

SOUTHWESTERN UNION

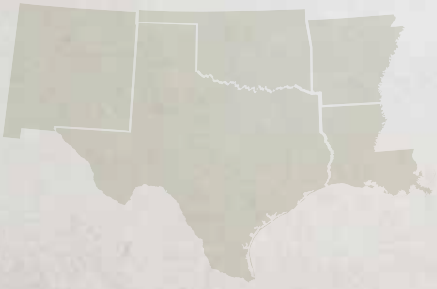
Record

OCTOBER 2014



A Prayer and Seven Pieces of Spaghetti

EXPERIENCING THE BLESSINGS OF PRAYER



8



A PRAYER AND SEVEN PIECES OF SPAGHETTI

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On the Cover

This issue of the *Record* is dedicated to the transforming power of prayer, as shared through the insights and stories from faithful prayer warriors around the Southwestern Union. Our prayer is that you, too, will experience the rich blessings of prayer in *your* life. Pictured on the cover are Duane McKey, Southwestern Union vice president, and his wife, Kathy, Southwestern Union's prayer ministries coordinator, whose wonderful story about answered prayer appears on page 8.

Point of View»

BY LARRY MOORE » SOUTHWESTERN UNION CONFERENCE PRESIDENT



Prayer—It's Like Talking to a Friend

Most of us understand the importance of prayer in our daily lives. But when it comes to actually doing it, we sometimes push it to the bottom of our agenda. I read a report sometime back that Adventists spend an average of three minutes a day in prayer, which means that some spend more, some spend less, and some probably do not pray at all. This is a tragic statistic.

I have found that having a specific time and place to pray is very helpful. But that does not mean that we can't pray in other places at different times. Besides my usual place at the beginning of the day, I use the down time on planes or pray as I am driving (with my eyes open!).

If prayer to God is like talking to a friend, then I'm sure God will accept any sincere prayer from one of His children. Don't worry about proper language. The Holy Spirit will make it pleasing to God.

Jesus' model prayer recorded in Matthew was quite short, which means that our prayers do not have to be long to be effective. I hope these thoughts will cause you to examine your own prayer time and talk more to your best Friend.

Larry Moore



Stepping Stone to Success

LM: If I had a nickel for every time I heard an alum of Southwestern say, "I never planned to go to Southwestern, but..." I'd probably have quite a few nickels! I love to hear how students' lives were changed, their minds challenged, and their paths made sure in ways that they never expected, and in a place they never expected!

SRL: I had never planned to attend Southwestern. I was living in Florida and had made numerous trips to Southern, where I was planning to attend. However, my father told me, "Sarah, we already have it set up to visit Southwestern. It doesn't hurt to visit. At least go and look at the school before you make your decision." I have thanked my father and God many times that I made that trip.

I fell in love with the campus the minute I arrived. I remember the first thing that I saw was the Mizpah Gate. I can't quite put into words how I felt, but it was very meaningful. I met with the chairs of the history and English departments, as I planned to double major at the time, and they both made me love the school even more with their intellect, humor, friendliness, and the fact that I knew they would push me to be the best I could



Sarah Rivera Laue,
History, 2012

be. I graduated in May 2012 with my bachelor's in history and I would never change that.

I miss being at Southwestern because of the amazing and wonderful experience I had. I made lifelong friends, met my husband, and traveled to places I had never dreamed of going. I would never change my decision to go to Southwestern. The teachers—the people—made an impact on my life both intellectually and spiritually.

Although I will admit I didn't always work as hard as I should have, the professors were always there for me and never gave up on me. They encouraged me to do my best. I have many happy memories of just plopping down in their offices, talking to them, and gaining wisdom from their life experiences. I remember eating with professors in the cafeteria and our wonderful conversations. I wouldn't have been able to do that at larger schools. The things I learned at Southwestern are priceless and have helped shaped who I am today. I cherish all of my memories and the people I met while at Southwestern, because they helped me grow, not only as a person, but also as a Christian.





CREATION Health

BY LYNELL LAMOUNTAIN » SOUTHERN UNION HEALTH MINISTRIES DIRECTOR

Prayer: Perfect Rest for Your Mind, Body, and Soul

“Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.”
~ Jesus (Matthew 11:28, NIV)






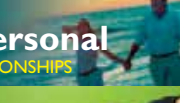


PRAYER: WELLNESS BENEFITS

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

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

Prayer decreases psychological distress. It also increases life satisfaction and creates greater happiness; it lessens our burdens.

So, when worried, stressed, or under intense pressure, take time to pray.

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

PRAYER: A PATHWAY TO POWER

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

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

PRAYER: A NEW REALITY

Prayer is a shelter, a sanctuary—a space in time—where you meet with God and He meets

with you. To use another metaphor, authentic prayer creates a cosmic command center in your life for the divine and human to be unified in truth, vision, and purpose; prayer creates a new reality through a new perspective.

Prayer connects a limited human outlook with unlimited, divine potential; nothing is too difficult for God and with

Him *all* things are possible.

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

PRAYER: THREE RADICAL BENEFITS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

That's CREATION Health!

Lynell LaMountain, Southern Union health ministries director

God is Faithful

A MISSION TRIP WAS NOT ON MY LIST OF THINGS TO DO until the summer of 2008. I had been raised a Seventh-day Adventist, but it was during this time that I truly surrendered my life to Jesus. In the course of those summer months God put me in different situations where I found joy in sharing the love of God with others and helping them. As a result I decided that one day I wanted to go to other parts of the world and serve as a missionary. I started praying for a mission trip. However, I did not want to wait until that opportunity came to start working for God. I knew I could still be a missionary working in my house, my church, and my community, and so I did.

Five years went by and it was not until 2013 that I saw that my prayers were about to be answered. One Sabbath almost at the beginning of the year, Derral Reeve, education superintendent of the Texico Conference, came to my church to promote a mission trip to Africa that was going to take place in March 2014. Deep in my heart I felt that this trip was the one that God had for me. The only problem was that I did not have the money to pay for the trip. Around the same time, Junior Nelly Marchena, from *La Voz de la Esperanza*, came to our church to have a concert. At the end of the concert he had five envelopes for those who wanted to give a special offering of \$500 to support the program. He explained how when we trust in God and we give Him everything we have, He can multiply what is left in our pocket, even when it is nothing, and give us more. I wanted to help, but at this time I had no money at all. A few weeks before I had used my savings to pay for my education. I was also starting a new job and I had to wait two weeks for the first paycheck to arrive. However, I wanted to help and I knew God could give the \$500 to support the program and also the money to pay for the trip. I took the envelope, filled out the information with a little note that had a specific date to take the money out of my account. I told God, "I want to give you this money to support the program, but also, because I believe You can give the amount of money I need to go to Africa."

In September 2013 God answered my request and gave me

more than what I had asked for. During my school year I had applied to receive financial aid and I received it. This helped me to pay for all my tuition. But I had also applied for a grant, which was also given to me. Since I had already paid for my tuition, I



Daniela Marquez's dream came true when God opened the way for her to be part of a mission team in Livingstone, Zambia.

knew God was giving me that money to pay for my trip. This year during March I was able to see my dream come true. I spent three weeks in Livingstone, Zambia, sharing the love of God every night in the Hill Seventh-day Adventist Church. Every aspect of the trip was such a great blessing, especially the end of the evangelistic campaign when I saw 37 people from the Hill church getting baptized along with people from the other churches. That day felt as if heaven had come to earth. I felt a joy I had never experienced before.

I can tell you that surrendering my life to Jesus has been the best decision I have ever made. I never imagined all the things He had in store for me. God is faithful. We only need to trust Him and give him everything and He will do miracles with it.



Pass it On...

A Monthly Focus on Evangelism in the Southwest

BY MARJORIE GREEN

Lord, I Want to Be a Witness Today

Sitting in the pew one Sabbath, with the Women's Ministries Committee of the Oklahoma Conference, I listened intently to the pastor share a personal story. A friend had challenged him to ask the Lord to send someone his way to witness to that day.

How many times have we come away from a conversation knowing the Lord had planned for us to be there, to share a word in due season, and at that moment, to be His witness?

As I continued to listen to the pastor share his experience of answered prayer, I thought to myself, *I want to ask God to help me be a witness every day.* "Lord, send someone my way, to witness for you today," became my daily prayer. I know the Lord has answered that prayer every day since then. Sometimes I'm at home, sometimes at church, and most of the time at work—yet the Lord always answers that prayer.

One day as I traveled home from my job at the health food store, I was reviewing my day and I began to doubt that I had helped anyone that day. Then the Lord asked me, "Did you not ask?"

"Yes, Lord," I replied.

"Then just because you do not know who it was, it does not mean I did not send someone your way to witness to for Me today." From then on I rested in that thought. I do not need to know who I witnessed to, I just need to trust the Lord and be faithful. Most days I can look back and see His hand leading me to help a fellow human being with a word of hope, a hug, a smile, or with help with a simple remedy from the Great Physician.

I have learned, for sure,

that the eight laws of health are the true remedies; they are the blessings we need to understand so we can minister to others like Jesus did. When we relieve a physical burden "tactfully" and "with skill," people's attention is drawn to the only One who can fill their most important needs and provide that peace which passes all understanding.

Just recently a woman came to the store needing help for her son, and being a single parent, she carried the burden alone. Her request for physical help opened the way for me to listen to her concerns. She started to cry three different times and I assured her each time with the words "I understand." When I had the opportunity to share a personal story about my son, she stopped

and looked with tears in her eyes and said, "You *do* understand." Being real with people is very important, and many times people tell me, "It was meant for me to be here today."

The Bible tells us "Ask and you shall receive, Seek and ye shall find, Knock and the door shall be opened" (Matthew 7:7). Ask, seek, knock. Many of the people I have met have become special friends and kindred spirits, and it all starts with a daily morning prayer that I will meet someone that day. Our God is faithful!

Proverbs 3:5, 6 says, "Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." I am so thankful that every day He directs my path toward someone I can be a blessing to.



Marjorie Green



¿Hay Para Dios Alguna Cosa Difícil?

En la mañana del 20 de noviembre del año 2002 mi esposa jugaba con nuestra pequeña Angie y yo con nuestros varoncitos cuando llegaron unas hermanas para hablar conmigo. Entramos a la casa y encargamos a Angie con sus hermanos. Una vez dentro mi esposa sintió que algo marchaba mal y salió corriendo de la casa sólo para encontrar a Angie en la pila de agua flotando boca abajo. Mis hijos corrieron a llamarme. Cuando salí mi esposa me dio el cuerpecito de mi niña y noté que no respiraba. Oí en ese momento clamar a mi esposa en oración diciendo, “¡Señor, tú eres el que das la vida, si es Tu voluntad regresarle la vida a mi niña, dámela!”

Tantas cosas podían suceder, pero, para Dios no hay nada imposible. El Señor dice: “Clama a mí y yo te responderé” (Jeremías 33:3). “Por tanto os digo que todo lo que pidieris orando, creed que lo recibiréis y os vendrá” (Marcos 11:24). En Lucas 18:27 nos dice “Lo que es imposible para el hombre, es posible para Dios” (Marcos 10:27). Cuando le estaban dando los primeros auxilios a mi hijita menor, mi otra hija, Judith, nos preguntó, “¿qué esperan, porque no la llevan al médico?” Salimos corriendo. Durante el viaje llamé al presidente de la Asociación, el Pastor Gregorio Dzul, para contarle lo sucedido. El inmediatamente me dijo “vamos a orar.” Y en seguida llamó a todos los pastores de la Misión y de la Unión solicitando oraciones por Angie. La noticia se difundió hasta la División Interamericana. Todos los pastores, dirigentes, y miembros oraban por nuestra hijita. Cuando el doctor la atendió, él mismo se sentía impotente. No podía estabilizarla. Mi esposa, al pie de la cama de emergencia al ver el nerviosismo del doctor, dijo, “el Señor nos dice, ‘No temas porque yo estoy contigo, no desmayes porque Yo soy tu Dios, que te esfuerzo, siempre te ayudaré, siempre te sustentaré con la diestra de mi justicia’” (Isa. 41:10).

