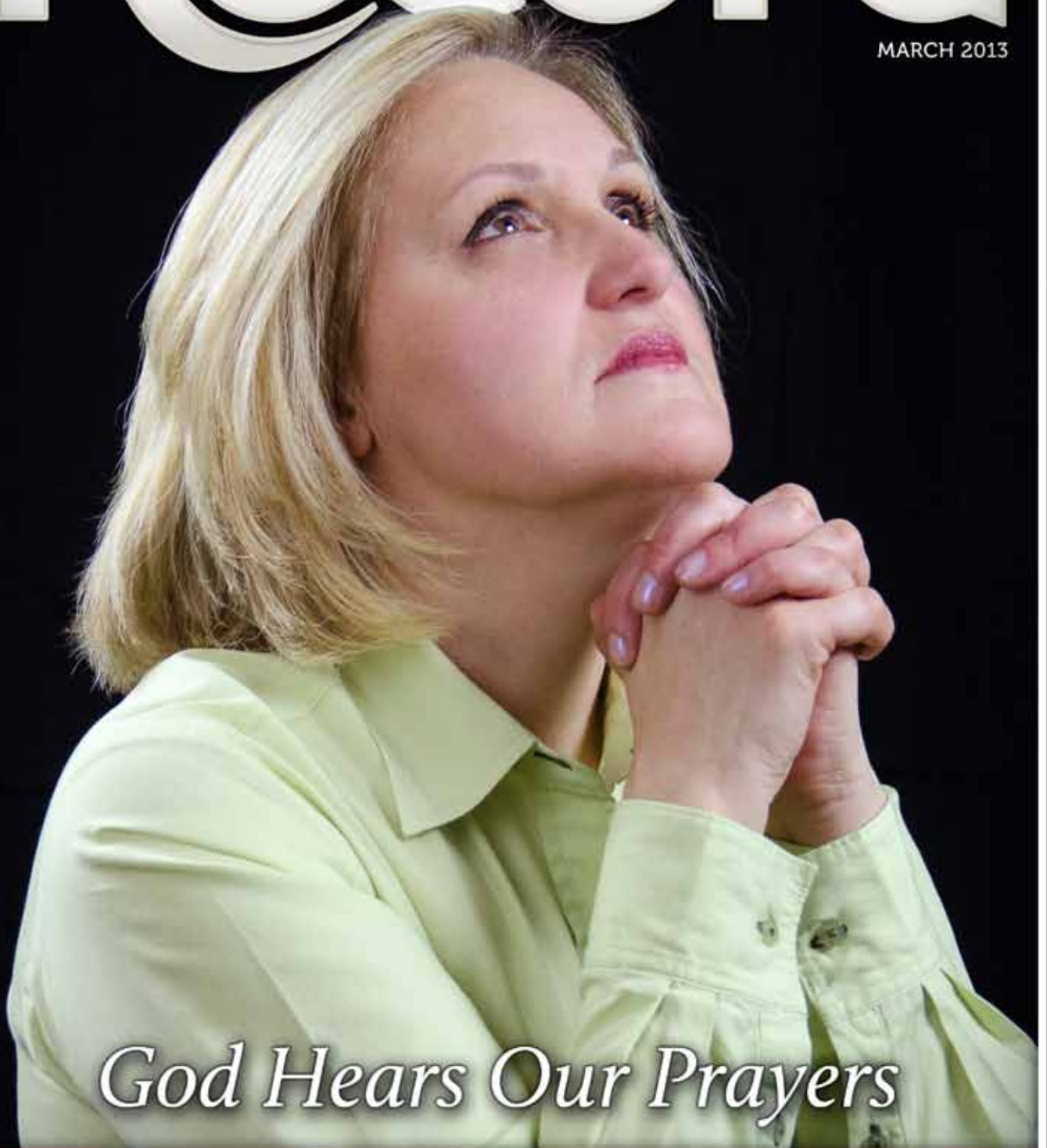


SOUTHWESTERN UNION

# Record

MARCH 2013



*God Hears Our Prayers*

EXPERIENCING THE POWER OF PRAYER



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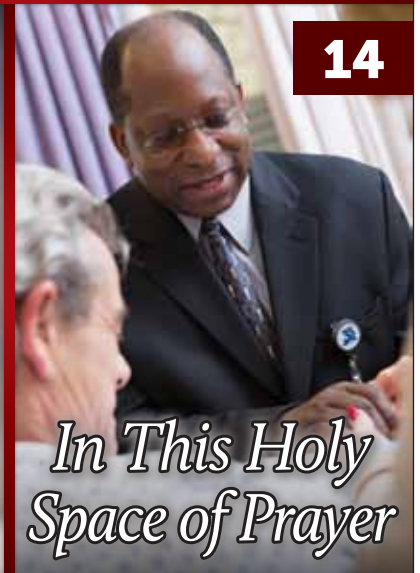
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**HOW GOD SET ME FREE**  
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**Next month's RECORD** will be our annual Summer Camp and Camp Meeting issue, including schedules and a chance to win a FREE week at camp!



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**On the Cover**

Clarice Salandini, who recently joined the Joshua Seventh-day Adventist Church, has learned through personal experience that God indeed hears our prayers. Though not every one of her prayers was answered as she had hoped, Clarice has learned to always trust the outcome to God. Read her inspiring story on page 8.

# Point of View»

BY LARRY MOORE » SOUTHWESTERN UNION CONFERENCE PRESIDENT



## Much Prayer, Much Power

**This issue of the *Record* contains helpful insights for you to consider as you think of your prayer life.** For some, these will be new thoughts and ideas. For others, it will serve only as a reminder of the privilege of prayer. I have often wondered why we do not pray more. You have heard the phrase, “much prayer, much power; little prayer, little power; no prayer, no power.” Could this be the reason we do not see God’s power at work in our lives or in the church? The Scriptures say, “Pray without ceasing” (1 Thessalonians 5:17). It appears that we must pray for spiritual survival. Add to that what Ellen White says, “Prayer is the breath of the soul,” and you have conclusive evidence of the need for prayer in the life of the Christian. If you need further convincing, read the chapter in *Steps to Christ* entitled “The Privilege of Prayer.”

I believe most of us see prayer as important, even vital, but we don’t do it because it involves time and effort. My appeal to you is “just do it.” There are no magic formulas, no right or wrong way, “just do it.” Prayer is like talking to a friend. “Just do it.”

PS: The Southwestern Union has taken a giant step forward. We have asked Pat Humphrey, our *Record* editor, to also serve as

director for Health Ministries. Pat has a keen interest in health and is anxious to encourage our members to live a more healthy life. Please pray for her and watch for a new health emphasis here in our union.

*Larry Moore*



## Stepping Stone to Success



*My history with Southwestern Adventist University goes back to 1963 when I was a new Adventist. I had just graduated from San Antonio Junior Academy, and continued my Adventist education at Southwestern Union College Academy. From there, attending Southwestern Union College was only natural. I love Southwestern and I want to see it thrive. We have great faculty and students.*

*I have asked our communication staff to work with the university to highlight the successful lives of Southwestern’s alumni and faculty to show you how God has used Southwestern to be a stepping stone to their success. Let me introduce you to Kisha Norris, currently the executive director of advancement and development at Oakwood University. – Larry Moore*

### Kisha Norris

“I went to Southwestern because it’s where God wanted me to be. I’d attended Valley Grande Adventist Academy, and had many friends go to Southwestern. I received scholarships from a few different schools in my hometown, San Antonio, but I wanted to

grow as a Christian, and God steered me to Southwestern. By the time I enrolled for the fall semester in 1998, all of my prayers had been answered on how to pay for my education. I received scholarships, two on-campus jobs (as a recruiter and in the advancement office), and had an amazing roommate. I knew Southwestern was where God wanted me.

“I graduated with a degree in biology, which I used to teach. However, my experience in fundraising at Southwestern’s advancement office would foretell my career path. I’m currently the executive director of advancement and development at Oakwood University. All of my mentors are people that I met as a student worker at Southwestern. I can honestly say that the trust and responsibility given to me as a student fundraiser has driven me to successes that I never knew imaginable. I love my career and I owe it to the advancement office staff who molded and shaped me into the fund raiser I am today.”



Kisha Norris





# CREATION Health

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

## Prayer: Perfect Rest For Your Mind, Body And Soul

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.”

~ Jesus (Matthew 11:28, NIV)

### PRAYER: WELLNESS BENEFITS

Did you know that frequent prayer, public or private, is associated with better health and emotional wellbeing?

People usually focus on the spiritual dimension of prayer, but there is a wellness component, too, because through prayer we rest in God.

Prayer decreases psychological distress. It also increases life satisfaction and creates greater happiness; it lessens our burdens. So, when worried, stressed, or under intense pressure, take time to pray.

### PRAYER: A PATHWAY TO POWER

When we pray, we intentionally connect our life to the Almighty God. Through prayer, it is our *privilege* to upload our heart to God and for God to download His heart to us. Imagine the possibilities!

Since prayer attaches our soul to the God of perfect peace, power, and joy, we may say that prayer offers perfect rest for the soul.

### PRAYER: A NEW REALITY

Prayer is a shelter, a sanctuary—a space in time—where you meet with God and He meets with you. To use another metaphor, authentic prayer creates a cosmic command center in your life for the divine-human to be unified in truth, vision, and purpose; prayer creates a new reality through a new perspective.

Prayer connects a limited human outlook with unlimited, divine potential; nothing is too difficult for God and with Him *all* things are possible.

What better way to cope with the relentless demands of daily life and rise above the tyranny of time than by plugging our heart, mind, and soul into the very heart of God through prayer?

### PRAYER: THREE RADICAL BENEFITS

Prayer is an awesome opportunity to commune with God that yields these three benefits (admittedly, there are many more than three):

**One:** Prayer creates a new relationship. Prayer is our interpersonal relationship time with God—time to connect with Him as a *Friend*. With so many religions teaching that God is a power to be appeased—and whatever you do, make sure you do not upset Him—isn't it wonderful that Jesus invites us to make our heavenly Father our Best Friend? Through prayer, you and God are Best Friends Forever.

**Two:** Prayer creates new outcomes. Because of prayer we can share with God everything that is happening in our lives—our joys, challenges, praises, and needs. Because nothing is too difficult or impossible for God, prayer creates new possibilities.

**Three:** Prayer creates a new beginning. God loves us unconditionally right now, just as we are. If God accepts us unconditionally, then we are to accept ourselves unconditionally, too. Do something for me: sometime today gaze into a mirror and say, “I accept myself unconditionally right now.”

If God doesn't beat you up, then you shouldn't either. Prayer creates a new *appreciation* deep within your heart for your very own life; this creates a new beginning.

Daily time with God through prayer is a powerful promoter of wellbeing. Time spent in honest conversation (worship) with our Best Friend, yields a whole person healing effect. Just as we receive benefits from the qualities of a good friend when we spend time with him or her, the same holds true of God.

Prayer is a direct channel with our Creator, Redeemer, and Lord, and through daily communion with Him, we are richly blessed and experience perfect rest.

*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

## God Hears Our Prayers

**OVER THE HOLIDAYS I HAD THE PRIVILEGE OF JOURNEYING TO SEATTLE, WASHINGTON, FOR GYC,** which stands for Generation of Youth for Christ, a series of meetings that have been held over the New Year holiday every year since 2002. The city was gorgeous and the weather was cold but enjoyable. We got to stay in a pleasant hotel with comfy beds, hot showers, as much ice as a person could use, and it was conveniently close to the convention center where the meetings were held. I had been to GYC the previous year, so I thought I knew what to expect, but even then the turnout was so surprising. Over 5,000 people from all over the world came together to one place because we all have one thing in common—God.

There were nineteen in the group that went from my church, and among us was Sierra Hall, a good friend of mine who used to be a member of my congregation, but a few years ago she moved to Missouri. She traveled down to Texas just so that she could go to GYC with us because it was that important to her. About a week and a half prior to the trip, she had taken a concern of hers to God. She wanted Him to take away the fact that, like most teenagers today, she worried too much about what other people think. The very first meeting we attended was the morning devotional on Sabbath, given by Wes Pepper. The exact topic she had taken to God in prayer is what Mr. Pepper was talking about that morning. He spoke about how we need to put God's opinion above all else, including our peers, friends, family, and even our spouses. When he finished she had tears in her eyes. If that wasn't a mood setter for the weekend, then I don't know what would have been. God is definitely amazing and He hears our every prayer.

