

SOUTHWESTERN UNION

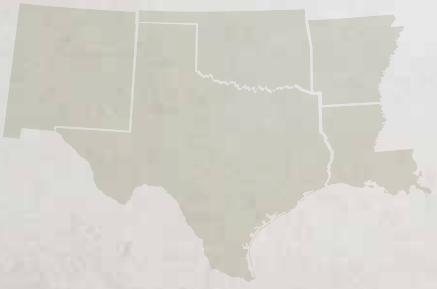
Record

DECEMBER 2016

Creating

Christmas
Joy

AT HOME AND IN YOUR HEART



The Angel Said...

Celebrating 25 years of
Christmas in My Heart

8

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Family Crafting

with Aunt Carmen and Uncle Buddy



A Taste of Home

Family Recipes for the Holiday Season

14

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On the Cover

Luzeli Prieto enjoyed making a felt nativity set with friends and hearing the story of Christ's birth from Carmen Griffith, Southwestern Union women's ministries and ministerial spouses director. Photo by Jessica Lozano.



Point of View»

BY LARRY MOORE » SOUTHWESTERN UNION CONFERENCE PRESIDENT



Celebrate His Gift!

As young children settled in to hear the children's story one Sabbath morning in December, the question was asked: "What is your favorite part of Christmas?" The children's answers varied, but giving and receiving presents, spending time with relatives rarely seen, and enjoying tasty meals were among the answers.

"Did you know that Christmas is the day that we celebrate the gift of Jesus Christ?" asked the young woman sharing the story. The children were intrigued. Some nodded, while others simply waited for more.

"Would you like to hear the story of Jesus' birth?" More nods and enthusiastic vocalizations.

The young woman opened her Bible, and began to read from the book of Luke: "But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a

baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.' Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.' When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, 'Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.' So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger" (Luke 2:10-16, NIV).

At a time when every celebration and holiday, especially the celebration of Christ's birth, is exceedingly commercialized and can begin to feel like more of a financial burden than an event to honor God's divine gift, it's refreshing to be reminded of the excitement and joy of the individuals surrounding Jesus at the time of His birth. It's important to honor His birth as the fulfillment of scripture.

In 1889, following a Christmas celebration at the Battle

Creek Tabernacle, E.G. White described her appreciation for celebrating Christmas "with gratitude expressed in everything done and said, because Jesus the Prince of Life had come to our world a babe in Bethlehem to be an offering for sin."

This Christmas season, celebrate the love that was shown for us through the gift of Jesus Christ. Share the story of Christ—the gift of His birth, His life, and His sacrifice for us—as people who love God and want to honor Him. This Christmas, celebrate Jesus!





To Your Health

BY LYNELL LAMOUNTAIN

Sharing The Gift Of A Better Life

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Mr. Lang yearned for a better life for these students. His heart went out to them. He so desperately wanted to make a difference in their lives and see them succeed that he said, "Don't think for a minute that you can't go to college, because you can. I promise today that I will personally pay the college tuition for each of you who graduates from high school."

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

One student said, "I had something to look forward to, something waiting for me. It was a golden feeling."

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

a bright future for their lives.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

That's CREATION Health!

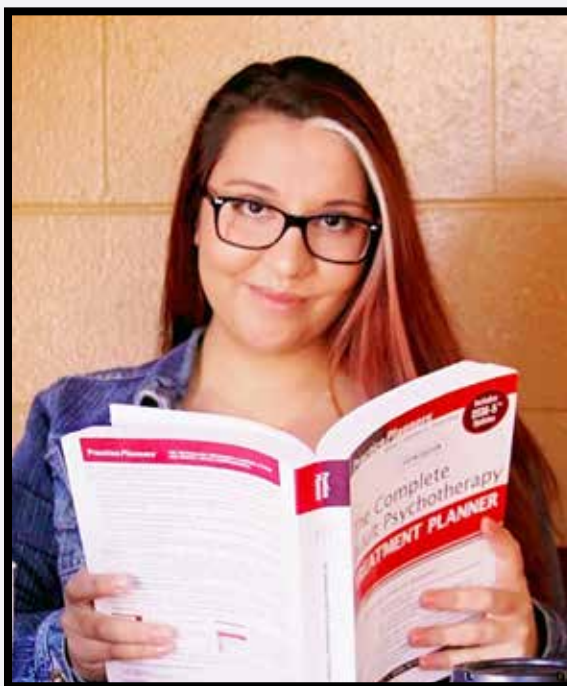
God Sends Us Where We Need to Go

IN THE SUMMER OF 2013, I remember sitting with one of my friends before he went away as a student missionary. I remember talking about how he was looking forward to his metaphorical desert, being alone in a place where you are almost forced to rely solely on God. When we look in the Bible, we see a lot of major characters went through a desert before starting their missions: Jesus was in the desert for 40 days, Joseph walked through the desert after being sold into slavery and Moses walked through the desert out of Egypt before meeting God at the burning bush. During and after this conversation I not only started wondering about my desert, but anticipating it. Three years later and caught completely off guard, I have found mine.

Two months after graduating from Southwestern Adventist University I found myself on the floor of my apartment in Lubbock, Texas bawling over the daunting task before me. I'd been hired at Lubbock Junior Academy as the teacher/principal of a one room school—and this was my first year as a teacher. I had no idea how to write a school handbook, nor where to even start. As I look back now I see there were resources available for me and I didn't have to go at it alone. I have a close relationship the school board members and I should have and could have contacted them for help. Perspective changes everything and at that moment in time my perspective wasn't great. This was the first of many breakdowns I had before starting that school year. I am far away from my friends and family. Despite Lubbock being a college town, I have yet to make friends my age. I never imagined this was where God would send me. Being a teacher was never in my plans. I was going to graduate with my psychology degree and work at a nail salon so I could counsel people while also doing their nails. However, God has a funny way of changing our plans and sending us where we need to go.