Ya en la clínica todo parecía en vano y tres horas después nos enviaron de emergencia al Hospital del Niño en la Ciudad de Toluca. Cuando llegamos al hospital no nos dieron ninguna esperanza. Fue un día muy doloroso y triste para nosotros. El Señor nos dice,

“Echa sobre Jehová tu carga, Él te sustentará, no dejará, para siempre caído al justo” (Salmos 55:22, 1 Pedro 5:7). En esa noche tan dura y triste, Dios nos envió Ángeles. Cada dos horas llegaba un pastor diferente para acompañarnos en nuestra necesidad, mi presidente había coordinado un programa de apoyo hasta el amanecer. A las 9 de la mañana fui con mi esposa para hablar con el administrador del hospital, buscando información exacta sobre el estado de salud de nuestra hijita. Mientras esperábamos llamó mi presidente, y se ofreció a ir con nosotros para hablar con el administrador. Una vez en la oficina nos presentamos como pastores de la Iglesia Adventista del Séptimo Día y dimos el motivo de nuestra visita. El administrador preguntó a la doctora encargada por el estado de la niña

Angie Cedano, diciendo que éramos sus “amigos.” Ella le contestó que la niña estaba despertando y estaba pidiendo algo de comer! Entonces él nos dijo que era ¡un milagro!; otros niños en mejor condición no sobrevivían. La promesa en Jeremías 29:13, “Me buscaréis y me hallaréis porque me buscaréis de todo Corazón” es verdadera. Cuando le pedimos al Señor algo, Él siempre nos responde de una manera correcta y en el tiempo correcto, para gloria de Su nombre. La Biblia dice que para aquellos que aman a Dios todas las cosas son para bien, esto es, conforme a sus propósitos (Romanos 8:28). Cuando El Señor

obra, Él todo lo hace perfecto.

Ese mismo día mi hijita fue dada de alta, estaba totalmente sana. ¡Alabado sea Dios! Regresamos el día siguiente y la doctora nos dijo, “la niña está muy bien, den gloria a Dios porque Él le volvió a dar la vida.” Angie hoy en día tiene 13 años, el Dador de la Vida nos la ha prestado para que siga con nosotros hasta que Él crea conveniente. Por eso apreciado lector, digamos, “Todo lo puedo en Cristo que me fortalece” (Filipenses 4:13). Ahora más que nunca nos rendimos a nuestro Salvador Jesucristo, para que Él nos siga ayudando a prepararnos para Su Segunda venida, y con todos los redimidos estemos con Él por la eternidad en el reino de los Cielos. ¡Maranatha!



Angie Cedano, un milagro para la familia Cedano.

Saúl Cedano, pastor

A PRAYER AND SEVEN PIECES OF SPAGHETTI!

Southwestern Union Prayer Ministries Coordinators

I'll never forget the spring of my husband's junior year in college. It was that time of the year when the publishing directors would visit the college campuses to recruit students to colporteur immediately following the school year. They were especially interested in recruiting theology majors. My husband, Dr. Duane McKey, was a theology major, but he tried to avoid having contact with the recruiters.

Bob Peck, Duane's friend, was going to be a student colporteur leader and naturally wanted his friend to have the wonderful experience of canvassing. Bob called Duane to find out if he would be willing to accept the challenge. After hearing Bob's appeal, the first words out of Duane's mouth were, "No," I could never do that. Besides, I have a job already putting up steel buildings." Bob asked Duane to at least pray about it.

After Duane hung up, he told me that he didn't want to colporteur but he had promised Bob he would pray about it. I have to admit that I was a bit anxious and so was he. In fact Duane was so

anxious that he got seven pieces of spaghetti, broke one off and then we knelt for prayer. We prayed that if Duane was to canvass that I would draw the short "straw" or piece of spaghetti. Well, wouldn't you know it, I drew the short piece of spaghetti. I felt sick and Duane was not happy about the thought of canvassing. Surely this wasn't the Lord's will! So, we threw away the seven pieces of spaghetti and got seven new pieces of spaghetti. Again we broke one piece off and knelt down to pray. We prayed that if the Lord wanted Duane to canvass, I would draw the short piece of spaghetti, six chances for us, and one for the Lord. What do you think happened? I drew the short piece.

After we rose from praying, we had such peace. I said to Duane, "We are so young and if you don't sell enough to pay for your school, we'll chalk it up to good experience."

The day came for Duane to canvass with Bob, his student leader. They went out together for half a day. Duane was told that after lunch



he should not go out by himself; however, he was so anxious to get started that he went, but he didn't sell a thing. We were both a bit discouraged at the end of the day. But God didn't let us down.

A lady named Wanda had sent in a card because she wanted to purchase Arthur Maxwell's *Bible Stories* for her grandchildren. When Duane arrived at her home he found that she could not afford to buy the books, but she was interested in doing Bible studies. The next week when Duane returned with her Bible studies he started visiting with her about her family. Soon it was time for him to leave and he walked out the door without taking the rest of the Bible studies with him. The next week when he visited Wanda to go over the two lessons, she had done the whole packet of lessons and the first thing she asked him was when she could be baptized. In a few short weeks we had the privilege of witnessing Wanda's baptism.

It was truly an amazing summer. Not only did Duane sell enough books to cover all of his tuition, he sold enough to cover half of *my* tuition. God blessed us with so many Bible studies and wonderful experiences. There is so much more to this wonderful story, but space won't allow me to share it.

Sometimes we have our lives all planned out, but God has something so much better for us if we will just surrender to Him and pray for His guidance. You know what happened to the steel building company that Duane had been working for before canvassing? They went bankrupt. As Duane so often says, we see only a small part, but God sees all around the mountain. He loves us so much and wants only what's best for us. Let's ask Him each day what He has planned for our lives. It's much better than we can even think or imagine.

Kathy McKey, SWUC Prayer Ministries coordinator



As the Southwestern Union Conference Prayer Ministries coordinator, I have the privilege of working with wonderful conference prayer ministries coordinators whose lives are driven by prayer. You will experience that firsthand as you read their devotional thoughts below.

Let me introduce you to the Southwestern Union prayer coordinators: **Marian Parson** of the Arkansas-Louisiana Conference has a prayer call every Wednesday at 7:30 a.m. If you would like to join the call, please dial 712.432.0031, access code: 270973#. Marian also does prayer seminars in churches throughout the conference.

Cindy Mercer of the Oklahoma Conference leads a prayer conference call every Friday at 8:00 p.m. To join the call for prayer, please dial 712.432.0232, access code: 450698#. If you want a Sabbath blessing, please join Cindy and her husband, Pastor Rick.

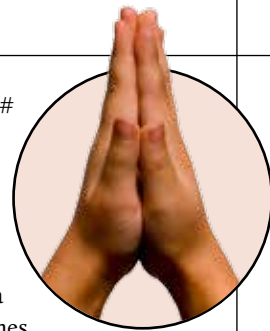
The Southwest Region Conference prayer leader is **Yvonne Irving**. She leads a prayer teleconference each Thursday at 8:00

p.m. Dial 218.339.2500, Access Code: 748522# to join in prayer. Each year Yvonne hosts a wonderful prayer retreat. Watch for details coming in 2015.

Letty Craig leads as the Texas Conference prayer coordinator. Each year the members of the Texas Conference receive a prayer calendar. Each day of the year has names of pastors and their families, teachers, schools, churches, and thoughts for the day. It is put together with much thought and prayer.

Pastor **Jaime Calvo** is the former Texico Conference prayer leader. He did a wonderful work promoting prayer among the churches; however, he recently transferred to another conference. We thank him for all he did for prayer within the conference.

If you want to start prayer ministries in your church or to have a stronger prayer life, feel free to contact your conference or union prayer coordinator. Please remember this: Much Prayer, Much Power; Little Prayer, Little Power.



Is He Listening?

Have you ever wondered if your prayers really make a difference? Likely there are times in each of our lives when we feel that it does no good to pray. During stressful times we have cried out to God, wondering whether He was listening.

Job comes to mind whenever we think of trials. When it seemed so unfair that he had to go through this devastating experience, he expressed his grief with this statement, "Oh that I might have my request, and that God would grant me the things that I long for."

Jeremiah, in a time of deep discouragement, lamented, "Even when I cry and shout, He shuts out my prayer." But during these times of anguish Job and Jeremiah were comforted as they remembered God's great love and mercy. Job could exclaim, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him." Jeremiah penned this powerful statement: "Through the Lord's mercies we are not consumed. Because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning. Great is Your faithfulness."

During those times when we don't feel His presence, the clouds of doubt and darkness can be lifted as we spend time reviewing the precious promises in His Word and recall the times when He has graciously answered our prayers. His promise in Jeremiah 29:11, 12 has been a great blessing to me: "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon me and go and pray to me, and I will listen to you."



Marian Parson

Waiting on Answered Prayer

“I have been praying for a *very long* time....and still, no answer!” How many of us have heard this phrase before? Or even spoken these words ourselves? The real truth is, I sometimes feel as if I coined this phrase, having repeated these words over and over many times before. And most likely, many of us can identify with this phrase all too well.

That wonderful word “wait” can really ignite concern. Just thinking about the word “wait” seems to immediately cause me some discomfort, some sort of indefinite time period that seems eons away! But if you look in a concordance, you will find some beautiful, comforting scripture references that give the word “wait” a whole new meaning! For example, “*I waited patiently for the Lord; And He inclined to me, And heard my cry*” (Psalms 40:1). And that is exactly what I chose to do 10 years ago. I told the Lord my troubles and difficulties, and I waited—yes, waited for Him to give me the answers. That waiting period will be different for all of us. For me, it was seven years. It was well worth the wait as I witnessed my marriage that was destined for disaster transform into a testimony for Jesus!

To be quite honest, I needed to get past the notion that prayer was not just for a crisis (which I was certainly experiencing) or as a last resort when everything else had failed.

Prayer, for me, had to become an everyday part of my day—it didn’t “just happen”—I had to show up and participate. Oh yes, and wait.

God answers all prayers. Even though we don’t see His answer immediately, never give up! Never be tempted to cease from prayer. We can have confidence that the earnest, sincere prayer is never ignored and never left unanswered—ever.

Cindy Mercer



The Battle is the Lord’s

The journey has been arduous, but through it all I am learning more and more each day to trust Jesus. Sometimes things occur in life over which we have no control. In these situations we often feel overwhelmed, as if our back is “up against the wall.” During these times, we must remember that God is still on the throne and working things out for our good.

I encountered a situation that, as my young people would say, “rocked my world.” The situation was so deep, so grave, that it sent me to my knees. My pain was so great that I couldn’t even express it. Sometimes all I could do was moan, cry, or be still at His feet. When I couldn’t verbally pray, the sweet Holy Spirit made interces-



Yvonne Irving

sion for me with groanings that cannot be uttered. The Holy Spirit does the same thing for each of us. Isn’t that good news? (See Romans 8:26.) If we can’t walk or see our way, our Savior carries us! I’m positive He’s carrying me!

Part of experiential prayer is studying the Word of God. This journey caused me to examine the lives of Daniel, the three Hebrew boys, Hannah, Dorcas, Elijah, Joshua, and many more. Let me share what I found in Joshua. There we are admonished to be strong and courageous! Joshua says, “Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go” (Joshua 1:9, NLT).

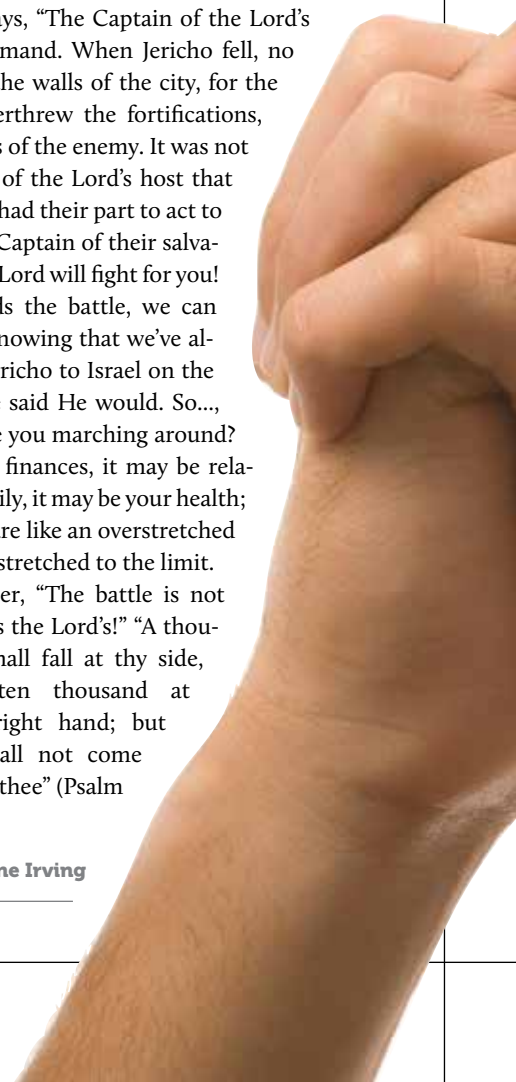
Imagine this scene. You’re a captain in Joshua’s army camped a few miles outside the city of Jericho. You’ve seen the thick, double-layered stone walls surrounding the city and armed soldiers guarding every entrance. You’ve heard tales of the fierce Canaanite army and their ability to hold their ground in battle. In the midst of all of this, an edict, from God Himself, comes down from the upper ranks. Israel is planning to take Jericho. Actually, we are told that Israel has already taken Jericho, but Jericho just doesn’t know it yet.