On Sunday afternoon we did outreach and there were several different activities. Our group was among the incredibly large sum of people who went out knocking on people's doors and inviting

people to meetings. We went to Puyallup and the group dispersed throughout different neighborhoods. Some of the people welcomed us, while others not so much. But from the numbers that I heard later on, it was altogether a very successful day. Over 500 people accepted the invitation to attend upcoming meetings.

All of the speakers for the weekend were incredible and they

each had their own message to touch the audience. Adam Ramdin, the youth director for the North England Conference, was the person from whom I received the most blessing. He spoke for one of the plenary meetings and also had a seminar with Josephine Elia on "The Calling: Living and Knowing God's Will for Me."

It was all in all a splendid experience and I am so thankful to everyone that helped us get there—the many people who helped us fundraise or donated money so that we could go. I can't say

that it wasn't a challenge, but God always provides for His children, and He certainly did for us.



Sierra Hall, left, who received an amazing answer to prayer, and her friend, Jordanne Armstrong.

**Jordanne Armstrong**, 19, is from Keene, Texas, and is studying to become a veterinary technician.



# Pass it On...

A Monthly Focus on Evangelism in the Southwest

BY CINDY MERCER

## Operation Call to Prayer

If you were asked “What is the first thing that comes to your mind when it comes to prayer?” it would most likely include a variety of things, but probably not a telephone.

It seems that as our lives get busier and busier, God is calling us to find new, creative ways to connect with our brothers and sisters. We live in a world where it seems that even our personal interactions with others are becoming a thing of the past. I think we can all agree that unity is a characteristic that God’s end-time people should possess. The problem is that it seems very unrealistic to obtain this idea of unity when we pass each other “coming and going” in our hectic schedules.

So, praise God for the novel idea of a telephone! Add to that a free service offered by [www.greatercalling.org](http://www.greatercalling.org) and some very dedicated prayer warriors, and that equals a Friday evening “Upper Room” experience!

It was more than three years ago that I was introduced to a “prayer line” via the telephone. My husband and I were invited to join a Central United States prayer line every Wednesday morning at 7:30. We were very interested in this idea and eagerly joined the prayer line led by Arkansas-Louisiana Conference prayer coordinator, Marian Parson. We were immediately blessed and still participate in that prayer line. As time went on, it became apparent that we needed to initiate a dedicated prayer line for the Oklahoma Conference. My husband and I are very passionate about evangelism and felt this would be a blessing and asset to our conference. We were impressed it would provide an opportunity to pray for the Holy Spirit

to work in our evangelistic outreach efforts in our conference. It would also provide an opportunity to pray for our leaders, and for Revival and Reformation. So, in April 2011, the Oklahoma Conference Call to Prayer was launched! It has been a tremendous blessing for our conference as we have seen God answer our prayers.

We believe God is calling His people into corporate prayer. When God’s people come together, we can expect His blessings

in large proportions. Churches from all around the world recently joined together in “10 Days of Prayer,” January 9-19, 2013. There were prayer groups in homes, churches, and even on the telephone line. We personally experienced the mighty hand of God move in our small group that met in our home each night. There were those convicted to spend more time studying God’s Word, reports of relationships restored, and a desire to be more faithful in tithes and offerings.



Rick and Cindy Mercer, a pastoral couple in the Oklahoma Conference, held a prayer group in their home during the recent “10 Days of Prayer.”

While gathering face-to-face is the optimal way for God’s people to connect, we are thankful for the way God is using the prayer line to allow us to come together in corporate prayer.

As we unite together, either on a prayer line or in a small group, we can claim Matthew 18:20, “For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them.”

The prayer line meets every Friday evening at 8:00 p.m. CST. Simply dial 712.432.0232. Enter access code 450698# when prompted. For more information, visit [www.oklahomasda.org](http://www.oklahomasda.org).



## Envía Un Ángel Desde el Cielo Para Hablarle

**L**a semana pasada, mi esposa y yo estábamos en nuestra casa, meditando en la lección de escuela sabática, y en el Gran Plan de Salvación, y en cuantos familiares se perderán si rehúsan aceptarlo. En el momento que comenzamos a orar por la familia recibimos la noticia que Clemente, el hermano mayor de mi esposa, estaba internado en el hospital con anemia y había sido diagnosticado con cáncer terminal. Lloramos de dolor no sólo por su estado físico sino por su condición espiritual.

Mi cuñado, habiendo sido criado con nociones católicas, se rebeló contra toda religión a una temprana edad. En su adolescencia, comenzó a fumar marihuana y se unió al comunismo en México. Fue muy activo en el movimiento comunista, al punto de postularse para la presidencia municipal de Ensenada Baja California, México. Y todo ese tiempo él se declaraba ateo. Siempre ha sido un hombre de fuerte carácter, dictando a los demás como pensar y vivir. A nosotros nos decía que, por nuestra afiliación cristiana, andábamos “con la cabeza en las nubes y deberíamos poner los pies en la tierra para darnos cuenta de la verdad.” Aun así, fui-

mos corteses, cordiales y tratamos de estudiar la Biblia con él para explicarle del amor de Dios, pero él sólo se burlaba de nosotros.

Durante nuestra oración por Clemente le pedí a Dios “no importa el medio que uses, envía un ángel desde el cielo para hablarle.” Al día siguiente una hermana de mi esposa llamó y nos dijo, “no van a creer lo que sucedió.” A la misma hora que estábamos orando, un hombre entró al cuarto en el hospital donde estaba Clemente, para visitar a un sobrino que yacía en la cama anexa a mi cuñado. Tan pronto entró, mi cuñado sintió que una presencia especial entraba con él, sintió como si fuera un ángel, y su presencia le dio paz.

Después de unos minutos, el visitante miró y le sonrió a Clemente. Se acercó a la cama y comenzó a platicar con él. Le contó cómo, en años anteriores, él había sido alcohólico y como el Señor Jesucristo lo había cambiado. Le expresó que si él quería, Jesús le podía cambiar también; sólo tenía que rendirse a Cristo, Él lo podía sanar y salvar. Lo abrazó y le besó diciéndole, “Jesús te ama.” Clemente lloró largo rato y el visitante lo confortaba diciendo, “este es el Espíritu Santo que te ha tocado. Ríndete y deja que te llene de Su paz.”

Hoy en día, mi cuñado sigue enfermo, ya en su casa. Mi esposa y yo estamos atónitos al ver como Dios contestó nuestra oración, durante el acto de pedirle. No nos queda duda alguna que Dios envió al “ángel” que yo había pedido. Dios habló por medio de ese hombre y dejó brillar Su luz en el corazón de mi cuñado Clemente, ¡y él vio Su Gloria!

Querido lector, por este medio te invito que, de favor, te unas con nosotros en oración por Clemente, que esto sólo sea el inicio de su andar con el Señor Jesucristo y aunque él muera, que su esperanza quede firme en nuestro Redentor, quien es la Resurrección y la Vida eterna.

Dios les bendiga.



Clemente Parra (izquierda), cuñado de Steven Dence (derecha).

**Steven Dence**

# HOW GOD SET ME FREE

Clarice Salandini



Tobe Watts



*Clarice Salandini always felt close to God, even without a Christian background, and she always believed in prayer. Her life was filled with painful situations but she continued to pray. As she reflects on her life, she knows God has answered every prayer. Although her life did not end up the way she planned, she has found a home in the Adventist Church and a powerful faith in a God who works miracles.*

I was born in São Paulo, Brazil. Even though I didn't grow up in a Christian home, I always believed in Jesus and that God works miracles. I grew up in an environment in which praying to saints (using idols) was a common practice. Ever since I was eight years old, my dream was to study the Bible, but we didn't have a Bible at home. My parents were Catholics, but never went to church.

My father was a brilliant advertiser, but because he was an alcoholic, our family life was miserable. My mother, who had four children, tried her best to raise us with very little money. I was always the different one in the family. They used to say that I always wanted to be "too perfect." I tried to live in my own little world, praying to God secretly and watching miracle after miracle happen.

When I became an adult, I graduated with a degree in business administration and found a job as a manager in a service company. I worked very hard and the challenge of working and going to school while helping my family financially was quite stressful. Wanting a way out, I said, "I would love to work on a horse farm, or maybe even become a farm manager." Words have power, so we need to be careful what we wish for! Three months later I got an invitation to manage a horse farm in São Paulo, though I knew nothing about land or horses. There I met Silvio, and we started dating.

One year later, at the end of 1998, Silvio was invited to work in the U.S. I stayed in Brazil, taking care of Silvio's house. Silvio's neighbor, a Baptist pastor, encouraged me to join his church, but

I didn't feel comfortable there. He gave me a Bible and I read it through, loving every story. The pastor and his wife never offered me Bible studies, but I discovered years later that they always prayed for me.

Then Silvio invited me to come to Wisconsin. A year later, in 2000, I got an invitation to manage a horse farm in Wisconsin, which I accepted. The following year I gave birth to Giselle Christine. Silvio and I got married, but life was difficult. I thought I knew God, but I began to have serious doubts. I suffered a lot and didn't know what to do with my life. I attended a Catholic church a few times, but Giselle didn't like it. Then, I became separated from Silvio, the man I loved. I didn't know if I should go back to my country, or stay here and raise my daughter. I decided to pray with all my heart for several months and God heard me. My husband and I reunited and, shortly afterward, he was invited to be a horse trainer in Burleson, Texas. Unsure of what to do, I opened my Bible, read Deuteronomy 26:7-9, and envisioning a "land flowing with milk and honey" I made the decision to move to Texas. I believed that God would bless us in our new life in the "promised land."

We worked together very hard from Monday through Saturday all day until we finally bought our own house. Then came another disappointment when my husband left me again. My world fell apart, and I felt all alone. I was so depressed that I couldn't even pray. That's when Nilson, a veterinarian, called me from Brazil. When I told him about my separation, he mentioned it to his mother, who immediately sent me an e-mail explaining that we

do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places (Ephesians 6:12). She said she would pray for me and send friends to help me. She connected me with a woman named Rose, a missionary from the Methodist church in Brazil, who immediately started an Internet conversation through Skype to pray for me. Every single day for a month, she would contact me morning and evening to pray, teaching me the Bible. I don't know if I could have survived if God had not sent me an "angel." She said she would pray that I would find a close friend to pray with me, and that I would find a good church here.

In 2007, I prayed for God to give me some genuine friends, and by His providence, I met Maria Diva, who happens to be an Adventist. Every morning she would pray for me, but the day before, she would call and say, "I will be praying for you, is there anything specific you want to pray about?" At that time, I didn't understand how prayers work. I eventually lost contact with her because of my busy work life. But I know that she prayed for me for three years.

Toward the end of 2010, I called Diva, desperate about my separation and not knowing what to do with my life. She came to my house and prayed with me and it seemed that the doors began to open. So, with Rose in Brazil, and Diva in the U.S., I started a new life in Christ. I also had another good friend, Leny, who, along with her husband, Ricardo, both Adventists, started giving me Bible studies at home. They would also ask people to pray for my situation. Diva would give me books and CDs so I wouldn't have time to think about anything other than God. For an entire year, she would call me every day to check on me and to pray with me. Some days, we would converse five times a day! I often listened to a CD by singer Rudy Micelli. His songs spoke directly to my heart.

Miracles started happening, spiritually and financially. I thought I couldn't make it, but when I least expected, a check would come in the mail for a refund or overpayment.

In my mind I really wanted to become an Adventist, because what I was feeling I had never felt before. For the first time I started having peace of mind. Despite the difficulties on my job, and the devil's tactics, my faith continued to grow. One day I said at work, "I am going to buy a Bible today after work, because I don't have one." A half hour later, a lady came and dropped a Bible on my desk, saying, "This is a gift for you" and quickly left. Some minutes later, Diva called me saying, "I just bought a Bible for you." I laughed hard and thought *Am I dreaming?* Then I went home and found a flyer about a seminar called "Unlocking Revelation's Mysteries" that would be taking place in Joshua, Texas. As soon as I picked up the flyer, I said to myself, "I don't know what this is, but I am going to participate." I called Diva and she said she would go with me every day. She then mentioned that the meetings were taking place at the Joshua Seventh-day Adventist Church. We at-

tended from March 4 to April 9. Since the beginning of the year, I had wanted to go to church on Saturdays and asked everybody I would meet at the church to pray for my freedom, so I would not have to work on Saturdays. I asked my boss, who said he couldn't afford to give Saturdays off. After three months of prayers and supplications, one Thursday I knelt down, cried, and prayed all night to our powerful God to set me free. The next day, which was Friday, I went to work and my boss came to see me and said, "Do you want to ask me something?" I was tired, but I lifted my eyes and said, "Yes, I want to have Saturdays off so I can go to church." He then replied, "From now on you can have all Saturdays off" and I said "I want to be baptized next week, but I will only do it if you are there." He then said, "Yes, I will be there." I learned that with God *all* things are possible.

