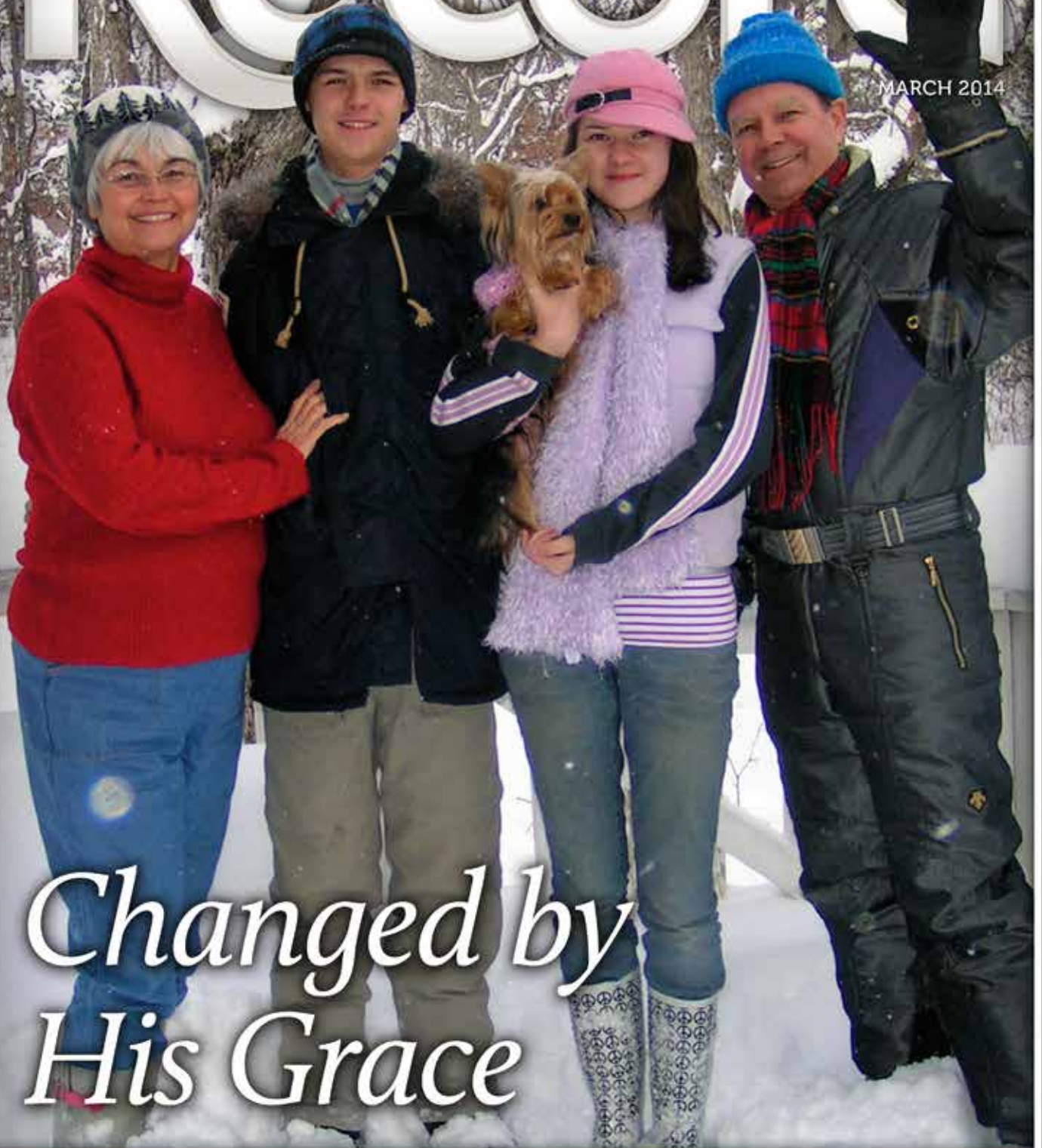


SOUTHWESTERN UNION

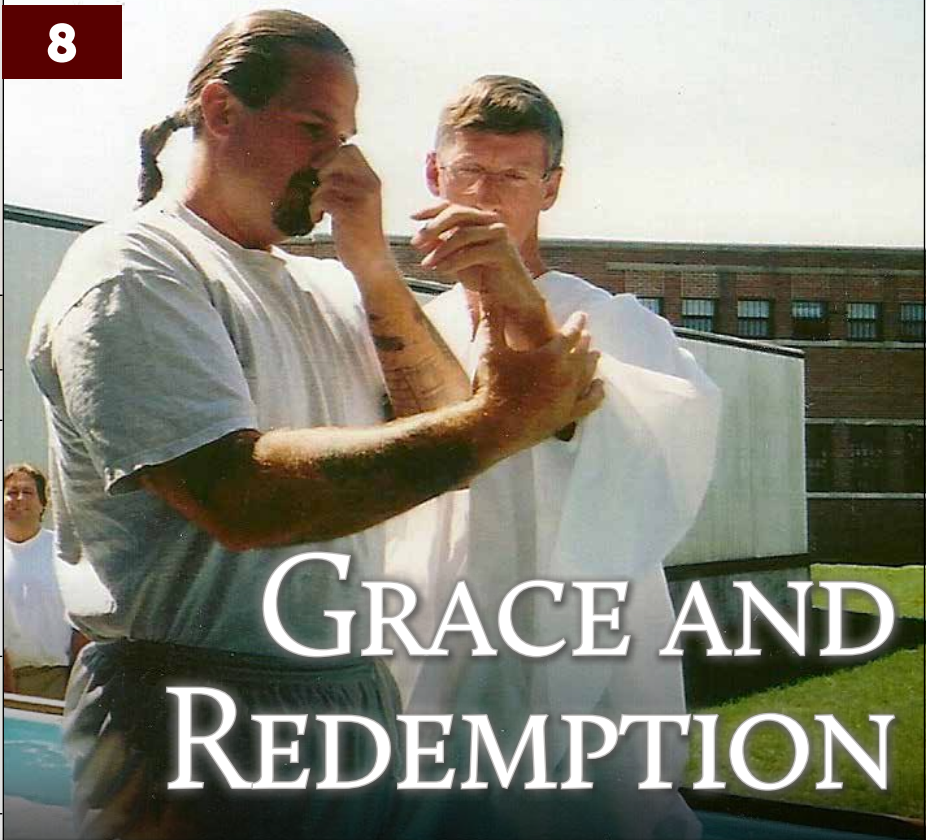
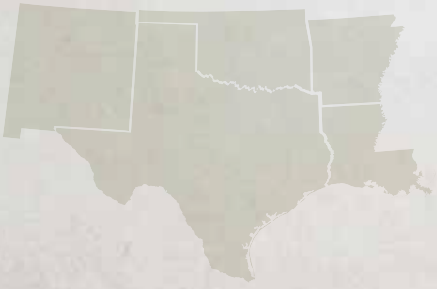
# Record

MARCH 2014



*Changed by  
His Grace*

COMPELLING STORIES OF TRANSFORMATION



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GRACE AND REDEMPTION



"WHOSOEVER' MEANETH ME"  
A Transformation Story

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**On the Cover**

Ron Woolsey's life might have looked very different if not for the grace of God. He is pictured here enjoying a wintery afternoon with his wife, Claudia, and children, Zachary and Natalie. His and other stories of transformation through Christ are the focus of this issue of the *Record*.



# Point of View»

BY LARRY MOORE » SOUTHWESTERN UNION CONFERENCE PRESIDENT



## God's People Are Everywhere

When I was pastoring the Phoenix Paradise Valley church in Arizona, Carl and Ella Johnston were the conference evangelists (they are now directing Seminars Unlimited in Keene, Texas). We sent out handbills to the community and had a good response. Lee and Sharon came with their children, and were very interested in learning more about Bible prophecy. When we visited their home, Lee told us that he was the manager of a rock band and was into drugs and all that goes with it. I was interested to see if God could make a Seventh-day Adventist out of him. Lee was also in trouble with the law and would later have to face the consequences. They were able to come to all of the meetings and took their stand for Jesus and His church. God's people are everywhere.

Cigarettes were a real challenge for Lee to give up. He said it was easier to give up hard drugs than to give up tobacco. The law finally caught up to Lee and he was incarcerated in Arizona State Prison. Lee told me that God was working in his life even in prison. He was able to finally get over his cigarette habit and witness to many inmates about his new beliefs and the love of Jesus. God has His people out there. Many are looking toward heaven and God for answers to life's problems. We have been given the precious opportunity to point them to the Savior. Let's do all we can to cooperate with the Holy Spirit in the work of soul winning.

*Larry Moore*



## Stepping Stone to Success

**LM:** As you read about Rachel Macomber Lawry, '09 and Jeremy Carter, '06, two recent Southwestern Adventist University graduates, notice how they are passing on the education they received to their own students and those they work with.



Rachel Macomber Lawry '09, English

**RML:** I graduated from Southwestern in 2009 with a degree in English and a minor in religion. It was an easy choice for me to attend Southwestern. I knew I wanted to attend an Adventist college, as I hoped to maintain a close relationship with God as I worked to achieve a higher education. I was amazed to find that Southwestern had five professors with PhDs in its English department. Besides having so many qualified teachers in my area of study, Southwestern had a vibrant drama program, and many extracurricular activities to stimulate the mind. My husband, Gavin ('08), and I met while attending Southwestern, and married after we had both completed our coursework. We currently live in Conroe, Texas, where I work as the language arts and English teacher for the upper grades at Adventist Christian Academy of Texas. I have an amazing opportunity to reach young people and help impact them and lead them toward a more fulfilling future. I desire that each of my students' futures will center around a love for Christ.



Jeremy Carter, '06, Psychology

**JC:** Prior to my admission to Southwestern, I had never attended a Christian educational institution. This Christ-focused education came at a critical period in my life. Southwestern gave me a context to evaluate my personal ideas in contrast with biblical concepts. The professors challenged and expected more than just academic achievement, which was in stark contrast to my previous academic experience. The students gave me the opportunity to build meaningful relationships that not only helped mold my character, but also supplied a sense of belonging and nostalgia that returns whenever I step foot on the campus. Since graduating from Southwestern, I have completed both a masters and a doctoral degree in clinical psychology. I have worked in a clinical setting at Texas Health Huguley Hospital and various other facilities for the past ten years and was recently promoted to clinical supervisor of the behavioral health program. When I was offered the opportunity to teach psychology at Southwestern, I jumped at it. Southwestern was a program that was personally, spiritually, and professionally helpful for my life and has afforded me the opportunity to pass this along to other students.





# CREATION Health

BY LYNELL LAMOUNTAIN » SOUTHERN UNION HEALTH MINISTRIES DIRECTOR

## Divine Beauty

“For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible...All things were created through Him and for Him,” (Colossians 1:16).

### Beauty

When you think of “environment,” what images come to mind? Do you see pictures of our blue-emerald planet swirled in white, slowly spinning on its axis with its luxurious variety of ecosystems created for our enjoyment, like steamy rainforests, colorful coral reefs, snow-capped mountains, waterfalls, and deserts? What do *you* see?

### Overlooked

How often do we miss beauty that is right in front of us? We gaze at tiny screens, satisfied to live a virtual life while the heart-pounding majesty of God goes unnoticed. What would happen if we traded virtual reality for environments flourishing with beauty, freedom, and joy?

### Why?

Years ago, my wife and I had the privilege of accompanying Elder Morris Venden to the Philippines for meetings. Since Jennifer and I are avid scuba divers, we decided to visit Australia and dive the Great Barrier Reef while we were on that side of the planet.

We spent five days and four nights on a live-aboard dive boat, diving morning, noon, and night. It was a glorious adventure!

I will always remember one particular dive. The boat anchored at a place called Challenger Bay. The dive master reviewed the dive plan with our group; this would be an unsupervised dive where we could go off by ourselves and explore until our hearts were content (or until we ran out of air!).

Jennifer and I took a giant stride off the back of the dive boat and plunged into the cool, oceanic paradise that teemed with fish. We held hands as we slowly finned through the enchanting world that was aglow with neon reds and blues, fluorescent oranges and yellows, and iridescent greens and blacks.

We were bedazzled, and heard our hearts beating in the sacred silence of this underwater sanctuary, in awe that our heavenly Father created this place!

Then the thought struck me: Why did God create this environment with such luxurious extravagance? *Why?*

Think about it: Most people will never see for themselves what lies beneath the surface of the earth’s topaz waters. Sure, they see the sky, and the heavens bejeweled with sparkling stars, the moon, and planets. But most people will never see brain coral, blue tang, fuzzy-looking spider starfish, white-tipped reef sharks,

or how a rusty-orange octopus dances through the water, or ever stare at a sky blue fish with pink lips in the eyes.

A utilitarian god would have clothed this environment in muted grays and browns. Such a god wouldn’t have wasted creative resources so costly, extravagant, or *unnecessary* on something most people would never see.

But our God is not a utilitarian Creator. He values beauty. He loves variety and colors, shapes and sizes—small fish and big fish, refrigerator-size potato cod and emerald-colored clams the size of kitchen tables. Our heavenly Father loves to create stuff that makes His kids go, “Wow.”

### We Are Creators

God values and appreciates beauty for beauty’s sake.

Think about your personal environments...are they cheerful and uplifting? Do they recharge your spirit, calm your heart, and inspire you with feelings of gratitude and joy? Do they warm and lift your soul heavenward?