The battle plan is really no plan at all. You’re supposed to get your troops together and conduct a victory march around the city. Just once six days in a row and blow the trumpet. Then on the seventh day you’re to march seven times around the city, blow the trumpet, and shout. That’s when your soldiers can march in and take possession.

My favorite writer says, “The Captain of the Lord’s host was there to command. When Jericho fell, no human hand touched the walls of the city, for the angels of the Lord overthrew the fortifications, and entered the fortress of the enemy. It was not Israel, but the Captain of the Lord’s host that took Jericho. But Israel had their part to act to show their faith in the Captain of their salvation” (2BC, p. 994). The Lord will fight for you!

As long as God leads the battle, we can march in confidence, knowing that we’ve already won. God gave Jericho to Israel on the seventh day, just as He said He would. So..., what wall does He have you marching around? Your challenge may be finances, it may be relationships, it may be family, it may be your health; you may feel like you are like an overstretched rubber band—stretched to the limit.

Remember, “The battle is not ours, it is the Lord’s!” “A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee” (Psalm 91:7).



Keep On Praying

When I was in college, people talked about being a prayer warrior. Most of them were outgoing and vivacious people who shared stories about how God had changed their lives and how frequently God answered their prayers, often in miraculous ways.

As I reflected on my life and my walk with God, I labored with the Lord and asked Him why I wasn't like other prayer warriors. I wondered why I was not as enthusiastic as others were about sharing everything God has done for me. So one day I stopped to take a spiritual inventory of my life and experiences.

While doing my internship in Early Childhood Education I was intensely occupied, working the classroom in the mornings and going to school in the afternoons. I had an extremely tight schedule, but somehow I always found time for my Lord.

I kept observing others, such as ministers, teachers, and fellow church members, and they all seemed to be quite excited about the presence of Jesus in their lives and the changes that He had wrought. Then, as the years passed by, I graduated from college, got married, and had my three kids.

I made it a priority to keep up my walk with God and try to live my life as best as I possibly could for His honor and glory. I kept in tune with my Lord every single day. Every problem, large or small, every happy or sad moment in my life, I let Him know how I felt, not because He didn't know—after all, He is my best Friend! Every single thing that happened in my life, whether good or bad, I felt like I needed to tell Him. This became my therapy. Philipians 4:6 says: “Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your request to God.”

Prayer is without a doubt the greatest privilege God has given to those of us who are redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ. And yet so few of us truly understand or appreciate prayer as we should.

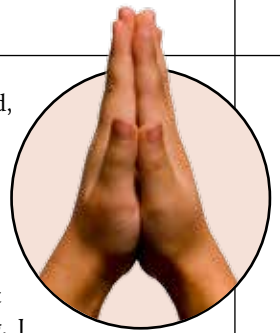
Now, as I think back on the people I so admired in my younger years, sadly, some of them have left the church.



Once again I find myself asking: “Why, Lord, why is it that such strong prayer warriors have given up? Why?” Then I hear the Lord whisper: “Be still, and be faithful! Don't give up!”

I need to confess my sins every day and renew my covenant with the Lord every morning. I am compelled to live every day as if it were the last day of my life. Don't give up; keep praying. The Lord takes pleasure in hearing our voices in prayer!

Letty Craig



God Hears Our Prayers

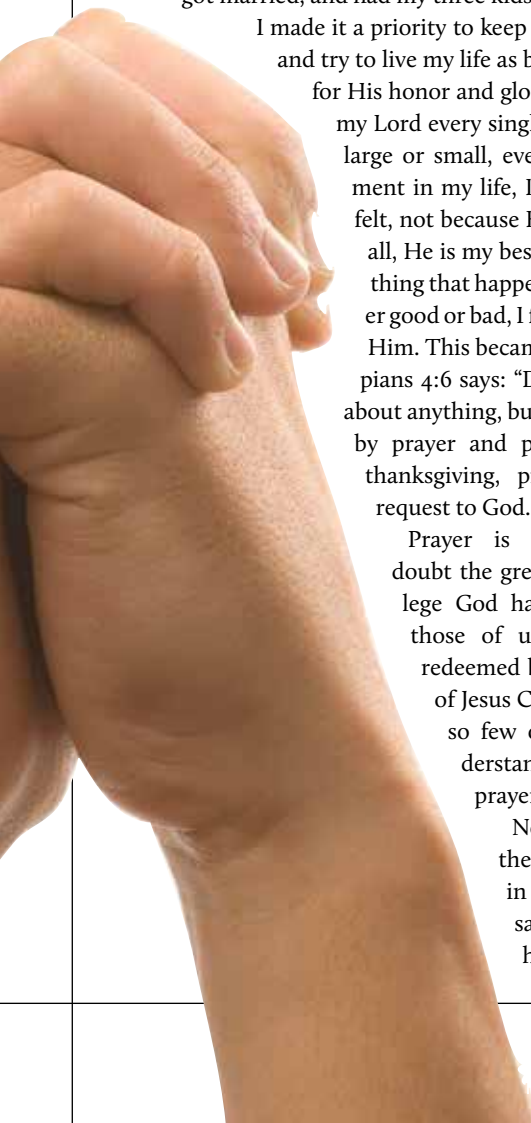
There is a song in Spanish that includes these words: “When God's people pray, things happen, wonderful things happen. There is healing, there is salvation, and you can feel the Lord's presence.” Many people don't pray because they think they don't know how to pray or because they feel unworthy to do so. For those who feel this way, let me share this:

Your sense of inadequacy is your best prayer. The first step for us to perceive the divine response is to feel that we are weak and needy. When we pray and tell God everything that happens in our life, when night comes and we open our hearts to Him, it creates in us a sense of dependency and need for Christ.

Even if we don't say anything and we simply kneel down before Him (realizing we need Him), the Lord will hear and will attend to our needs. The mother looks at that little boy who is grabbing her skirt. That child does not even know how to speak, but has needs: food, care, love, and affection. The only thing he knows to do is to cry to get his mother's attention and this is the way he expresses his needs. Because the mother loves him, she tries to meet his needs. She freely gives him her affection and attention, whether it is 8:00 p.m. or 2:00 a.m.

In the same way that a mother lovingly meets her child's needs, God meets our needs. When we pray, we are crying out to God, just as a child cries for its mother. We open our heart to Him and let Him in. We allow Him to be part of our dreams and plans. We let Him take charge of the most intimate things of our lives. Then God gives us peace. What a blessing to commune with God in prayer.

Jaime Calvo





D THE CURE FOR DISTRACTION

But Martha was distracted with . . . so many things, Luke 10:40, 41 (NASB).

Karen Pearson, director of publicity and public relations, Pacific Press Publishing Association

Really?

She was only preparing a meal, for crying out loud, how distracted could she be?

As the blank page on my computer screen stares at me reproachfully, the phone on my desk rings and my cell phone pings to remind me of an appointment, while someone knocks on the door I've closed in a ridiculous attempt to keep from being distracted.

After work I will rush across town to help with the VBS program for three hours before driving home and collapsing into bed, knowing all the while, that when I wake up a few hours later, I'll

get to do it all over again. Martha doesn't get much sympathy from me, I'm afraid. I'm too distracted!

It seems I'm not alone. I googled the word *distraction* and within a fraction of a second 34,000,000 results hit my screen. The first response gave Google's definition of the word.

dis-trac-tion

dis'trakSHƏn/

noun

1. a thing that prevents someone from giving full attention to something else.

2. extreme agitation of the mind or emotions.

It's been my experience that too much of the first always results in the second. Chronic distraction inevitably gives way to extreme

agitation of the mind. But here's something you may not know about distraction. David Meyer, director of the Brain, Cognition, and Action Laboratory at the University of Michigan believes that chronic, long-term distraction is as dangerous as cigarette smoking. He believes distraction kills—literally—after his son was killed by a distracted driver who ran a red light. Chronic distraction, he says, kills you more slowly.

So, is there a cure? This is hardly an exhaustive list, but here are some things I have found helpful in navigating the sea of distraction.

1. Turn off all digital devices—yes, all of them—two hours before going to bed. Keeping connected 24/7 is not the eleventh commandment.
2. This one is more challenging for me—take a Sabbath's rest from social media. That's right. Sunset to sunset. It's amazing, but I've found that no one misses me if I don't post anything on Facebook, Pinterest, or Instagram.
3. Schedule time to step away from the treadmill of endless tasks, responsibilities, and to-do lists. You don't have to do it all by the end of today. Really.
4. Slow down and breathe. Fresh air. Preferably outside.
5. Rest. Go to bed early.
6. Spend some time in worship and prayer first thing in the morning. Before powering up the digital devices you turned off the night before.
7. Repeat.

Will this cure you from the chronic distractions in your life? Not entirely. But I have found that it goes a long way to clearing my mind so I can better assess my true priorities and eliminate the many unnecessary distractions that would otherwise overrun my day.

When I stick with the plan this is what I've found: Jesus knew what He was talking about! He summed it up perfectly when He told Martha that it all comes down to "one thing." It turns out that the "one thing" Mary chose is really the "One thing." Choosing to sit at Jesus' feet is "the only necessary thing." Which brings me to a well-loved quote:

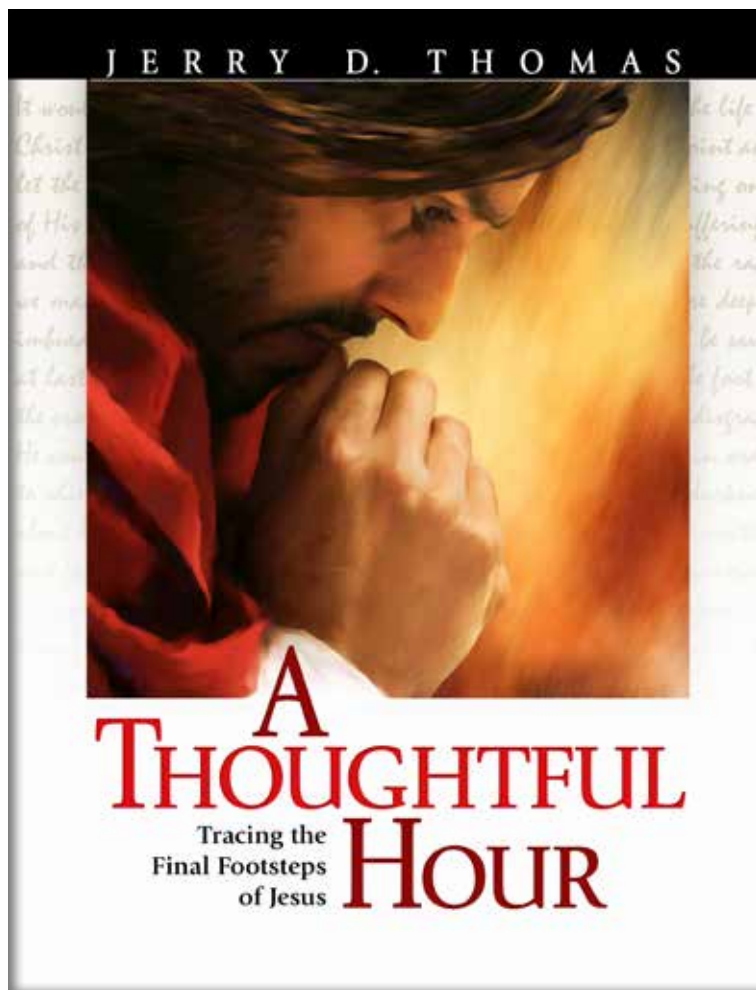
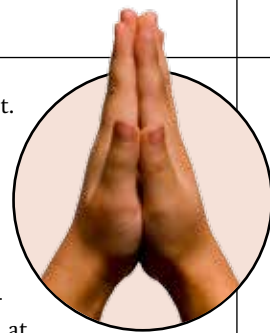
"It would be well for us to spend a thoughtful hour

each day in contemplation of the life of Christ. We should take it point by point, and let the imagination grasp each scene, especially the closing ones. As we thus dwell upon His great sacrifice for us, our confidence in Him will be more constant, our love will be quickened, and we shall be more deeply imbued with His spirit. If we would be saved at last, we must learn the lesson of penitence and humiliation at the foot of the cross."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 83.