I was baptized on May 14, 2011 and my daughter was baptized on November 17, 2012 at the Joshua church. During all this time, we had amazing experiences and have made friends for life. It has not been an easy journey, but my faith continues to grow as I read the Bible stories. And for every experience in my life God sent angels in human form to help me.

I've been praying to have time to read all the books friends have given me. Some books caught my attention, including *Steps to Christ, 40 Days: Prayers and Devotions, The Incredible Power of Prayer* by Roger Morneau and others. Now, I have a notebook with a list of people to pray for and when prayers are answered, I make a check mark. Giselle and I feel that we have found our home and our family in the church. They always greet us with hugs and smiles, every time we walk in. We have a warm feeling in our hearts. And we plan to do mission trips and help others as we were helped.

Today, I pray for the Holy Spirit to give me wisdom to understand God's will and plans for my life. Now, when I look back, I understand that God answered everything that I prayed for, and that sometimes, if a prayer was not answered, it was probably not the right time. If something doesn't happen the way I think it should, I don't get upset, I just give thanks for everything, as the Apostle Paul tells us to in the Bible.

I've learned that Matthew 7:7 is real: "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened."

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Giselle Salandini, right, daughter of Clarice Salandini, was baptized on November 17, 2012 at the Joshua Seventh-day Adventist Church in Joshua, Texas.



# THE BLESSING OF PRAYER

**Kathy McKey, Southwestern Union prayer ministries director**

**Do you remember when you prayed your first prayer? Do you remember who taught you your first prayer or what you said in your first prayer?**

I want to take you back to when and where I first learned to pray. It was in an upstairs bedroom in our farmhouse about 30 miles from Jamestown, North Dakota. My dad's and mom's parents were Germans who had immigrated from Russia. My grandpa, Chris Lang, had homesteaded this property in 1900. Grandpa had learned about the Adventist message. He was so excited about his newfound faith that he couldn't keep it to himself; he just had to share it. Grandpa and his cousin would go by horseback from farm to farm. If the farmer and his family were interested, they would stay and teach them for as long as five days. But if the people weren't interested, they would leave and go to the next farm.

Grandpa and Grandma married and had six children, which in-

cluded my dad, Gideon. My mom's parents lived close by and they all attended the Seventh-day Adventist church out there in the country. Mom and Dad were married and had five children, but unfortunately, they lost their love for the church and no longer attended. However, our family members considered themselves Seventh-day Adventists.

Family members of Kathy McKey, Southwestern Union prayer ministries director, on the day of her parents' baptism. Seated, from left: Peter Wohl (Louise's father), Louise Lang, Gideon Lang, and Christ Lang (Gideon's father). Second Row: Jean Carlson (Kathy McKey's older sister) between Peter Wohl and Louise Lang, Kathy McKey (behind Louise Lang).





When I was five years old, my sister, Jean, who was 16 years older than me, taught me how to pray my first prayer. She told me that I should kneel down and close my eyes and then she asked me to repeat the words after her. The prayer began with “Now I lay me down to sleep,” and you probably know the rest of that little prayer. That little prayer had a profound effect on me, even though it is just a little rhyme. It taught me that no matter how old I was, I could talk to Jesus.

It was shortly after Jean taught me to pray that she got married to a Seventh-day Adventist. Jean and her husband, Ron, used to take me to Sabbath School and church and even to camp meeting. I was so happy to be able to attend these meetings, but something or rather, someone was missing—my mom and dad. I would long for them to be there, so I started to pray for Mom and Dad that they would change their lifestyle and be baptized. I prayed and prayed and prayed. Finally, Jean and Ron had two children, Denise and Lonnie. When the children started reciting their memory verses on the 13th Sabbath, they would invite Mom and Dad. It was then that Mom and Dad started attending the church service. Their lifestyle had not changed, but they had taken the first step, and I was so happy. I kept praying for them.

When I was a freshman at Union College my dad became very ill. He got an appointment at Mayo Clinic and was diagnosed with Hodgkin’s Lymphoma. We never know under what circumstances people will give their hearts to the Lord. While Mom and Dad were at Mayo, my dad’s cousin, who was the Seventh-day Adven-

tist minister for the Rochester, Minnesota, church, and his wife came to visit them. They visited often and finally the minister gave the invitation for mom and dad to surrender their lives to Jesus. They both accepted that invitation.

I’ll never forget the first time I heard my dad pray. Joy of joys! Tears still come to my eyes when I recount that special occasion. A few months later I was able to witness the answer to my prayer when Mom and Dad were baptized in a lake. Can anything be better than this?

I started praying for my parents as a small child and my prayer was fully answered when I was an adult. I had no idea how it would be answered, but God worked it out for a minister to be in the city where Dad was sick. Not only that, He put into the heart of that minister a desire for people to know Jesus and fully surrender to Him.

Sometimes we become impatient when God doesn’t answer our prayers immediately. However, does the timeframe really matter? What is important is that we never lose our faith and that we never stop praying. What a blessing to be able to spend time with our best Friend, Jesus, every day. We can praise Him for who He is and we can share our joys and our sorrows (challenges) with Him. Isn’t it wonderful that we can place our loved ones in His care and keeping?

When it comes to prayer, we should declare as David did, “My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed,” (Psalms 57:7).

# IN THIS HOLY SPACE OF PRAYER

**Deena Bartel-Wagner, publications editor, Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries**

**E**.M. Bounds, a pastor and a chaplain during the War between the States, wrote, “By prayer, the ability is secured to feel the law of love, to speak according to the law of love, and to do everything in harmony with the law of love.”

Around the world each day Seventh-day Adventist chaplains show the love of God through the ministry they perform with their presence and their prayers. One of these chaplains is Theo Stewart, director of the Pastoral Care Department and clinical pastoral education supervisor at Huguley Memorial Medical Center in Burleson, Texas.

“Prayer is a holy space where someone of faith feels safety and comfort,” says Theo. “You are offering yourself up to the Holy One.” In his ministry as a chaplain, Theo has seen prayer break down walls that people have built around themselves.

“Chaplains minister in a pluralistic setting,” says Theo. “People of various faith traditions and with a wide variety of life experiences need ministry. Often they are eager for a prayer to be said for them, especially when they are in crisis.”

Theo experienced this when he reached out to a doctor at the medical center. “I learned he was facing a serious health concern,”





On a return visit, the chaplain asked Kate if he could offer a prayer for her and her family. “Kate had also been ill-treated by her husband, and was now a single mother,” says Theo. “The chaplain chose words for his prayer carefully and compared the love of God to that of a mother hen who gathers her chicks under her wing to protect them.”

That picture resonated with Kate. As a mother herself, Kate was missing her children while she was in the hospital. “Kate was able to see the love of God in a way that opened her heart to learning more about a God she knew nothing about,” says Theo.

There are times when chaplains are exposed to patients who might be considered society’s outcasts. “One of our chaplains met Sam,\*” says Theo. “Sam hadn’t bathed in a long time and because of his body odor, no one wanted to go near him.”

During the visit, the chaplain reached out to take Sam’s hand in his own. In those moments Sam confessed to the chaplain a behavior that he had been involved in on a regular basis. “This was an act that was horrifying, but the chaplain saw Sam with the eyes of Jesus,” says Theo. “The chaplain wanted to jerk his hand away. Instead, he asked Sam if he would like to pray for release from this behavior and for forgiveness. Sam said yes and they bowed in prayer.”

The chaplain reached out to Sam like Jesus reached out to the lepers of His time. They were the unwanted, the outcast, and the people who needed to know there was a God who cared about them.

This is the ministry of chaplains around the world. They pray in the rooms of hospitals and medical centers. They encourage students on school campuses. They minister to police and firemen, as well as the victims of violence in local communities. They bring hope within prison walls to those who have committed crimes against fellow human beings. They are on the battlefield, the ships, and in the barracks with

those who stand watch to keep our nation free and safe. Through it all, these chaplains depend on the power of prayer in each situation they encounter.

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\*Names have been changed for privacy considerations.

says Stewart. “As I began a visit with him, I asked him how it felt to be the patient rather than the doctor. Our conversation flowed smoothly. I told him that I knew he wasn’t a Christian, but asked him if I could pray for him.”

The doctor consented, and as Theo finished the prayer he noticed a look of peace replacing the concern that had enveloped the doctor’s body language. “Sometime later the doctor sought me out and thanked me for the prayer,” says Theo. “He was a devout follower of his beliefs, and the prayer I offered had given him peace.”

Often chaplains do not know what they will face in speaking with a patient and trying to bring comfort to them. “One of our chaplains met with Kate\* who had been terribly abused by her father when she was a child,” says Theo. “The chaplain recognized that Kate could not relate positively to a heavenly Father because she had not experienced the love of an earthly father. Thinking about how to help Kate, the chaplain realized there are many elements to the nature of God.”

**Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries (ACM)** develops, promotes and supports Adventist chaplaincies and serves as the ecclesiastical endorsing agency for the denomination. Chaplains extend the gospel into the greater community, offering grace and hope to all people within the chaplain’s circle of influence. Through chaplains’ ministry of presence, ACM seeks to reach the unreached with the gospel of Jesus Christ and invite them to become His disciples.

## God Answers Prayer



As a pastor's family, we knew what it was like to move every few years. Over the course of our first 20 years in ministry, we moved seven times.

That's an average of one move every 2.86 years. It was during each of the last four (of the seven) moves that our family made that we prayed the same identical prayer and witnessed God answering each time, even though our faith was challenged and stretched to what seemed to us to be the limit.

It was in those last four moves that our boys were of school age. So, as the boys went off to school, my wife, Micki, also went off to school—as a teacher. Yet, it wasn't quite as simple as it may sound. Every one of those teaching positions came as a direct answer to prayer, all the while testing our faith and yet at the same time confirming to us that God was indeed

behind every one of those calls to move. Perhaps the most remarkable answer to prayer came when we were asked to move from Little Rock to pastor the Bentonville-Decatur district. That call came four weeks before school was to start.

At that point in time, both of our sons were going to be in academy, and Micki desperately needed to work, if the family budget was going to be balanced. Our family began praying that she would be hired somewhere, knowing all along that most teachers by that time already had contracts for the coming school year. All of the church school positions in the three church schools in the area were filled. Each public school district office in Northwest Arkansas (Micki placed applications in 11 school districts) also indicated that they had no unfilled teaching positions available. In fact, every single school district office indicated that they had anywhere from

100 to 500 applicants already waiting for a possible opening!

Two weeks before school started, Micki “happened” to check with the Springdale school district office, and learned that one of the principals was unofficially interviewing teachers for a sixth-grade class. She was one of 32 teachers that interviewed for that sixth-grade class, and three days before the opening day of school, she was hired for the job! We were thrilled! But the story doesn't end there. One week after the start of school, because of undersized classes, Micki was transferred to another school that provided her with an even better teaching situation. We marveled at the wonderful way in which God took care of our family needs when it seemed so impossible. We believe God answered our prayer!

Steven Orian, president

ARKANSAS-LOUISIANA CONFERENCE



CliAnn Pittman and Thomas E. Griffin, III, M.D., at their farewell reception at the Deridder church.

## Deridder Church Bids Farewell

**DERIDDER, LA.** » The Deridder church recently held a farewell for Thomas E. Griffin, III, M.D., who is moving to Florida. For more than 30 years, Griffin has been a member and head elder of the Deridder church. He is truly a gracious and loving man who cares about all of his friends and patients. Along with a private practice in Deridder, Griffin also worked at Beauregard Hospital, and always showed such a willingness to help others spiritually, socially, and financially. Church members have shared so

many laughs and giggles with Griffin, and he has reached out to help us all. Griffin and his fiancé, CliAnn Pittman, have been a blessing to the church and will be sorely missed as they move to Florida. His children's stories have been a highlight for the church's children. His and CliAnn's kindness will be missed. They have been our true friends, and we pray God's continued blessings and protection.