Today, I can see how God has used different aspects of my life to prepare me for this. Working at summer camp helped me

learn how to deal with and relate to kids of all ages. Helping the Cactusville team in Austin during the NAD ministerial convention taught me how to work well with complete strangers. Even



working at the ABC store in Keene, Tex., helped me a lot in dealing with customers who may not have been the easiest to work with. These are experiences that have helped me this past semester, but the biggest lesson I have learned this year is that even though I don't have friends to hang out with and I'm still learning how to be the best teacher I can be for my students, God is still there holding me during my breakdowns and learning moments. It is said that we need to be careful what we ask for; well I anticipated my desert and I found it. However, I want to share this with all my brothers and sisters who may also be in their own desert: I have learned that Jesus is our Oasis in the moments we feel surrounded

by sand and sun. He reminds us that we are stronger than we know and He is preparing us for something bigger than ourselves. I don't know what God has in store for my future, but for now I know His plan is for me to be here with my six students to help prepare them for not only their future, but for Jesus Christ's return.



Pass it On...

A Monthly Focus on Evangelism in the Southwest

BY JESSICA LOZANO

Sharing Hope at Christmas

The Christmas season can be the perfect opportunity to share the distinct Adventist message of hope and wholeness. We can follow Christ's example of mingling with people, inspiring them, assisting them in their needs, and inviting them to follow Him.

Every year, our churches use various ways to share the good news of Jesus' life, His gift of sacrifice, and His soon return. These methods include the following:

CHRISTMAS SERVICE

Churches big and small can hold Christmas services. Involve all of your church's ministries in the process, and invite your community. A typical service may include songs, dramatic presentations of the Nativity story, scripture readings, and special messages of hope. After the service, serve refreshments and invite people to mingle. Get to know them and invite them to return.

HOST A MEAL

Gather a group of volunteers to prepare a Christmas meal for community members at your church. Invite members of the local community through local media, social media, and personal invitation. Decorate your dining space and present a simple program with music and presentations of the story of Christ's birth as people enjoy the meal.

USING YOUR TALENTS

Does your church have a choir? Or members who can play musical instruments? Make a point to visit a local hospital or nursing home during this season to sing, play music, and visit with the patients. Pray

with them and share small gifts of encouragement, such as cards printed with Bible verses.

SERVING THE HOMELESS

There are many homeless shelters that appreciate assistance during the holidays. These shelters need assistance in many ways, including meal preparation, donations of food and non-perishable items, or special donations, such as clothing or toys for children. Check with your local shelters for the types of help you can provide. If you live in a rural area with fewer homeless shelters, consider hosting a meal for community families.

consider hosting a meal for community families.

CHRISTMAS STORES AND PANTRIES

Many of our community members struggle at this time of year because they wish to provide gifts and a nice meal for their children and families. One way to reach out is to hold a toy drive for a "Christmas Store" where parents can "shop" for presents for their children. Another way is to provide pre-made Christmas meal boxes available for anyone who would like one.

These are just a few ideas of how your church can share hope at Christmas. Share your own ideas on our Facebook page, at www.facebook.com/SouthwesternUnion.



Top: Chandler, Okla., church members presented a Christmas program for orphans.

Middle: Members of the Slidell, La., church sang Christmas carols for nursing home residents.

Bottom: Members of the Berean church in Baton Rouge, La., provided toys and clothing for children of residents at a battered women's shelter.



El Misionero Imparable

Con un corazón misionero de nacimiento, el Pastor Guillermo Zenner, de 78 años no ha dejado que la jubilación ni sus problemas de salud lo detengan de hacer el trabajo que él más ama. En su juventud, Zenner estudió administración de empresas en el Instituto de Uruguay, pero Dios dirigió sus planes y lo guió a recibir una especialización en teología y un menor en la administración de empresas en la Universidad Adventista del Plata en Argentina.

Su primer campo de misión fue en el sur de Brooklyn, Nueva York, en una comunidad diversa y pobre. Al llegar, le preguntó a su congregación de 50 miembros que deseaban para su iglesia. La respuesta fue tener la iglesia abierta todos los días de 7:00 am a 9:00 pm, cerrando solo los lunes. Por dos años él hizo lo que la iglesia le pidió, y los miembros aumentaron tanto que hizo falta una iglesia más grande. La congregación recaudó el dinero suficiente para comprar un edificio que había sido un banco. El edificio se convirtió un templo compuesto y la congregación creció a más de 700 miembros.

Zenner dice que a lo largo de su ministerio, “La visitación ha sido la parte más importante de mi trabajo—algo que rara vez se hace hoy en día. Se visita a un miembro Adventista o no adventista por 15 minutos, primero formando una amistad y después se ora con ellos; manteniendo la visita corta”. La formación de una relación cara-a-cara con las personas en sus hogares fue lo que energizó a Zenner durante sus años de pastor. Cuando se jubiló en el 2004, se sentía un poco limitado y le preguntó a Dios como podría seguir trabajando para Él. Zenner dice que la respuesta de Dios fue ir y repartir la revista *El Centinela*. Su meta fue regalar 15 copias a dondequiera que fuera. Zenner honró su palabra y repartió por lo menos 15 revistas cada día.

En septiembre del 2015, sintió un fuerte dolor en la pierna y fue al hospital. Un par de semanas después, regresó al hospital. Esta vez tenía una bacteria mortal que había entrado en su cuerpo en su previa visita al hospital. La bacteria causó que sus órganos se deterioraran y even-

tualmente fallaran. Estaba al borde de la muerte.

Un mes después, su esposa, Maria Zenner, se enfrentó con una decisión difícil. Admitirlo a cuidado de hospicio o transportarlo a un hospital de largo plazo. Eligió el hospital de largo plazo, pero continuó batallando en su corazón si esta era la decisión que Dios quería. Ella siguió orando, pidiéndole a Dios que le mostrara Su voluntad. Mientras lo preparaban para ser transportado, Zenner le pidió a Maria que se acercara. Con su débil voz le dijo que si algo le llegara a suceder, ella necesitaba terminar los estudios bíblicos que habían empezado con los vecinos. ¡Eso es un verdadero misionero!

María fue a su casa con el corazón quebrado esa noche. Se preguntaba si volvería a ver a su esposo al siguiente día. De rodillas le pidió a Dios una señal. Quería verlo al día siguiente sentado en su cama, capaz de hablar con ella. Milagrosamente, ella lo encontró exactamente así al siguiente día. Él comenzó a recuperarse y, después de tres meses en el hospital, pudo volver a casa.