A thoughtful hour spent at the feet of Jesus. This is not a new thought, but it's one that's easy to lose sight of amid life's daily distractions. Jerry D. Thomas, vice president of product development at Pacific Press® Publishing Association and former communication director at the Southwestern Union, says, "As precious as the story of Jesus is to each of us, the distractions that fill our lives each day keep us so busy that it's hard to carve out the time we would like to spend learning about Him. It's hard to find an hour—a thoughtful hour—reading and studying the gospel accounts of His life."

For that reason, to help provide some structure and focus, and to make it easier to study the life of Christ, Jerry has created *A Thoughtful Hour*, a book that examines the closing scenes of Jesus' life. Each of the 15 chapters begins with an introduction by Thomas, followed by passages from either *The Desire of Ages* or *Messiah*, so you can read along with whichever book you prefer. Each passage is followed by several questions to consider. The workbook format works well for me and helps keep me focused. I use it alone in my early morning quiet time, but I know of others who use it in their small group study each week.

Jesus says in Matthew 6:33, "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you," (NASB). In my Bible this verse falls under the section heading, The Cure for Anxiety, but it could just as easily be found under The Cure for Distraction.



Equipped and Empowered

Equipped
for Ministries

Equipando
para Ministerios

Approximately 1,000 members of the Southwestern Union gathered at the 2014 Equipped for Ministries Convention, held August 28-31, in Frisco, Texas. Members were “Equipped and Empowered” in various areas of ministry with the help of specialized breakout sessions, guest speakers, and inspirational fellowship. Special guest speakers included U.S. Senate Chaplain Barry Black, General Conference vice president Ernesto Castillo, and General Conference Ministerial Association associate secretary Derek Morris..

One attendee from Killeen said “I love the theme—being equipped and empowered for ministry. I love being in a large gathering of like believers. It’s inspiring to me, motivational, and just gives me what I need to move on.” She adds, “I like that the convention has all of these different elements so that each member of the family can find something.”





Photos by James Bokovoy and Richard Castillo



The 2014 Forever Faithful International Camporee, held in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, August 11-16, was the largest Adventist Youth event to date, with more than 46,600 participants from more than 50 countries. More than 600 young people, ages 10-15, were baptized at the event. The camporee's theme was focused on the life of Daniel, with evening programs offering dramatic performances from the life of the biblical hero. The Southwestern Union was well represented at the camporee, with more than 6,900 participants coming from its five conferences. The Texas Conference was recognized as having the most participants from any conference in the world at 4,400.



Top right: A Southwestern Union Conference Oshkosh pin stands out in the middle of a pin display board at the Pathfinder Heritage Museum at the 2014 Forever Faithful International Pathfinder Camporee, Oshkosh, Wisconsin, August 11-16. [Photo by James Bokovoy]

Middle right: General Conference president, Ted N.C. Wilson, addresses the crowd of 47,000 at the 2014 Forever Faithful International Pathfinder Camporee in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. [Photo by James Bokovoy]

Bottom right: Pathfinders from the Southwestern Union getting baptized. [Photo by Brent Hardinge]

Top center: Cedric Ceballos, former NBA All-Star, speaks to the Pathfinders at the end of the parade through the city of Oshkosh, Wisconsin, on Sabbath afternoon, Aug. 16, 2014, during the Forever Faithful International Camporee (FFIC2014). [Photo by Enno Müller]

Top left: The future of America is on the shoulders of youth. Malik Jones helps carry the United States flag at the Forever Faithful International Pathfinder Camporee in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. [Photo by R. Steven Norman, III.]

Bottom left: A group of 467 Pathfinders from Oklahoma attended the camporee and were recognized as having one of the best camping area entrances, which featured a traditional Native American headress.



Top left: Korean dancers perform a traditional dance at the 2014 FFIC in Oshkosh. The Oklahoma Conference hosted 120 Pathfinders from Korea for the camporee. [Photo by James Bokovoy]

Second row, left: Ashley Kim and Minah Wang complete their Adventist Community Services Disaster Response workbook at the 2014 Forever Faithful International Pathfinder Camporee, Oshkosh, Wisconsin. [Photo by JeNean Johnson]

Third row, left: Pathfinders from the Southwest Region Conference carry their conference banner in the Sabbath parade at the Forever Faithful International Camporee 2014 in Oshkosh, Wisconsin.

Bottom left: A brilliant fireworks display shines above the crowd of almost 50,000 Pathfinders as they watch the closing ceremonies of the #FFIC2014. [Photo by James Bokovoy]

Top right: Brian Robak, playing King Nebuchadnezzar in the Forever Faithful drama production at the International Pathfinder Camporee in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. [Photo by James Bokovoy]

Center: Alyssa, of Fondren SDA Church in Houston, Texas (Southwest Region Conference, Southwestern Union), climbs the rock wall at the YMCA in Oshkosh during the 2014 Forever Faithful International Pathfinder Camporee, Oshkosh, Wisconsin. [Photo by Stacy Griggs]

Middle right: Pathfinders from the Southwestern Union getting baptized. [Photo by Brent Hardinge]

Bottom right: Pathfinders attending the 2014 Forever Faithful International Camporee meet for the evening program, August 13, 2014 in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. [Photo by Daniel Weber]

Keep Going to the Rock



The North American Division has designated 2014 as the Year of Prayer and has used the theme, "I Go to the Rock." I like that! Because when we pray, we are doing just that, we are going to the Rock—Christ Jesus. Reflecting on this over the course of this year has reminded me just how much I really need to keep going to the Rock. For everything, I am to-

tally dependent on Jesus. I am indebted to Him for every breath of air I breathe. I can take credit for nothing. David recognized this when he wrote these words: "The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; the God of my strength, in whom I will trust; my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold and my refuge; my Savior, You save me from violence" (2 Samuel 22:2, 3, NKJV).

to Canaan. The apostle Paul referenced that when he wrote: "...They drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and *that Rock was Christ*" (1 Corinthians 10:4, NKJV).

There is no question about it. We need the Rock, Christ Jesus. We need Him as our strength, we need Him as our sustainer of life, and we need Him as our only source of salvation. We *need* the Rock! So the real question is, "Are we really going to the Rock?" Is the theme, "I Go to the Rock," simply a slogan, or is it a way of life? Don't be content with "just a little talk with Jesus," but keep going to the Rock of ages, until your life is hid in His. Remember, no prayer brings no power; little prayer brings little power; but much prayer brings much power. We have not because we ask not (James 4:2), yet our God wants to supply all our needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:19). I go to the Rock!

Stephen Orian, president

Health Ministry Training

Nov. 14, 15, 2014

Lynell LaMountain

Southern Union Health Ministries Director

Where: Camp Yorktown Bay, Mountain Pine, AR

Cost: Includes materials, meals, and lodging.
\$ 90 per person (cabin or lodge)
\$140 per couple (hotel only)

Contact: Call 318-631-6240 ext.115 for information and to register, by November 6.

Most of us like stability. We like things that are constant, sure, and certain. We like to deal with people who are dependable, trustworthy, and steady as a rock. That's Jesus! He is constant, dependable, and He is rock solid—He is *the Rock!* Jesus is our great provider. He provides the necessities of life today, just as He provided bread and water from a rock to the children of Israel when they went through the wilderness on their way

Ozark, Clarksville, and Boonville Churches Honor Pastor

OZARK, ARK. » Bryan Seymour has been the shepherd for the Ozark, Clarksville, and Boonville Seventh-day Adventist Churches for the past two and a half years. Recommitting his life to Jesus at the age of 18, Seymour feels that the Lord has called him to a life of service for Him. Winning souls for Christ's kingdom is truly his joy and happiness. During his time in the district Seymour held evangelistic meetings, gave Bible studies, and added several members by baptism.

Seymour received a B.A. in religion from Southern Adventist University, where he became involved in some outstanding outreach and Bible study programs. Now he has been invited to continue his education at Andrews

University to pursue a masters of divinity degree, which he started in August 2014.

His goal is to seek and save many lost souls by presenting the everlasting gospel of Jesus Christ through pastoral ministry and evangelism.

The district churches have enjoyed his enthusiasm and refreshing approach to sermons, and he has given us hope and a better understanding of God's Word. The churches came together for a district-wide going-away picnic in honor of Seymour. It was a very emotional time for him and his members, as he has made many wonderful friends and lasting relationships with the church family. We wish God's blessing on him as he continues his ministry.

Arlene Lewis



Bryan Seymour, pastor, was honored by the district churches which he pastored.

ARKANSAS-LOUISIANA CONFERENCE

By God's Grace Ozark Adventist Academy Mission Trip to Dominican Republic

GENTRY, ARK. » For years my view has been that my mission field is right in front of me. I often thought that not enough mission work is done within our own communities. Therefore, why would anyone need to go on a mission trip? So you can imagine my thoughts when Ron Holloway, chaplain at Ozark Adventist Academy (OAA), asked me to go on the Dominican Republic mission trip. He wanted me to lead the medical clinics during OAA's mission trip with Quiet Hour Ministries (QHM).

I must admit I was not eager to accept the call. And I even demanded a few comforts, such as air conditioning, in an effort to deter Ron's efforts. Little did I know! Ron continued to ask, and I promised to pray. And next thing I knew we had air conditioning arranged, and I was committed to go. Most of the comments I heard from family and friends were, "No way!" They knew a mission trip was completely outside of my comfort zone. Only by God's

grace did I accept the call.

On April 2, 2014, I left with 37 OAA students and sponsors on our journey to Barahona, Dominican Republic. I had no idea what to expect. I had prior conversations with QHM staff and Esther Hilde, our amazing team leader, but I totally didn't see the great task that lay ahead.

It soon became clear God had great things in store for our group. He blessed us through dawn-to-dusk construction work, medical clinics, health talks, children's programs, and evangelistic meetings. He blessed us through the close bonds we made with the local conference and five area churches. These positive working groups really made the long days a joy.

I observed firsthand how ministering to medical needs was a vital first step in the process of showing God's grace and love. Our medical team treated nearly 1,500 people! Our eye clinic examined 526 people and distributed 336 pairs of eyeglasses! God blessed our evan-

gelistic meetings with a total attendance of 4,781 people between the five sites. And 4,707 kids attended our children's outreach programs! At the end of our evangelistic meetings, praise God, 102 people were baptized! And an additional 1,012 people gave their lives to Christ and began preparing for baptism! When our time there came to a close, the strong bonds we had developed with the people brought tears and hugs with a realization that we would probably not meet again this side of heaven. We made commitments to meet again when Jesus returns where we can reunite in His kingdom.

On this mission trip, I gained a new perspective. Reaching out of your comfort zone allows God to use you in ways you may never experience in your own backyard. My views on air conditioning may not change, but by God's grace I know anything can happen!

Gina Webb



◀ OAA student gives injections in the clinic.

Top right: Hot, sweaty work joyfully done.

Bottom left: The OAA mission team in the Dominican Republic.

Bottom right: The mission team presented evangelistic meetings with the help of translators.



Heber Springs Church is Rejoicing

HEBER SPRINGS, ARK. » The members of the Heber Springs Seventh-day Adventist Church are rejoicing! We got out of the graveyard! Maybe we need to give an explanation. For many years we have been meeting in a cemetery chapel. It was in the



Top left: Sunny and Herman Harp bless the church with a concert.

Top right: Church members visit as they wait for the concert to begin.

Above: The New Heber Springs church building.

country, in a beautiful location, through a gate, down a gravel road, and beside a lovely pasture. But it was not a location that would be conducive to growth.

Around the first of August this year the church members decided to take a different direction with the church. After much prayer and discussion we began looking for a place for our church to grow. We saw a location that we liked, but when we went inside, it was falling down. Then we found another place, on a main highway, just two blocks from the city park where there are lots of festivals held. We feel that God had that spot reserved for us; as it will have many people passing every day. It has room for expansion, and with God's help, we will need it. Please keep the small Heber Springs church in your prayers, as we move forward to do God's will.

Laurie DeWitt

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Prayer Will Change the World!



Where can you experience the blessings of joining together in prayer early in the morning, in the afternoon, and right before bedtime and multiple times throughout the day, as well as a prayer trail, prayer walking, prayer testimonies, and as an added bonus, experience “Morning Manna” presented by our North American Division prayer coordinator Ruthie Jacobsen every morning for eight days in a row? Yes, that’s right—only at Oklahoma Camp meeting!