Since God appreciates beauty, you can, too. So create environments that are a reflection of heaven on earth—that nurture your life and draw you closer to your loving Creator...and that make you go, *Wow*.

*That’s CREATION Health!*

Lynell LaMountain is director of Health Ministries for the Southern Union.

## Committed to God

**I WILL ALWAYS REMEMBER MY 15TH BIRTHDAY** because on that date, February 1, 2014, I publicly dedicated my life to Christ. Even though I had been baptized when I was younger, I felt that it was important for me to reaffirm that decision to be 100 percent committed to Christ physically, mentally, and spiritually throughout my teen years. I know that I will face trials, but I believe that the support I get through my friends and family can help me stay faithful to God.

One of the main reasons why I came to this decision is the experience I had at the Teen Prayer Conference this past October at Camp Yorktown Bay. It was not only exciting and fun, but the breakout sessions about real-life teen dilemmas, such as bullying, dating, and wise decision making, challenged me to put Christ into every aspect of my life. I learned that it was OK to say no to the crowd and to stand up for what I believe.

Since then, I have tried to surround myself with good friends and mentors that help me grow closer to God. For instance, my youth pastor is constantly encouraging me to study my Bible every day and choose friends wisely. He has helped me learn to think of others, use good sportsmanship in my basketball games, and have a blast in a Christ-centered atmosphere. Also, I now have a prayer partner that is my age, and we pray daily for our classmates at school. We've already seen many answers to our prayers, and we know that God is working.

On Sabbath, February 1, my pastor, youth pastor, and several

of my family and friends played an important part in my dedication. They knelt around me, laid their hands on me, and prayed that I would be able to keep the vows that I made. Through their support and prayers, I know that "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13). As you read the vows I made during the church service weekend, I invite you to make the same commitment to Christ that I did.

My Vows of Commitment to God:

*Because I believe that my body is the temple of the Holy Spirit and because it is my desire to have the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be pleasing in God's sight, I dedicate my teen and adult years to Christ, claiming that I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.*

*I promise to:*

1. *Keep my body pure from unhealthy substances such as illegal drugs, alcohol, and tobacco.*

2. *Keep my body pure in my dating relationships, saving myself for my marriage partner.*

3. *Keep my mind pure by hiding God's Word in my heart through daily worship, prayer, and Bible study.*

4. *Keep my communication open with my parents by sharing my joys and concerns and respecting their godly advice as I mature in making my own decisions.*

5. *Keep my faith growing by choosing friends and a life companion that will build my relationship with God and make me a better person.*

6. *Keep my courage strong by confessing my sins when I falter and claiming God's promise to forgive and cleanse me from all unrighteousness.*

7. *Keep my relationship with Christ first and foremost, by giving myself wholly to God's service, accepting His plans for my life, dedicating my time, talents, and money to sharing the gospel with others so that I might bring many with me to heaven.*



A special birthday cake was made in honor of Jonathan Hanson's commitment to live his life with Jesus Christ.



Jonathan Hanson dedicated his life to God on his birthday, February 1, 2014 at the Gentry, Arkansas, church.



# Pass it On...

A Monthly Focus on Evangelism in the Southwest

BY JIM AYER

## God's Word Transformed Me **IT CAN CHANGE YOU, TOO!**

**A**t one point in my Christian walk, I felt like I was wading through sludge rather than traveling on the "Kingdom Highway." Allow me to explain. I would come home at night only to slump into a crying heap because of my same old sins—I didn't even have time to move on to any new ones!

Then God guided me on a journey through my Bible. I highlighted every text that spoke of His desire to lift us up, His plans to enable us to be overcomers (Revelation 2 and 3), and His mighty power to accomplish His will through us. I soon discovered that the transformation experience, God says I must have, is anchored in His marvelous power—His power alone!

Check out Ezekiel 36 and you will find dozens of statements by God saying, "I will." Understand, it is not about you or me, it is all about God! The entire Bible is saturated with His glorious plans, promises, and power to make it become reality.

God led the children of Israel out of Egypt in a single night but it took Him 40 years to get Egypt out of Israel. They witnessed the Creator part the sea, destroy the entire Egyptian army, and wipe out kings. But when they arrived at the border of Canaan Land, they found giants.

We find this sad account in Numbers: "And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, of the giants. And we were in our own sight like grasshoppers," (Numbers 13:33, MKJV). The problem is easily identifiable—they were looking at themselves, not their God.

This is exactly what I had been doing on a daily basis. I was

looking at how terrible I was, the sins I was committing, and the hopeless battles I was fighting with my giants. But once I began looking at God's amazing power and took Him up on His offer to stand on His shoulders, I no longer saw any giants! My perspective was completely transformed! The battle was God's!

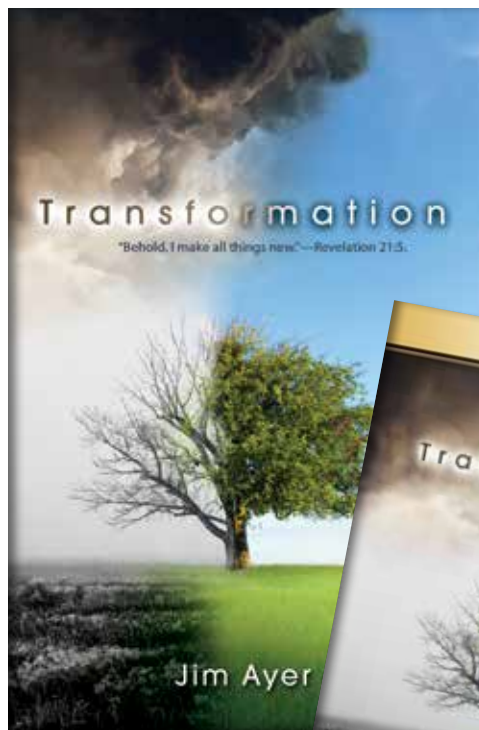
Therein lies every Christian's key to victory: Focus upon God—not the giants—choosing Him as your Champion. Once you surrender full control to Him, He will fight every giant that blocks our entry into the Promised Land.

Perhaps you have seen the bumper sticker on the car that reads, "Jesus is my co-pilot." I can assure you that if Jesus is your co-pilot, you've placed Him in the wrong seat! This is your battle—the battle for your will—where every conflict is won or lost. That's why it took God 40

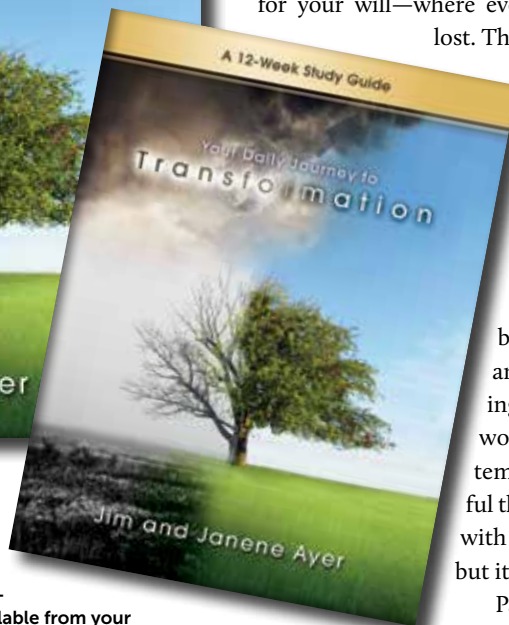
years to get Israel into the Promised Land and far away from Egypt. It took that long for them to place Him in the pilot's seat of their lives.

I have read my Bible from cover to cover and what I found is exciting—God wins! The devil would like us to think his temptations are so powerful that God can do nothing with the giants in our lives, but it's an extreme lie!

Paul counseled Timothy that, "All Scripture is God-breathed" (2 Timothy 3:16 MKJV). I urge you to spend time in His Word. As you do, He will breathe His spirit of power and victory into your life. Spend time looking at God—not the giants.



*Transformation, and its companion study guide, are designed to help Christians experience a deeper and more powerful relationship with God. Published by the Review and Herald, both are available from your local Adventist Book Center.*



**Jim Ayer** is vice president of Adventist World Radio and the host of Making Waves, a popular TV series. He is the author of several books, including Transformation and Remodeling Your Life.



## De Católicos a Pentecostales pero nada como ser Adventistas

**Z**ulema Fuentes descubrió que su compañera de trabajo, Norma Zunum, era Adventista del Séptimo Día en Noviembre del 2011. Norma formaba parte de un pequeño grupo en su iglesia que compartían estudios bíblicos, de manera que después de formar una linda amistad con Zulema, Norma le

ofreció los estudios y Zulema acepto. José Luis Rodríguez acompañó a Norma el primer día de visita a casa de Zulema. Ellos fueron advertidos que Honorio, el esposo de Zulema, tenía un carácter fuerte y que permanecieran calmados si algo fuera de lo normal sucedía. Al transcurso de los estudios al presentar las lecciones de la Fe de Jesús, llegó Honorio; lo saludaron, el contesto y muy serio siguió a su recámara. Minutos después, bañado y arreglado, salió a la sala y le invitaron a unirse al estudio, el acepto. Desde ese día, él se preparaba para repasar la lección. A pesar de que Honorio y Zulema vivían bajo el mismo techo, les dividían serios problemas que parecían irreparables. Sin embargo, al llegar el mensaje del Cristo que les ama y desea salvarles sus vidas tomaron un rumbo diferente al que habían experimentado. Zulema comienza a asistir al Grupo Pequeño "Jeremías" y decide ir por primera vez a la iglesia de Norma. Fue en este momento en sus vidas que reciben la noticia que ¡en 9 meses serían padres!

El bebe nació en el mes de julio del 2012 y la pequeña familia asistía al Grupo Pequeño y a la Iglesia de manera regular. A pesar de que los problemas de pareja persistían habían mejorado un poco. En octubre iniciaba una Campaña Evangelística en la Iglesia y los miembros del Grupo Pequeño les invitaron. Asistieron toda la semana, pero el sábado les fue imposible por la mañana. Al atardecer, preguntaron a una hermana del Grupo Pequeño si ya había

terminado el programa. Se les dijo que no y ellos se dieron prisa para asistir a la conclusión de la Campaña. Vieron los bautizos y escucharon la última invitación bíblica de la semana. "Me conmovió el mensaje, quería ser bautizada, pedí hablar con el pastor Leo Figueroa y después de una conversación descubrí algo que me sacudió. ¡Nos dimos cuenta de que no estábamos casados!" dice Zulema. Fue entonces que Honorio declaro que él prefería separarse. Entre el grupo de personas buscaron opciones, y junto con Honorio y Zulema llegaron a tomar un acuerdo, y juntos oraron por la voluntad de Dios para esta pareja. Honorio acepto el llamado del Señor para su vida y la de su familia y decidió formalizar la unión con Zulema. Se casaron, se bautizaron, y ahora Zulema es asistente en tesorería, coordinadora del Grupo Pequeño "Jeremías" y Honorio es un Diacono activo en la iglesia. Juntos ellos traen al Grupo Pequeño y a la iglesia a Orlando (hermano de Honorio). Dios hizo un milagro en la vida de ambos.



Zulema y Honorio Fuentes son miembros activos en su iglesia.

Pero los milagros continúan dando testimonio de la mano del Creador en la vida de estos hermanos. Cuando el segundo bebe nació, vino con un quiste en el ojo derecho. A pesar de lo que el medico dijo, los miembros del Grupo Pequeño y la Iglesia se unieron en oración por él bebe y de manera milagrosa ¡recibieron otra gran bendición para con ellos!

"Jesucristo cambio nuestro hogar, vivimos diferente, nuestro carácter está siendo transformado, oramos juntos, estudiamos la Biblia, nuestros niños aprenden las historias de Jesús y hemos descubierto que 'todo se puede en Cristo,'" concluye Zulema.

Leobardo Figueroa, pastor

# GRACE AND REDEMPTION

David Casey

So many times I have sat back and asked myself, “Why me?” I know most people ask themselves, “Why me?” when things go south in their lives. I have lived a life so far south, so bad, but now, with all that God has done and is doing for me, I still ask, “Why me?”

Let me tell you about *grace*. I have lived a life of total destruction—self-destruction, that is—and that comes with drugs, violence, gangs, and crime. Yet, God’s grace kept me alive through it all to be where I am today. God can and does use people even in the state that I was in.

I grew up in a home with a father who was blind, and a mother who passed away when I was 14. It is sad to say, but I grew up to be just what my parents raised me to be, a violent criminal. You might ask, Why would anyone raise a child to be a violent criminal? This, I believe now, was not their intent. My mother wanted us to have things but had no money to buy them. She taught me and my seven brothers and sisters to steal and stealing was fine. The lesson was to not get caught. My father tried to beat out of us the behavior that my mother taught us. Through this experience, I learned that it was OK to take other people’s things. I also learned



After David found a personal relationship with Christ in prison, Dan Hall, pastor, performed his baptism there.





David and Gina minister at the youth jail in Midland, Texas.

that I could control others with violence. So, was it any surprise that I was in the adult state prison system in Michigan serving a 5-to-15 year prison sentence for armed robbery at the age of 17?

Before I went to prison, I had gotten a girl pregnant. We were married in July of 1975, when I was 16 and she was 15. She delivered a baby boy in November of 1975. During this time, my life consisted of drinking and drugging. We called it “ripp’en and runn’en” in the streets of Detroit, meaning getting high and stealing.

I was not a dad at any level. I just didn’t care about anyone, including myself. I was a heroin addict at 16 and did any type of dope in any way it could be done. I really thought it showed toughness to shoot up drugs.