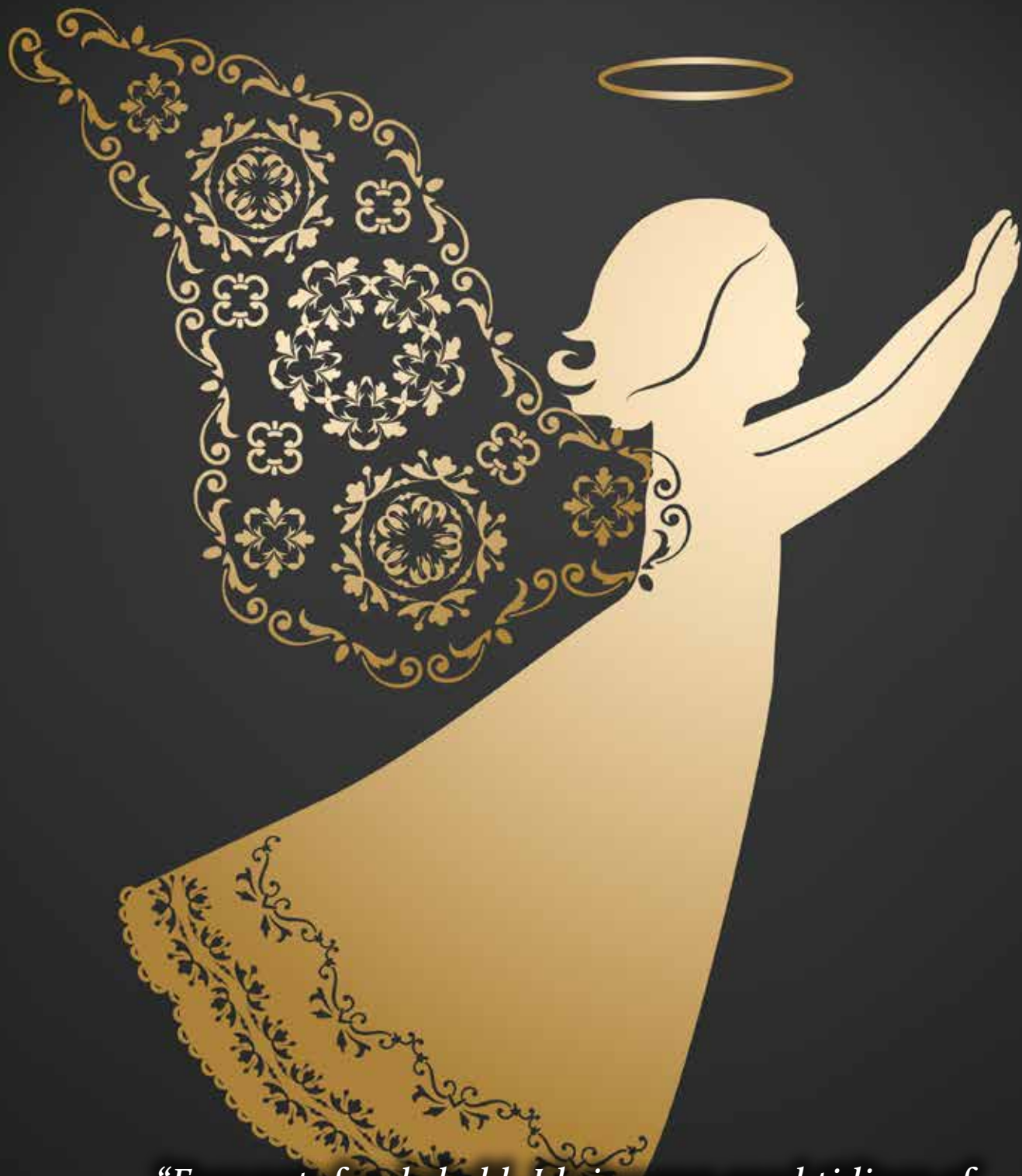
Zenner sintió la necesidad de comenzar a visitar a personas, pero no sabía como hacerlo. Apenas podía caminar y no podía salir de su hogar debido a su lenta recuperación. Empezó a despertarse a las 3:00 a.m. a orar por las familias y personas que recordaba que necesitaban oración. A partir de ahí, creó una lista y la cantidad de personas que necesitaban oración comenzó a crecer. Hoy hay 135 personas en su lista.

El método del Pastor Guillermo Zenner es fácil. Desde su casa en Grand Prairie, él llama a un grupo de personas en su lista cada día. Comienza con una conversación amable y termina con una oración. Él dice: “No puedo visitar a los miembros en sus hogares como lo hacía antes, pero ahora soy capaz de hacerlo a través de la oración intercesora. Este es un método que Jesús usó. Primero, se convirtió en sus amigos y luego les dijo: ‘Sígueme’”.

Zenner dice que sabe que Dios le ha dado una misión, y con un fiel corazón, seguirá haciendo Su obra hasta el día de su descanso.



Tammy G. Prieto



“Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord” (Luke 2:10-11).



The Angel Said . . .

Olive Rambo Cook

The following is an excerpted story from Christmas in My Heart 25 by Joe Wheeler. The Christmas in My Heart series is the longest running Christmas story anthology series in America, with a total of 402 stories and more than 3,000 pages, and is printed by Pacific Press Publishing.

Printed with permission of Joe Wheeler, author, editor, and anthologizer of Christmas in My Heart 25 and the Christmas in My Heart series.

“I couldn’t,” she stammered.
“I couldn’t,” she said again.
“I can’t, Miss Webb.”

Why was it that she was so terrified of getting up in front?

The sixth grade was awl with excitement. The principal had just asked the pupils to take part in the Christmas program to be given in the high-school auditorium. The class wanted to have an extra-good number, because they would have only one.

“Let’s have somebody give a reading,” one of the boys suggested.

“Oh, that would be only one of us. We want the whole class to take part,” Miss Webb objected.

“Then let’s sing carols,” someone else suggested.

“The eighth grade is singing carols. We can’t do that.” Miss Webb looked thoughtfully around the room.

“Why can’t the rest of us sing ‘Silent Night’ while Ann draws a Christmas picture in front of the audience?” Georgia asked. “That would be different—and pretty too.”

“Oh, let’s do!” everyone said quickly. Georgia could always think of the best things for a program.

“I think it would be nice if, while Ann was drawing and Jerry playing, someone would read the Christmas story from the Bible,” thoughtful Janet Rhodes offered. “The one from Luke that goes, ‘And there were shepherds abiding in the fields by night.’

“Rhoda, you’d be the very one to do that,” Janet spoke across the room.