We believe that prayer *is* the road when otherwise there would be no road. This is why every year before camp meeting prayer warriors gather at the entrance of Wewoka Woods Adventist Center and prayer walk their way all over the campus in preparation for lives to be radically changed!

As we came together, believing and claiming God’s precious promises over the campground, we truly expected a camp meeting different from all others in the past. As expected, Jesus was triumphant and manifested His power by bringing an atmosphere of prayer not

only to the campus, but also to many precious individual hearts.

Of course, in the past seven years that I have been a part of Oklahoma camp meeting, I have seen much prayer *and* many answers to prayers! There has always been a faithful group that meets very early—even before the sun comes up! What an encouragement for all the speakers and families who come each year to the campground. However, this faithful and committed prayer group has outgrown its small meeting place in the corner of the main auditorium.

With great excitement, we were able to provide a very special dedicated area for these faithful prayer warriors this year as a prayer tent was erected adjacent to the main auditorium. Of course, if you have ever been to Oklahoma camp meeting, you know that the temperature can easily reach the triple digits! What a surprise it was to experience delightfully cool temperatures this year! The prayer tent was full every single morning with more than 30 in attendance. It was our little “house of prayer.”

My friend, Ruthie Jacobsen, has often said, “If you were thirsty, you wouldn’t go

to the ocean with a teaspoon. You would go with a five-gallon bucket!” I suppose this is true—God wants to do *big* things in your life! Expect *big* answers to prayer from a *big* God! We are reminded in Isaiah 56:7 and Ezekiel 34:26 that “*Mine house shall be called a house of prayer for all people. I will make them and the places round about My hill a blessing; and I will cause the shower to come down in his season; there shall be showers of blessing.*”

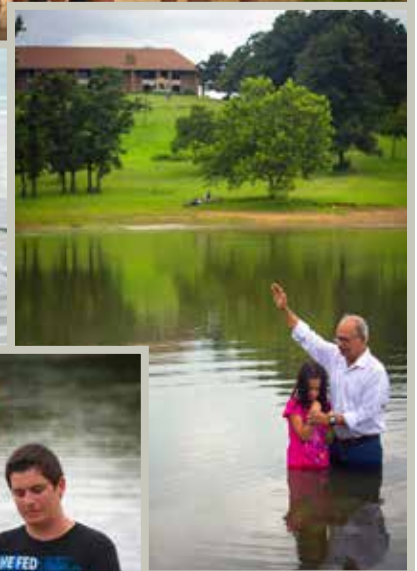
We are praying that all churches in the Oklahoma Conference and the entire worldwide church will become houses of prayer and experience the blessings that are in abundant store—soon to be poured out like rain. Reach out for a prayer partner in your local congregation that will join you in praying for revival and reformation. What are you waiting for? Now is the time. If not now, when? If not you—who? Prayer changes lives. Will you commit to join me and your Oklahoma Conference in a prayer revolution that *will* change the world?

Cindy Mercer, prayer coordinator



Fourteen Souls for the Kingdom of God

WEWOKA » Camp meeting at Wewoka Woods Adventist Center is always a wonderful time for members to get together to visit, reconnect, and gain new spiritual insight as they attend the many different presentations throughout the nine days of camp meeting. Sabbath School departments are filled with active and happy children who are ready for crafts, playing and interacting with other children, swimming, horseback riding, and boating. From the older children's rooms excited and enthusiastic singing can be heard. The youth



Top right: Front row from left: baptism candidates Cody Gilliam, Kent Tillery, Makayla Castillo, Emma Mitchell, Angela Taylor, and Sarah Shaffer.
Back row from left: pastors Stephen Carlile, Ciro Castillo, Daniel Ortega, Perry Flerchinger, James Bokovoy.



people and adults took their stand and their friends and family witnessed their baptisms. We cannot testify at this time what ripple effect

can be found doing community outreach beyond the gates of Wewoka Woods. The bottom line is that the organizers and planners of Oklahoma Camp Meeting are looking for meaningful opportunities for hearts to be changed and for people who wish to follow Jesus.

Such an experience took place this July at camp meeting. Plans were made to hold evangelism meetings during camp meeting. Fliers and advertisements were delivered to surrounding towns to announce our intent. Emanuel Baek, pastor of

the Ardmore church, preached eight consecutive meetings that were Bible-based, positive, and comprehensive.

Other speakers during the day were Ruthie and Don Jacobsen, Ivan Blazen, Eddie Ramirez, John Anderson, Jud Lake, and Tony Moore. Those attending were blessed beyond measure. On the last Sabbath, two baptisms were held in the auditorium and the lake. Fourteen individuals publically showed their desire to follow Jesus and to follow His example to be baptized. Young

will result from this summer's events.

Come join us next July 17-25, 2015 at Wewoka Woods Adventist Center. We offer spiritual blessings, fresh air and nature, horseback riding, water and boat activities, and good, healthy food. Come reap blessings beyond measure!

Susan Castillo

Edmond Church Honors Long-time Member

EDMOND » On Sabbath, July 26, members of the Edmond church gathered after the church service for photographs to salute one of God's faithful servants, José Torres.

A member of the Edmond church for more than 25 years, Torres served as head elder, treasurer, chairman of the building committee, and in many other ways as the church grew from a small group of about 25 members until now when work got underway on a new building designed for 15 times that number.

"The best part has always been watching the church grow," Torres said. Head elder Rick Clark said, "Regardless of all the church positions José has held, his most important trait by far is his love of Christ."

As a token of the church's gratitude, Larry Priest, pastor, presented Torres with a plaque, which stated, "In recognition of the leadership and support



▲ Members of the Edmond church gather for a picture with long-time member Jose Torres and his wife, Lucy, as part of a tribute to Torres for his 25 years of service to the church.

◀ Edmond church pastor Larry Priest presents a plaque to Jose Torres in recognition of Torres' more than 25 years of service to the Edmond church as his wife, Lucy, looks on.



he shared with the Seventh-day Adventist Church of Edmond, Oklahoma, for over 25 years."

Ernie Schultz

Oklahoma Conference Elects New Conference Secretary

OKLAHOMA CITY » The Oklahoma Conference is honored to announce that Richard "Rick" C. Dye is the newly elected Executive Secretary of the Oklahoma Conference. He and his wife, LaVonne, have spent 34 years in ministry serving in Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas. For the past year he has been the director of planned giving and trust services, Sabbath School, and men's ministries in Oklahoma. He had also served as health ministries director and the ASI director for the Texico Conference. He brings a great amount of experience and knowledge, plus a team spirit to

his responsibilities. He joins our president, John Moyer, and treasurer, Karen Senecal, in leading the constituents of Oklahoma in



Rick and LaVonne Dye

their gospel mission.

Dye is a graduate of Union College and Andrews University. His passion in ministry is to tell men and women about Jesus, and to welcome them to the family of God. He also has a genuine desire to train, equip, encourage, and to empower people to discover their own passions and gifts so that they can minister to others in turn. We are very proud to have the Dyes back with us in Oklahoma. Their positive spirit is contagious and we know it will ripple across the Oklahoma Conference.

Susan Castillo

What Prayer Means To Me



The subject of prayer always evokes different thoughts and emotions in different people. There are many admonitions in scripture regarding prayer: pray without ceasing, pray and faint not, pray for one another, pray to the Father in secret, just to mention a very few.

There probably have been more books written on prayer than any other topic in scripture. However, it is probably the least practiced by most of us, yet the most desirable act that God wants from us, His children.

There are so many things that we confess that minimize prayer in our lives, such as, time, place, tiredness, mental obstacles, emotions as obstacles, and you can probably think of a few in your personal life.

For me, prayer is essential to my life. I find myself praying while driving, while watching television (so much so that sometimes I have to hit the replay button), while talking on the phone, while listening to people in front of me, while lying on my bed, and with my wife—and I still feel guilty that I do not pray enough.

The reason prayer is such an integral

part of my life is that without even asking, God has blessed me abundantly above what I have asked Him for. For that reason, most of my prayers have become prayers of thanks. Are you thankful for something God has done in your life? Why not express your gratitude in a prayer of thanksgiving—today and every day!

Samuel L. Green, president

Baton Rouge Berean Celebrates 78 Years

BATON ROUGE, LA. » On Friday, July 4, our nation celebrated its 238th birthday. On the following Sabbath, July 5, the Baton Rouge Berean church celebrated its 78th church anniversary. While fireworks were absent from the latter celebration, there was excitement nonetheless. An annual homecoming/anniversary celebration began three years ago with the arrival of current pastor Robert L. Davis, who readily admits to continuing a tradition he has instituted with each of his previous churches. The colorful red, white, and blue flyer not only announced the much-anticipated anniversary but also served as the cover of the program booklet. Sylvia Scott and Margaret Lawrence coordinated this year's anniversary, which had an international flair. According to Scott and Lawrence, "With the multi-cultural church that Berean has become, it was only natural that we recognize the different cultures."

In addition to the theme, "Eyes on the Prize—Christ Jesus," this year's banner included the names of several Caribbean islands, African nations,

and Spanish-speaking countries. Philippians 3:13, 14 reminded us not to dwell on the past but to look forward to that which is to come—the reward at our Lord's second coming. Because it was a "homecoming," it was only natural that a "native son" would serve as speaker. The invitation went to Helvius Thompson, of the Grace Temple

church in Fort Worth, Texas.

The worship program included a rousing song service led by Oliver Moore with Thompson's wife, Janice, assisting Patrick Allen at the piano. The program continued with Irma Bates' tribute to the church's charter members, as well as those who had passed away since the church's last



Darielle Patin holds a Bible while Betty Collins waves the U.S. flag. Many nationalities and countries were also represented at the celebration.



Far left: Youth processional participants, from left: Darielle Patin, Kevin Greeley, Chris Mitchell, and Chris Davis.

◀ Celebration coordinator Sylvia Scott is congratulated by Robert Davis, pastor, on a “job well done.”

Middle left: Chris Mitchell, Chris Davis, and children singing “America” with the congregation during the third annual church anniversary celebration at the Baton Rouge Berean church on July 5.



Bottom left: Helvius Thompson and Robert Davis, pastors, pose in front of anniversary banner.

▼ Janice and Helvius Thompson with Berean’s only surviving relative of a charter member, Doris Gilliam (right). Her mother, Laura Hubbard, was a founding member when the church began 78 years ago.



celebration, and a religious liberty spotlight by Arlene Mossey, whose bell ringing summoned a youth-led processional. Bearing a gigantic cross, Kevin Greeley led the way followed by Bible-bearer Darielle Patin. Next came Chris Davis waving an enormous Christian flag and Chris Mitchell with the American flag. Several children waving smaller American flags trailed them. Those representing Berean’s diverse nationalities were then invited to come forward with their respective flags. And come they did—taking their positions up front while proudly displaying their flags. Veterans representing various branches of the armed services then joined the group.

Helvius Thompson, who has been a pastor for 44 years, then began the sermon. He was quick to acknowledge the influence that members of the Berean church had on his life, particularly his late maternal grandmother, Lillie Anderson; mother, Lilburne Thompson; and aunt, Phrozine McCoy; along with Berean’s other charter members.

“I fondly recall my relationship with former Berean pastors. This is a historical church with a rich background,” he stated. A vivid description of the religious “tug-of-war” in his family elicited chuckles from the audience as he told of his late father’s Lutheran background and his mother’s Adventist one.

“Subsequently, as a youth, I went to church the entire weekend—on Sabbath and on Sunday.” He then presented Davis with a framed portrait of Berean’s South 14th Street (church’s former location) youth group.

Using Mark 6:6 and Luke 7:9 as his scripture, he titled his message “What Made Jesus Marvel?” Thompson admonished the church not to be afraid to ask God for big favors. “Faith works best in adverse circumstances as it sees the deliverance of God in our lives.” His message to God’s Laodicean church is that unbelief separates from Christ. “As Seventh-day Adventists,

we should be most faithful—most optimistic—as we marvel at God’s goodness.”

The Sabbath lunch, coordinated by one of Berean’s residential chefs, Trudy McClain, satisfied physical appetites before the evening musical, which featured local and some out-of-state talent. As the evening’s activities drew to a close, Berean’s pastor and others couldn’t help but “marvel” once again at how God has blessed Berean for 78 years.