In October 1976, I found myself in state prison. Prison went well for me. It was very violent, but violence was a way of life for me. My parents insisted that we kids were very aggressive, even with each other. I fit right in at the prison. I understood the “Big Yard” rules and did not mind playing them. You had to be the aggressor or be preyed upon. You could not show any weakness. I am a big guy, so I was good at the game. It did not help that I saw the movie *Easy Rider* in the late 60s about some hard-partying, drug-doing bikers. It gave me a love for motorcycles. It was no surprise I gravitated to a motorcycle club. But, it was not just a motorcycle club, it was a 1%er club, a subculture of men willing to kill and die

for the club. They were the 1% of the bikers who were the worst of the worst.

That first trip to prison set the stage for the next 30 plus years. In the “B.C.” or “Before Christ” era of my life, I served 24.5 years in state and federal prisons on five different trips.

Through my life in the streets, I became very well known in Detroit and was a well-respected, street-wise guy. I was a man for hire and did work for all other organized crime. It involved doing every act of violence that comes with that lifestyle. I have owned a tattoo shop, nightclub, bar, gambling business for bars, and sold drugs. I did it all and have seen it all. There was no limit or line that I was afraid to cross. This brought in very large amounts of cash, and I had all the toys that comes with the lifestyle—motorcycles, cars, and jewelry.

I know this is where I am supposed to say none of that worked. Well, it did not work. It was *things* that I was going after, and there were never going to be enough. Let’s look at it as it is for me today. Today I have Jesus. Is it enough? No—I want more of Jesus! It is what drives me to study His Word. The search comes down to what we value. What is the treasure of your heart? Is it enough today? Do you have enough of the Holy Spirit in your life? We can never become complacent with our faith. We are all given a measure of faith. But what is your measure? When can you say, “There—*now* I am good with Christ? I know enough. I have made it.”

How did I come to be a witness of the Three Angels' messages to the world? I know this is going to sound wild, but all my life I believed myself to be a Christian—even while living such an evil lifestyle. I thought all it took to be a Christian was to believe the Bible was the Word of God, that Jesus is the Son of God, and that Jesus died for our sins. This historical belief made me believe I was a Christian. But that is not enough. That can be the start, but it is not enough.

I was in federal prison for felony in possession of a firearm, serving a 92-month sentence. I was not thinking that I needed Jesus, but that I had it all together. After all, I believed I was a Christian.

But a friend in the streets told me, "If you ever get a chance to go to the chapel for the Seventh-day Adventist Church, go." Well, I did, and met a prison ministry team from the Ann Arbor, Michigan, Seventh-day Adventist Church. I found what they were saying to be outrageous. I challenged them on every point, and they lovingly walked me through the truths of the Bible. Eldon Hickman, one of the men who volunteered at the F. C. I. Milan prison each Sabbath, told me one day, "David, you are going to have a powerful testimony when you get out." I replied to him, "Brother, you have a powerful testimony." He said, "I have not done anything wild or loud." I said, "What are you talking about? Sir, you have lived it.

You have walked with Christ all your life. To me, that is a testimony!" Wow—this Lord we serve will use all walks of life if we just let Him. The best thing I learned from the Adventist prison ministry team was to let the Scriptures interpret themselves, that it is the Holy Spirit talking to me.

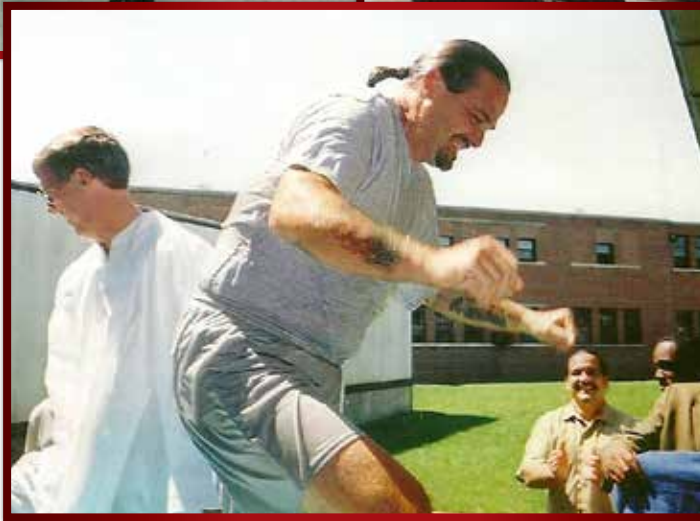
I was baptized while in that prison into this remnant body of Christ. This is the grace of God to use a man even as I was. Through His love and mercy He calls us unto Himself. Now I am happy to share this



◀ David Casey had the privilege of going back to the prison, but this time to share the love of Christ with the inmates.

▼ David has many speaking opportunities to share his powerful testimony of God's grace and redemption in his life.





**Above left:** David in prison before Christ.

▲ Before coming to Christ, David was a part of the “Outlaws” motorcycle club in Detroit, Michigan.

◀ David rejoices after his baptism by Pastor Dan Hall.

message of love with others walking in the world as I was. God has blessed me with a prison ministry called Onesimus Freedom Ministry. Inmates in many states are currently requesting Bible studies, which I send out as a part of this ministry.

I am newly and happily married to my wife, Gina, whom

I met as a result of an interview on the 3ABN Today program of my testimony. We are blessed to be doing a Bible-teaching radio broadcast every Sunday on KWEL Radio 1070 AM and 107.1 FM ([www.kwel.com](http://www.kwel.com)) out of Midland, Texas. For more information regarding the ministry, visit [www.onesimusfreedomministry.org](http://www.onesimusfreedomministry.org).

Gina and I are blessed to witness to juveniles at the Barbara Culver Juvenile Detention Center in Midland every Sabbath. I have had the privilege of going there for nearly two years now, and have faith that the Holy Spirit is working through us there. Lives are being changed.

The first Sabbath of February 2014 I had the privilege of once again returning to the prison, but this time it was to share the message of Jesus’ love and truth to inmates through this ministry. God has brought me full circle!

I will be attending the next Amazing Facts Center of Evangelism (AFCOE) program beginning August 2014 in Albuquerque, New Mexico. I am very excited to be a part of this great movement—the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Please pray for me to be the man the Lord has always wanted me to be.

I ask, “Why me?” The answer? *Grace*—Jesus did it all for me.

**David Casey**

# “WHOSOEVER’ MEANETH ME”

A Transformation Story By “Victor J. Adamson,” pen name for Ron Woolsey

Ron Woolsey



Ron Woolsey, his wife, Claudia, and their children, Zachary and Natalie.

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that *whosoever* believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life,” (John 3:16).

“But, pastor, don’t you believe in victory over sin?!” Sue exclaimed into the phone.

“Of course I do,” replied the pastor. “But *that* kind can never change! Furthermore, I would advise you to keep your children away from him!”

As a new pastor myself, having previously left behind the gay lifestyle, I had been preparing Sue and her family for baptism into Jesus Christ. From my own perspective and experience I had taught them well that our God is mighty to save the *whosoever*s from whatsoever, even to the uttermost; hence, her response to this skeptical pastor who had called to inform them of the past nature of this man (yours truly) who was studying with them. Though they may have been surprised to hear for the first time from prejudiced lips the story of my past, it only made them realize all the more the power of our Savior to save the “*whosoever*s”—that even homosexuals might become overcomers and have right to the tree of life.

One week later, I baptized this family, having gone to great lengths to support the husband in a desperate struggle of his own with an addiction, leading him to victory in Jesus.

Yes, I had to admit to this family that up until my conversion one year earlier I had been a homosexual most of my life, though not the pedophile as accused. They already knew that I had come to the Lord from a life of total degradation, but it had not been my practice to share openly the specifics of my past.

However, as more and more people became aware of my story, I should not have been surprised when someone walked up to me one day and said, “Pastor, if the Lord can save *you*, why He can save *anybody*! I now understand and believe in His power to also give *me* victory in *my* life. Would you be willing to baptize *me*?”

The youngest of three boys, and with three sisters, I was one of those who grew up thinking myself to be unlike all the other boys, more inclined towards music and the gentler side of life than to the rough and tough games and sports enjoyed by “all the other boys.” As I matured into a teenager, I was very aware of my sexual attractions to young

men rather than to young women. As far back as I could remember my tendencies seemed to have leaned in that direction. So, of course, I was one of those who eventually accepted the “fact” that I had just been “born gay.” God must have made me that way.

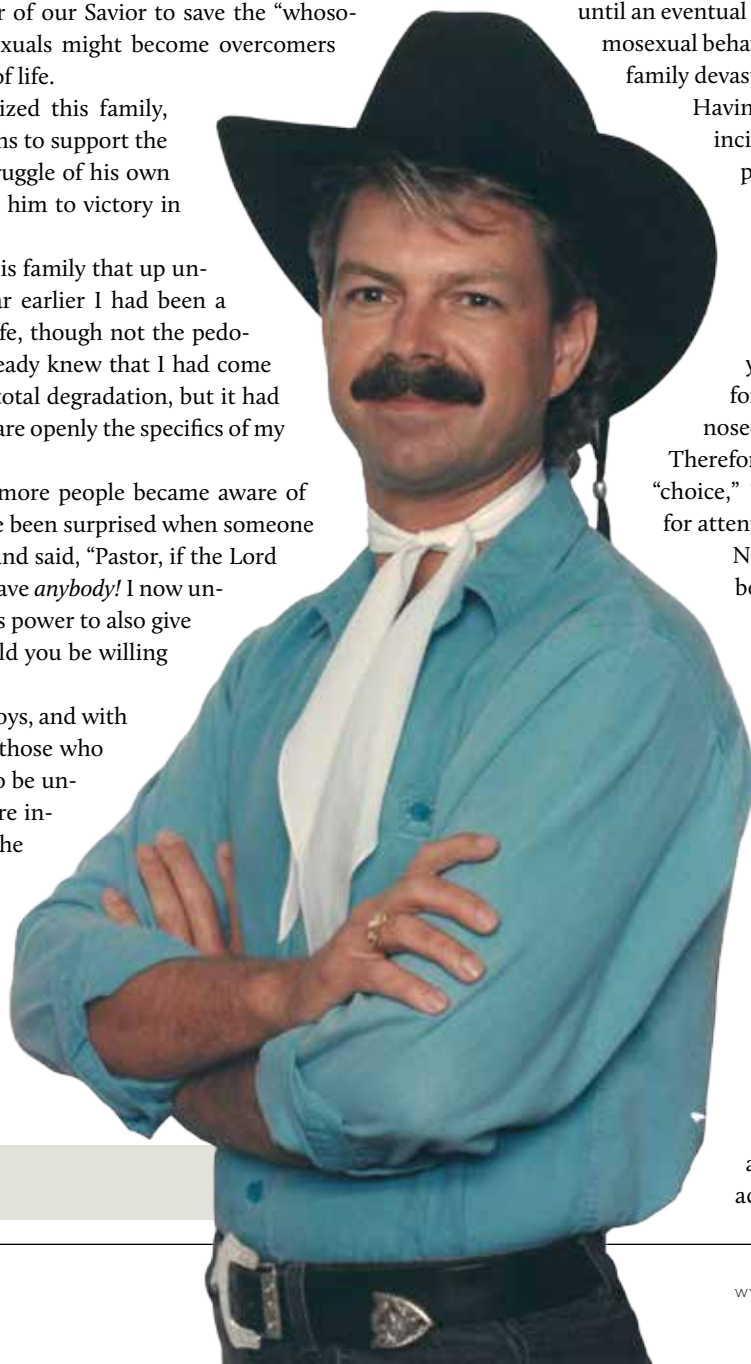
In retrospect, I can now see various factors that helped shape and mold me into what would later blossom into an all out, full-fledged homosexual, both in orientation and in behavior. At the age of 4, I was sexually molested by a young farm hand who worked for my father. As is typical with most victims of sexual abuse, I felt guilty, dirty, as though I had done something terribly wrong. Therefore, the last thing I wanted to do was to go tell “Mommy” and “Daddy” what I had done with this man (rather than what this man had done to me).

To make a long story short, I kept this deep, dark little secret tucked securely away for almost 25 years. As with an unattended splinter in the flesh, it festered all those years producing wild imaginations and fantasies and perverted attractions until an eventual eruption occurred into overt homosexual behavior that left me in shock and my family devastated.

Having not dealt with this childhood incident properly by going to my parents where I could get sympathy, understanding, and loving counsel, I began to regress emotionally and physically. I lapsed back into a bed-wetting problem that seemed to be beyond cure. Years later, I was taken for a medical exam only to be diagnosed with perfectly normal kidneys. Therefore, my problem must be one of “choice,” “laziness,” “an unhealthy desire for attention,” etc.

Never dreaming that there could be an emotional problem, my father had been using very poor parenting methods to try to make a man child out of me, to the point of intentionally shaming me publicly in order to make me stop being so lazy about going to the toilet and to toughen me up as a boy. Of course, that only exacerbated the problem, leaving me to deal with a sense of rejection. It was not until I left home at the age of 15 that I stopped bed-wetting, and then almost immediately.

By this time, however, I had such low self-esteem that I actually craved the attention, acceptance, love, and physical



Ron Woolsey, 1990.



► Ron (far right) visiting with family in Tennessee shortly before his conversion in 1990.

Far left: Claudia and Ron on their first date in November 1992. Many years later, they were reunited and later married.

◄ Ron Woolsey in 1988 at a school function.

demonstration of that love from men. Still, I tried desperately to be “normal,” having girlfriends, eventually marrying and fathering two beautiful children.