“Well, but Ann ought to draw the picture,” Georgia repeated.

“Yes, she should,” one of the boys agreed. “She draws the fastest and the best. Why that picture of the red house with the candles in the window is plenty good!” The whole room murmured their approval.

All through the discussion Ann had said nothing. Her face

flushed with happiness and pride to think that the sixth grade wanted her to draw the picture, but a cold, sinking fear was commencing to crawl inside her, the same terrifying fear that always haunted her when she was asked to be on a program. She turned a miserable face toward the teacher.

“I couldn’t,” Ann stammered brokenly. “I’d get so scared I’d drop the chalk. You’ll have to ask somebody else.”

A feeling of shame swept over her.

“You’d do it for the sixth grade, wouldn’t you?” one of the boys demanded.

Ann shook her head sorrowfully: “I couldn’t!”

Miss Webb put her arm about Ann’s shoulders. “We’ll all help. There’s nothing to be afraid of. Everyone in the sixth grade will be on the stage too.” She patted Ann’s shoulders comfortingly. “You must conquer this fear sometime. Why not this very Christmas? You will try, won’t you?”

“I can’t, Miss Webb,” Ann almost sobbed. “I just don’t want to.”

The room was silent for a long moment.

“Georgia, will you draw the picture for us?” Miss Webb asked quietly. Ann knew by the tone of her voice that she was disappointed.

“Oh, Miss Webb! I can’t draw half as well as Ann. I’ll try though,” she promised in a firm little voice.

“Thank you, Georgia.”

Ann sensed the disapproval of her classmates as they went on planning the program.

“All the sixth graders will stand on the stage with Jerry and Rhoda and Georgia out in front. Jerry will start to play ‘Silent Night’ on his violin, and just as soon as he begins Georgia will start to draw. In a moment Rhoda will begin to read the Christmas story, and when she has finished, everyone will sing ‘Silent Night.’ It will take

a lot of practice to get the picture and the singing finished at exactly the same time, but it will be beautiful. Do you want to try it?"

"Yes, let's do!" the whole grade chorused, all except Ann. She was looking straight ahead trying to keep the tears back.

When four o'clock came, Ann slipped out the side door, not wanting to see or talk with any of the sixth graders. They thought she was disloyal and did not want to help! If they only knew! Ann could never forget the time when she had tried to recite a poem and had been so frightened that she could not finish it. That was the first time that terrible feeling of fear had come over her. Shame filled her heart even now every time she thought of it.

Why couldn't she be like Georgia, who was always willing to help? Even though she had been second choice, Ann could hear the courageous voice saying, "I'll try."

Always before when Ann had begged not to be put on a program Miss Webb had asked someone else that could do the part just as well or even better. But this was different. No one in the whole sixth grade was as good as Ann at drawing. Each week she drew an original picture on the blackboard for Miss Webb. Ann's fingers seemed to give the chalk a magic touch. And now when she had a chance to bring honor to her class she had refused to help!

When she reached home she hurried up the stairs and flung herself on the bed.

"Nobody'll ever like me again," she cried into the pillow.

Mother opened the door softly, but Ann pretended not to hear, so the door was closed again.

I'll tell her tonight or in the morning, Ann thought miserably. *Mother will be disappointed in me, too.*

It was a very quiet little girl that ate her supper that evening and then curled up later in a big chair by the living-room fire. The dancing flames seemed to be the eyes of her classmates looking at her. All the joy and fun of Christmas was wiped out by this miserable feeling of fear and shame that had come over her. Ann decided to go to bed.

Mother held her close as Ann kissed her good night, but she asked no questions, and Ann did not tell what was troubling her.

"I'll be glad when Christmas is over," Ann said to herself the next morning as she dressed for school. "Then perhaps the sixth graders will forget."

So far they had not forgotten. Ann would not let them. They were reminded of her failure every time they looked at her forlorn figure. She kept to her seat and drew sad little pictures on her sketch paper. Even Georgia and Rhoda, her two best chums, did not ask to see her drawings or talk with her about the Christmas program. Ann tried to forget by thinking of her own Christmas tree at home, but it was a long, long day.

Ann had her gifts ready and wrapped, all except Mother's. She had been waiting for a sheet of special drawing paper to make it on. When she reached home it had come. She must hurry if it was to be finished by Christmas eve.

Up in her room Ann fastened the piece of velvety paper to her drawing board. She had decided to make a small drawing of Mary and the Christ Child, an original

one, just the way Ann thought they must have looked if she could have seen them almost two thousand years ago. She would picture them in the stable, the Child lying on the straw in the manger, a mother sheep and her little lamb near by. Mother would love that kind of a picture, Ann knew.

While Ann used the soft little sticks of chalk and watched the lovely colors take shape under her fingers, she felt some of the pain and hurt of the last few days ease away. A quiet peaceful feeling seemed to smooth away the heartache. But in the morning when a group of girls hurried ahead of Ann, she thought they were trying to keep her from catching up with them. All the old hurt came back again, and the comfort she had gained from drawing the picture for Mother was lost.

It was several evenings before Ann had Mother's picture completely finished, but finally she trimmed the edges and placed it in a narrow white frame that she had bought. Then she wrapped it in paper that was the color of the blue sky over Bethlehem and tied it with a shining gold ribbon that made her think of the star.

I wonder if the Christ Child was ever afraid or ashamed, Ann thought as she slipped the little package under the tree. "Maybe I won't always be afraid," she murmured, as she thought of the face of the Child. "Maybe sometime I can draw a beautiful picture for everyone to see. But not now—not for a long, long time."

Finally the day before Christmas arrived and the program was to be presented that evening. The school was having a final rehearsal and trying to perform just as they would in the evening.

The auditorium walls were decorated with silver bells and white candles. The stage was beautiful with cedar trees and colored lights.

When the sixth-grade number was called, one of the boys placed the easel at the front of the stage. Quietly Georgia and Rhoda took their positions, Jerry following with his violin. Grouped behind the easel in two lines that reached almost across the stage were the sixth-grade boys and girls.

Softly came the strains of "Silent Night, Holy Night." Georgia began to make swift strokes with colored chalk and under her fingers a picture started to grow, a scene of shepherds and their flocks.

Rhoda's voice sounded sweet and clear: "There were shepherds abiding in the fields by night."