Evelyn M. Edwards

Shiloh Adventist School Keeps Busy

LITTLE ROCK, ARK. » There is a lot going on at Shiloh Adventist School! Students began the school year with lots of excitement, beginning with new technology in the classroom with five new laptops, a brand new playground, 16 new hall lockers, and a brand new sign in front of the school!

The new playground was built by T. Clemons with the assistance of Curtis Pettis. When asked what name should be given to the new playground, the response was, "It's not a playground, it's a theme park!" The playground includes three swings, two balance beams, a coil climber, a rock climb, two slides, and a tetherball.

Durandel Ford, pastor, dedicated the playground on May 10, 2014. Ford was also the guest speaker for education day festivities at Shiloh. Shakuntala Ramsarran, Southwest Region Conference education director, made a wonderful presenta-

tion during the education spotlight. Both Ramsarran and Ford received plaques for their continued dedication to the field of education.

On May 17, 2014, Shiloh also held its first big fundraiser with a banquet/contest. The theme was "Remember Esther," and each student received a trophy. David Thomas

was crowned "King of Shiloh" and Coneah Williams was crowned "Queen of Shiloh" for raising the most funds.

Students at Shiloh will be giving back to the community this year by supplying the homeless shelter with handmade stocking caps and shawls for the winter.



Shiloh Adventist School students are thrilled with their new playground.

Brenda Davis Ordained as Elder in Hebron Church

HOUSTON, TEX. » Brenda Davis has functioned as an elder of the Hebron church for the past two years. On Sabbath, July 12, 2014 she was ordained as the first female elder of Hebron. Davis joined the Seventh-day Adventist Church at the age of 17 and has successfully served in many capacities including Sabbath School secretary, Sabbath School superintendent, Sabbath School teacher (children, youth, and adult divisions), Adventist Youth Society director, Vacation Bible School director, community service director, church ministries director, church clerk, and internal auditor.

Davis graduated from the University of Houston Downtown College with an associate of science degree in biology. She attended Texas Woman's University, the University of Texas, and Southwestern Adventist University. She graduated summa cum laude with a bachelor of science in

business management and leadership from Capella University. She then obtained her masters in adult and higher education from Capella University, graduating with honors. She has completed her coursework towards her doctorate in organizational management and leadership and is scheduled to start the dissertation phase in January 2015.

Davis is also a retired training specialist. After 30 years of service, she retired in January of 2007 from the University of Texas Police Department in Houston in the training and recruiting division. She started there as a police dispatcher, then moved to police guard, and was then promoted to police senior guard. Within two years, she



Brenda Davis was ordained as an elder in the Hebron church on July 12, 2014.

was assigned to the police training division as a trainer/facilitator. She was responsible for training all new and incumbent police personnel. She was later promoted to Training Specialist I, and finally, Training Specialist II, the title she held upon retiring.

With God on her side, Davis believes anything is possible. Davis has overcome insurmountable odds and has gone on to be successful in her career, education, and most importantly, she has been successful with God. Davis has been a wondrous addition to the Hebron church and we look forward to her leadership in the years to come.

Naomi Harris

Prayer Moves the Heart of God



“Who [Christ], in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear, though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him” (Hebrews 5:7-9, NKJV).

There are several things that leap out of these words at us, begging for spiritual application. (1) God Himself, in the flesh, knew *how important* prayer was as a strengthening agent for the human heart weathered and beaten down by the trials of this world. (2) When He *prayed*, He did so with supplication. He pleaded with His Father and cried; His soul was poured out before the Father and He felt anguish and heartfelt emotion. The windows of His soul were washed transparent; there was nothing between Him and His Father!

(3) He was *heard*. He didn’t receive the answer He sought, but He was heard. Sometimes the Father says yes, sometimes He answers no, but His infinite wisdom and sovereignty is always in the right! (4) Even God’s divine and sinless Son, according to the text, “*learned obedience*” through suffering! That is an awesome and most sobering thought to me. If God Himself submitted Himself to the school of suffering, to learn obedience in honor of His Father with Whom He was and is equal, how much more should we all as His children submit ourselves willingly and daily to the processes that He aligns for our own good? (5) Can perfect be perfected? According to the text, I believe so! It reads—“and having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation, to all who obey Him”

Did we read that right? He who was, is, and, evermore will be *perfect*, was perfected through the obedience of the cross. (6) If the Lord Himself learned obedience through prayer and supplication, then we as His disciples may certainly have that

privileged experience of struggling with Him in prayer and all supplication and find sweet victory over the sins that so easily beset us.

Perhaps we spend far too little time and energy in prayer. Could it be that we give up in prayer far too early? Notice the words of the servant of the Lord, Ellen White, in *Christ’s Object Lessons*, “Christ’s lessons in regard to prayer should be carefully considered. There is a divine science to prayer. Christ teaches us the necessity of perseverance in presenting our requests to God and assures us of His willingness to hear and answer our prayers...The same devotion, the same self-sacrifice, the same submission to the claims of the word of God that were manifest in Christ, must be seen in His servants” (p. 142).

So pray on, the victory is just before you!

Carlos J. Craig, president

Tyler Adventist School Baptisms

TYLER » Five students of the Tyler Adventist School were baptized on May 10, 2014. Some of the five took baptismal classes with Paul LeBlanc, pastor, during the 2012-13 school year and the rest took them this past school year.

“As with the angels in heaven,” said LeBlanc, “there is always so much joy in heaven when our young people dedicate themselves to the Lord.”

After witnessing these baptisms, four more youth have stepped forward declaring their desire to dedicate themselves to God, and are now preparing for baptism.

Jessica Anderson



Back row, from left: Wizan Sebulburo, Jasper Delim, Karilyn Heinrich. Front row, from left: Esteban Morales and Ethan Maples.

A Year of Firsts and Surprises

JEFFERSON » On May 21, 2014 Pineywoods Adventist Christian School's first eighth-grade graduate, Luttrell Stevenson, received his diploma. Stevenson has attended PACS from its inception in 2011. He has grown physically—gaining more than a foot in two years—and spiritually. He was baptized in the spring of 2012. In addition, he has shown his academic abilities by scoring overall best performance at Jefferson Academy during Academy days, entitling him to a scholarship should he choose to attend there next year.

Stevenson's graduation wasn't the only "first" for PACS this year—God answered a desperate prayer for help with transportation and surprised us with a 12-passenger Dodge van that is used to transport nine students from the Lufkin area to the school in Nacogdoches. Without this means of transportation, several of these children would not have been able to attend PACS this year. A number of generous donors also made it possible for students to attend who might not have been able to.

The students at

PACS are blessed with a well-equipped computer lab that enables them to utilize the Internet to enhance their educational experience. The school's art program has included its own set of firsts—two trips to a local business named Glass Castles where the upper grade students completed stained glass projects.

A significant first this past year focused on actively reaching into the community each month through our outreach program. The students helped provide funds for purchasing booklets and leaflets for distribution by paying \$1 in order to participate in "Free Friday," when they could substitute "regular" clothes for their school



uniform. Our outreach activities included performing for two local assisted-living homes, distributing door hanger bags in the neighborhood, collecting cans for food baskets, purchasing items for foster children, and even visiting Love Inc., to decorate bags for distributing food.

Everyone at PACS is looking forward to the "firsts" and surprises God has in store for the 2014-2015 school year. Please don't forget to help support your local school. Your generosity and prayers may help them to experience lots of wonderful surprises and firsts in the coming school year, too.

Sharon Clark



Pineywoods Adventist Christian School received a 12-passenger van from generous donors to aid in transportation.

Kids in the Kitchen

MT. PLEASANT » The Mt. Pleasant church's Kids in the Kitchen Vacation Bible School, held June 16–20, was a great success, with 17-20 kids attending each day. The kids' days were filled with fun songs, silly contests, guest speakers from the city to discuss important topics, stories from the Wild West, classes with Bible lessons, cooking projects, crafts, and games.

Our guest speakers were a police officer (personal safety), a pediatrician (staying healthy), a firefighter (fire safety), city community services director (facts about the city and how we can help our city), and a couple of paramedics (dealing with medical emergencies).

Everyone enjoyed the presentations, but

their favorite activities were going outside to look at the police car, the fire truck, and the ambulance! The police officer even let the kids push buttons to turn on the lights and sirens. "Grandpa" Darwin



The Mt. Pleasant church's Kids in the Kitchen Vacation Bible School was a fun and memorable experience for all involved.

It was obvious his guardian angel has done double-time keeping him safe.

The kids cooked vegetarian pizza buns, soups, sandwich spreads, homemade bread, and casseroles. The week ended with a special Sabbath School program. Lynne Barrett gave an overview of the week, the kids sang songs they'd learned, and we watched a slide show of pictures from the week. God blessed our VBS program and we pray this is something the kids will always remember.

Julie Smith

delighted everyone with tales of his days in the forest service in the Northwest and the harrowing experiences he's been through.

God's Weird Animals

HOUSTON » The Houston Alief Spanish church held its annual Vacation Bible School during June 9-13. More than 57 children, including 25 children from the local community, participated in the program. The children learned about some pretty weird animals and their amazing differences. No matter what our differences are, God will always be with us. The Weird Animals VBS program taught the children about Jesus' love as being one of a kind. Miguel Ramos, pastor, and his family helped give the kids an unforgettable VBS. Every night was full of object lessons and great games.

The Sabbath day was an incredibly special as we closed the VBS program and many parents, relatives, and friends of the children were invited to watch the graduation

program, during which each child received a certificate of completion. Vacation Bible School has definitely touched our community, and already kids are asking about VBS for the next summer.

One of the mothers, who was a visitor, took her daughter to the VBS because she wants for her daughter to grow up knowing about God. The mother attended the program one night and said she felt something differ-

ent within her, and it changed her life. The kids truly bonded with this team and begged them to come back next year!

Ely Ray Juanillo

More than 57 children attended the Houston Alief Spanish church's VBS.



Plugged in to the Power



TEXICO CONFERENCE

“One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When He finished, one of His disciples said to Him, ‘Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples.’

He said to them, ‘When you pray, say: Father, hallowed be Your name, Your kingdom come. Give us this day our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us. And lead us not into temptation’” (Luke 11:1-4, NIV).

The more well-known version of this prayer is found in Matthew 6. We refer to it as The Lord’s Prayer, and Christians everywhere often recite it together. But in Luke’s gospel account we find a more concise presentation of the components of prayer. Here Jesus opens this topic to His disciples in response to their request that He teach them to pray.

The very first words in this chapter show that before Jesus even began to speak to them He was teaching this lesson by example. His disciples knew that He “was praying in a certain place.” They were real-time witnesses of how faithful Jesus was in connecting with His father by prayer. They could

sense the value He placed on prayer as His ministry was totally dependent on Heaven’s power.

Jesus chose His words carefully as He tells them, and all of us as His disciples, to address our thoughts, our praise, and our gratitude to His Father. He presents the extremes of our need for daily provision as well as our need for His promised presence to become very real in every moment of our lives.

His prescription for our peace is centered in the importance of forgiveness. This includes us extending forgiveness to others and the need for us to receive it from God. I believe that we are all in need of the peace of mind that comes from knowing there is nothing between us and God that remains unresolved or unforgiven.

I have long treasured a special chapter in the book *Steps to Christ* which I have read countless times over the years. This chapter is entitled “The Privilege of Prayer,” and I have found that nearly every sentence speaks powerfully to my heart. Let me share a few with you:

“Prayer is the opening of the heart as to a friend... Prayer does not bring God down to

us, but brings us up to Him.”

“Jesus Himself, while He dwelt among men, was often in prayer... And if the Savior of men, the Son of God, felt the need of prayer, how much more should feeble, sinful mortals feel the necessity of fervent, constant prayer.”

“There is no time or place in which it is inappropriate to offer up a petition to God... A closet of communion can be found wherever we are.”

What amazing words about our compassionate Father, the One Who is ever-present as we walk the pathways of life. Nothing that in any way concerns our peace is too small for Him to notice. And what a blessing it is to know that no matter where we are, or what we are doing, He’s only a prayer away. I hope that you will take a few minutes to explore this wonderfully encouraging chapter and be blessed by a full dose of inspiration.

Through prayer we can each gain access to the peace, wisdom, comfort, courage, and strength of Heaven. May we find ourselves in daily communion with Jesus.

Phil Robertson

El Paso Central Celebrates Baptisms at Graduation

EL PASO, TEX. » El Paso Adventist Junior Academy (EPAJA) is truly a school with a mission, especially considering that many of the students attending are from different faiths. For the past two years principal Cathie Workman has asked her husband Pastor Chuck to hold Bible studies with her students who would like to get to know Jesus better.