But marriage did not fill the void in my life as I had expected. After all, how could the love, devotion, and attention of a doting wife possibly satisfy the craving for attention, acceptance, and love from men? What a tragic situation in which to put an unsuspecting young woman! So, now I had guilt piled on top of guilt, creating a burden under which I eventually collapsed.

Losing my family, I turned my back upon God and everything and everyone I knew and fled into the unexplored world of homosexuality. What followed was years of night clubs and bar rooms and resorts of ill repute; 11 years in “long term” relationships and

five years of “tricking”; highs and lows, ecstasies and agonies, high hopes and dashed dreams, heartache, heartbreak, frustration, depression, and despair.

Through the interceding prayers of my family, the Lord allowed me to be brought down to the lowest depths of degradation to where the only way to look was up. From there, once I stopped blaming God and everyone else for my situation, He began to reveal to me through His Word and through my own honest examination and evaluation of my life how and where I had been derailed—where I had gone wrong.

Eventually, acknowledging homosexuality to be a sin issue, and assuming responsibility for my own present and future, I turned to Him in desperation with an honest desire to be set free from my life of bondage. I submitted to His divine plan of restoration, therapy, and re-creation. With simple, childlike trust, I committed myself to a life of obedience to His will and His way, regardless of my existing tendencies, attractions, feelings, and emotions. In thus starving out “the old man” and feeding “the new man,” I eventually came to realize that in Christ, I had become a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new,” (2 Corinthians 5:17). I learned that the new birth consists of new motives, new tastes, and new tendencies; and that a genuine conversion changes both hereditary and cultivated tendencies to wrong.

I prayed earnestly that God would give me a second chance in life and a double portion of His Spirit that I might redeem the time squandered through my many years in homosexuality. The night of my baptism, 22 years ago, He launched me into full-time ministry (that has now grown into pastoring, writing, radio evangelism,

musical concerts, and international speaking). One year later He brought my present wife into my life. In the subsequent years He blessed us with two beautiful children. “It’s time to stop praying for those second chances and double portions,” she pleaded in good humor upon hearing that we probably were going to have twins.

The Good Book says, “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him,” (1 Corinthians 2:9). This promise is for the homosexual, too, sin-sick and willing to submit to the will of our loving Father, Who truly does know best for His created children.

It took nine years for me to get to the point where I could write and speak openly about my testimony. Such is the result of the guilt and shame associated with homosexuality. However, David wrote, “Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom He hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy,” (Psalms 107:2). So I have now come forward to boldly declare Jesus Christ Who can and will

save His people personally, not *in* their sins, but *from* their sins, including even the sin of homosexuality.

In publishing my story as a book on how to understand and overcome homosexuality, as well as an autobiography, I chose a pen name—Victor J. Adamson—a new name that might in itself reflect my experience through Jesus. For He says, “To him that overcometh will I give...a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it” (Revelation 3:17). Now, I look forward to someday receiving the new name that God has chosen for me.

John 3:16 tells us, “God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that *whosoever* believeth in Him, (homosexuals included), should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

“Whosoever’ surely meaneth me!”

Ron Woolsey is a concert artist with a multi-faceted faith ministry called The Narrow Way. One of the facets of the ministry is music concerts, through which the Woolsey family shares a collection of classic sacred melodies.



## The Wonder of Life-transforming Power



ARKANSAS-LOUISIANA CONFERENCE

She came the opening night of the evangelistic meeting and continued coming, hardly missing a night. Every evening as she was confronted with the truth of the Word of God, she rejoiced in the discoveries that came from the clear presentations of Scripture. As the church pastor, I could see something happening in her heart that was bringing conviction. The distinctive Bible truths such as salvation in Jesus alone, the Second Coming of Jesus, the Sabbath, the state of the dead, and the sanctuary message were quickly accepted. When the appeal was made for baptism, Anna (not her real name) was among the first to respond and came forward in the call by the guest evangelist.

The evangelist and I made an appointment to visit her one day and discovered that she was fully embracing everything

that she was learning in the meetings. She wanted to be baptized by immersion and become a member of the church. A number of church members had already befriended her and had made her feel like she was a part of the church family. However, there was a personal matter that Anna found extremely difficult to handle and accept. She shared with us her passion for jewelry and ornamentation. It was not about a particular necklace or bracelet that she was particularly fond of, but that she had some kind of jewelry that went with everything that she wore. Her clothes were matched to her ornamentation and jewelry. It all tied together.

As once again the clarity of God's Word was opened up on the subject, Anna yielded to the voice of the Holy Spirit. Obviously, the transformation was very visible as seen in her dress, but for those of us who

knew her, the transformation of heart and mind was even more beautiful and wonderful. Jesus became her treasure and "jewel." What Ellen White wrote became most evident in Anna's life: "To human beings striving for conformity to the divine image there is imparted an outlay of heaven's treasure, an excellency of power, that will place them higher than even the angels who have never fallen" (*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 163). That is a power-packed statement that comes from the context of what will happen when a person experiences redemption in Jesus—and Anna experienced that wonder of life-transforming power that radiated from her new adornment in Jesus.

Steve Orian, president

## Umpire Church Witnesses to First Baptist Church

**UMPIRE, ARK.** » The Umpire church is prayerfully working on a church plant in Nashville, Arkansas, with the help of Ouachita Hills College students. The students had a community service day on October 22, 2013, and sent 31 students with four staff members to Nashville. They spread out among eight businesses and homes.

One of the homes belonged to Melba, a member of the First Baptist Church in Nashville. The day ended with all the students and staff singing scripture songs on Melba's front porch, ending with Amazing Grace. She was so moved by the singing and the help around her house that she invited them to sing at her church. The college students were not able to make it, but it opened the way for Umpire Christian School to have a program in Nashville's First Baptist Church.

On Tuesday evenings once a month, the First Baptist Church has a group that meets called THEOS (Together Helping Others Spiritually). This group is made up

of their church's widows and widowers. The Umpire Christian School arranged a musical program for them which involved chimes, scripture songs by memory, scripture songs with signing for the deaf, and some gospel songs. The Holy Spirit was moving in the audience and they showed their appreciation with tearful eyes, clapping after each song, making brownies for the students, and also showing their desire to go to the church for the school's Christmas program. This is a great change from having some of the leaders at First Baptist Church trying to shut down our evangelistic meetings and working to have the Umpire church kicked out of the



Umpire Christian School students signing a song for the First Baptist Church.

building they were holding them in.

Please continue to pray for the church plant in Nashville. One of the things we are praying for is more workers in the area, either by local baptisms or workers moving to the area. It is exciting to see the Holy Spirit softening hearts and opening doors.

Jonathan Baylon



# College Students Ask God: Open Our Eyes

**CONWAY, ARK. »** About 40 public college students from a variety of denominational backgrounds came to Camp Yorktown Bay, October 18-20, 2013, for a weekend dedicated to fellowship with Jesus through study and prayer. The plea was simple: God, please open our eyes to Your presence and Your ways.

Lex Grissom, aviation maintenance management major at Henderson State University, appreciated the diversity at the conference. He said that the “different denominations kept everybody’s imperfect doctrine in check. No human is going to make 100 percent when they are doing God’s ‘theology exam.’”

The weekend retreat was organized by a partnership between Adventist Students for Christ at Henderson State University, a group called Going Deeper, and A Peculiar People (the collegiate division of the Conway church). The conference was sponsored by the Arkansas-Louisiana Conference’s youth department, the Arkadelphia church, and several area pastors and teachers. Bryan Seymour, pastor of the Clarksville church was one of the speakers for the weekend. Seymour is passionate about the importance of collegiate ministry—especially reaching out and providing support to those in a secular environment. “Collegiate ministry is important because approximately 80 percent of college students have never had a significant church experience and those that have been raised in the church usually don’t find themselves back after graduation,” said Seymour. “Most college students never get the opportunity to experience a weekend where Jesus is the theme of their lives. I literally believe that everyone experienced a piece of heaven this weekend.”

Conference topics ranged from looking at our lives from God’s perspective and learning to trust Him to a “how to” roundtable session on inductive Bible study and how to get both historical perspective and current application from reading the Bible. Many students had never considered the



difference between reading and studying the Bible and were impressed and challenged to dig deeper.

Kayelyn Foote, sophomore art education major at Henderson, said that the weekend “brought me to the realization that I need to read the Word more. Usually, if I do read, I read just to say that I read the Bible. I never really comprehended it. It’s just crazy how a lot of the answers to life are all in one book! I now want to learn how to read the Bible and understand how to use its words in everyday life.”

Even amid the information-packed sessions, the attendees still had time to fellowship, explore the camp’s hiking trails, paddle out in kayaks, catch a speedboat ride, and enjoy a bonfire. The setting was ideal for many attendees seeking respite from an intense school year. “Peace of

**Top:** From left: Leah Grant (HSU), Sunni Lovell, Heidi Beirele (Cossatot Community College) and Izhar Buendia (HSU) enjoy a speedboat ride after lunch.

**Above left:** Paty Diaz learning what it feels like to trust.

**Above right:** Students work through an inductive Bible study on Daniel 2.

heart is found in Christ alone,” said Gerard Munyazikwiye, junior physics major at the University of Central Arkansas in Conway. “Being in this distraction-free environment helped me to focus on the Word of God and reflect on the beauty of God’s creatures.”

**Amie Register**

ARKANSAS-LOUISIANA CONFERENCE

# Texarkana Church Shows Appreciation to Pastor

**TEXARKANA, TEX.** » The Texarkana church has a prayer breakfast the second Sunday of each month, followed by a brief devotional and prayer, and then a church board meeting. After the October breakfast, instead of the usual devotional, the church presented Daniel Supler, pastor, with a gift of appreciation.

The women's ministries department took charge of collecting money for either a new tablet or a tracing pen. Thanks to his wife, Edit, we knew the contents of his wish list. We would like to thank both the Suplers for the love and devotion they have shown through their leadership in Texarkana.

**Loretta Johnson**



▶ Daniel Supler, pastor, and wife, Edit.

▲ Bill Little presenting a gift to Daniel Supler, pastor.



# Gentry Celebrates 13th Sabbath

**GENTRY, ARK.** » The Primary class at the Gentry church is being led by Jessica Robinson, and on the last Sabbath in September, she and her students celebrated their first 13th Sabbath together. Co-leaders George and Haley Robinson gave each child a flashlight that had the child's name engraved along with the words, "Shine for Jesus." George brought a helium tank and blew up balloons for the students, and there were enough balloons for students in other classes to come celebrate with the Primary class.

**Jessica Robinson**

# Lake Charles Church Ordination Service

**LAKE CHARLES, LA.** » Dennis Shafter of the Arkansas-Louisiana Conference was the guest speaker at the Lake Charles Seventh-day Adventist Church for a recent Sabbath ordination service that included all the elders, deacons, and deaconesses from the Lake Charles and Deridder churches. Twenty-two people were ordained in this special ceremony. Sorin

Munteanu, pastor, is the new pastor for both churches. May God continue to bless them in their commitment to serve Him.

**Margaret M. Jackson**

Dennis Shafter and Sorin Munteanu, pastor, pray with the elders, deacons, and deaconesses during a recent ordination service.



The Gentry Primary Sabbath School class celebrated 13th Sabbath together.

# Conversions for the Kingdom!



I will never forget the first time my husband met Jack. He walked into an evangelistic meeting on opening night with his wife, Sandy. Jack and Sandy continued to attend for several nights, and then one night Sandy came alone. My husband immediately asked, "Where's my buddy, Jack?" A very sad Sandy replied, "He did it again, Pastor Rick." You see, Jack was an alcoholic and would go on binges where he would disappear for days while he was off somewhere drinking—a vicious cycle that had sadly been repeated way too many times. Jack, like many other people, tried *really* hard to be good, but then he would just explode. It was as if you could see the pressure building up for a "big boom!" After a while, Jack just gave up and said there was no use trying.

My husband continued to visit Jack on a regular basis and share with him how much Jesus loved him and had a plan for his life. Then one day my husband went by for one of his visits and Jack told my husband, "Pastor, I keep hearing that song."

My husband replied, "What song is that, Jack?" He smiled and replied, "You know, that song you sing *all* the time, 'I have decided to follow Jesus!'"

Jack made a decision to follow Jesus; he made the decision to trust Jesus, not himself. As Jack filled his life with Jesus, he lost all desire for anything else, even his drinking binges. Not long after this, my husband had the blessing of baptizing Jack! Praise God! Sadly, only two days later, Jack could not get out of bed. Jack had recently been diagnosed with cancer. A week after Jack's baptism, we had Jack's funeral. But his funeral was not a time of sorrow, but rather a time of celebration! Jack found out that being a born-again Christian is not about what you *do*, but *who* you get to know, and then who you know will change what you do. He simply altered his focus, and it changed his life forever—literally!

How did Jack become an overcomer? How can you and I experience a "conversion" experience? There is only one way: by looking to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith. Our only deliberate effort in this big plan of salvation is to not try and

overcome the sin, but rather to fight for time to spend with Jesus. Hebrews 12:1,2 reminds us, "Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."

Not only did Jack experience conversion, his entire family decided to follow Jesus and joined the family of God. Today, they are all joyful, active members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Jack's decision had a ripple effect with eternal consequences!

Let us all learn that it is *only* by looking unto Jesus that we may all experience a true life-changing conversion for the Kingdom!