Nell Miller

## Baptisms Highlight Communion Sabbath

**TEXARKANA, ARK.** » The Texarkana church welcomed James Cason and Sonja and Susie Kiel through baptism on October 6 on a special Communion Sabbath.

Lorene Patterson had invited James, who had some knowledge of Adventism, to the church's “2012 Countdown” meetings. The church members praise God for people who share their beliefs, and praise Him for bringing James into our church family.

Sonja and Susie came to Texarkana af-

ter Hurricane Katrina. Their TV only picked up one station—3ABN! They called the church's pastor and asked if they could come to his church. Of course, they were welcomed with open arms. Sonja and Susie also attended the “2012 Countdown” meetings and accepted the call for baptism and fellowship with the Texarkana church.

Loretta Johnson



From left: James Cason, Sonja Kiel, and Susie Kiel, who were baptized at the Texarkana church on October 6.



# Teen Prayer Conference: My Life 360

**GENTRY, ARK. »** The fourth annual Teen Prayer Conference was held October 25-27 at Ozark Adventist Academy and the Gentry church. The theme for the event was “My Life 360,” which was a symbol of the life that can be lived when Jesus is at the center.

More than 200 young people attended from many areas of the Southwestern Union and beyond, including Arkansas, Louisiana, Texas, Oklahoma and Missouri. Parents and

sponsors also took part in the various activities. Enthusiasm was evident on Thursday evening as the participants entered the church and joined in the worshipful music led by Jim Moon, pastor and prayer coordinator of the Rocky Mountain Conference, along with students. The program kept the attention of the teens while Edwin Rosado, pastor, demonstrated with a black light presentation what a difference it makes in our lives if we allow Christ to be involved in all areas, including the spiritual, physical, mental, emotional, and social aspects of our

lives.

Friday was spent demonstrating how the Christian life can be lived through Bible study, prayer, ministry, and worship. On Friday afternoon, the students ministered first to a group of grade-school students with a day camp, and then participated in community outreach by either singing

and encouraging residents in an elder care facility or visiting homes and praying with people in the community.

Sabbath morning and afternoon were spent in various workshops that challenged the young people to learn what it means to have Christ in each area of their lives, through positive, interactive activities where they helped one another and worked as teams to accomplish particular goals.

Bill Kilgore, from Southwestern Adventist University, was the speaker for the general sessions on Friday evening and Sabbath morning. His messages were inspiring and helped the participants better understand why it just makes sense to choose to live for Jesus.

Sabbath evening, Victor Snead, pastor, led in a candlelight commitment service, during which he challenged participants to make a serious decision to commit to living the “abundant life” that Jesus has offered each one.

A large number of youth and adults came forward and signed the commitment. The service was followed by a farewell reception in the youth center, where students reluctantly said goodbye to the friends they had made during this inspirational weekend.

**Marian Parsons**, prayer ministries director



## Benton Pathfinders and Adventurers

**BENTON, ARK. »** The Benton Jesus Warriors and Little Jesus Warriors Pathfinder and Adventurer clubs teamed up with the church’s food pantry to help provide food to those in need. The Pathfinders and Adventurers collected more than 550 canned food items during their Thanksgiving and Christmas food drive. These cans, along with other food items, were distributed to families who had very little. It was a pleasure to work with these young people. Their hard work and willing attitudes make them mighty warriors for Christ.

**Francis Caple**



The Benton Pathfinders and Adventurers collected canned food for the church’s food pantry recently.

# Springtown's "Back Porch" Evangelism

**SPRINGTOWN, ARK. »** Last November, the "Back Porch" series was created at the Springtown church. Marti Cash, coordinator for the series, led dozens of volunteers in the first event, "Tastes of the Holidays" where ten tables were decorated with table settings and displays of holiday breads, soups, and desserts. Samples of all food items were offered and an attractive recipe book was given to the nearly 175 people who attended.

The next event in December was called "Unstressing the Holiday." Idea swapping was a large part of the program, along with some demonstrations on how to de-stress your life. Denny Williams presented on how holidays became cluttered and com-

mercialized. Area churches of different faiths were also invited to participate.

Traditional evangelism has been unproductive in the Gentry area for a number of reasons. The members of the Springtown church decided they needed to take their church to the community. One church member is in real estate. She sold a house that belonged to a seriously ill individual

who was unable to make required renovations that were conditions of the sale, so 20 church members made the improvements in one day and the sale was completed.

A family near the church was in need of firewood. The husband was terminally ill and could not work. Church members invaded his woods with six chain saws and three log splitters. In two hours, more than enough firewood was neatly stacked on the patio. At a later time, they had a pole barn collapse in a heavy show. Members helped carry the barn's contents to another building, and the grateful husband and wife began attending worship services. When he died, the wife continued to be a part of the church. She has recently moved to another state, but she is involved with a nearby Adventist church.

If there is a need and an opportunity to follow Jesus' example of ministering to one of God's children, help is spontaneous and cheerfully given by the congregation, who remember Christ's words, "Inasmuch as you have done it unto one of these, you have done it unto Me" (Matthew 25:40).

Larry Yeagley



The Springtown church's evangelism includes the "Back Porch" series. The first event in the series was "Tastes of the Holiday," in which holiday foods were served on decorated tables for guests to enjoy.



## Six Baptized at Searcy Church

**SEARCY, ARK. »** December 3, 2012 was a high Sabbath for the Searcy church, as members witnessed Tommy Blount, pastor, baptize six people who, through Bible study, received Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. It is always a special occasion to witness souls giving their lives to Christ. Another evangelism meeting will be held at the Searcy church in March. The church members' prayer is that many more will give their lives to Jesus Christ, as He will return soon.

Herman Clements

Tommy Blount, pastor, with Searcy church's six new members.



# God Answers Prayer



Mark Twain is quoted as saying, "It isn't the things in the Bible that I don't understand that bother me, it's the things that I do understand." I think that we would all admit that there is enough that can be clearly discerned between the covers of the sacred book to keep us occupied in meditation for the rest of our time on earth. But, then, what do we do with the other texts? Do we ignore them, read really fast when we come to them, or do we ask God to, in His own time, reveal what He wants us to know from each page of His book?

One verse that has often troubled me is Matthew 7:7 (NKJV), "Ask and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock and it will be opened to you." People have

told me that they have not found that text to be true. "I have asked," they say, "and sought, and knocked and knocked, but nothing happens. Why doesn't God answer my prayers?" For a partial explanation, let's look at a few Bible characters and their prayer experiences. We remember how Elijah prayed in 1 Kings 17 that God would send fire to consume the sacrifice and then that He would send rain to end the drought. Those prayers were answered. But, consider his prayer in 1 Kings 19:4, where he prayed that he might die, and said, "it is enough! Now, Lord, take my life, for I am no better than my fathers!"

Did God answer that prayer? My Bible tells me that Elijah did not die and is very much alive in heaven.

What about Paul? He tells us in 2 Corin-

thians 12:7, 8 that he had prayed not once, but three times that he might be delivered from the "messenger of Satan," the "thorn in his flesh." Did God take it away? We read in verse 9 that He did not. Why not? Well, you say, the things they asked for were not the best things for them. That's right. I'm going to make a bold statement. For the one who is sincerely seeking God and is committed to His will, He will always give you what you want—or something better. Put another way, God always gives His best to those who leave the choice with Him. Tell Him what you think you need, but trust Him to give you what is best. He loves you and wants what is best for you.

John Moyer, president

## Oklahoma Family Prayer Conference

**TULSA** » For some time, it had been the prayer and passion of division leaders in the conference to see families unite together in prayer. With God's guidance, the Oklahoma Family Prayer Conference was held on October 25-27, 2012 at Tulsa Adventist Fellowship with the theme, "PRAYER—Unity at the Cross."

Conference attendees were blessed to have Ivor Myers and Steve Case present topics and workshops for both youth and adults. They encouraged attendees to reflect on scriptures and live a life saturated in prayer. The weekend was filled with fellowship, worship, and praise. Many participated in a Sabbath-afternoon prayer walk, while others participated in *P.U.S.H.* (Pray Until Something Happens) prayer stops at the church campus.

Conference leaders have been blessed to hear reports of families and individuals who shared that they left the conference with a desire and urgency to bring God back into their homes and prayer life.

"If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land" (2 Chron-

icles 7:14, NKJV).

I would like to invite you to join the Oklahoma Conference prayer line every Friday at 8:00 p.m. Simply dial 712.432.0232, and enter access code 450698# when prompted.

Cindy Mercer, Oklahoma prayer coordinator



▲ Pastor Rick Mercer prays for Pastor Ivor Myers.

◀ Pastor Steve Case ministers to the youth.



# Youth Ministries Leadership Retreat

**WEWOKA WOODS** » In January, the Oklahoma Conference held its Pathfinder/Adventurer Directors and Youth Ministries Retreat at Wewoka Woods Adventist Center (WWAC). It's amazing how a story from the Bible that is heard and read over and over again can still have new meaning and direction. Bill Kilgore, religion professor at Southwestern Adventist University, who was the guest speaker, pulled thoughts and illustrations of leadership from the book of Nehemiah. He encouraged leaders to always be part of the solution—not the problem.

Laura Weber had special programming for children of all ages at the conference, and the weekend was not complete without a fun game night with Johny Flores leading out. The attendees truly



The Oklahoma Conference's Pathfinder/Adventurer and youth leadership retreat was held in January at Wewoka Woods Adventist Center (WWAC).

Bill Kilgore, religion professor at Southwestern Adventist University, spoke to the attendees about leadership from the book of Nehemiah.



enjoyed the relaxing weekend, and praised God for being such a wonderful Giver. He ensured that all of their needs were met with a wonderful speaker, a wonderful Sabbath day with family and friends, a fun night of play, great food, and His caring love.

**Jung-Wook Park**, Pathfinders, Adventurers, and youth director

# Canton Church Adds a Baptistry

**CANTON** » In the 1940s, a tornado destroyed the Canton church. It was rebuilt, but without a baptistry. This was possibly due to the fact that a major state park and lake is only a five-minute drive from the church. Recently, the Canton church decided it was time to have a baptistry inside the church, so they built one and had their first baptism on November 3, 2012. Steven Prouty, an Amazing Facts Bible correspondence

school graduate, was the first person baptized in the church sanctuary.

**Rex Shores**, pastor

The Canton church recently installed a baptistry inside the church; it has been without one since the 1940s. Steven Prouty was the first person to be baptized in the new baptistry.



# Southern Hills Church Holds Auction And Chili Cook-off

**OKLAHOMA CITY** » The Southern Hills church recently held an auction and chili cook-off to raise funds to support its Pathfinder Club. All of the different pots of chili tasted great, and they all had to be sampled in order to determine the winner. While sampling the chili, guests had the opportunity to view the items up for auction. Donald Clark took home the blue ribbon for his chili, and the lemon pie, oatmeal cookies, and three sashay scarves (crocheted and donated by Tamra Clark) were the big ticket items in the auction.

**Carla Everett,**  
communication  
secretary



Participants of the chili cook-off sampled each of the pots of chili, then placed a vote.

**Above left:** Donald Clark took first place in the chili cook-off fundraiser at the Southern Hills church.



# Central Church Baptisms

**OKLAHOMA CITY** » In November of last year, the Central church experienced a wonderful baptismal service, following a powerful Week of Prayer. Briezy Edmonds, Sammie Wallace (a recent Dallas transplant), and Hannah and Joseph Moyer were baptized, and Briezy's parents were rebaptized. The Edmonds also renewed their marriage vows later that same evening.

John Moyer, Oklahoma Conference president, had the privilege of bringing his daughter and son, Hannah and Joseph, into the faith through baptism. The Moyers were blessed to adopt them, biological siblings, several years ago, and by the Lord's providence, they have recently adopted Molly and Benjamin, the younger siblings of Hannah and Joseph.

The church was mightily uplifted by

these decisions that have enlarged the Kingdom of God.

**Mike Lawlor,** pastor



**Top:** John Moyer, Oklahoma Conference president, baptized his children, Hannah and Joseph Moyer.

▲ Briezy Edmonds with her parents, Chrissy and Brian Edmonds after their baptisms.

◀ Brian, Chrissy, Briezy, Eternity, and Faith.

# Coincidence? Maybe!

“More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of” (Alfred Lord Tennyson, *The Idylls of the King*).

