can trust confidently that He will provide all that we need.

I love this promise: "Honor the Lord with your possessions, and with the firstfruits of all your increase; so your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will overflow with new wine" (Proverbs 3:9, 10). Let's be faithful with all that we have and watch how God works in 2013 and beyond!

Pat Humphrey

Record

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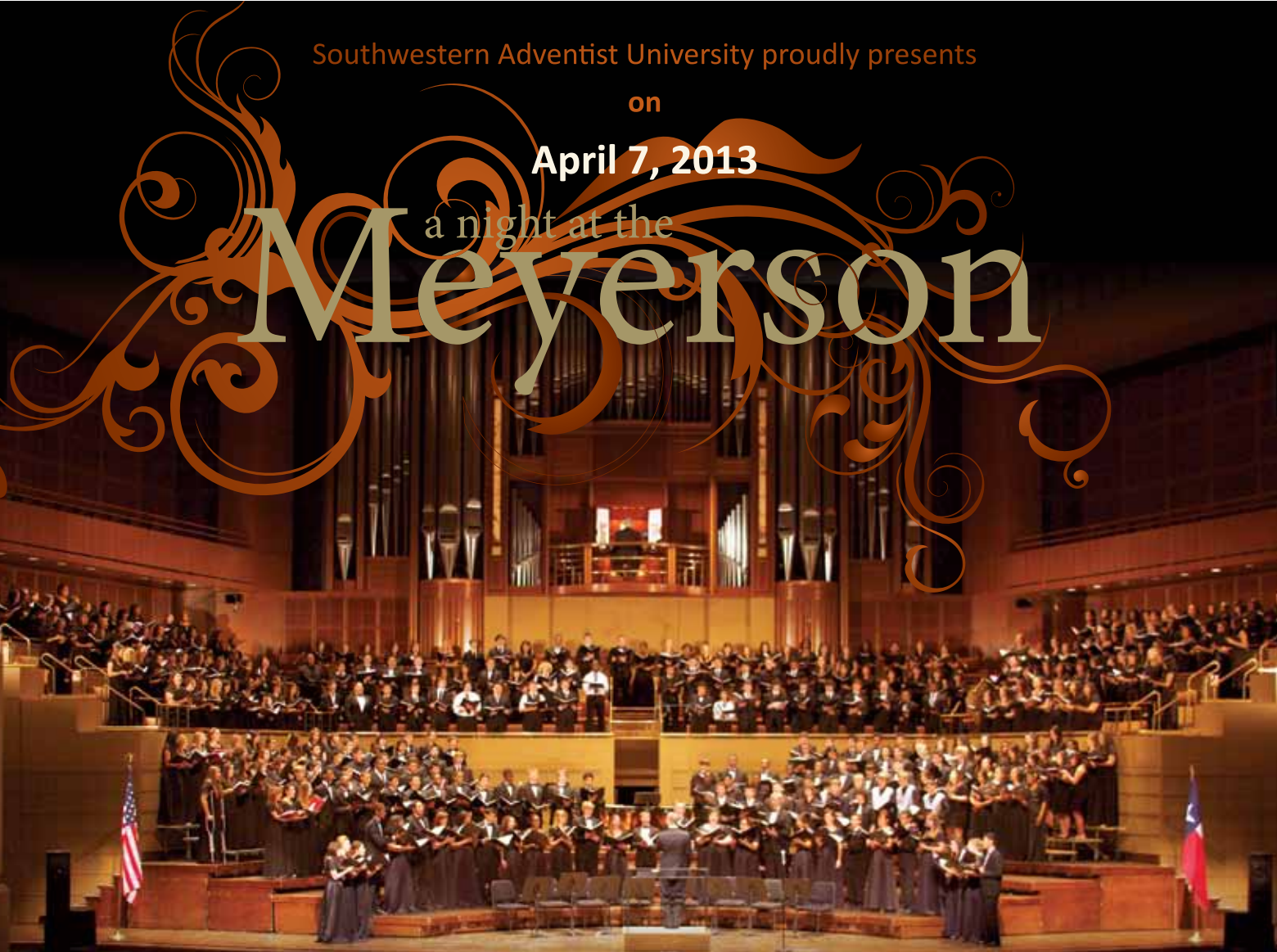
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