Cindy Mercer

## Community Evangelism at Wagoner Church

**WAGONER** » The Wagoner church is reaching out more than ever to get involved with the community. The approach is simple—rather than drawing the community to the church, the church will go to the community to bring souls to Christ. Our efforts will only be successful with prayer and the Holy Spirit's leading. We work with the "Food for Kids" program, where children are given food for the weekends, when they may not have access to food otherwise. We serve 22 children each week. We utilize our food pantry to help families in need who may not be served by other agencies. We have mailed out *Steps to Christ* and *End of Time* to 7,000 residences in Wagoner. We also provided Thanksgiving baskets to families in need.

We plan to have a vegetarian cooking seminar this year to help educate our



William Hults, Connie Sutherland, Carol Harris, Tom McGrady, and Jack Harris working on Thanksgiving baskets.

community on healthier lifestyles. A soup kitchen is also in the works to collaborate with other churches for the good of the community. God continues to bless our small congregation of 30 members, and

with your prayers He will continue to keep us in the palm of His hands.

Jack Harris

# New Baptisms at Alva Church

**ALVA** » In the late 1990s, the Alva church experienced a great reaping of 12 baptisms and three professions of faith due to the determined efforts of our pastor, Harvey Kornegay. When the church was built in the 1930s, a baptistry was not a part of the construction. Through the resourcefulness of Roger Simpson, Jr., head elder, a temporary baptistry was borrowed from Wewoka Woods.

The next 10 years were quiet for the church, but, with the maturing of the youth, a sense of revival and the Holy Spirit filled our church. In 2010, Michael and Ariel Simpson were baptized at Canton Lake by Rex Shores, pastor. Michael is an active deacon and has presented a number of evangelistic meetings. Ariel has taken the position of communication director and also produces the Sabbath bulletin. They also team with the Hazelton Boys Ranch, helping to foster boys.

In the winter of 2010, construction began on a new handicap-accessible church building with a baptistry. This was just in time to baptize James and Peggy Burke in December of 2012. Peggy had recently been diagnosed with breast cancer and she wanted to be baptized before her chemo treatments. Her treatments were successful and she is in remission. December of 2013 found the church almost complete, due in part to the support of faithful membership, the evangelistic efforts and Bible studies of our pastor, the help of Roger Simpson, Jr. and R.L. Simpson in the first three phases of construction, and the help

of Chantae Simpson, who headed the decorating committee.

The church most recently baptized Mary



and Scotty Cox on December 7, 2013. They and their three boys were welcomed into our church fellowship. We are still waiting for our pews and sound system, but we have been blessed to watch God blessing the transformation and we look forward to our grand opening. Three of our youth have requested baptism, so our church family will be preparing for another high Sabbath.

Gabi Simpson

**Top left:** Peggy Burke was baptized in December of 2012.

**Top right:** Ariel Simpson was baptized in June of 2010.

**Bottom left:** Mary and Scotty Cox were baptized in December of 2013.

**Bottom right:** Mike Simpson was baptized in June of 2010.

# New Sign Invites Community to Broken Arrow Church

**BROKEN ARROW** » Four elders at the Broken Arrow church had a vision. Not the kind of vision you would find in the book of Daniel, but a vision nonetheless. For many years it was known that the church had a great potential for advertising from the front lawn because the church faces the Broken Arrow expressway. That heavily-traveled expressway connects Tulsa with its largest suburb. The official traffic count for that particular stretch of road is around 22,000 cars a day in each direction. The potential was there, but there were some obstacles to overcome—some very tall obstacles in the form of several tall scrub oak trees that obscured the view of the lawn where a sign could be placed.

Sonny Harmon, a horticulturist and landscaper by trade, went to work and with the help of several church members

took on the tedious task of clearing the brush and trees to open a clear line of vision from the highway to the placement of a new sign.

Mike Moon, with the assistance of Greg Marquette, realizing the urgency of the project, worked until the wee hours of the morning and built a large 8x32 foot billboard. The sign was up and ready to go in two days.

The next obstacle was to assure the sign was readable to occupants of cars traveling at high speeds. Greg Marquette and Darren Shaw came up with a shortened Web site name: [www.What-istruth.com](http://www.What-istruth.com). With help from a Tulsa-area church Web designer and with board approval, the church now has a sign that can easily be read from the road and which advertises the message of the Seventh-day Adventist Church to

thousands of travelers a day.

The new Web site is linked to our church as well as to all of the Amazing Facts Web sites. The traffic on the Web site has been an average of 250 hits a month for the past six months. Visitors from other denominations have attended church services because of the warm invitation on the sign. The information on the sign can be changed to advertise special events or crusades.

We thank God for finding the perfect location for our church and for the vision of our elders that enable our church to witness to thousands of travelers every day.

Greg and Judy Marquette

# Three Angels Church Responds to Great Controversy Project

**OWASSO** » Challenged by Ted Wilson, General Conference president, to distribute *The Great Controversy* to every home, members of the Three Angels church in Owasso responded with an all-out effort to reach every home in the area. Every Sabbath, Jeff Eldred challenged members to financially support this project. He enlisted the help of young Daniel and Julie Orellana, eight and 12 years old, to make an attractive goal chart so that members could see the progress being made to raise the \$40,000 necessary to complete the project. In just 12 months, the project was complete.

The final results: 32,295 full-version copies of *The Great Controversy*, 6,427 copies of *Edge of Time* and 1,000 copies of *The Great Hope* were distributed in our area. The next project for the Three Angels church? Distributing *The Marked Bible* to every home. Our church is following its motto: "Forward on Our Knees."

Nelita Martin



From left: Jeff Eldred, Julie Orellana, and Daniel Orellana.

## Saved By Grace



It has been seven years since I met Jenny. She was 17 when she left her parents' home due to an irreconcilable argument. She spent a few months in different friends' homes until finally moving in with her boyfriend, Hector. Her daily life consisted of arguments, mistreatment, verbal abuse, infidelity, despair, depression, and hard work at a gas station in Houston, Texas.

In the midst of her anguish, she met Loida Mota, who invited her to study the Bible. The first Bible text studied was Jeremiah 29:11-13, "For I know well the plans I have in mind for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare, not for woe! Plans to give you a future full of hope. When you call me, when you go to pray to me, I will listen to you. When you seek me with all your heart" (NAB). The Word of God was music to her ears and brought her new hope.

Jenny started visiting the Houston-Maranatha church. She got pregnant, though, and did not want to be seen because she was not yet married to Hector. Tribulations arose once again—her boyfriend left her and one afternoon she decided to end her life by throwing herself into a bayou canal. But the Lord had plans for Jenny. A church member, Aide, saw her walking and called her name. Jenny looked back toward Aide and tearfully fell into her arms.

Aide offered her a home, and a few days later she gave birth to her son. Hector came back to meet his son, and Jenny's parents finally helped her to acquire her birth certificate, which she needed in order to get married. On November 8, 2013, her birthday, Jenny and Hector were married. On November 30, they decided to give their lives to Christ through baptism. Jenny said: "I was tired of the life we were living and from having experienced God's healing grace before,

I knew that He was and is the only footpath I could take. He has a plan and a future for my life.

"Now that we have been baptized, we are doing better and have received marriage counseling. We respect each other more and fight less. We feel peaceful, and have noticed how love, understanding, patience, and prayers have grown in our home. After seven tumultuous years, we have finally accepted God's call to baptism and are saved by His grace.

"Our outlook towards life has changed. When trials come, we know we have God in our lives, who will never leave us and will sustain us through hard times. We have wisdom given to us through the Bible, and we live each day remembering this is not our home—we have a wonderful one in heaven waiting for us!"

**Kircio D. Mota**

## Passing the Church's Heritage Light On, God's Way

OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLA. » A "heritage day" was held on October 12, 2013 at the Tenth Street church. This program was an effort of the history committee to commemorate the naming of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination in 1863, 150 years ago. The highlight of the program was a PowerPoint presentation of Oklahoma Black history intertwined with the history of the Tenth Street church, 1919-2013, entitled, "The Lighthouse," written and directed by Mary C. Moon, chair of the history committee. The perspective was an interpretation of slavery's beginnings through Negro Spirituals. Rebecca Fields was the master of ceremonies, and a five-part narration was done by Darlene Hudson and Patricia Collins. The presentation included the following topics: The Cultural Complex Beginning as a People in Oklahoma, 1830-1876; A Time of Racial Memorabilia, 1877-1933; Creation of Black Regional Conferences, 1934-1964; The End of the Beginning of the New, 1947-1995; Significant Occurrences for Tenth Street



SDA and other Adventist Churches, 1996-2013.

Darlene Hudson worked with our children for a wonderful presentation entitled, "Special Love Promises to God Forever." The PowerPoint presentation was developed by John Graves and presented with the help of Ayub Munyenye, Reginald Moore, and Patrick Shavers, who are part of the communication department.

Attendees enjoyed a delightful dinner prepared by Alma McGuirt, Joyce Scott, and staff. Special music was by Herman Richmond, elder. Special acknowledgements and certificates of appreciation were conferred to honorees for their dedication and service to the church by Stephen

Attendees of the Tenth Street church's "heritage day" were enriched by presentations, music, fellowship, and food.

Brooks, who ended the presentation.

As a result of the informative presentation, we were affirmed in our faith that God has led and guided His church for more than 150 years. We celebrated the almost 100 years the Adventist church has had a presence in Oklahoma City and its subsequent growth. We committed ourselves to continue the work the Lord has put in our hands so many more can join us to receive Jesus when He comes back soon.

**Mary C. Moon**

SOUTHWEST REGION CONFERENCE

# Singles Making a Difference

**CORSICANA, TEXAS** » Timothy McBrown was the guest speaker for our youth day program at the New Life church in Palestine, Texas, at our first singles day program at Bethel in Corsicana, Texas, and at the SWRC singles retreat in Little Rock, Arkansas, all within the last three months of 2013, and those were just a few of his engagements!

McBrown is a unique presenter with a style that is simple, direct, and to the point. He tells the bare truth, just like it is, without the frills, because he has experienced enough in life that he knows it is time out for games, just by the way he presents the message. Several people, young and old,



Timothy McBrown has been a guest speaker for events for youth and singles across the Southwest Region Conference.

have decided to follow Jesus because of his willingness to allow the Lord to use him to spread the everlasting gospel to a dying world. We would like to thank McBrown, as well as Vera Ragland, SWRC singles ministries coordinator and her team; Vernescia Fuller, New Life Youth/AYS director; Jessie Hill, Bethel church's singles ministries coordinator; and Norman Stiggers, pastor, for helping to make these programs the evangelistic tool they were meant to be.

Lorraine James-Stiggers

# Clothing Giveaway

**OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLA.** » The Tenth Street church's community services department, under the direction of Stephen Brooks, pastor, and Betty Taylor, community services director, had its annual clothes giveaway on October 13, 2013. The church members came together and served approximately 253 families. We were able to provide 3,394 items, which included clothing, shoes, coats, purses, reading glasses, and other accessories. The giveaway was not limited to clothing; we provided a mini health expo that included flu shots, glucose testing, and blood pressure checks. We distributed copies of *The Ministry of Healing*, *The Great Hope*, *Can We Eat Anything?*, and literature about diabetes. We were blessed to have around 100 people sign up for Bible studies. It is the church's desire to not only provide clothing for our community, but to also provide spiritual guidance.

This year we were also able to partner with three women from different Hispanic churches in Oklahoma City. They recently started a program to send clothes to poor families in different countries and we were able to provide them 250 articles of clothing. They sent a portion of the clothing to



The Tenth Street church held a clothing giveaway, helping more than 250 families in need.



Honduras, where an Adventist church was able to share them with needy families. Another portion will go to Ecuador in a future shipment. We hope to continue working

together in the future to do the work that God has called us to do.

Marquitta Brown

# Muskogee Berean Celebrates Baptisms

**MUSKOGEE, OKLA. »** The Berean church in Muskogee sits on the corner of 7th Street and West Southside Boulevard. It has 34 members, 15 who attend regularly, and the majority of them are over age 50. Despite the low attendance, members still believe that God will grow the little congregation. Berean has continued to pray for young people to attend and help keep the church alive. With prayers sent up and believing in a positive answer, Joe Ellis, pastor, baptized a 17-year-old young woman name LeeAndra Thompson last November. Even though LeeAndra's parents don't attend church, she has been faithfully coming with her aunt.

Berean members never gave up, and believed that God would continue to send people their way that want to know Him and would open their hearts and minds to receive His truth. Andrae Freeman, the Sabbath school superintendent and treasurer, prayed that the Lord would send people who wanted to know the truth. One day, Andrae received a text from a young couple who wanted to be baptized. Dontez Fields and Cheyanna Parish (now Fields), both 21, had been attending the church when they could and decided that they wanted to make Berean their church home. Dontez's sister, Dahjae Fields was already attending the church and had completed Bible studies given to her by Marvin Freeman, and was ready to be baptized. Andrae agreed to give the couple Bible studies to prepare for their baptisms. The couple faithfully came and began to

bring others to the classes with them. They showed so much zeal and excitement to learn more about Jesus.

The time came for an Amazing Facts study lesson called "A Happy Marriage," and after class, the lesson weighed heavily on their minds. They wanted to be baptized and felt that because they were liv-

but God showed He is always in control. Ellis arrived early Friday to sit with the couple and make sure everyone was ready. Dontez



Marvin Freeman was rebaptized at the Berean church in Muskogee by Joe Ellis, pastor, on December 14, 2013.

ing together, that it was God's will for them to join together in marriage before they joined the church. A call was made by Ellis and it was shared how the Lord was dealing with the couple. The pastor was happy about the decision and offered to marry the couple the day before they were going to be baptized. Dahjae was already preparing to get baptized on December 14, so they all decided to do it together.