Georgia kept on drawing. Those watching followed every stroke of the chalk. Ann, pressed tightly in among other sixth graders behind the easel, heard Rhoda's words "And they were sore afraid."

Just as I am, Ann thought ashamed.

And then came Rhoda's voice: "And the angel said unto them, Fear not!"

But I didn't listen for the angel, Ann thought. Soon the reading was finished. Ann joined the others in singing.

Georgia had not quite finished the drawing at the end of the song and Miss Webb was a little worried, but Jerry played until the picture was finished and that made it seem all right.

"Everything will be fine tonight if Georgia draws just a little faster," Miss Webb told them. "Everyone be present in the class-

room by 7:15 this evening.”

Ann hurried home through the crisp wintry air. Everywhere were people loaded with packages and calling happy Christmas greetings.

“It’s the best time of the year,” Ann tried to say happily. But there was a strange lump in her throat every time she thought of the program, a feeling that was not like Christmas.

The tree in the living room was lovely with packages piled high beneath it. Early in the morning Daddy and Mother would sit on the davenport and Ann would take the gifts from the tree. Oh, it had always been such fun! Maybe the hurt would leave when Mother unwrapped her picture. Surely her face would shine. Daddy would smile too when he knew that Ann had drawn it. Well, soon it would all be over. It did not seem possible to Ann that she could really be wanting Christmas to be over!

At seven o’clock Ann with her parents started for the schoolhouse. Her father and mother went into the auditorium while she went on to her classroom. At 7:20 everyone in the class was there—everyone except Georgia! The program was to begin in a few minutes. The sixth graders had the third number. Miss Webb kept her eyes on the door. Surely Georgia would not be late.

Then it was time for the program to begin.

One of the teachers came to the door and spoke hurriedly to Miss Webb for a moment. Miss Webb turned toward the children.

“Georgia’s mother just called and said that they were having trouble with their car and would not be able to get here in time for the program!”

The sixth graders groaned.

Miss Webb was thinking hard.

Ann felt someone jerk her sleeve. It was Rhoda, white-faced and trembling.

“Ann, you’ve got to do it! Tell Miss Webb you’ll draw the picture. Tell her!” Rhoda held onto Ann’s sleeve. Others crowded around.

“Come on, Ann. You know you can,” everyone urged. Someone pushed her toward the door.

Ann’s knees trembled. Little cold chills crawled up and down her back. Why, why did they have to ask her? She saw Miss Webb’s eyes watching her.

“Oh, Ann!” Rhoda whispered, “don’t think of yourself! Think of the class! This is the only number we have on the program, and we must not fail! Try just this once!”

In some manner, Ann never remembered exactly how, she found herself walking across the stage with a box of chalk in her hand. The easel was already there, with a large white sheet of drawing paper firmly clipped to the board.

The sixth graders were on the stage. Ann spread out the sticks of chalk and glanced at Rhoda and Jerry. They both smiled encouragingly. Everything was still. Could she do it? Would she fail them again? The whole sixth grade seemed to be holding its breath!

Softly, Jerry started playing “Silent Night.” Rhoda began to read.

With a long, swift stroke Ann pushed her chalk across the paper! First gray and then black, with a spot of blue and yellow. She must not hesitate! With shaking hand she drew in the brown wood of

the manger. For a second she hesitated, and the picture of quiet hills near Bethlehem and shepherds watching underneath a starry sky came to her mind.

Rhoda’s voice was firm and strong: “And the angel said unto them, Fear not.”

Ann’s lips moved. “I am listening to the angel this time,” she breathed silently. With strokes true and steady she drew the form of Mary bending over the manger, her head bowed in wonder over the Christ child as He lay asleep!

There was a moment of silence after Rhoda finished reading, and then came the song. Clear and sweet the sixth graders sang, with Jerry’s violin leading them in the song they loved so well.

Swiftly Ann hurried on as she heard the voices singing the Christmas story. A window and a door were sketched in the gray stone wall of the stable, with soft yellow light shining in, touching the face of Mary and the Child. Behind both heads she drew yellow halos. A few finishing touches, and she laid down the chalk.

With a long breath of relief, she picked up the black wooden frame and set it on the easel around the picture. As she turned to face the audience, there was one last note of Jerry’s violin and the room was strangely still for a moment. Then there came a warm rush of applause.

The sixth graders went quietly back to their room, but once inside they crowded around Ann, all talking at once.

“I couldn’t draw the shepherds in the fields, as Georgia did,” Ann explained, “but I had just finished drawing a picture of the manger scene for my mother’s Christmas present. So I drew that. Was it all right?” Ann asked.

“Was it all right?” Miss Webb’s eyes were misty. “Oh, my dear, it was beautiful.” She put her arm around Ann’s shoulders. “And you won’t ever be afraid again, will you?”

“No.” Ann smiled as she looked up at Miss Webb, and then at her class members standing near. “I have learned to listen to the angel.”

Joe Wheeler's Christmas in My Heart 25-book box set and the new book, Christmas in My Heart Book 25, can be purchased at your local Adventist Book Center, online at www.adventistbookcenter.com, or by calling 1.800.765.6955.





Family Crafting

with Aunt Carmen and Uncle Buddy

Felt Nativity Set

This craft is perfect for sharing and telling the story of Christ's birth with children. Although scholars tell us that Christ was not born during the time that is traditionally celebrated as His birthday, it is an excellent opportunity to spend time with family, bonding over the gift of His birth and life.

Older children can help with cutting out the felt, and both younger and older children will enjoy assisting with assembling the set, attaching embellishments with glue, creating rosy cheeks with Q-tips and ink, and, of course, acting out the nativity story.



Supplies:

- Felt – a variety of colors
- Scissors
- Markers
- Beads, buttons, and/or ribbons as desired
- Q-tips
- Pink inkpad
- Googly eyes
- Glue
- Popsicle sticks (if desired)

Instructions:

Use our printable stencils (available at swurecord.org) to draw out the needed parts. If you're crafty, freehand draw them. Cut out the felt pieces, and assemble the set as seen in the photos on the opposite page. Add sashes and embellishments with ribbons, buttons, and beads. These felts can be used on a felt background (such as a felt Christmas tree or a large night sky) or as puppets on popsicle sticks.