I have had some amazing answers to prayer in just the last few weeks. On the other hand, maybe they're just coincidences. I'll let you be the judge. In the following three examples, I've been praying for over a year for God to move in the lives of these individuals. I have seen a definite movement in the direction of my prayers, either that or a very strange set of coincidences. I've changed their names and other details to protect their identity.

Angela and Brad's 15-year marriage has been marked by violence, infidelity, drug use, and frequent separations. On more than one occasion I've thought to myself, “This is it. Their marriage will not survive this latest episode.” Yet, I continued to pray for their total conversion and for God to intervene in their relationship. While speaking with Brad two weeks ago, he said, “Everything is going just fine.” If it weren't,

Brad wouldn't have hesitated to say so. Last Friday night I got a text from Angela. “I'm at church right now. This lady is singing We Shall Behold Him, and I thought of you,” she said. Coincidence? *Maybe!*

I've also been praying for Danny nearly every day for well over a year. He walked out on his marriage of 10 years, leaving behind a grieving wife and two small children to move in with another woman. He also left behind the church of his youth. I'd not had contact with Danny in more than six years until last week, when I received an e-mail from him telling me that I needed to contact a mutual friend who is deathly ill. Coincidence? *Maybe!* Nevertheless, it gave me the opportunity to send some love and thoughts of encouragement his way.

Lastly, there's Dexter. Dexter had a rough childhood and ended up in prison. While there, he was contacted by one of our church elders involved in prison ministry. Thank God for prison ministry! He promised the elder that when he got out, he would attend his church. Dexter

has been out of prison for several years now, and seems to have lost the spiritual fervor he had while he was incarcerated. The church elder has tried unsuccessfully to rejuvenate Dexter's interest in spiritual things. Two weeks ago, Dexter called me and said, “I want you to call me more and help me to understand the Bible.” Coincidence? *Maybe!*

The Bible says in James 4:2, “you have not, because you ask not.” Let's start asking God for the salvation of others. Take the challenge issued by Ellen White, “Why do not two or three meet together and plead with God for the salvation of some special one, and then for still another?” (*Testimonies*, v.7, p. 21). I can assure you that if you pray persistently in faith for the salvation of others, that things will begin to happen. Then, you will have to decide. Coincidence? *Maybe! Maybe not!*

**Terrell McCoy**, executive secretary

## Faith and Learning In Action

**ROUND ROCK, TEXAS** » On December 15, 2012, students, parents, and teachers came from across the Southwest Region Conference to participate in the conference's annual School Bible Competition, hosted by the Round Rock church in Texas. Each year, the schools in Southwest Region Conference are assigned to study and memorize selected books and chapters of the Bible. Teachers, students, and parents work diligently to ensure that the students are familiar with the material.

This year, the Texans (schools in Texas) won over the ARKLA Lions (schools in Louisiana and Arkansas). Congratulations to all participants!

Such events are reminders of the importance of Adventist education, and the role it plays in the integration of faith and learning. One of the most significant passages

in Scripture to outline Adventist curriculum is found in Deuteronomy 6:4-9, which begins “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one!” This verse, considered by many Jews to be one of the most sacred in the Torah, identifies God as the focus of the educational program. This emphasis is reiterated throughout Scripture. “For the Lord gives wisdom; from His mouth come knowledge and understanding” (Proverbs 2:6). “My purpose is that they may...have the full riches of complete understanding,

in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Colossians 2:2, 3). God is the core curriculum in Adventist education.

**S. Ramsarran**, superintendent

Students from across the conference came together for the annual School Bible Competition on December 15, 2012, in Round Rock, Texas.



# Bethel Church Celebrates Adventist Education

**CORSICANA, TEXAS** » The Corsicana Bethel church was recently blessed to have the Garland Christian Adventist School's students, under the direction and leadership of Catherine Black-Jackson, present on the theme of "Educating for Eternity." The young guest speakers were Jaxon Theriot, Ardena Jaxon, Yentel Payne, Paschall Theriot, Mycah Hylton, Brandon Martin, and Alexandria Martin, all of whom stressed the importance of Christian education. They shared the many benefits they have received from their experiences at an Adventist school. The students conducted the entire worship service. They preached, sang, testified, and recited—speaking with conviction and authority about their knowledge of Jesus and their relationships with Him.

Certificates, medals, and awards were

distributed to students who had perfect attendance, were on the honor roll, and those who graduated from kindergarten, eighth grade, high school, or college. A fellowship luncheon was served after the service.

Garland Christian Adventist School was founded in 2008 with the enrollment of four students. Under Black-Jackson's leadership, the school increased its enrollment to 12. In the past 17 months, she has served the school by leading the students in creative thinking and writing in the classroom, community and local service for witnessing, and character development.

The students at the school participated in an exhibition of their skills and achievements at an annual Learning Arts Showcase and Knowledge Bowl. In addition to the showcase, the students completed

a witnessing tour in Washington, D.C., where they visited the White House and met Chaplain Barry Black and his staff. They also visited the headquarters of the North American Division and the Ellen G. White Estate, ministering to the workers with readings, presentations, songs, prayers, and testimonies.

Black-Jackson is a product of Seventh-day Adventist education, beginning at an early age through graduate school. On May 25, 2012, she retired from active service in the Texas Conference, after forty-two years of dedicated service to the church's education system. Lorraine James-Stiggers, education and family ministries coordinator at Bethel, presented Black-Jackson with a beautiful plant, gift, and honorarium as a small token of appreciation for her willingness to commit her time, talent, experience, training, and expertise in education.

**Lorraine James-Stiggers**, family and education coordinator

Garland Christian Adventist School students recently took a trip to Washington, D.C. where they visited the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial (below, right), met senate chaplain Barry Black (below), and also toured the Seventh-day Adventist World Headquarters in Silver Spring, Maryland (bottom).



# Holy Convocation 2013 a Success

**DALLAS, TEXAS** » The New Year brought change to the Southwest Region Conference's annual workers' meeting, which was called "Holy Convocation 2013—Focus, Forward, Finish." More than 700 constituents attended the meeting held in the Grand Hyatt DFW. Conference leaders intentionally made the meeting a unique experience for church leaders as well as church members. The weekend's keynote speaker was Roscoe Howard, vice president of mission and ministry for Adventist Health System. He spoke on the need to reshape our focus and make our mission match God's plans. He also spoke about filling our "spiritual tanks" correctly so that we can finish the work that the Lord requires.

The leadership breakout speaker, Paul Hunt, pastor of the Acts Two church in Plano, Texas, explained the difference between business-style management, which measures success with numbers, and that of the church, which measures success in caring for others. "We must care for our members and love them as Jesus loves them—that is our guide for success," he said.

Four key areas were focused on during

the weekend's breakout sessions—communication, community service and philanthropy, stewardship and fundraising, and evangelism and member retention.

Luis Castro enjoyed the event and its new format. "The convocation allowed for the focus to be laid



**Top left:** Roscoe J. Howard, vice president of mission and ministry for Adventist Health System, was the keynote speaker.

**Top right:** Paul Hunt, leadership presenter.

**Above:** More than 700 attendees were blessed by the messages, seminars, and fellowship of the Holy Convocation.

**Above left:** Testimony and prayer time at the annual workers' meeting.

out so God can move us forward through communication, media, community services, evangelism, and stewardship—helping the Southwest Region Conference to finish 'making disciples' of those in its territory," he said.

**Kenn Dixon**, communication director

## Children's Day at the Tenth Street Church

**OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLA.** » On October 6, 2012, the Tenth Street church celebrated "Children's Day," with the theme "Speak Lord, I am listening!" Three short sermons, one each by Noah Williams, Casey Childs, and Ashley Jones, were part of the service, and the children's choir also sang. The church was richly blessed and was grateful to the children's department and to the children for giving of their talents.

**Sheila Mejias-Shavers**

Children led the services on Children's Day at the Tenth Street church.





# The God of Answered Prayer



The story is told of a young boy who accompanied his mother to the local mom-and-pop shop down on the corner. The shop owner, a kindly man, passed him a large jar of lollipops and invited him to help himself to a handful. A bit out of character, the boy held back. So the shop owner reached into the big jar, and pulled out a large fistful and handed them to the boy. Once outside, the mother asked her son why he had suddenly become so shy and had refused to take a handful of lollipops when offered. The boy quickly replied, "Because his hand is much bigger than mine!" What an enormous gift from God, to be able to send our prayers, knowing that the largest hand in the universe is ever-willing to give good gifts to His children!

The book of Revelation describes the prayers of God's people ascending before His presence like incense (Revelation 5:8) and a sweet savor, pleasing in His sight. It's interesting that the Word does not qualify those prayers, they are simply considered "sweet" and "pleasing" to the Lord. The further I go into the experience of being a grandparent, the more fully I understand

this concept and how precious the barely legible words of my little ones are to me. Anything they say is priceless! As Christians, it is instrumental that we strive to comprehend how important a healthy and vibrant prayer life is to our spiritual life.

Take, for example, the function of the heart, which is to supply blood and nutrients to the body. The regular beating and contraction of the heart moves the blood throughout the body. Each heartbeat is controlled by electrical impulses traveling throughout the heart. In a normal heart, these electrical impulses occur in regular intervals. When something goes wrong with the heart's electrical system, the heart does not beat regularly. The irregular beating then results in a rhythm disorder commonly known as arrhythmia. Some of us have spiritual arrhythmia because of our lack of discipline in prayer!

Ellen White puts it this way, "The arm of Omnipotence is outstretched to lead us onward and still onward...The Lord says... It is for My Name's glory that you ask, and you shall receive. I will be honored before those who are watching for your failure. They shall thus see Me triumph gloriously. 'All things, whatsoever ye ask in prayer, be-

lieving, ye shall receive'" (Matthew 21:22).

When we pray, fully expecting the loving reply of the Master, we become part of a divine plan to fully communicate the power of God. On the other hand, let us be very careful not to take credit in any way, shape, or fashion for God's blessings and providence. Doing so would be spiritually lethal.

Think on this story from Savonarola, the Italian political reformer. He noticed an elderly woman who came to pray on a regular basis at the cathedral in front of a statue of the virgin Mary. One day, Savonarola took an elderly priest aside, and said, "Look how devoted this woman is! She comes every day to offer prayers, what a marvelous act of faith!"

The elderly priest replied, "Do not be deceived by what you see. Many years ago, when the sculptor needed a model to pose for this statue, he hired a beautiful young woman to sit for him. This apparent devout worshipper you see here every day is *that* young woman of years past. She comes to worship who she used to be." Let us keep ever clear in our minds *who* it is that we pray to, and why.

**Carlos J. Craig**, president

## LEGAL NOTICE FOR BIENNIAL CONSTITUENCY SESSION

### Texas Conference Of Seventh-day Adventists

**Notice is hereby given** that the Biennial Session of the Texas Conference of Seventh-day Adventists will convene at the Keene Seventh-day Adventist Church, located at 114 S Fairview St, Keene, TX 76059, on Sunday, April 28, 2013, at 10:00 a.m. The purpose of this meeting is to review the business of the Conference for the past two years, and to transact such business as may properly come before the Constituency.

Each church is entitled to two (2) regular delegates for the organization and one delegate for each 60 members who hold membership in the local church which accredits them.

**Carlos Craig**, President  
**Gary Brady**, Secretary  
**Edwin Romero**, Treasurer

### Texas Conference Association Of Seventh-day Adventists

**Notice is hereby given** that the Biennial Session of the Texas Conference Association of Seventh-day Adventists will convene at the Keene Seventh-day Adventist Church, located at 114 S Fairview St, Keene, TX 76059, on Sunday, April 28, 2013, at 10:00 a.m. The purpose of this meeting is to review the business of the Association for the past two years, and to transact such business as may properly come before the Constituency.

Delegates to the Biennial Session of the Texas Conference of Seventh-day Adventists are also delegates to the Texas Conference Association Session.

**Carlos Craig**, President  
**Roger Mekelburg**, Secretary

### Valley Educational Foundation

**Notice is hereby given** that the Biennial Session of the Texas Conference Valley Educational Foundation will convene at the Keene Seventh-day Adventist Church, located at 114 S Fairview St, Keene, TX 76059, on Sunday, April 28, 2013, at 10:00 a.m. The purpose of this meeting is to review the business of the Foundation for the past two years, and to transact such other business as may properly come before the Foundation.

Delegates to the Biennial Session of the Texas Conference of Seventh-day Adventists are also delegates to the Valley Educational Foundation.