The church was filled with joy and joined together to help in any way they could. At times, the devil tried to show his disapproval



From left: New member Dahjae Fields and new members and newlyweds Cheyanna and Dontez Fields stand with Joe Ellis, pastor, holding their baptismal certificates.

and Cheyanna were married at the church at 5:00 p.m. that day and it was such a lovely day for Berean to remember. The next day was Sabbath and Dahjae, Dontez, and Cheyanna were baptized that morning. Marvin Freeman was also rebaptized. That week alone Berean had three new members. The couple continues to come to Bible studies and bring others who have asked them questions about their lifestyle changes. Berean is happy to still be a part of building God's kingdom. Berean will continue to seek the Lord and spread His gospel.

**Shenelle Freeman**

# Revelation Seminar at New Life Reaps Baptisms

**PALESTINE, TEXAS »** In 2013, several community residents and members of the New Life church attended the Revelation Seminar series coordinated by Norman Stiggers, pastor. Namon Latson and W. T. Arthur conducted the nightly seminar presentations. Approximately 40 people studied and completed the lessons and also participated in the graduation celebration and luncheon held at the church. Three pre-



cious souls, James Noeldner, his wife, Mary Ann Noeldner, and Anquishae Warren, were baptized as a result of the series. We plan to reap the harvest of those individuals who are still receiving Bible studies and are planning for baptism in the near future.

**Lorraine James-Stiggers**

Approximately 40 people participated in the New Life church's seminar and three were baptized.



# Changed by His Grace



The year was 1997. I had just been assigned to the Baldwin Park Bilingual Seventh-day Adventist Church located approximately 25 minutes east of downtown Los Angeles. I still remember him as he approached me one Sabbath afternoon immediately after the service. He had on a short-sleeve sports shirt that revealed muscular arms that were covered with tattoos that portrayed gang affiliation. He had a mean look on a face that was weathered by street smarts. He said his name was Lionel, and he wanted to talk. As we made our way back to my office, I couldn't help but feel intimidated by his presence, yet there was a distinct awareness that God was up to something! We sat down, we prayed, and then he began to pour out his heart. He was born in San Antonio, but had grown up on the violent streets of East Los Angeles. From age 11 he had been initiated in gangs, and wound up as a member of the Mexican Mafia, calling the shots over a crew that operated out of El Monte. The things that he had been involved in during his lifetime sent chills up and down my spine as I sat that there riveted by his conversation. Running drugs and street crime had led him to be incarcerated

for 12 years by age 40. But now, the Spirit of God had overtaken him and had led him and his live-in partner, Claudia, to one of the members of our church who had also been involved in gangs as a youth. And now here was Lionel, sitting right in front of me, requesting prayer and Bible studies. And thus, a beautiful friendship and spiritual mentorship began.

Six months later, by God's grace I had the privilege of performing a small wedding ceremony for Lionel and Claudia, and then baptizing them into the family of Christ! Just a few months later, I was also blessed with the honor of baptizing their three boys and daughter. The changes that were evident in the life of Lionel were astounding. It reminded me of the words of God's prophetess Ellen White: "It was Satan's purpose to bring about an eternal separation between God and man; but in Christ we become more closely united to God than if we had never fallen," (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 25).

Born into a broken home, Lionel had learned to live and survive on the mean streets of Los Angeles. He had lived by the motto, "Hit them before they hit you!" But in the midst of violence, the Spirit of God found him and convicted him of his sins, his need for Christ, and the power of the Holy

Spirit to change his heart! Lionel became the head deacon in the church, and was instrumental in bringing other ex-gang members to the foot of the cross. With the same zeal and tenacity with which he had run the streets, he witnessed for the Lord! Everyone who had known him before was tremendously impressed with the change that God had wrought in his life. The grace of God had transformed his heart and his life. But stories of transformation by God's grace don't always have a beautiful or graceful ending. In 2004, Lionel contracted an aggressive type of cancer, and within a few months, he passed away. I have often thought about and remembered my good friend Lionel, thinking of how far God brought him from where he was. I look forward to seeing him again in the kingdom of heaven! The words of the apostle Paul come to mind in reference to Lionel and others whom the Spirit of God has called. "For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men... that having been justified by His grace, we have become heirs according to the hope of eternal life," (Titus 2:11, 3:7).

Carlos J. Craig, president

## Burton Adventist Academy Focused on Being Second

**ARLINGTON** » Burton Adventist Academy is honored to be such an important part of each student's life. Burton's sincere desire is to make Jesus first in the students' lives. We are dedicated to empowering our students in a meaningful, vibrant, living relationship with Jesus, growing closer to Him in every way possible.

Burton and the Arlington church have collaborated in a new partnership and created a chaplaincy program. In addition to teaching two religion classes, the pastoral team has an office on the Burton campus where they maintain regular office hours. Our dedicated pastors offer spiritual support, counseling, discipleship, and leader-

ship development to students and their families.

The Arlington church is working closely with the ministry at Burton, creating opportunities for students to become involved with the local church. Burton's student association selected "I Am Second" as their theme for this year. Ken Blanchard, pastor, recently conducted an uplifting Week of Prayer at Burton. On the last day, commitment cards were distributed to students, allowing them to indicate whether they wanted to receive Bible studies and/or baptism. Thirty-four students returned the card requesting baptism.

God has blessed Burton Adventist Acad-



Burton Adventist Academy recently held its week of prayer. At its conclusion, 34 students returned cards requesting baptism.

emy and we are so thankful that the presence of the Holy Spirit can be found in every corner of our campus.

Darlene White

# Unshackled: Southern Worship Center's Women's Retreat

**ARLINGTON** » Southern Worship Center's women's ministries department, which goes beyond the call of duty in helping, ministering to, and guiding women to God's love, held its annual women's day program during the weekend of September 27-29, 2013. The theme of the program "Unshackled," focused on issues that women go through, such as physical, sexual, mental, and spiritual abuse, fear, depression, rape, divorce, and poor finances.

According to the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, women experience about 4.8 million physical assaults and rapes every year, and more than 600 women a day are raped or sexually assaulted. Women age 24 and under suffer from the highest rates of rape. African-American women face higher rates of domestic violence, and American Indian women are victimized at a rate more than double that of women of other races.

The speaker for the weekend, Cynthia Hammond, used the biblical characters Ruth and Esther as examples of how women should treat themselves. Bible verses were taken from Psalm 119:133, Ruth 1:16, and Psalm 51:10. Hammond emphasized that as a church we need to confront these issues

our fellow sisters, not really listening to their words of pain. We need to support one another, and come together as one, and appreciate how beautifully God has made us.

The various breakout sessions, which included The Woman's Center of Tarrant County, Arlington ISD, Gilda Swasey, Lindy Gonzales, Pierre Ortiz, Valerie Washington-Masseuse, Pauline Hunt, Gina Jenkins, Jodie Bryce, Estrella Delgadillo, and Britney Lumbard, empowered the women to confront these sensitive issues in order to loosen the shackles of binding. The teenage girls were also encouraged by Model Me Ministries to model after Christ.

With God's help, SWC's women's ministries will

continue to reach out to touch people's lives by showing empathy, and going beyond saying "Happy Sabbath," and walking away.

**Pauline Hall-Souder**



Southern Worship Center held a women's retreat last September in order to provide a time of reflection and education for its women.

and bring this issue out of the closet. She also stated that we go to church every week, greeting each other with "Happy Sabbath," when, in fact, there is nothing happy about it if you are being shackled and abused. Too many times, we have turned a blind eye to

# VGAA Student Honored at State Capitol

**WESLACO** » Each year, high school students are nominated by members of the Texas Chapter of the American Board of Trial Advocates (TEX-ABOTA), and from the nominations, a select few are chosen to attend and participate in the James Otis Lecture for that year. The 2013 James Otis Lecture took place on Constitution Day, September 17, in the chambers of the Texas House of Representatives at the State Capitol in Austin. Constitution Day commemorates the formation and signing of the U.S. Constitution by thirty-nine brave men on September 17, 1787. James Otis, Jr., was a lawyer in colonial Massachusetts, a member of the Massachusetts provincial assembly, and an early advocate of the Patriot views against British policy that led to the American Revolution. He is credited with coining the phrase, "Taxation with-

out representation is tyranny!" ABOTA created the James Otis Lecture Series to educate and inspire students across the nation so they will have appropriate knowledge of and respect for the United States Constitution.

Valley Grande Academy senior Mónica Alicia Villarreal was among those chosen to attend the 2013 lecture. The keynote speaker was author and University of Texas professor Henry William Brands. A brilliant historian and fabulous storyteller, Brands had the students completely enthralled as he discussed his most recent book, *The Man Who Saved the Union: Ulysses Grant in War and Peace*. Students also enjoyed a tour of the House of Representatives and the Senate Chambers. Congratulations to Mónica on becoming a James Otis Scholar.



Mónica Alicia Villarreal, a VGAA senior, was honored to attend the James Otis Lecture and become a James Otis Scholar.

# Mission Trip 2013: Honduras

**HOUSTON** » I stood in stunned silence as I realized that my luggage was not among the many suitcases and duffel bags lying strewn on the floor of the guesthouse. As the leader of our group expressed his dismay and disappointment, the other members of the group looked on with nervous anxiety or tried to offer helpful suggestions; but I couldn't hear them. Oh, why had I come?

Tocoa, Colon in Northern Honduras is hot and humid, and incredibly fertile due to being watered by four rivers. Fruit and livestock abound, but so do poverty and ill health. The message of salvation through Jesus Christ alone is in short supply. As the organizing church, Houston International SDA (HISDA) decided this city would be the focus of their 2013 mission trip. Other churches that assisted in this effort were Sugarland ISDA and Houston Central SDA.

In February 2013, HISDA, in coordination with Tocoa Central Church, began an evangelistic crusade: "Jesus es la Respuesta" (Jesus is the Answer). With financial support 52 people were baptized before the missionary team arrived at San Pedro Sula Airport on Friday, August 26, 2013. The missionary team consisted of 13 adults, 2 teenagers, and 4 children. The objective was to provide a health clinic, children's ministry, and evangelism to the people of Tocoa and the surrounding towns. Our four main sites of operation were La Escuela and San Isidro (both in Tocoa), Barranco Celle, and Salama, both of which were located about 20-30 minutes away. The daily health clinic went to one site a day providing blood pressure checks, cholesterol checks, diabetes checks, consultation with a local doctor, and giving prescription medication that had been shipped ahead in large quantities. The remaining supplies were donated to local hospitals. While the five nurses and some others on the team ran the clinic, additional team members were busy making home visits or handing out clothes. Each evening, six team members preached at each of the four sites simultaneously while a VBS-style program was conducted for the children.



Church members from Sugarland and Houston Central churches were part of the mission trip to Honduras. During the trip they provided medical outreach, personal ministries, and VBS.



At the conclusion of our evangelism on Saturday, August 3, 2013, there had been 69 baptisms. *This is why I came.* Philippians 3:8 says, "Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ." And bring Christ to others. It turned out that two of us lost our luggage that first day. We both ended up getting donated clothes and help from our teammates. One of my lessons was that self (and selfishness) is lost in the service to Christ.

Our team endured lost luggage, language barriers, heat and humidity, logistical challenges, broken-down vans, a national dengue fever emergency, sickness, personality clashes, and many of the general frustrations brought on by living and working abroad. But thank God our team also experienced the protection of angels, joy and laughter, prayer and devotion twice daily, an outpouring of the Holy Spirit, witnessing baptisms, working with the local churches, forming new friendships, learning Spanish, drinking

fresh coconut water, eating well, and the list goes on! We sacrificed job time, school time, sleeping comfortably, and air conditioning to gain 69 new brothers and sisters in Christ. What a deal! Surprisingly, we also had the opportunity to meet the mayor of Tocoa, Hector Hernandez. We even shared a copy of *The Great Controversy* with him.

HISDA is not done serving in Honduras. The church will be supporting the local evangelism and follow up in Tocoa, Colon for three more months. The missionary team members still have more to learn about the Garifuna culture of Honduras which we had a chance to view on our last day there. Our host's daughter needs open heart surgery at four months of age. This surgery is not available in Tocoa, so we need to help connect him to the right services and organizations to save his daughter's life. The service of Jesus Christ is never ending but so are the blessings; and I would not trade those spiritual blessings for all the luggage in the world.

**Monet Morgan and Stephen Mbola**

# Thirsting for a Change



TEXICO CONFERENCE

She would try to hide from the people of the community due to her reputation. To avoid the crowds, and especially the women that liked to gossip, she would draw water from the public well in the afternoon.

It seemed that her life only brought her disillusionment, pain, and a broken heart. She wanted to find peace and be accepted in the community. The more she thought about it, the more she realized it was too late to make changes, because the vigor of her youth was gone.

Then a solitary Man sitting near the well broke through her despondent thoughts and silence. He said, "Give me a drink" (John 4:7).

The request of this Man surprised her. She knew that a Jewish man could not talk to a woman, especially a Samaritan woman.

"If you knew the gift of God," Jesus said, "and who it is who says, give me a drink, you would ask of Him and he would have given you living water" (John 4:10). He added, "Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the wa-

ter that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life" (John 4:13, 14).