A Taste of Home

Family Recipes for the Holiday Season

Apple Cider Tea

By Carmen M. Fuentes-Griffith

Ingredients:

- 1 gallon apple cider (not apple juice)
- 1 cup orange juice
- 2 Tbsp lemon juice
- ¾ c brown sugar
- 6 cinnamon sticks
- 4 tsp whole cloves
- 2 tsp whole allspice

Combine all ingredients and brew for 45 minutes over medium heat. Let cool. Using a cloth, pour tea over the cloth into another pan in order to remove the sediment. You can place orange slices in the liquid when serving. Drinking this tea hot is the best way to enjoy its flavors.

Grandmother's Peanut Butter Loaf

By Evelyn Parker

Ingredients:

- 2 cups grated carrots
- 1 ½ cups quick oats
- 1 cup peanut butter
- 2 eggs
- 3 Tbsp dried onion
- ¾ tsp salt
- ¼ tsp sage
- 1 tsp Vegex melted into 1 cup of boiling water

Mix all together and bake in an oiled and covered baking dish for 45 minutes at 375 degrees.

Garlic Big Franks

By Neyra Greenidge

- 1 can Big Franks
- 3 garlic cloves
- Adobo seasoning
- Oil for frying

Slit the Big Franks horizontally. Smash the garlic and put some garlic all along the slit in the Big Franks.

Sprinkle adobo seasoning all over the Big Franks. Fry them in a small amount of oil and enjoy!

Apple Dumplings

By Brooke Simons

Part I

- 1 tube Pillsbury Crescent Rolls
- 2 Granny Smith apples (cored, peeled and sliced)
- 1 ½ c brown sugar
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 3 squirts lemon juice

Stir all of the above and let sit for about 10 minutes. Allow ingredients to get saucy.

Part II

- 2 sticks unsalted butter
- 1 c 7-Up

Place two apple slices in each crescent roll. Place each roll in a 9x13 buttered pan to form the dumplings. Pour leftover apple slices over the top of the dumplings in the pan. Melt the butter. Add the leftover sauce from the apples into the pan with the butter. Stir until it thickens up and is well mixed. Pour over the dumplings in the pan. Take 1 cup of 7-Up and pour around the sides of the pan. Bake at 350 degrees for 35 minutes. Serve with ice cream.

Arroz Con Dulce (Sweet Coconut Rice)

By Marlene Del Valle

Ingredients:

- 1½ cups rice
- 4¼ cups coconut milk
- 1½ teaspoons salt
- 3 cinnamon sticks
- 2 ounces ginger
- 6 whole cloves
- Pinch of nutmeg-optional
- 1½ cups sugar
- ½ cup raisins
- ¾ cup coconut milk (reserve to use at the end)

Wash rice and cover with water. Let soak for 2 hours. The rice will soak up the water so use plenty. About twenty minutes before the rice is finished soaking, combine the 4½ cups of coconut milk, salt, cinnamon, ginger, cloves and nutmeg in a large pot. Bring the mixture to a boil over high heat. Reduce heat to moderate, cover and boil for 15 minutes. Drain the rice thoroughly and add it to the to pot. Mix and bring to a boil over moderate heat. Reduce heat to low and allow the rice to cook without stirring until it is completely dry. Add the sugar and raisins, stir, and bring to a boil over moderate heat. Reduce heat to low and cook for another 15 minutes, without stirring. Add the reserved ¾ cup coconut milk and stir. Turn heat to moderate and boil for about 30 minutes, or until rice dries again. In this cooking period, turn rice over occasionally and scrape bottom of pot. Remove the spices. Spoon rice into a flat serving platter. Allow to cool at room temperature. Serve cold.

Vegetarian “Turkey”

By Reggie Johnson

Ingredients A:

- 2 cups boiling water
- 1 large packet (16 oz.) stuffing
- 1 cup sliced celery
- 1 cup chopped onion
- 1/2 cup margarine

Mix boiling water with stuffing. Sauté celery and onion in 1/2 cup margarine. Mix all together until thick. Place on foil-covered baking sheet and form into an oval shape.

Ingredients B:

- 4 cups Worthington Fri-chik, Worthington Smoked Turkey Log, or combination of both
- 5 eggs
- 1 onion
- 1 packet George Washington Broth
- Salt to taste
- 2 Tbsp McKay’s Chicken Seasoning
- 1 sleeve soda crackers, crushed

Grind Fri-chik or vege turkey in food processor. Mix in large bowl with remaining B ingredients. Spread evenly over the oval shape of Ingredients A, shaping into desired turkey-like appearance. Bake at 350 degrees until brown, approximately 45 minutes.

For a different twist, use cornbread stuffing and add 1/2 cup dried cranberries to Ingredients A. For crispier surface, brush one egg, whisked, onto surface before baking.

Chipotle Cranberry Sauce

By Reggie Johnson

Ingredients:

- 3-5 dried chipotle peppers, or substitute canned chipotles in adobo sauce. Use fewer peppers for a milder sauce
- 1 12-oz. package of fresh cranberries
- 1 cup water
- 1 cup sugar

If using dried chipotles, reconstitute by placing in small bowl and covering with hot water. Let soak for 30 minutes. Place chipotles in blender with a little bit of water and puree. Dissolve sugar in 1 cup water in a medium saucepan and bring to a boil. Add cranberries and pepper puree and return to a boil. Simmer gently for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Cool completely to room temperature and refrigerate.

Pumpkin Roll

By Suzanna Facundo

Ingredients (makes three rolls):

- 9 eggs
- 2 ½ cups sugar
- 1 small can of pumpkin
- 2 ¼ cups of flour
- 2 Tbsp cinnamon
- 1 Tbsp ginger
- 1 Tbsp baking powder
- 1 ½ tsp salt
- 1 ½ tsp nutmeg

Filling:

- 3 (8oz) packages of cream cheese
- 3 cups powdered sugar

Whip the eggs and sugar for 5 minutes. Add the rest of the ingredients up to filling. Pour into 3 jelly roll pans (15” long) lined with parchment paper. Bake at 375 degrees for 14 minutes. Take out and roll the bread while hot still keeping the parchment paper with it. Allow it to cool to room temperature.

Mix the cream cheese and powdered sugar together. Open up the rolled bread and take off the parchment paper. Spread the cream cheese mixture equally among the 3 breads. Optional: sprinkle with pecans or walnut. Reroll and wrap in a piece of heavy duty foil sprinkling lightly with powdered sugar before wrapping. Keep in freezer until ready to slice and serve. It is easier to slice the rolls when they are still slightly frozen.