**Carlos Craig**, President  
**John Page**, Secretary

**V.A.S.**  
Verdaderos Adventistas Solteros  
**feliz soltero con Cristo**

Junto a  
**Cesar de Leon Ph.D & Carolann de Leon**

12-14 Abril, 2013  
Salvation Army Camp  
8060 Shingleton Rd. Midlothian Tx 76065

Atrévete a conocer a otros solteros que al igual que tú, quieren también ir al cielo. Acompáñanos a un retiro espiritual que se llevará acabo el 12, 13 y 14 de abril del 2013. Registración empezará a las 5pm. Los 5 estados de la Unión y Puerto Rico se unirán en el primer retiro espiritual de V.A.S.

Costo: \$165 por persona  
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# Gulf Haven Church Reaches Out with Food Baskets

**HOUSTON** » On the morning of November 18, 2012, community services leader Carmen Garza set aside time for members and friends to come to the church to arrange and fill Thanksgiving baskets for those in need. During this time, something wonderful and spectacular happened.

Around 10 a.m., cars began to fill the parking lot. Members and friends poured into the church, arms loaded with various food items like fresh fruits and vegetables, bread, milk, eggs, pies, non-perishable items, and canned goods.

Two volunteers brought large frozen turkeys to help fill each of the large double-sized boxes. Seeing dedicated people come in response to the need of the community was truly the type of spark that reignites one's love for the Savior.

The church's Pathfinders made loaves of pumpkin bread and pumpkin pies in the church kitchen under the direction of the deputy director, Sylvia Corona, as their way of sharing for this cause.

A heartbroken woman and her daughter relayed their story to Garza as they came to the church to pick up a box of food. Out of desperation, she revealed that they were being evicted from their home that day if they did not come up with the money to pay their rent. She explained that their rent was \$650, and she only had \$400. Garza explained the situation to those who were present and a basket was immediately passed around where the \$250 that was needed was collected almost instantly. When told that the amount needed had been collected, the woman burst into tears. She was so happy and grateful to the members for their loving and generous act.

The conclusion to this special commu-



The Gulf Haven church gave out boxes of food, as well as new toys, at Thanksgiving and Christmas, as a way to reach out to the community.

nity outreach ministry came a few weeks later on December 23, when this same loving service to those in need was repeated.

The plans this time included providing Christmas food baskets for needy families, as well as new toys for children.

On December 23, two days before Christmas, members and friends came again, bringing armloads of food to fill the numerous boxes. The Gulphaven School children provided half of the food items. The large supply of new toys, which were purchased by members, were inspected by volunteer Ron Boczkowski, before they were distributed to some 48 children.

It was no small joy to see the happy and cheerful faces of each individual as they so



lovingly packed the boxes for delivery to those families in need.

Nearly 50 families had a brighter Thanksgiving and Christmas because of this loving act. It is important that the church reach out to the brokenhearted and struggling, to bring comfort and joy into the lives of so many that surround us. As we reach out to make a difference in ministering first to the physical needs of the community, there will also be opportunities to minister to their hearts.

**Jean Hagen**

## The Prayer of Forgiveness



TEXICO CONFERENCE

I remember it as if it was yesterday. I was 14, and just beginning to learn to drive my father's farm truck. What a thrill it was as I mashed down the accelerator and felt the power of that '39 Plymouth's six-cylinder engine.

It was harvest season, and it was my job to scoop the harvested corn into the corn crib. We had borrowed a neighbor's tractor to haul the corn. The tractor was unusual in that it had a foot-operated accelerator, just like my father's truck, as opposed to one that was hand-operated.

Not having much driving experience, I was excited at the opportunity to accelerate in the tractor. I picked up a load of corn from my dad and drove it back to the corn crib. All the way, I pushed the foot accelerator up and down to keep the tractor racing. But there was another difference between this tractor and the tractors we had on our farm—this tractor had an axle that ran outside the wheel's edge.

I pulled into the barn where the corn crib was. I was going fast, and, wanting to get as close as possible to the corn crib, I pulled in close to the side. All of a sudden—Crash! Bam! Boom!—the axle of the tractor began to gouge the two-by-fours that held the corn

crib together. By the time I could get the tractor stopped, I had broken half a dozen of the boards.

By this time in the harvest season, the corn crib was about three-quarters full and it began to bulge out rather dramatically. I scooped the corn into the crib and then waited for my dad to come in that evening.

I knew I deserved whatever punishment he was going to give me for driving too fast. That sometimes meant severe physical punishment, or a well-articulated verbal reprimand. Whatever the punishment, each of them seemed equally distasteful. I wondered, What should I do? Should I tell him? Should I let him discover it on his own? I really didn't know what to do.

I decided the best thing to do was to show him when he came home. I said, "Dad, I had an accident. I ran into the side of the corn crib with the axle." He went in and looked, and I was fully expecting punishment. He shook his head, turned around, and walked away without saying a word. I was in shock. Why didn't he punish me? I deserved it, but he didn't do anything.

Thirty years passed before I could talk to him about it. It was my last visit with him before he died when I asked him, "Do you remember when I knocked those boards loose

from the corn crib? Why didn't you punish me?" He looked at me and said he didn't think you should punish someone when they have an accident when they are working hard. That was all the discussion. I drove too fast. He knew it, but he chose to forgive rather than punish. I was working hard, doing everything I could to help out on the farm, but I had still done something wrong.

Forgiveness is easier to preach than to practice. This is probably best illustrated by Jesus' prayer on the cross, "Father forgive them for they know not what they do," (Luke 23:34).

"That prayer of Christ for His enemies embraced the world. It took in every sinner that had lived or should live, from the beginning of the world to the end of time. Upon all rests the guilt of crucifying the Son of God. To all, forgiveness is freely offered. 'Whosoever will' may have peace with God, and inherit eternal life," (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 745).

I'm glad I had a forgiving father. I'm also glad we have a forgiving Savior who prayed for His persecutors, for you, and for me. Let's be the answer to Jesus' prayer. Then, we will escape punishment and inherit eternal life.

**James L. Stevens**, president

## Family—A Little Taste of Heaven

**ALBUQUERQUE, N. MEX. »** More than 40 families attended "Family Weekend" (Fin de Semana Familiar) at the Rio Grande church recently. The women's, men's, and family ministries coordinated the event with guest speakers Miriam Acosta, psychiatrist, and Pablo López, a psychologist and pastor.

On Friday evening the program began with the theme, "The Home Imagined by God." Attendees learned that their homes should be a small piece of heaven.

On Sabbath, a seminar for men taught them how to have better relationships with their spouses and communicate better within the family. The women had their own time to learn to love, respect, and how to take care of themselves, with self-esteem being the main topic. At the same time, pre-teens, teens, and youth had their own meeting with López, who discussed

the advantages and disadvantages of using Facebook and social media, and how to use it wisely. He explained how they could protect themselves physically on social media as well as protect and manage relationships with friends, family, and God.

At the end of the program, the professionals answered questions on health, spirituality, relationships, forgiveness, parenting, and other issues. Afterward, mar-

ried couples enjoyed a romantic dinner at a local restaurant.

God truly blessed the families and reminded each one that this earth is not our home. We are headed to a much better home, but while we await His Second Coming, we ought to prepare and make our homes a little taste of heaven.

**Rosio Aguilera**



Miriam Acosta, psychiatrist, addressed families at the Albuquerque Rio Grande church's Family Weekend.

# New Mexico Troops Return Home

**ALBUQUERQUE, N. MEX. »** More than 400 soldiers from the New Mexico National Guard returned home after a year-long, peace-keeping mission to Sinai, Egypt. The troops returned home in waves, with the third and final wave of guardsmen returning to Albuquerque, New Mexico, on December 11, 2012.

Staff sergeant Timo Alvidrez, son of Gilberto and Maxine Alvidrez, and specialist Gabriel Vasquez, son of Michael and Margaret Vasquez, were two of the soldiers in that last wave of New Mexico-bound troops. Both young men grew up in the Adventist faith, both attended the Albuquerque Three Angels church since their youth, and unknown to each other, both Timo and Gabriel enlisted in the New Mexico National Guard and were surprised to see each other preparing for the same peace-keeping mission trip to Egypt!

Each son then shared the news with their parents, and soon a common bond formed between the two sets of parents. "I remember every Sabbath, Gilberto and I would find time to encourage each other about our sons, and to keep them and the rest of the troops in prayer," recalled Michael Vasquez, Sr.

"There was one time that I hadn't heard from Gabriel in weeks," said Margaret Vasquez, "One night, we heard a disturbing broadcast on the world news regarding certain situations in Sinai, the very

place Timo and Gabriel were stationed. My heart grew heavy and my prayers intensified. Then, a few days later on Sabbath morning, Maxine sought us out at church to tell us their son was able to get through to them, and he assured them all was well at their site and also relayed the message that our son, Gabriel, was OK, too. We were so relieved! I found great comfort talking with Gilberto and Maxine throughout this past year, because they could relate to our concerns about our son just as we could relate to theirs."

After a year of faithful prayers and encouragement from the two sets of parents, church family, and friends, the Albuquer-

que Three Angels church welcomed Timo and Gabriel home. Upon arrival at Cutter Airport, the two young soldiers, along with the rest of the troops, were greeted with hugs and cheers and the words "Thank you for your service" from various veterans' organizations, including Blue Star Moms, and from numerous family and friends in attendance. About 45 New Mexico Guardsmen still remain on duty in the Sinai Peninsula. Let's continue to keep these men, women, and their families in faithful prayer for their safe return home.

Margaret A. Vasquez



▲ Staff Sergeant Timo Alvidrez and Specialist Gabriel Vasquez of the New Mexico National Guard, returning home after a year-long peace-keeping mission in Sinai, Egypt.

◀ The third wave of New Mexico National Guard soldiers landing at Cutter Airport in Albuquerque, New Mexico, on the morning of December 11, 2012.

# Warm Hearts on a Cold Afternoon

**CORRALES, N. MEX. »** On a cold Sabbath afternoon this past December, the men, women, and children of the Corrales church distributed clothing, blankets, bedding, toiletries, and sack lunches to the homeless at Project Share. Project Share, with the help of its wonderful sponsors and volunteers, provides hot, nutritious meals on six evenings every week to the homeless population in the Albuquerque metropolitan area.

About 15 years ago, Ralph de Palma, a Vietnam veteran and former homeless person from the East Coast, became a Christian. He relocated to Albuquerque and began to devote his life to the homeless near Old Town by holding Christian meetings at soup kitchens and talking about God's love to those sleeping under bridges. John Houser, a previous member of Corrales church, met de Palma, and established a yearly collaboration between him and the church. During Thanksgiving and Christmastime each year, the Corrales church collects clothing and prepares lunches to support the homeless in de Palma's program as a way to show God's love to the neediest. In the early days, church members distributed the clothing and food on street corners and parking lots, but later the church began a collaborative partnership with Project Share as a better way to synchronize the efforts of each organization to address needs during the winter season.

For the past two years, Sandia View Elementary School has been actively involved in this endeavor. The school gymnasium has been transformed into a production line,

with students assembling sack lunches of fruit, chips, cookies, and sandwiches. Along with passing those sack lunches to the homeless at Project Share, the children are able to learn firsthand about God's love for the less fortunate. They are able to put themselves into the situation described in Matthew 25:35: "For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and

you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in."

On December 15, the Corrales church once again went to Project Share and distributed clothing, toiletries, and sack lunches. It was a frigid afternoon, but the children had warm hearts and eagerly gave out food and clothing. The youth sang Christmas songs and the adults prayed with those who wanted prayers. They also provided for special needs, such as buying diapers and baby clothes.

One of the homeless men expressed his sincere appreciation and felt he needed to return the gesture of thoughtfulness back to the children. The only thing he had to give were hummingbirds made from plastic pens and a Bic lighter. It was a sign of his love for the kindness the children showed that afternoon. This interaction was a true exchange of brotherhood without regard to age or status.

**Monique Wilkerson**



**Top left:** A sleeping bag is distributed by a loving child from the Corrales church.

▲ A homeless man reciprocates the kindness shown to him by giving the children hummingbirds made from plastic pens.

◀ Corrales church members, young and old, packed sack lunches to take to the homeless in Albuquerque.

# The Value of My Education

Lee Rudisaile, class of 1985, works as an x-ray technician—but there's more to his job than meets the eye. He studied communication at Southwestern Adventist University. His job might not be considered as part of communication field, but Rudisaile makes use of his degree on a daily basis.