Speaking in her native language, she pronounces the sacred name of God, Jahve, "Sir, give this water, so that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw" (John 4:15). She wanted to taste and experience this incredible miracle.

Knowing her heart and the change that she needed, Jesus said, "Go call your husband," (John 4:16). She felt dejected and depressed with these words. What's the use, she thought. Looking down at her feet in the sand, she said, "I have no husband" (John 4:17).

How did Jesus know she had had five husbands? How did He know that the man she was currently living with was not her husband? She was confused. Nobody had talked to her like that before. A mysterious hand was flipping through the pages of her life, bringing to light what she had carefully tried to conceal. Who is this individual that can read the secrets of her life? Her conscience was awakened.

The desire burned within her to drink of

the living water that Jesus offered. Somehow this individual made her feel that she needed a change. She wanted something that would supply the longing of her empty soul. She ultimately comprehended the idea of what Jesus was talking about. The Samaritan woman began to drink the Savior's word; it started to satisfy her thirsty spiritual longings and produced a change in her. The woman realized that what the Lord offered her was a spring overflowing continually. The Redeemer became an inexhaustible fountain. The man in front of her had the ability to change her and gave her hope of a bright future.

The same can happen to us also. In Jesus, "We may drink, and drink again, and ever find a fresh supply. He in whom Christ dwells has within himself the fountain of blessing,—'a well of water springing up into everlasting life.' From this source he may draw strength and grace sufficient for all his needs" (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 187).

Our Lord and Savior longs for us to drink from His fountain that we may have life and have it more abundantly!

Lee-Roy Chacon

## Readily Accepting the Truth

**SANTA FE, N. MEX. »** Juan and Jolanta Feliciano decided to visit the Santa Fe English church recently and ended up staying for fellowship lunch. During the meal, Eric Redic, pastor, asked if he could stop by and visit them at their home. The couple prepared a wonderful meal, and while enjoying the food and conversation, Redic asked what had led them to visit the Santa Fe church. They explained that they had been watching some Seventh-day Adventist videos online and wanted to come to church. The pastor then asked if they would like to do Bible studies together and they very excitedly agreed. Juan and Jolanta

readily accepted the things they learned from the Bible. It was a joyous day when they officially became part of the church family through baptism.

Sue Hinkle and Eric Redic

Jolanta and Juan Feliciano readily accepted the truth of God's Word after watching Seventh-day Adventist videos online and taking Bible studies at the Santa Fe English church with Eric Redic, pastor.



# Faith with Works

**CORRALES, N. MEX. »** The Corrales church is active in its pursuit to reach out to its neighbors, far and near. In Matthew 25:35, Jesus said, “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” (NIV).

Every month, church members give their time and reflect the love of Jesus while distributing food to the hungry through the RoadRunner Food Bank in Albuquerque, New Mexico. On the third Wednesday of each month, many indigent individuals and families line up at the Sandia View Elementary (SVE) gym to wait for the arrival of the mobile food pantry. Dedicated members set up, sort and distribute food, and then tear down the distribution center. Also, every year, close to Thanksgiving, a group from the Corrales church travels to the Project Share location in Albuquerque where they meet the physical needs of the less fortunate by providing meals. There, the church distributes winter clothing, such as jackets, gloves, and hats, as well as lunches prepared and packed by SVE junior high students in brown bags decorated by the lower grade students. This year, while distributing clothing, several members gave their own jackets, gloves, and hats to ensure the essentials of these less fortunate souls were met for the winter.

Jesus said, “Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,” (Matthew 28:19, NIV). The Corrales church participates in this Great Commission. In addition to many of its members participating in short-term mission work, the church is well immersed in the mission of

sharing God’s message of love. Two ladies decided to lead an initiative to support Maranatha’s One-Day Church project. One of the ladies donates all the profits from the sale of her poultry eggs and the other donates all the profits from the sale of her knitting. Additionally, the Kindergarten Sabbath School class has taken on a “Shoes for School” project in Guyana. One member, David, accepted the call to conduct a survey mission trip to Guinea with Adventist Frontier Missions. Also, Bruce and Monique Wilker-

son are preparing to deploy to the remote interior of Guyana, where they will serve as missionaries for Adventist World Aviation for five years. “For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also,” (James 2:26, NIV).

**Tamara Patrick**



**Top:** Sandia View Elementary students wrote notes of love on the brown bags which would be given out to the homeless.

**Above:** Rico brings pears from the mobile food pantry.

# Lubbock Students Make Friends with Seniors

**LUBBOCK, TEXAS** » Occasionally, the students at Lubbock Junior Academy (LJA) visit Quail Ridge Dementia Center and Ventura Retirement Village, which are within walking distance of the school. We love to sing and visit with the residents. This December, we sang songs from our Christmas program. Some of the seniors sang with us and clapped after each song. After our program, we took time to shake hands and visit with the residents.

Our visits feel more akin to visiting family and spending time in their homes. Our students are impressed with the care the residents receive and how friendly they are. One of our

senior friends asked us to sing Jingle Bells to her. I had to search through the cob-

webs of my brain trying to remember to begin the song with, "Dashing through the snow!"

After our program and visiting, one of the Center's caregivers gave us a tour of each facility. We were shown the daily activity calendar, plus the inside of a resident's apartment. Each building was decorated for Christmas festivities. It would be difficult to be sad in these places. Our students were on their best behavior and were gracious guests. One day soon, we'll see our senior friends with perfect bodies and minds. We will not be singing Jingle Bells but the song of the redeemed.



Madelyn visits with one of the senior residents.

Susan Zimmermann

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# Southwestern Adventist University News

## Southwestern Continues Increased Enrollment Trend

Southwestern welcomes the spring semester with 17 more students than the same time last year. This exciting news follows on the heels of an increased enrollment in the Fall 2013 semester, as Southwestern accepted its largest freshmen class since 1999. Universities and colleges around the nation continue to experience decreased enrollment. Pacific Union College, Union College, and Southwestern are currently the only Adventist colleges in the North American Division with a growing enrollment in their freshman class.

## President Anderson Announces Retirement

After nine years as president of Southwestern Adventist University, Eric Anderson announced his intention to retire. Speaking to a regular meeting of university faculty and staff, Anderson said,

“My wife and I believe that God called us to Keene and we have been richly blessed during our years here.”

“He has been an excellent leader for the university,” says Larry Moore, chairman of Southwestern’s board of trustees and Southwestern Union president.

“He and his wife have both contributed greatly to our program.”

»»Read more at [southwesterner.swau.edu](http://southwesterner.swau.edu).

## Southwestern Announces New Fire Science Program

Southwestern is introducing a new fire science program for Fall 2014 with the approval of SAC and SCOC (Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges), the regional accreditation body. The program will consist of an associate of applied science degree from Southwestern, with firefighter, EMT, and fire inspector certifications awarded by the State of Texas. The program is offered through collaboration with Training Division, an emergency services train-

ing company located in Crowley, Texas, and will be provided through Southwestern’s Department of Kinesiology. Chad Hutchinson, assistant kinesiology professor, played a significant role in the development of the program and will be its coordinator.

The new program is an exciting addition to the university’s offerings. The program reflects Southwestern’s dedication to educate individuals for Christian service, promotes the goals and mission of the kinesiology department, offers kinesiology majors more variety in career options, and meets the needs of a growing population of students who seek two-year occupational degrees. “The development of the program and the collaboration with Training Division lays the groundwork for potential expansion of programs of this type, while giving Southwestern access to material, logistical, and technical equipment,” explains Amy Rosenthal, vice president for academic administration.

The program is also unique among Seventh-day Adventist colleges and universities. Graduates of this program will graduate not only with a degree, but several technical certifications that will allow them to become employed by fire departments around the nation. “We are thrilled

to offer this new program,” says Vesa Naukkarinen, kinesiology department chair. “It provides new opportunities for our kinesiology majors and opens our doors even wider to our local community.”



**Above left:** Southwestern will begin its new fire science program this fall.

▲ Southwestern president Eric Anderson and his wife, Loretta Anderson has announced his plans to retire.

◀ Training at a house fire in Joshua, Texas.

## 2014 NAD Health Summit Held in Orlando

ORLANDO, FLA. » Health professionals, local church health ministry leaders, lay members, pastors, and union and conference health ministry directors gathered in Orlando, Florida, from January 24 through February 2 for the 2014 NAD Health Ministries Summit, where they learned to become better equipped for engaging in effective health ministries. This year's summit focused on comprehensive health ministries, which seeks to engage health professionals, health ministry leaders, and ministry leaders from a variety of disciplines to work collaboratively to bring health, healing, and wholeness to Adventist churches and their communities.

"This year our focus was to launch a comprehensive health ministry—a re-branding of medical missionary work that includes partnerships among all ministries of the church," said Katia Reinert, director of Health Ministries for the North American Division. "We want to encour-

age different ministries to work together to bring about a ministry that focuses on bringing wholeness for members and others," Reinert added.

The first weekend of the 10-day summit, in partnership with Loma Linda University, was aimed at health professionals and their role in comprehensive health ministries, both in their clinical practices and their local churches. Other new features this year included the addition of several new tracks, including Adventist Community Services, an educator's track, and a youth track.

For the past several years, an evening evangelistic program has been a key aspect of the NAD's health summits. "The evening

outreach to the community is critical to impact the city we are in," says Reinert, "as well as to expose attendees to a live evangelistic event that models what they can emulate in their local communities." John Bradshaw, speaker/director of the *It Is Written* television broadcast, gave six compelling presentations on how to thrive in a broken world, concluding on the closing night by sharing insights into his own personal journey in which his life took an unexpected turn when he was recently diagnosed with cancer.

A tradition at each summit is the Adventist In Step for Life (AISFL) awards ceremony, during which schools, churches, health care institutions, and Pathfinder Clubs are awarded for their participation in Let's Move Day and impacting their communities with the message of health and wholeness. Two conferences in the Southwestern Union received awards this year: Texico Conference for the highest number of miles recorded within the Southwestern union in the AISFL program and Oklahoma Conference for the highest participation rates within the Southwestern Union in the AISFL program. "As churches begin building connections and partnerships in the community, they can place the church in a better space to minister and truly show they want their communities to be whole," says Katia Reinert.

**Pat Humphrey**, *Record* editor and SWUC health ministries director



▲ Katia Reinert, NAD Health Ministries director, and Peter Landless, M.D., lead a panel discussion on the role of health professionals in comprehensive health ministries.

◀ Southwest Region Conference was well represented at this year's health summit. Mildred Dyer (center), Southwest Region Health Ministries director, is accompanied by local church health ministries leaders from around the Southwest Region Conference.



## Dan Weber Appointed NAD Communication Director

SILVER SPRING, MD. » Daniel Weber, formerly the associate director of communication at the North American Division, comes to this new position with a wealth of experience in the Adventist Church and the field of communication. He worked at Adventist Mission as a video producer for eight years and as senior producer at the Hope Channel. His journalism assignments have taken him to more than 115 countries, covering stories on humanitarian and missionary outreach. Before his work for the church in

2002, he worked in corporate communications, marketing, and also operated his own commercial photography studio for seven years. In all, Dan has more than 25 years of experience in various communication fields, both inside and outside the church. He replaces George Johnson, Jr., NAD communication director since 2010, who has gone to Oakwood University to fill the position of director of Integrated Marketing and Public Relations.



Dan Weber is the new communication director for the North American Division.






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### REAL ESTATE/HOUSING

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### EMPLOYMENT

**Adventist Health System** seeks law student for 6-8 week summer clerkship in 2014. 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 projects. Send resume and transcript to [david.gordon@ahss.org](mailto:david.gordon@ahss.org).

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**Southwestern Adventist University Kinesiology Department** seeks full-time physical education professor beginning July 1, 2014. Master's degree required; doctoral degree preferred, must have college teaching experience. Please submit curriculum vitae and cover letter to Human Resources at [www.swau.edu](http://www.swau.edu). For further information, please contact Mr. Vesa Naukkarinen at 817.202.6684 or [vnaukkar@swau.edu](mailto:vnaukkar@swau.edu).

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**Don't miss Wellness Secrets' Spiritual Health Retreat** in beautiful NW AR, March 23-30. Our theme is the *Gift of the Holy Spirit*; our goal is spiritual revival. Activities: Bible study, interactive discussions, cooking classes, nature walks etc. "Come away and rest a while" recharging your spiritual batteries. Contact: 479.752.8555, [WellnessSecrets4u.com](http://WellnessSecrets4u.com).

**Medical Missionary Training at Wellness Secrets** in NW AR April 3-20. This program is designed to teach the fundamentals of health evangelism. Classes will be given on principles of medical missionary work, healthful living, common diseases and natural

treatment, hydrotherapy, herbs and community health evangelism. For more information: 479.752.8555, [WellnessSecrets4u.com](http://WellnessSecrets4u.com).

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# Assurance Beyond Tomorrow

## Ozark Family Campmeeting 2014

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May 27-31

### Weekend Speaker



Dr. Carlton Byrd is Speaker/Director of the Breath of Life broadcasting TV ministry on four national television networks, and pastor of the Oakwood University Seventh-day Adventist church.



Ben Oriani: A graduate from Ozark Adventist Academy. He served as a pastor in New Orleans during hurricane Katrina. Currently he is the senior pastor of the Brighton SDA church in Brighton, CO.



Keith Detweiler: A team member from Little Light Studios. Keith is a native of southern California. His educational background is in Chemistry and Biochemistry. He enjoys studying the deep things of God, writing, racquetball, combining the logical and creative. His passion is evangelism and using technology to that end.