Christmas is *All* About Jesus



Unfortunately, for some, the Christmas season is viewed only as a celebration of a pagan festival; and as such for them it has no place whatsoever in the home of a Christian, let alone in the services of the church. The point is made, and I would agree rightfully so, that Jesus has no place in pagan mythology. Yet when we sing carols like, "O Come, All Ye Faithful", "It Came Upon a Midnight Clear", or "Go, Tell It On the Mountain", there is absolutely no connection to mythology or paganism. It is *all* about the incarnation—about the Creator God entering the human family so as to become the Savior of the world.

I love the Christmas season. I love singing and listening to the spiritual songs of the season. I have often wondered why we limit singing those great hymns like "Silent Night" and "Angels We Have Heard On High" to just a couple of weeks before Christmas. Secular songs like "Jingle Bells" and "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer" contribute nothing to the scriptural truth of, "Thou shalt call His name, Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins," (Matthew 1:21).

No, Jesus was not born on December 25. Bible chronology helps us to understand that His birth was sometime in the fall of the year. Yet most of the world has chosen to celebrate the nativity on December 25. So while that celebration has been corrupted with gross commercialism and customs and practices that have nothing to do with the birth of the Son of God, December 25 affords the Christian a unique opportunity to clarify the significance of that birth. It is not about the date. Rather it is all about the event.

A number of years ago I researched what Ellen White had to say about Christmas. I would encourage you to do the same. Look up the word "Christmas" in the index to her writings. You may be as surprised as I was. She wrote in positive terms about us-

ing a green tree in church, the exchanging of non-costly practical gifts, and festive celebrations of Christian fellowship. She counseled against worldly practices that focused on greed and selfishness and anything that would take one's focus away from the humble birth of the Savior of the world.

Christmas is not about Santa Claus, the North Pole, reindeer, mistletoe, or tinsel and glitter. Christmas is *all* about Jesus and His first advent that makes possible the reality of His second advent.

Stephen Orian, president

ARKANSAS-LOUISIANA CONFERENCE

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Lake Charles SDA Church Makes Food Baskets

LAKE CHARLES, LA. » The Lake Charles Seventh-day Adventist Church is thankful for and greatly appreciates the help of Beta Club members and sponsors of Malo Middle School for donating 447 non-perishable items to our food pantry. These items will be used to fill food baskets for families in our community. Our food pantry operates Tuesdays and Wednesdays of each week with the help of volunteers like Richard Janise, Eva Rachel, Antione and Sidney Joseph, Johnnie Celestine, Abbie and Ida Gaspard, Michael Easton, Margaret Owens, and Dale Romero. We ask that God continue to bless this ministry.

Margaret Davis



Boxes of food donated.

Heber Springs Church at Ozark Trail Fest

HEBER SPRINGS, ARK. » The Heber Springs Seventh-day Adventist Church set up a booth at the Annual Ozark Trail Fest held in October. It was located in the Seven Springs park in Heber Springs. The booth had many different kinds of spiritual books to give away and it was a great opportunity to meet many new people from our community. We gave away a lot of books and literature! It was a fun and a spiritually refreshing time as well. The next day, one of



- ▲ Literature spread out for taking.
- ◀ Mother & daughter team help man the booth.

the women who took several books posted on the church Facebook page how much she really appreciated receiving the books from us. That is what makes it all worthwhile! What a blessing to put the Good News in the hands of seekers. We are anxious now to do it again next spring.

Judith Newton



Northwest Arkansas Chapter of Sabbath Keepers Motorcycle Ministry Hosts First Rally

LAKE WEDINGTON, ARK. » The Northwest Arkansas Chapter of Sabbath Keepers Motorcycle Ministry is the newest chapter of Sabbath Keepers Motorcycle Ministry in the Southwestern Union region. Thanks to generous and tireless work from chapter leaders and members, along with encouragement and cooperation from local Adventist churches, we find ourselves experiencing abundant blessings.

One of the first things we have learned has been the importance of “reaching-out” to members of the motorcycle community and of “reaching-in” to members of our own churches. “Reaching-out” has been accomplished by attending Motorcycle Rallies throughout Arkansas. At these rallies we set up booths identified by our Northwest Arkansas Sabbath Keepers Motorcycle Ministry banner and signs. We offer free shop rags and spiritual-themed coloring books with our logo and contact info stamped on them.

services for local Adventist churches. An entire service typically consists of prayer, offering (only for the church unless clearly designated otherwise), special music, children’s story, and sermon. We have had the privilege of presenting for several Arkansas SDA churches, including Lincoln, Rogers, Siloam Springs, Ozark, and Springtown. Members of these churches who enjoy riding and ministering to others have become members of the Northwest Arkansas Chapter and the churches are encouraged to be more accepting of the motorcycle enthusiasts who choose to visit their churches.

We hosted the First Annual Sabbath Keepers Motorcycle Rally here in Northwest Arkansas at Lake Wedington. This was attended by Sabbath Keep-

ers members for the Northwest Arkansas Chapter as well as members from the Oklahoma and Kansas Chapters of Sabbath Keepers. The rally was a blessing for all who attended. Presentations were made by Seventh-day Adventist pastor/evangelist Myckal Moorehouse (Phoenix, AZ) and Arkansas Seventh-day Adventist pastor Tony Cash (Siloam Springs and Springtown). Chaplain A.J. Jones and Daryl Renshaw, members of Hands with Prayer Motorcycle Ministry, taught us how to communicate with members of the motorcycle community without unintentionally offending them.

Please pray for our outreach to the motorcycle community. You can visit our Facebook page, [facebook.com/nwaskmm](https://www.facebook.com/nwaskmm) or Website, www.nwaskmm.com.

L.A. “Slap” Winn



For the spiritually curious we offer a variety of GLOW tracts and small books, as we may have available. We also take time to listen, speak words of encouragement, and spend time in prayer with those seeking spiritual assistance in their time of need.

“Reaching-in” has been accomplished by presenting the Sabbath



- ▲ A Northwest Arkansas motorcycle group
- Top left: The Northwest Arkansas Sabbath Keepers motorcycle patch
- Middle left: First Annual Sabbath Keepers Rally
- ◀ Motorcycle ministry at the First Annual Sabbath Keepers Motorcycle Rally

What Did He Get?