"I've done all kinds of things that aren't usually in my job description," said Rudisaile, "partially because I have a communication degree. One of the most valuable things I ever learned at Southwestern was how to connect with people."

Rudisaile didn't know what to expect when he came to Southwestern.

"I had no idea how college would be," said Rudisaile. "I lived in the village with my aunt, and that was something I had never done since I lived in a dorm in academy. I met a lot of people that became my friends, and that I continue to have as friends."

Rudisaile chose to study communication because it was something he always enjoyed.

"Ever since I was a kid, I liked television and radio," said Rudisaile. "If there was a big box, I'd cut a hole in it and pretend like I was on the television. My step-father, Richard, suggested communication to me on the drive to Southwestern, and right then and there I knew that's what I wanted to study."

After settling in, Rudisaile got a job at the campus radio station. He got to know his teachers and enjoyed his studies. One teacher that he looked up to was his advisor, Bob Mendenhall. Mendenhall still teaches communication at Southwestern.

Rudisaile and his wife, Laura, whom he met at Southwestern, enjoyed their time at the university so much that they decided to move near campus so that their daughter could attend.

"We both believe that Christian education is very important," said Rudisaile. "We wanted our daughter, Stephanie, to have the opportunity to be near home and at a Seventh-day Adventist college."

Now, Rudisaile is still involved on campus. He's been on the alumni association

board, volunteered, with Laura, to help feed students for special events, and volunteers at Southwestern's radio station, 88.3 The Journey.

Even though Rudisaile's job as an x-ray technician at Texas Health Cleburne isn't a communication job, he still makes use of his degree. He's also the PACS (Picture Archiving and Communication System)

Point presentations, and writing hospital newsletters. Other tasks include volunteering as a hospital representative at the Special Olympics and teaching radiology students that visit the hospital.

"One of the most important things I learned at Southwestern was how to communicate," said Rudisaile. "The college has the same kind of goals that my fam-



Lee ('85) and Laura ('85) Rudisaile celebrate their daughter Stephanie's high school graduation. Stephanie is now a junior English major at Southwestern.

manager. In other words, he works with the computer system and stores medical images for the hospital.

In the past, he's also fulfilled communication assignments around the hospital, such as writing speeches, creating Power-

ily has, and that's to prepare ourselves for heaven. That's why I still invest my time and money here."

**Makala Coleman**, sophomore journalism major

## “Let the little children come unto me...”

We care about evangelism in the Southwestern Union. And a very important part of evangelism is reaching out to the children. Because we care about the children, we include them in our evangelism efforts. Vacation Bible School is our oldest and most used evangelistic program for the children.

Over the years, we have kept up with changing society in our programming. One of these VBS programs will be presented to all of the Southwestern Union children's leaders on March 17. If you love children and enjoy working with them, you're invited to be a part of this training.

We do this training every year and it is well attended. The decorations and props we use for the training are then recycled out to the churches that want to use them.

The 2013 VBS program is entitled Kingdom Rock—Where Kids Stand Strong for God and is based on the following texts: “The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer” (2 Samuel 22:2) and “I love you, Lord; you are my

strength” (Psalm 18:1).

Kingdom Rock reaches today's kids. Everything—from the inspiring music and Bible adventures to the energizing games and crafts—has been designed to connect children's minds and hearts to one simple daily Bible point. You're on a firm biblical foundation with Kingdom Rock. Every activity is intentionally designed so that kids hear, see, sing, touch, and even taste God's Word! Kids apply what they've learned as they serve others and watch for God in everyday life.



### Join Us! “Be a Kid for a Day.”

**Date:** March 17, 2013

**Time:** 9:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.

**Place:** Burleson Adventist Church (next door to Southwestern Union Conference), 601 S. Burleson Blvd., Burleson, TX 76028

We call our VBS training “Kid for a Day,” where everyone experiences VBS in a “hands-on” way. When attendees go back to their conferences and churches, they are “fired up” to have the best VBS ever for the children in their church and neighborhood.

Yes, we have fun in VBS! But we don't stop there. We encourage follow-up after the VBS is over. We want the children to feel welcome and comfortable in our church. We want them to experience God's love, which they learned about in VBS.

**Margaret Taglavore**, Southwestern Union Conference children's ministries director

## NAD Ordination Study Committee launches new web site

The NAD Theology of Ordination Study Committee has launched a Web site at [NADordination.com](http://NADordination.com).

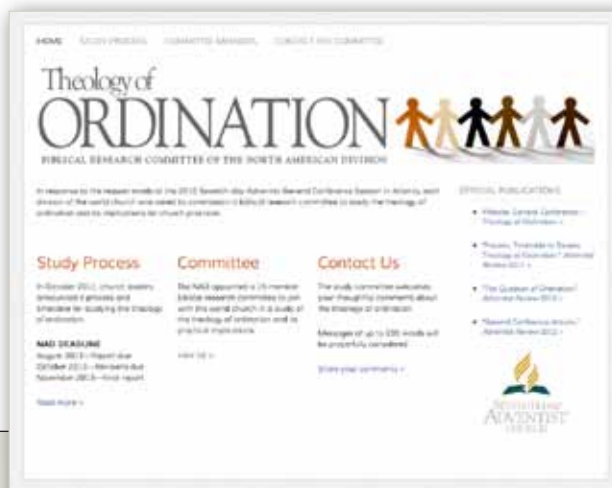
The committee, appointed by the North American Division as part of the study currently underway in the worldwide Seventh-day Adventist Church, is researching the theology of ordination and its practical implications for the church.

“Transparency is our goal as we compile the report,” says Gordon Bietz, chair of the NAD committee. The site includes news about the progress of the committee,

a list of committee members, and an easy-to-use e-mail form for church members to send messages of up to 200 words.

“We are scheduled to meet in March, June, and July to review documents, discuss findings, and develop a North American Division statement on the subject of ordination,” Bietz says.

The committee's final report will be presented at the NAD year-end meetings in November 2013.



The NAD Ordination Study Committee recently launched a new “Theology of Ordination” Web site. The site includes news about the progress of the committee, a list of committee members, and a form for church members to submit messages.



# New CHIP launched at North American summit

**CRANDALL, GEORGIA** » A new global and integrated health resource for local churches was launched at the CHIP Summit, held November 15 to 19, at Cohutta Springs Conference Center, Crandall, Georgia. The all-new Complete Health Improvement Program (CHIP) builds on the foundation of the former Coronary Health Improvement Project, including the continuing core principles of health intervention and lifestyle medicine with a contemporary presentation, and updated medical and scientific research.

Dr. Hans Diehl founded the CHIP ministry 25 years ago, but acknowledges that the previous materials needed updating and that the self-supporting ministry did not have the necessary resources for this task. “We needed to find a strong partner with commensurate resources but that also embraced our basic Adventist wholistic values with strong spiritual underpinnings,” Dr. Diehl explains.

Working particularly with the church-owned Sanitarium Health and Wellbeing in Australia, the South Pacific Division purchased CHIP with a plan for it to be renewed and relaunched under the leadership and management of Sanitarium. “CHIP has been a great program that was setting the church up to be a center of influence in the community, that was bringing great results and bringing the church’s health message to life,” says Cathy McDonald, general manager of Sanitarium’s Health and Wellbeing Services. “We also saw the potential to update it and enlarge its impact.”

“After 25 years of making CHIP my life and my mission, it was not easy to let CHIP go, but my team and I recognized the need for an enriched environment in which CHIP could develop to full maturity,” adds Dr. Diehl. “We are truly grateful for how God has led. We are overjoyed to place this project in the hands of the church for which it was created.”



▲ Summit participants unpack the all-new CHIP resource kits at the launch of the new program on November 15, 2012.

◀ Darren Morton, left, a physiologist and a senior health and exercise science lecturer in the School of Education at Avondale College, Cooranbong, New South Wales, Australia, was a presenter at the CHIP Summit along with Hans Diehl, CHIP program founder.

While need for a new CHIP was recognized, the measurable clinical outcomes of the existing program has been lauded by medical researchers. Early this year, the American College of Lifestyle Medicine described research on CHIP participants published in the *American Journal of Cardiology* as “some of the most impressive recorded clinical changes ever in the literature.”

Some 270 CHIP facilitators, health professionals and health leaders applauded the launch of the new CHIP resources, included integrated textbook, participants’ journal, recipe book, and DVD series at the CHIP summit. “I think the new CHIP resource is phenomenal,” says Dr. Brian Will, a medical doctor and CHIP leader in the Meadowglade Adventist Church, Washington. “The advances in scientific knowl-

edge have added greater credibility to the core principles of CHIP. The team has created a product that is dynamic, is engaging and must be more effective than even the great results we have already seen. It will be simpler to run but will be more professional and it will come across well in the community.”

According to Cathy McDonald, the combined American and Australian team are planning for the new CHIP “to become the biggest lifestyle medicine and disease reversal program globally and to resource the global church with a quality health program at a local church level.

“We believe this will significantly add to the medical missionary work of the church,” she adds. “We want to be able to support local churches to be centers of health, hope, and healing.”

Nathan Brown

## 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: [www.summitridgevillage.org](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](mailto:david.gordon@ahss.org).

**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>.

**Adventist University of Health Sciences** is seeking applicants for the position of Program Director for a new Physician Assistant program. A master's degree is required; doctoral degree is preferred. Adventist University is a faith-based institution which seeks candidates who fit the unique culture and mission of the college. Please email CV to: Dr. Len M. Archer, Assoc. VP for Academic Administration, Adventist University of Health Sciences, 671 Winyah Drive, Orlando, FL 32803; [len.archer@adu.edu](mailto:len.archer@adu.edu).

**Adventist University of Health Sciences**, Orlando, FL is seeking a Physical Therapist Program Director beginning 2013. The Program Director will provide overall academic leadership developing this program, and salary will be competitive. Requirements: doctoral degree from regionally accredited school, PT academic experience, eligible for FL PT licensure. Preferred: senior faculty status. Submit letter of interest, curriculum vita, three references and/or letters of recommendation to Dr. Don Williams, Sr., VP Academic Administration, Adventist University of Health Sciences, 671 Winyah Drive, Orlando, FL 32803; [don.williams@adu.edu](mailto:don.williams@adu.edu).

**Andrews University** seeks an Associate/Full Professor for Physical Therapy. Qualified candidates should have an earned entry level physical therapist degree from a CAPTE accredited program. An earned advanced doctorate is preferred. Must have two years of teaching experience and two years in management serving in a leadership role. For more information and to apply, visit: [http://www.andrews.edu/HR/emp\\_jobs\\_faculty.cgi](http://www.andrews.edu/HR/emp_jobs_faculty.cgi).

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**Andrews University** seeks a faculty member for Medical Laboratory Sciences. Medical Laboratory Scientist or equivalent with National/US recognized certification. Earned doctorate preferred with demonstrated laboratory expertise and broad experience in clinical chemistry. For more information and to apply, visit: [http://www.andrews.edu/HR/emp\\_jobs\\_faculty.cgi](http://www.andrews.edu/HR/emp_jobs_faculty.cgi).

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LOMA LINDA UNIVERSITY  
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## 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@college.edu](mailto:alumni@college.edu).

**Washington Adventist University:** You are invited to attend Washington Adventist University's Alumni Weekend, April 12-14, 2013. Visit [www.wau.edu/alumni](http://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 schoolmates 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 [www.glaa.net](http://www.glaa.net) for further information. Please pass along 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](http://www.CRSBGift.org). Reach out with a tax-deductible gift to: Christian Record Services for the Blind, Box 6097, Lincoln, NE 68506.

**ACA Homecoming 2013:** One University Changing the World, Celebrating 50 Years of Adventist Colleges Abroad. April 19-21. La Sierra University, 4500 Riverwalk Parkway, Riverside, CA. More information: Julie Narducci, [alumni@lasierra.edu](mailto:alumni@lasierra.edu), 951.785.2578, [www.lasierra.edu/alumni](http://www.lasierra.edu/alumni).

**La Sierra University Alumni Weekend 2013:** Alumni and friend of La Sierra are invited to Alumni Weekend, April 26-27 and to a golf tournament on Sunday, April 21. Honor Classes are '3's and 8's. LSA Campus, Riverside, Calif. Information: Judith Nelson, [JNelson@lsak12.com](mailto:JNelson@lsak12.com), 951.351.1445, ext. 244, Web site: [www.lsak12.com](http://www.lsak12.com).