### Weekday Speaker



Elder John Lomacang has been a host on 3ABN and has worked alongside Doug Batchelor with Amazing Facts Ministries. He is currently the Senior Pastor at Thompsonville SDA church in Illinois.



Elder Minner Labrador: Director of Church Ministries and Stewardship for Southwestern Union Conference.



Dr. Elvin Adams: A graduate of Loma Linda School of Medicine with specialty in Internal Medicine. He has a Masters in Public Health from Johns Hopkins University. He is currently Chairman of the Board of Good News Television, KBOP Channel 20.4 in the Dallas/Fort Worth area.

## Announcements

**"Ye Olde" Cedar Lake Academy Reunion** will take place June 6-8, 2014 for alumni and schoolmates of 1964 and earlier of Great Lakes Adventist Academy, Cedar Lake, Michigan. Honor classes: 1934, 1944, 1954, 1964. Details will be forthcoming by postal service. For further information, contact GLAA Alumni office at 989.427.5181 or visit [www.glaa.net](http://www.glaa.net).

**La Sierra Academy Alumni Weekend** is May 2-3, 2014. Visit [www.lsak12.com](http://www.lsak12.com) for details.

**Broadview Academy Alumni Association:** Alumni Weekend is April 25-26, 2014. All alumni are encouraged to attend. Mark your calendars! Call your classmates and start planning for this weekend now! Honor classes: 1944, 1954, 1964, 1974, 1984, 1989, 1994, and 2004. Friday night Vespers, Sabbath

School, and Church. All ideas and information welcome. N. Aurora SDA Church, N. Aurora, Ill. For communication purposes, we need your email addresses as postage is too expensive. Send email addresses to: Ed Gutierrez, [edjulie1@att.net](mailto:edjulie1@att.net); or call: 630.232.9034. More information to come. Don't miss it!

**Kona Adventist School** invites all former students, staff, and members of the Southwestern Union to attend our 50th Anniversary. July 26-27. Contact Valerie Oskins at 808.960.2406, or Cyndi Kiyabu 808.896.8646. Located at 82-1013 Kinue Rd., Captain Cook, HI.

**Southwestern Adventist University Alumni Homecoming** is scheduled for April 10-13, 2014, in Keene, Texas. Highlights include a golf tournament, spring concert, alumni fellowship potluck, class parties, and more. Honor

classes are those ending with 4 or 9. Contact: Bev Mendenhall, alumni director, 817.202.6232, or [BevM@swau.edu](mailto:BevM@swau.edu).

**Jefferson Academy's 100th Anniversary Celebration:** April 18-20, 2014. Guest speaker: Steve Darmody. Jefferson Academy Alumni, P.O. Box 187, Jefferson, TX 75657. [jeffersonacademyalumni@gmail.com](mailto:jeffersonacademyalumni@gmail.com).

**CHIP Plus (Complete Health Improvement Program) facilitator training** will be held at the Southwestern Union office starting the evening of May 31 and continuing all day June 1. Help your church and community to live healthier by making positive lifestyle changes through this fun and engaging educational program. For more information and to register, go to [www.southwesternadventist.org/health](http://www.southwesternadventist.org/health).

## Obituaries

**BODINE, Monte Ross**, born September 1, 1934 in Oklahoma City, Okla., and died December 12, 2013 in Wylie, Tex. He was a member of the Grand Prairie church. Monte graduated from Capitol Hill High School and worked as a carpenter, welder, and mechanic at various time in his career, retiring from the family trade of carpentry in approximately 2000. Monte was married to Marion "Joan" Smith-Bodine on May 26th, 1955; they were married 58 years. In Monte's early years he enjoyed sports (football namely), drag racing, motorcycles, and camping out with his family and church groups. He was active in church, participating as a deacon for many years, was a pathfinder leader, and was involved in church socials for teens and parents in the 70s and 80s in Oklahoma. Survivors: wife, Marion "Joan" Bodine; daughters, Vivian

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Winrow and Lynita Bodine; son and daughter-in-law, Monte Joe and Mary Bodine; five grandchildren; and four great-children.

**CALDWELL, Laticia**, born June 6, 1963 in Tishomingo, Okla., and died December 22, 2013 in Tulsa, Okla. She was a member of Adventist Fellowship and is survived by her husband, Lloyd Caldwell, of Tulsa.

**CARLSON, James W.**, born December 6, 1937 in Lompoc, Calif., and died August 25, 2013 in Ardmore, Okla. He and his wife, Beth, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary last year. A 1963 graduate of Loma Linda University, he also completed an orthopedic residency in 1968 at Los Angeles County Hospital. He practiced in Bangkok, Thailand and Provo, Utah before settling with his family in Ardmore for more than 30 years. Since retirement, he enjoyed growing pecans, and creating a new grove. Survivors: wife, Beth; son, Jay; daughter and son-in-law, Jill Carlson and Craig White, of Ardmore; brother, George Carlson, of Ardmore; sister, Janet Carlson; two grandchildren, and several nieces and nephews.

**CROFUT, Willis Alpha**, born December 17, 1928, and died December 3, 2013 in Tulsa, Okla. He was a member of Adventist Fellowship in Tulsa.

**FIALA, Robert**, born July 7, 1949 in San Antonio, Tex., and died September 6, 2013 in San Antonio. He was a member and had been an elder and member of the choir of the Highland Hills church for many years. Survivors: wife, Sylvia Fiala; daughters and sons-in-law, Dulcina and Joseph Bermea, Rebecca and Nathan Rangel, and Aniela and Jeff Keller; sons Bobby Fiala, Elias Fiala, Gabriel Fiala, and son and daughter-in-law, Marcos

and Emily Fiala; sisters, Linda Fiala, and Doris Fiala; brothers, Manuel Fiala, Edward Fiala, Orlando Fiala, James Fiala, David Fiala, Charles Fiala; mother, Alina Fiala; and 10 grandchildren and numerous nieces and nephews.

**HARGROVE, Richard Allen**, born August 8, 1942 in Conway, Ark., and died September 23, 2013. Richard and his family lived alternately in Benton, Arkansas, and West Texas. After his family settled in Benton, he completed his elementary education in Adventist schools and later attended high Ozark Adventist Academy and Benton High School. He was then drafted into the U. S. Army and deployed to Vietnam. Two years later, he was honorably discharged and returned to Arkansas where he worked as a literature evangelist, and subsequently as a roofer. Seeking a new beginning in the college town of Keene, Tex., Richard met and married Sally Malissa Layton. Throughout his lifetime, he operated his own roofing business. He moved back to Arkansas to be near his parents, and later retired in Granbury, Tex. His family will remember him for his love of God and church, his excellent roofing skills, his beloved dogs, his passion for trains and '57 Chevys, and his sense of humor. Survivors: daughters Julie and Caroline; son-in-law, Thomas Allen Baker; two grandchildren; sister, Reba; brother, Robert; sister-in-law, Rebecca Hargrove; and several nieces, nephews, great-nieces, and great-nephews.

**MCGEE, Francis**, was born April 19, 1936 and she died November 11, 2013. She was a member of Adventist Fellowship in Tulsa, Okla., and will be missed by family and friends.

**OLIVER, Giselle**, was born September 5, 1926 in Sao Paulo, Brazil and died October 11, 2013 in Tahlequah, Okla.

Giselle moved to the United States with her husband, Ray, and daughter, Genlis, in the early 1960s. While living in California, Giselle was a faithful and active member of Maranatha International. She and Ray traveled throughout the U.S., South America, and Brazil helping repair and build new churches. Giselle loved to sing and would share her singing gift in choirs and church activities. She was a registered nurse who worked in the maternity ward in Brazil. In Tahlequah she did private nursing jobs and volunteered at the Tahlequah City Hospital. She was a loving, kind, and generous worker for God. Gisele's favorite Bible passages were Psalms 91 and 103. She took comfort that she will see her friends and relatives in heaven, where they will never part again. She was preceded in death by her brother, Frank, and sister, Julie. Survivors: husband, Ray Oliver; daughter, Genlis Lajeunesse; sisters, Irene, Annie, Regina, and Martha; two grandsons; three great-grandchildren; and many nieces and nephews.

**PARKER, Marilyn Dee Garrison**, born June 20, 1939 in

Flint, Mich., and died November 30, 2013 in Ardmore, Okla. She was a member of the Ardmore church. She was preceded in death by her daughter, Dawn Gallo. She devoted her life to teaching and specialized in grades five and six. Marilyn earned a bachelor of arts in elementary education from Southern Missionary College where she met her husband, David Parker, who was also a teacher. She taught at schools across the country, including Atholton Adventist Academy, Platt Valley Academy, Pitt County Public School, Blackwell, Richmond Junior Academy, and in 1980 she returned to her alma matter, Southern College, as a professor of education. She was especially known for her ability to turn around failing schools. She once took over a classroom where the previous teacher had been stabbed and, in less than a year, restored order and raised the achievement level by two grades. At the time of her death she had been fighting pancreatic cancer for a year. Survivors: husband, David, and son, Kenneth.

SABBATH SUNSET CALENDAR						
	Mar 7	Mar 14	Mar 21	Mar 28	Apr 4	Apr 11
Abilene, TX	6:40	7:46	7:51	7:55	8:00	8:05
Albuquerque, NM	6:07	7:12	7:18	7:24	7:30	7:35
Amarillo, TX	6:47	7:53	7:59	8:05	8:10	8:16
Brownsville, TX	6:34	7:38	7:41	7:44	7:48	7:51
Dallas, TX	6:28	7:34	7:39	7:44	7:49	7:54
El Paso, TX	6:07	7:12	7:17	7:22	7:27	7:32
Fort Worth/Keene, TX	6:31	7:36	7:41	7:46	7:51	7:56
Gallup, NM	6:15	7:21	7:27	7:33	7:38	7:44
Galveston/Houston, TX	6:24	7:29	7:33	7:37	7:41	7:46
Gentry, AR	6:17	7:24	7:30	7:36	7:42	7:48
Little Rock, AR	6:10	7:15	7:21	7:27	7:32	7:38
Muskogee, OK	6:21	7:27	7:33	7:39	7:45	7:51
New Orleans, LA	6:03	7:07	7:12	7:16	7:20	7:24
Oklahoma City, OK	6:30	7:36	7:42	7:48	7:53	7:59
Roswell, NM	5:59	7:04	7:10	7:15	7:20	7:25
San Antonio, TX	6:37	7:41	7:45	7:50	7:54	7:58
Shreveport, LA	6:17	7:22	7:27	7:32	7:37	7:41
Tulsa, OK	6:23	7:29	7:35	7:41	7:47	7:53

**Note:** Daylight Savings Time begins at 2:00 a.m. on March 9.



# On the Record »

BY PAT HUMPHREY » COMMUNICATION DIRECTOR, SOUTHWESTERN UNION

## The Power to Transform

**IN THE BOOK TRANSFORMATION** Jim Ayer tells the amazing (and sort of funny) story of a criminal named Max who lived in Papua New Guinea. Ayer describes Max as “the kind of guy who would just as soon kill you as look at you.” Max’s illicit activities eventually landed him in prison, but it wasn’t long before he and a couple of his companions escaped.

During the three weeks Max was in the prison he had figured out that he could avoid working by attending the prison’s church services, so he came up with a bright idea—he would attend both the Sunday services *and* the Sabbath services, which were conducted by a group of Seventh-day Adventists. That way he could get two days off!

So when he and his buddies escaped and fled to the top of the mountain, they came up with a scheme to build a church so that “if the police think we got religion, they will leave us alone.” When deciding about the kind of church to build, they reasoned that if they started a Lutheran

church, no one would believe them, so they decided to make it an Adventist church since “everyone hates the Adventists,” they said.

When the building was complete, “armed” with stolen Bibles and ties, the three convicts began holding “church” meetings, one of them conducting the youth service, another conducting Sabbath School, and the other conducting the church service. Before long, several youth who were students at the Adventist school in the valley below heard there was a church on the mountain and decided to attend. Not knowing quite how to handle the situation, Max invited the students

to conduct the services—and they gladly accepted. Attendance grew from week to week, and several Bible study groups were started—with no one ever suspecting that fugitives in hiding were running the church.

One day the students went to Max and told him they wanted to start an evangelistic campaign. He had no idea what that was, but decided to go along with the plan anyway. And when the series was over, guess who was baptized? You got it—Max! That’s the power of the gospel—the power to totally transform a life. Remember, “if any man be in Christ he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new” (2 Corinthians 5:17).

*Pat Humphrey*

## Record

### EDITORIAL STAFF

**Editor** . . . . . Pat Humphrey  
phumphrey@swuc.org  
**Associate Editor** . . . . . Jessica Lozano  
jlozano@swuc.org  
**Assistant Editor/Designer** . . . . . Reggie Johnson  
rjohnson@swuc.org  
**Advertising Manager** . . . . . Dianne Jones  
djones@swuc.org  
**Circulation Manager** . . . . . Rocío Rodríguez  
rrodriguez@swuc.org

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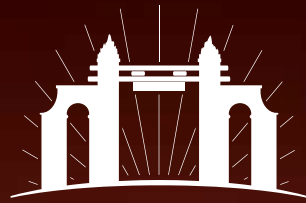
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Articles for the Record will be edited for length and content. Because space is limited, stories and articles are selected on the basis of interest and relevance to those around the Southwestern Union.



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**Meet Me in St. Louis (English Department Play)**

Thursday-Sunday, April 24-27, Southwestern campus,  
Mabee Center