After all, isn’t that the reason we support Christian education? Several students who were baptized last year recently returned to help with this year’s Bible study. Two new students requested baptism—Jason and Matthew Aranda. The baptism occurred during our EPAJA graduation at El Paso Central church as part of the end of the school year celebration.

Cathie Workman



◀ Jason and Matthew Aranda are happy to be baptized after concluding Bible studies with Chuck Workman.



▲ Chuck Workman, pastor, (left) presents the two baptismal candidates at the El Paso Central Church along with Robert Christenson (right).

Changed: Real Lives in the Real World

LAS CRUCES, N. MEX. » The Texico Conference held their spring youth rally at the Columbus Conference Center in Las Cruces, on April 4-5, 2014. Hosted by the Spanish and English churches, this was the first conference-wide youth rally held in Las Cruces. Youth and young adults from the community, as well as from around Texico, gathered for a weekend of preaching, worship, fellowship, and service.

The guest speaker was former Texico pastor and youth director Manny Cruz, who currently serves as youth director for the Arizona Conference. He challenged the youth with his theme, "Changed: Real Lives in the Real World." Joining him in ministering to our youth was Christian recording artist Charmaine, who provided a concert Sabbath evening.

On Sabbath afternoon the youth visited Tent City, a place in Las Cruces where the homeless can set up

tents. They distributed packets that included food, hygiene kits, and literature, and spent time talking with and praying for the people they met.

Of special note was the Española church, which had more than 20 youth participating in this rally. Many of these were non-Adventists who made commitments to Christ during the weekend. The Lord

greatly blessed our youth. Please continue to pray for and support our youth throughout the conference.

Fernando Villegas

Speaker Manny Cruz, from the Arizona Conference, was a blessing to the youth at the Texico Youth Rally held in Las Cruces.



Treasure Hunt Brings People Together

TAOS, N. MEX. » After holding an evangelistic meeting and follow up in Taos, the Adventist church decided to do something different in town. We invited the neighboring Adventist churches to join in a treasure

hunt game on a Saturday night. Members from every church in the area participated. Some people who had attended our evangelistic series last year came out for the fun evening. I was excited that a social activity

could reach people, and that we had an opportunity to witness for Jesus.

Participants were divided into groups and given a list of things they had to find and tasks they needed to do. Some of the treasure hunt instructions involved doing community service, such as washing car windows. Prizes were given for first, second, and third place. We had such a great time! The church felt unified, with young and old enjoying a good time together.

Jorge Poveda, pastor



Far left: The winning treasure hunt team is all smiles after a fun evening!

◀ The Taos Adventist church's treasure hunt included doing community service projects, such as washing people's windshields.

TEXICO CONFERENCE

Teachers Receive SWUC Excellence Award

TEXICO CONFERENCE

ALBUQUERQUE, N. MEX » This spring, two of our teachers in the Texico Conference received the Southwestern Union Conference Excellence In Teaching Award. Darlene Roche was the recipient of the elementary level award and Bryce Sampsel received the secondary level award.

Darlene Roche has been teaching at Sandia View Elementary (SVE) School for twelve years. She has dedicated herself to becoming the best teacher possible by taking classes year after year to complete her degree while earning North American Division certification. She is now contemplating obtaining her master's degree while teaching full-time.

Most of Darlene's years at SVE have been in the kindergarten classroom, but this year, she is teaching grades three and four. She is a very creative teacher who always has a smile for her students as she instructs them in spiritual and academic subjects.

Bryce Sampsel graduated from Walla

Walla College in 2005 and is now in his fifth year of teaching at Sandia View Academy. His goal is to educate students in his

areas of expertise while showing them the results of living a Christ-centered life.

He states, "I am willing to answer what-



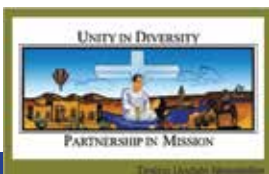
▲ Education superintendent Derral Reeve and Sandia View Elementary principal Bonnie Garner present award to Darlene Roche (center).

◀ Bryce Sampsel (center) receives his award from Derral Reeve and Sandia View Academy principal, Wendi Clapp.



ever questions my students have, whether it is dealing with academics or religion. My desire to help people influenced my decision to teach more than anything else. I believe the most important contribution I make is being willing to listen and when asked questions, I either answer them or find the answers. I try to show them that no matter what they do or don't do, or how I scold them or praise them, it has nothing to do with the gift of salvation."

Derral Reeve



Want to see more of what is taking place around the Texico Conference? Subscribe to the Texico Update Newsletter at

<http://eepurl.com/TdOc5>
or www.texico.org



Newsletter can be viewed in numerous languages.

Southwestern ESL Combines Lessons and Real Friendship to Teach English

Unique language labs, family-like support, and daily worship set Southwestern's English as a Second Language apart from other similar programs. The Euro-Asian Division of Seventh-day Adventists has taken note, and has decided to send its workers to Southwestern for ESL exclusively. Along with learning English, students learn to grow in Christ and support each other as a family.

"Being here is a big deal for me," says Jorge Morales, from Puerto Rico. "I came last summer and was really nervous. I came alone, but quickly became part of the family here."

The Southwestern ESL program is highly structured. Each day begins with prayer, and then the classwork starts with questions and answers.

"I tell students to be smart and ask questions," says Monica Kowarsch, ESL director. "That way I see where they are. In the beginning some are shy, but they soon discover that a lot of people have the same questions. You just have to ask them."

In-class discussion is a big part of the language learning process at Southwestern. Starting the day with questions helps students feel more open to talk and admit mistakes. There's freedom to interact.

Students first have lessons, and then practice grammar. "It is amazing to see all the students help each other to reach the goal of learning English," says Yardai Casco-Hernandez, a recent ESL student. "We not only learn from the professor but we also learn from each other."

An open classroom setting then transitions into labs and tutoring, taught by English-speaking Southwestern students.

"The labs are unique to Southwestern," says Kowarsch. "I hire students with a variety of personality and accents. I prefer to hire students that only speak English. It's hard for the ESL students at first, but easier

in the long run."

Student tutors help and spend time with ESL students both inside and outside of the lab. They consider tutoring as more than a job, but as a full-time responsibility.

"Every day we have talented tutors that are willing to help us reach our goal," says Casco-Hernandez. "It is beautiful to see their smiles and enthusiasm to sit and talk with each of the students. At the end of the semester they are no longer just tutors, but also our friends."

"I tell tutors that I can't pay them for all

the extra work they do," says Kowarsch. "But they do it anyway, because they enjoy it."

Another major success factor of Southwestern ESL is a focus on Christ. Daily devotionals and worship remind students that language is important, but the most important is spending time with God.

Bible reading sometimes doubles as an English lesson and devotional. Reading scripture in a new language gives students more time to reflect on the texts.

Before attending Southwestern, Morales never took time for daily devotional. Because of that, he grew apart from God. In the ESL program they sing every day and read scripture, helping Morales to grow spiritually.

"On the weekends I felt like I needed something, so I started doing personal devotionals," says Morales. "I really met God through ESL professors. They gave me advice as friends and Christians. Now I can say that I really know God."

Another student, Hanna Kim, began to study the Bible because of ESL. She and Morales began to study and pray together on a regular basis.

"I met God in ESL, truly," says Kim. "ESL made me realize God's love. In addition, I saw Jesus through my professors and tutors. I am so thankful I had an opportunity to study here."

Success of an ESL program should be measured by how well students learn English. At Southwestern, students learn English and more. A combination of dynamic learning, impactful worship, and lasting friendships makes Southwestern's ESL program truly unique. Judging from the growing participation, and the stamp of approval from the Euro-Asian Division, the program is making an impact.

Makala Coleman, senior journalism major



Top: Union presidents from Belarus, Moldova, and East Russia went through the ESL program before deciding to send all their employees to Southwestern in the future. Pictured here visiting Dallas with ESL director Monica Kowarsch.

Bottom: One of the many fun field trips the ESL students take, both to learn about the culture and practice their English.

Ten Days of Prayer 2015

SILVER SPRING, MD. » Experience ten life-changing days with the Savior as you start your year with prayer during the *Ten Days of Prayer*, January 7-17, 2015. The *Ten Days of Prayer* is a time to organize a group of friends, neighbors, church members, or family to spend uninterrupted time together in prayer.

The theme for this initiative is, “Experiencing the Fruits of the Spirit,” based on Galatians 5:22-25. Each day we will be praying for and learning about these ten attributes of the Spirit. You are encouraged to go to www.TenDaysOfPrayer.org to register yourself or your group. While there, you will find promotional materials as well as downloadable guidelines for leaders, which will enable a first-time leader to easily walk a group through an hour of prayer. You’ll also find daily theme sheets with prayer requests that reflect personal needs as well as the needs of the world-wide Seventh-day Adventist Church. At the bottom of the Web page, you can post prayer requests or praises on the Community Comments section. How exciting to be uniting together as a church to pray for specific requests and to see God work by pouring out the Holy Spirit in even greater measure!

Hope Channel and the General Conference Ministerial Association will once again partner to produce live broadcasts of the program, *Let’s Pray*. Each evening, a devotional thought on the theme for the day will be presented and viewers will be invited to participate by sharing and praying for requests on the program. *Let’s Pray* can be viewed on DirecTV 368 and streaming online at hopetv.org.

Why do we have *Ten Days of Prayer*? It is a time for individuals to meet together and experience the power that comes with united prayer and to pray in one accord so God’s power can be unleashed and the great controversy ended. If you or your group is unable to meet during the designated days, choose an alternate ten days that works for you so that you can still participate in the blessing.

“Why should the sons and daughters of God be reluctant to pray, when prayer

is the key in the hand of faith to unlock heaven’s storehouse, where are treasured the boundless resources of Omnipotence? Without unceasing prayer and diligent watching we are in danger of growing careless and of deviating from the right path” (*Steps to Christ* p. 94, 95).

After the 2014 *Ten Days of Prayer*, literally hundreds of participants wrote and shared their experiences with us: “We have seen former members returning and new people from the community coming to church, people got jobs, there has been an increase in prayer in our Sabbath services, and members have drawn closer to each other and to God.”

—**Gloria Milton, Keynes Church, United Kingdom**

“The Ten Days of Prayer was so spirit-filled! On the night of the eighth day one of our neighbors had demonic possession. Myself and one of my elders were invited to pray for the lady. We went there and the demon manifested himself but the power of God was so mighty on us that God Himself prevailed. The testimony from the lady the following morning was that she didn’t just see two of us enter her house. Instead, she saw the multitude of angels that accompanied us. To God be the glory!

During the ten days of prayer, we were asking God to give the church very significant testimony that will tell people that

He is with us. He did answer us!”—**Pastor Francis**

“For us, a small church plant, it was both necessary and blessed to come together to pray. We just started a process of developing visions and strategies for our group and for that reason the Ten Days of Prayer was much needed and it has set our thoughts in motion toward a common goal.” —**Anton Torstensson, Arvika Church plant, Sweden**

“We saw the hand of the Lord, during the past Ten Days of Prayer. Miracles happened, healings took place, many long-time unanswered prayers were answered. . . I believe no church can afford to miss next year’s Ten Days of Prayer . . .” —**Buhire Elie Brown, Guadeloupe**

God wants to pour out His Spirit on us now, just as He did for His disciples during Pentecost. Won’t you join the world church in praying for that blessing during January 7-17? Sign up today at www.TenDaysOfPrayer.org, invite friends to participate, join the Facebook event at [10DaysOfPrayer2015](https://www.facebook.com/10DaysOfPrayer2015), follow it on Twitter at [#10DaysOfPrayer2015](https://twitter.com/10DaysOfPrayer2015), and watch special episodes of *Let’s Pray—10 Days of Prayer* at www.hopetv.org. Join us and be blessed!

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10 days of PRAYER

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SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

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EMPLOYMENT

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edu, visit www.adu.edu/pt, or go to: www.floridahospitalcareers.com/ and search job number: 182527.

Pacific Union College

is seeking a full-time faculty in the Nursing and Health Sciences Department-Emergency Services/Nursing to begin during the 2014-2015 academic year. Ideal candidate will possess master's degree in nursing or related field, current RN license, and current National Registry EMT certification and/or Paramedic license with at least 2 years pre-hospital experience. For more information or to apply, call 707.965.7062 or visit <http://www.puc.edu/faculty-staff/current-job-postings>.