**Broadview Academy Alumni Weekend:** Mark your calendars, Alumni Weekend is April 26-27, 2013 at the N. Aurora SDA Church, N. Aurora, IL. All alumni are encouraged to attend. Call your classmates and start planning for this weekend now. There will be Friday night vespers, Sabbath School, and church. Honor classes: '43, '53, '63, '73, '83, '88, '93 and '03. All ideas and information welcome. For communication purposes, we need your e-mail addresses as postage is too expensive. Send your email address to: Ed Gutierrez, [edjulie1@att.net](mailto:edjulie1@att.net), or call, 630.232.9034. More Information to come. Don't miss it!

**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](mailto:bevm@swau.edu).

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

**Valley Grande Adventist Academy Alumni Weekend.** The alumni association invites all former faculty, staff, and students to alumni weekend to be held on March 22-24, 2013. Come sing with the Sylvan choir and visit with friends again. For more information, visit our Web site at [www.vgaa.org](http://www.vgaa.org), or contact Suzanna Facundo at [sfacundo@swuc.org](mailto:sfacundo@swuc.org).

**Oklahoma Academy's Academy Days:** If you are a student who is serious about your walk with the Lord and His mission for your life, Oklahoma Academy may be just right for you. Come visit April 19-21, 2013 for our Academy Days Weekend and find out! Call 405.454.6211 to make your reservations today! Find us on the Web at: [www.oklahomaacademy.org](http://www.oklahomaacademy.org).

## Obituaries

**BAKER Sr., Woodrow W.,** died October 31, 2012. He was preceded in death by his wife, Virginia, in 2009. He was a member of the Lufkin church, having moved to Lufkin in 1980 to start the local church school. Survivors: son, Woodrow Baker, Jr., of Lufkin; and son, Timothy D. Baker, of San Antonio, Tex.

**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: brother and sister-in-law, Wayne and Ellene Lovin, 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:

## Milestones

### BIRTHS

Vialo and Shannon Weis are pleased to announce the birth of their son, **Daniel Louis Weis**, on November 11, 2012. Daniel is named after his third great-grandfather and his name in Hebrew means "God is my Judge," which is a fitting name for a child whose parents are both attorneys. Vialo is the planned giving and

trust services director, public affairs and religious liberty director, corporation secretary, and general counsel for the Oklahoma Conference, and Shannon is a solo practitioner in Yukon, Oklahoma.

### ANNIVERSARIES

**Elder and Mrs. Tyrone Clem-  
ons** celebrated their 41st wedding anniversary on January 29th and continue to be high school sweethearts!

*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](http://www.texasconferencelegacy.org)

Texico Conference, Sean Robinson, 800.759.7851

Southwestern Adventist University, Harvey Byram,  
817.433.2240, [www.swau.edu](http://www.swau.edu)

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; daughter and son-in-law, Martha and Brad Fornal; five grandchildren, and five great-grandchildren.

**DESHAZO, Florence M. Fleenor**, 80, died December 18, 2012 in Hot Springs Village, Ark. Florence and her husband, Howard, moved to Hot Springs Village from Dallas, Tex., in 1990. She retired from Eastman Kodak Company in Dallas. She enjoyed classical music, the Symphony Guild, the Audubon Society, and walking the beautiful trails of Hot Springs Village. She was preceded in death by her husband, Howard DeShazo; her parents, William and Allie Fleenor; two brothers, Herbert and Daniel Fleenor; and one sister, Naomi Fleenor Haynes. She is resting peacefully next to her husband in Restland Memorial Park in Dallas. Donations in her memory may be made to the Diabetes Foundation. Survivors: sister, Jane Turnidge, of St. Paul, Minn.; and numerous nieces, nephews, and cousins.

**FELICIANO, José Ramón**, born October 30, 1938 in San Juan, Puerto Rico, and died December 5, 2012 in Keene, Tex. He was a retired minister, having served the Texas Conference for 17 years. He was a member of the Cleburne Spanish church. He was preceded in death by his loving wife, Dora Pérez-

Feliciano, who died 1998. Survivors: daughter Neyra Greenidge, of Cleburne, Tex.; daughter, Sasha Vásquez, of Germantown, Md.; son, José Feliciano Jr., of Keene; son, Magdiel Feliciano, of McDonald, Tenn.; son, Abimael Feliciano, of Laveen, Ariz.; and five grandchildren.

**HIGLEY, Clara B.**, born August 30, 1940 in Rosebud, Mont., and died September 23, 2012 in Gilmer, Tex. She was a member of the Longview church.

**SHARP, Linda Charlene**, born September 27, 1944, in Tulsa, Okla., and died September 29, 2012, in Wewoka, Okla. She was a long-time member of the First church of Tulsa, where she served as treasurer, Sabbath School teacher, deaconess, and choir member for many years. She was an employee of Citgo Petroleum for 32 years. Survivors: mother, Frances Gillham, of Tulsa; daughter and son-in-law, Julie and Dewayne Streater, of Wewoka, Okla.; son and daughter-in-law, Dr. Kenneth and Carissa Sharp, of Frisco, Tex.; sister and brother-in-law, Judith and Dave Garlock, of Tulsa; and five grandchildren.

**SWOFFORD, Jimmie W.**, born August 17, 1935 in Uvalde, Tex., and died November 19, 2012 in Center Point, Tex. He was a band director for 42 years in Arizona and South Texas. After retirement, he taught music at the Hill Country Adventist School. He was a member of the Kerrville church. Survivors: wife, Patricia "Pat" Swofford, of Center Point;

daughter and son-in-law, Melody Lee and Steve Smiley, of Saginaw, Tex.; daughter and son-in-law, Jimmie Lynne and Tom Manwiller, of Jacksonville, Fla.; daughter and son-in-law, Christy Ruth and Major Bruce Fletcher, of Shepherd Air Force Base, Wichita Falls, Tex.; daughter and son-in-law, Carmina Jene and Kelly Morrison, of Austin, Tex.; stepdaughters, Jennifer Omoto-Freeman, of League City, Tex., and Jill Omoto-Boyd, of Richardson, Tex.; sister, Joyce Marie Ritchie, of Hobbs, N. Mex.; and many grandchildren, step-grandchildren, nieces, and nephews.

**TEFETILLER, Marie Christine**, born December 24, 1934 in Davis, Okla., and died October 9, 2012 in Weatherford, Tex. She was a member of the Weatherford church. Marie and her husband, Homer, were pioneer sup-

porters of Southwestern Adventist University, providing a Christian home environment in Keene for various students. She continued to be a loving Christian witness to young and old up to the time of her sleep in Jesus. Survivors: daughter and son-in-law, Debra and John Davis, of Weatherford; daughter and son-in-law, Claudia and husband, Mark Yoder, of Azle, Tex.; brother, Jerry Willis of Burleson, Tex.; brother, Billy Willis, of Crowley, Tex.; five grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren.

**THOMSON, John Emerson**, born November 25, 1949 in Fort Collins, Colo., and died September 3, 2012 in St. Maries, Ida. Formerly from Keene, Tex, he was the son of Dr. George (Smokey) Thomson and Evelyn Thomson. Survivors: wife, Bobbye (Childers) Thomson; and daughter, Brenna Thomson.

SABBATH SUNSET CALENDAR						
	Mar 1	Mar 8	Mar 15	Mar 22	Mar 29	Apr 5
Abilene, TX	6:37	6:42	7:47	7:52	7:57	8:01
Albuquerque, NM	6:02	6:08	7:14	7:20	7:26	7:31
Amarillo, TX	6:43	6:49	7:55	8:01	8:07	8:12
Brownsville, TX	6:32	6:35	7:39	7:43	7:46	7:49
Dallas, TX	6:25	6:30	7:35	7:40	7:46	7:50
El Paso, TX	6:04	6:10	7:14	7:19	7:24	7:28
Fort Worth/Keene, TX	6:27	6:32	7:38	7:43	7:47	7:52
Gallup, NM	6:11	6:17	7:23	7:29	7:34	7:40
Galveston/Houston, TX	6:21	6:26	7:30	7:34	7:38	7:42
Gentry, AR	6:13	6:19	7:26	7:32	7:38	7:43
Little Rock, AR	6:05	6:11	7:17	7:23	7:28	7:33
Muskogee, OK	6:17	6:23	7:29	7:35	7:41	7:46
New Orleans, LA	5:59	6:04	7:09	7:13	7:17	7:21
Oklahoma City, OK	6:26	6:32	7:38	7:44	7:49	7:55
Roswell, NM	5:55	6:01	7:06	7:11	7:17	7:22
San Antonio, TX	6:34	6:38	7:43	7:47	7:51	7:55
Shreveport, LA	6:13	6:18	7:23	7:28	7:33	7:38
Tulsa, OK	6:19	6:26	7:32	7:38	7:44	7:49

**Note:** Daylight Savings Time begins at 2:00 a.m. on Mar. 10.



# On the Record »

BY PAT HUMPHREY » COMMUNICATION DIRECTOR, SOUTHWESTERN UNION

## Drive-through Prayer? Yes!

**ON A ROAD THAT I TRAVEL FREQUENTLY**, there is a church with a sign that reads “Drive-thru Prayer.” I must admit that, at first, the sign struck me as a bit extreme. In this age of “microwave” substitutions for everything, I figured this was the pastor’s last-ditch attempt to get people out to Wednesday-night prayer meeting. I reasoned that his thinking probably went something like this: “Everyone’s too busy to show up at prayer meeting. And since we can’t get people to sit down in the pews for a one-hour service, we’ll offer a drive-through prayer service. That’ll do it!”

But after a bit of pondering, my thinking began to shift a little. Maybe that sign isn’t meant for the members of that congregation, after all. Maybe, just maybe, that sign is for passersby! People like you and me, who may be traveling down life’s bumpy, curvy roads and in dire need of the blessings that prayer can bring. Perhaps that sign is an invitation from a loving, caring congregation that is reaching out to weary travelers who’ve been hit hard by life’s challenges, and who need to be reassured of God’s love and care for them.

I can tell you from personal experience about the blessings of intercessory prayer. Recently, within the space of about a week, I was talking

with two different friends on the phone. Before each conversation ended, each of my friends said to me, “I’d like to pray with you right now. Would that be OK?” Both times when that happened, those words covered me like a warm blanket in a cold room. My friends’ prayers for me were so



encouraging! I felt so blessed and loved. In a very real and personal way, I learned the precious value of reaching out to others through prayer and also how important it is for *me* to offer that same gift to those whom God places in *my* path.

As I think about the ministry of intercessory prayer, particularly here in our own Southwestern Union territory, I am heartened by what I see. Our members are reaching out in so many creative ways—through prayer conferences, small prayer groups in members’ homes, call-in prayer lines, prayer booths at fairs and other events, prayer walking through neighborhoods, and yes, even drive-through prayer!

Wherever we are, or whatever we are doing, God places people in our path who need to be covered with the “warm blanket” of prayer. We just need to recognize those opportunities when God presents them. As 1 Timothy 2:1 (NKJV) tells us, we ought to make “supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks” an integral part of our lifestyle.

*Pat Humphrey*

## Record

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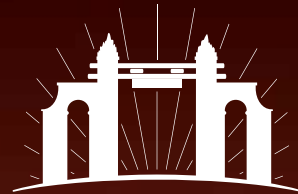
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### Submissions

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



# Through the Mizpah Gate

2013 Alumni Homecoming  
April 11-14, Keene, Texas

Featuring

*The 2013 Southwestern Homecoming Golf Classic*

on Friday, April 12, at The Retreat in Cleburne

Register online at

<https://iamsouthwestern.thankyou4caring.org/golf>  
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Highlights:

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- Prayer Breakfast
- Metroplex Tour
- Worship Services
- Class Reunions
- Pancake Breakfast Benefit
- 5K Run

For more information, please contact Bev Mendenhall, Director of Alumni  
817-202-6232 | [bevm@swau.edu](mailto:bevm@swau.edu)



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## UPCOMING EVENTS

March 24-25  
University Experience  
April 1  
University Open House

**A Night at the Meyerson**  
7:30 pm, April 7, 2013, Morton H. Meyerson Symphony Center, Dallas, Texas  
Tickets available online at [www.swau.edu/Meyerson](http://www.swau.edu/Meyerson) on January 7  
Orchestra/Orchestra Terrace: \$20 (\$15 until March 1) | Dress Circle: \$15