Southwestern Adventist University

Advancement office seeks full-time Vice President. Responsibilities center primarily in development in addition to PR/Marketing and Alumni. Minimum bachelor's degree and 2 years advancement experience required, master's degree preferred. Anticipated begin date is January, 2015. Submit cover letter and CV/resume to Human Resources at denise.rivera@swau.edu.

Web Press Operators

Wanted: Pacific Press Publishing Association seeks Seventh-day Adventist Web Press Operators for Head Press Operator and 2nd Press Operator full-time positions. Applicants should have 2-4 years of experience, showing mechanical aptitude and the proven ability to lead employees in a production

process. Hourly rate based on experience. Contact Ms. Alix Mansker, HR Director, PO Box 5353, Nampa ID 83653, 208.465.2567, phone; 208.465.2531, fax; or aliman@pacificpress.com.

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of Weimar, CA seeks mid-level Providers, RNs, X-ray, Ultrasound and Lab Techs, to staff Rural Health Clinic and Urgent Care Center. Candidates must have interest in, and reflect the values of, Weimar Institute's NEWSTART lifestyle. Call 615.604.0142. r61@me.com.

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seeks Seventh-day Adventist experienced in K-8 education and eligible for Nebraska certification to teach curriculum and instruction courses and supervise student teachers. Doctorate strongly preferred. Effective summer 2015. E-mail letter of interest and C.V. to Dr. Denise White, Chair of Human Development, dewhite@ucollege.edu.

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beauties of God's creation. Cost: \$975. For more information call 931.213.1329. www.butlercreekhealth.org.

Get your August 2014 Equipped for Ministries Convention DVDs: Available on-line from www.onsitevideo.net, or write to: P.O. Box 114, Keene, TX 76059. English DVD includes Derek Morris, Barry Black, Henry Wright, and Steve Case. Spanish DVD includes Ernie Castillo and Osvaldo Rigacci. Specify English or Spanish when ordering. \$15 each.

Announcements

Sheyenne River Academy/Dakota Adventist Academy Alumni Weekend, October 3-4, 2014 at Dakota

Adventist Academy, 15905 Sheyenne Circle, Bismarck, ND. Come and renew your friendships! Honor Classes: '40, '45, '50, '55, '60, '65, '75, '85, '90, '95, '00, '05, '10. For more information, contact 701.258.9000, ext. 236, or visit our website at: <http://bit.ly/DAA-AlumWknd14>.

Sandia View Academy Alumni Annual Reunion: Corrales, N. Mex., October 9-11, 2014. Honor Classes: 1944, 1954, 1964, 1974, 1984, 1989, 1994, 2004. The first academy 12th grade graduate, Max Martinez '42, will be in attendance! For more information, call or e-mail Jerry Ruybalid '54, Alumni Association President, at 405.570.3833, or jrsleeper1@gmail.com.

Obituaries

KOI, Norma W., born July 5, 1921 in Macon, Mo., and died August 7, 2014 in Hot Springs, Ark. She was a member of the Hot Springs church. Survivors: son and daughter-in-law, Edward and Janice Romero of West Blocton, Ala.; son, Michael Howell of Clarence, Mo.; sons, Matt Langston, Jimmy Langston, and Carl Langston of Hot Springs, Ark.; step-daughter, Regina Koi Richter of Rogers, Ark.; step-daughter, Susan Koi Richter of Wassailla, Ark.; step-daughter and step-son, Miki Koi and Julian Koi of Bastrop, Tex.; sister and brother-in-law, Jane Ann and John Smart of Wichita, Kan.; 27 grandchildren; 34 great-grandchildren; and two great-great-grandchildren.

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Pathway to Health is recruiting volunteers to provide free medical, vision, and dental services to thousands of underserved people April 8-10, 2015 in San Antonio, Texas. To become part of this exciting event, go to **BigCityBenevolence.org**.

MCLEMORE, Neal D., born July 5, 1943 in Oklahoma City, Okla., and died June 23, 2014 in Tulsa, Okla. He was a member of Adventist Fellowship in Tulsa. Survivor: Carole McLemore.

NEDLEY, Donna L., born February 1, 1947 in Brownville, Pa., and died May 14, 2014 in Norman, Okla. She was a member of the Ardmore church. She had been employed by Sunshine Industries. She was preceded in death by her parents, Lloyd A. Nedley, Jr. and Orvetta Charlton Nedley. Survivors: brothers, Dr. Neil Nedley and Wayne Nedley; sisters, Janice Crawford and Diane Brock; nine nephews and one niece.

PERRY, Rachel Coleen Ellis, born January 10, 1918 in Vian, Okla., and died July 10, 2014 in Sallisaw, Okla. at the age of 96. She was a social worker for the Sequoyah County Welfare Department. She also taught school at Sallisaw Seventh-day Adventist Church School and Belfonte and Marble City Schools. She was a member of the Adventist Church for more than 60 years, where she served as the church treasurer for many years. She was preceded in death by her parents, Lonzo and Eady Ellis, and her husband, Nolan Irby Perry. Survivors: two daughters and one son-in-law: Wanda Smith of Keene, Tex., and Doris and Kent Trotter of Vian, Okla.

PHILLIPS, Erma Jean Wells, born April 9, 1929 in Washington, Okla., and died March 8, 2014 in Ardmore, Okla. She was a member of the Ardmore church. She was an LPN and had earned

several bachelor degrees. She was an author, artist, seamstress, gardener, a person of great faith, and she loved children and used her skills to bless their lives. She is preceded in death by her parents, Earl and Georgia Mason Wells; her husband, Harold; and her daughter Brenda. Survivors: son and daughter-in-law Rodney and Teddy Jo; four grandchildren; and one great grandchild.

ROSALES, Erasmo, born September 5, 1929 in Escobares, Tex., and died June 19, 2014 in McAllen, Tex. He was a member of the Pharr church. Survivors: brother, Ruben Salinas; sons, Roal, Leo, and Rudy; and many grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

STOWE, Donald Ray, born November 2, 1929 in Hobart, Okla., and died June 29, 2014 in Fort Worth, Tex. He was a member of the Keene church. Survivors: wife, Marjorie (Yates) Stowe; brother, William Stowe; sons, Jonathan Stowe and Nathan Stowe; six grandchildren.

STUMPF, Christine, born June 23, 1922, and died June 5, 2014 in Bossier City, La. She was a member of the Hot Springs church. She was preceded in death by her husband, Arthur J. Stumpf, Jr., and her daughter, Martha Raye Sitig. Survivors: son and daughter-in-law, Jimmy and Norma Evans, of Bossier City; a daughter and son-in-law, Virginia and Jerry Mey, from Kentucky; two sisters, Betty Parker, of Center, Tex., and Yvonne Jackson, of Shreveport, La.; and many grandchildren and great-

grandchildren.

TURPEN, Dinnie Delois, born June 23, 1930 in Fort Worth, Tex., and died July 11, 2014 in Fort Worth, Tex. She was a member of Fort Worth First church for more than 60 years. Survivors: husband, Johnnie; son, Johnny; daughter, Sandra; and five grandchildren.

WESTBROOK, David, born October 20, 1940 in Beloit, Wis., and he died July 28, 2014 in Springdale, Ark. He was a member at Pioneer Adventist Fellowship in West Siloam Springs, Okla. Survivors: wife, Barbara Westbrook; daughters, Rebekah Westbrook, Sarah Westbrook and son, Benjamin Westbrook all of Gentry, Ark.; daughter, Carlene Whatley of Columbia, Mo.; son, David Scott Westbrook of Fort Worth, Tex.; and daughter, Robin Stewart of Siloam Springs, Ark.

WINES, Edward C., died on August 13, 2014 at the age of 91 in Signal Mountain, Tenn. He was a longtime educator within the Seventh-day Adventist Church. He graduated from Union College in 1943, and then served as a dean at Platte Valley Academy for two years. Next, he followed God's call to serve as a missionary in Ethiopia and Egypt. Later he served in the Southwestern Union Conference at Tulsa Adventist Academy, and as president of Southwestern Adventist University from 1964-1971. He was also vice president for advancement and public relations at Loma Linda University, and education director for the Columbia Union Conference. Survivors: wife of 71 years, Moneta Cavinness Wines; son, Edward E. (Cherie) Wines; daughters, Muriel Wines Phillips (Scott Saylor), and Mary Ann Wines (Randy) Graves; and eight grandchildren.

SABBATH SUNSET CALENDAR

	Oct 3	Oct 10	Oct 17	Oct 24	Oct 31	Nov 7
Abilene, TX	7:22	7:13	7:05	6:57	6:50	5:44
Albuquerque, NM	6:49	6:39	6:30	6:22	6:14	5:07
Amarillo, TX	7:30	7:20	7:11	7:02	6:55	5:48
Brownsville, TX	7:15	7:08	7:01	6:55	6:50	5:45
Dallas, TX	7:10	7:01	6:53	6:45	6:38	5:32
El Paso, TX	6:49	6:41	6:32	6:25	6:18	5:12
Fort Worth/Keene, TX	7:13	7:04	6:55	6:47	6:40	5:34
Gallup, NM	6:57	6:47	6:38	6:30	6:22	5:15
Galveston/Houston, TX	7:06	6:58	6:50	6:43	6:36	5:31
Gentry, AR	7:00	6:50	6:41	6:32	6:24	5:17
Little Rock, AR	6:52	6:42	6:33	6:25	6:17	5:11
Muskogee, OK	7:04	6:54	6:44	6:36	6:28	5:21
New Orleans, LA	6:44	6:36	6:28	6:21	6:15	5:09
Oklahoma City, OK	7:12	7:03	6:53	6:45	6:37	5:30
Roswell, NM	6:51	6:32	6:23	6:15	6:08	5:02
San Antonio, TX	7:18	7:10	7:03	6:55	6:49	5:44
Shreveport, LA	6:59	6:50	6:41	6:33	6:26	5:20
Tulsa, OK	7:06	6:56	6:46	6:38	6:30	5:23

Note: Daylight Savings Time ends at 2:00 a.m. on Nov 2.

On the Record »

BY PAT HUMPHREY » COMMUNICATION DIRECTOR, SOUTHWESTERN UNION



Prayer Changes Things. Most of All, It Changes Us.

The *Strong's Concordance* lists more than 500 references to texts that contain the word *pray* or one of its derivatives. The *Index to the Writings of Ellen G. White* contains 26 pages of references to statements that Ellen White made on prayer. And in the wider religious world, the topic of prayer seems to dominate the number of published works. Indeed, prayer is a subject that is vital to the Christian life.

One of my favorite passages on prayer is found in *Steps to Christ*, in a chapter entitled “The Privilege of Prayer.” There Ellen White makes the following statement: “Prayer is the opening of the heart to God as to a friend ... Prayer does not bring God down to us, but brings us up to Him” (page 92).

If you're like me—and you probably are—at times, your prayer life has been more like a shopping list than an intimate two-way conversation. At other times your prayers may have been more like an emergency S.O.S. (Save Our Ship!) call than a heartfelt cry for quiet communion with a loving God. Don't get me wrong, the Bible admonishes us to call for help when it's needed, and we're promised in Psalm 46:1 (and elsewhere) that “God is

our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.”

But as I've grown in my Christian experience, I've learned that real prayer is about much more than asking God to supply our wants and temporal needs. I once participated in an “emergency” prayer meeting to plead with God for intervention in a situation that had the potential of tearing our congregation to pieces. While I've been in prayer meetings before, never have I experienced the intensity of prayer as we felt it that night. Earnest, heartfelt pleas were made for forgiveness, for love, for patience, endurance, understanding, healing of relationships, and unity. Audible praises and silent confessions were made to God, pleading with Him for deliverance from a situation

that only He could remedy. Songs and readings from the Scriptures and Spirit of Prophecy punctuated the many earnest prayers. People left the meeting not knowing whether the answer had or would come, yet comforted by the knowledge that the Holy Spirit had been present in that assembly and that God had heard our prayers.

The next day a fellow church member called me and said how blessed she had been by the experience. She shared that the prayer service had helped her with an attitude problem and that she was now able to feel forgiveness toward those she considered to be at fault in the situation. Then it struck me that prayer does so much more than providing the answers or the things we are so desperately seeking. Prayer doesn't just change circumstances—it changes us!

Pat Humphrey

Record

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Upcoming Events

Fall Holiday—October 10

University Days—October 16-19, Southwestern campus

Week of Prayer—October 20-24, Southwestern campus

University Experience—October 30-November 2, Southwestern campus

Presidential Inauguration—November 6-7, Southwestern campus

Thanksgiving Break—November 24-30



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