In Matthew 2 we read the story of the wise men coming to find the baby Jesus. They had seen His star (a multitude of heavenly angels) in the east. And were coming to worship Him. With them they brought gifts. The NIV states, “they found the One they were seeking and bowed down and worshipped Him.” Then they “opened their treasures” (receptacles for valuables) “and presented Him with gifts.”

The gifts included gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Perhaps this seems like an unlikely combination of items. Let’s take a closer look at them.

Gold is a commodity bought and sold all day every day. Just in case you wanted to know, gold boils at 2,970 degrees C. At this writing, gold is trading at \$1,288.08

per ounce. Its symbol is Au on the periodic chart (number 79). By the way, in heaven gold is simply called something else: pavement.

Frankincense is made from a resin found in the *Boswellia carteri* tree. It is used in the creation of perfume and incense. Its uses include the treatment for colic. The essential oil of Frankincense can be inhaled, effectively acting as a pain killer.

Myrrh has a variety of uses. It comes from a resin found in the bark of the *Commiphora* tree. Myrrh can be applied directly to the mouth, for soreness and swelling, inflamed gums, loose teeth, and chapped lips. Myrrh can help decrease swelling (inflammation) and kill bacteria.

Gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Gifts brought to the baby Jesus by the wise men of old. I’m sure you have probably read and/

or heard this story many times. As I contemplate this story, I realize that in today’s world all these items are simply things that do one of three things. They make us look good (we think). They make us smell good (we sniff). Or, they make us feel good (we hope).

I am sure at the time, Jesus didn’t care what the wise men brought with them as gifts. Jesus could have been 40 days old by the time the wise men arrived.

Now He is after something worth more than \$1,288.08 per ounce. He is after something that has no smell to it. He is after something that He can make feel wonderful forever. All He wants - your heart.

Roger Driver, treasurer

Tulsa Adventist Academy’s 100 Year Anniversary

TULSA » The purpose and mission of Tulsa Adventist Academy (TAA) has always been to prepare students for this world and most importantly for the kingdom of Heaven. Our school has had an eternal impact on both students and faculty that have walked our halls during the past 100 years and we are excited that this rich tradition and excellence in Christian education continues today. Only in Heaven will we realize the



James Bokovoy

TAA alumni, students, and faculty enjoy vespers around the campfire at the home of Marvin and Lana McGehee on Sabbath evening of alumni weekend.



James Bokovoy

▲ The Tulsa Adventist Academy alumni basketball game.

► Larry Seery, TAA Math teacher, is doused with water as part of a school fundraiser during the alumni weekend.

true impact that our students have made on this earth as they have employed and will employ, the lessons learned at TAA. This year we celebrate the milestone of 100 years of excellence in education and praise God that He has called many to the privileged work of serving our children in the field of Christian education. We also praise God for every one of the students that have experienced love, friendship, fellowship, quality education and most importantly, a personal relationship with Jesus Christ at our school during the last 100 years. TAA, a vibrant Seventh-day Adventist pre-k through 12th-grade school in Tulsa, Oklahoma, strives to prepare students

from all walks of life for heaven and earth. To do this, we help each child establish a personal relationship with Jesus and confidence in the power of the Gospel; cultivate a sense of responsibility for the welfare of their home, their community, and their nation; and develop the ability to think independently and critically. TAA first opened its doors on October 2, 1916, and God has enabled the school to provide the finest in Adventist Christian education for Tulsa area students ever since. On the weekend of October 2, 2016, TAA alumni, former staff members,

and friends gathered at the school to celebrate TAA's 100 Year Anniversary. The celebration included opportunities for worship, fellowship, and reminiscing about wonderful experiences at TAA. Friday evening vespers was presented by Craig Mattson, TAA Principal from 2009—2012. Sabbath morning's worship service featured 10 former TAA principals along with two principals' wives who joined the current principal, Mark Griffin, in sharing inspiring stories about their years at the school. A history of TAA was read during the service. Following lunch, an Open House at TAA allowed alumni to tour the school building, visit with classmates, and browse vintage yearbooks. On Saturday evening everyone enjoyed vespers and a hayride at the home of Marvin and Lana McGehee. The weekend's activities concluded Sunday morning with a basketball game between current students and alumni. Players on both teams played well, leaving it all on the court and when the final buzzer sounded, the students were very excited to claim the prize. The ultimate purpose of TAA is to prepare students for this world and for the kingdom of Heaven. We

understand that God is calling faculty, students, alumni, parents, and every supporter of TAA and Christian education to leave it all on the court for God's kingdom, because we know that we are on the winning team. "In planning the TAA Centennial Celebration, it was amazing to contemplate the positive impact the school has had on so many lives," says Alumni Committee Chairperson Amy Cox. "I'm thankful the alumni were able to come together and celebrate the blessing TAA has been for the past 100 years."

Judi Carrico and James Bokovoy, communication director



James Bokovoy

Prayer is the Answer Oklahoma Prayer Conference 2016

WEWOKA » “Prayer is the Answer” was the Oklahoma Prayer Conference theme in early November at Wewoka Woods Adventist Center. The Prayer Conference, coordinated and led by Oklahoma pastor, James Shires, Rich Constantinescu, and Michael Smith, was interactive and personal. There was opportunity to not only learn more about prayer, but to pray privately, as well as together, and then to share what God taught us.

Friday evening Pastor Rich emphasized the importance of praying for the Holy Spirit, as the Spirit is a blessing that satisfies our every need, and brings every other blessing with it. The Holy Spirit brings rain that produces fruit in our lives, the fruit of love, joy, and peace. The Holy Spirit brings truth, gives instruction, and brings transformation of our characters, making us new creations! Then the Holy Spirit gives us power for witnessing.

Sabbath morning, we broke up into small groups and discussed the first few verses of the Lord’s Prayer. Our God is a very personal Father. He listens and knows our needs, and knows what is best for us. He is much more capable and able to meet our needs than any earthly father!

It was an especially beautiful fall day and Sabbath afternoon we were all given

three hours to go out in nature to pray and seek God. Armed with my Bible and pen and paper, I went out to find quiet spots for reflection. Thinking about the verse “Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness, and all these things will be added unto you”, I opened to Matthew 6 to read more. Facing some personally challenging situations, and with the presidential election coming up, my level of anxiety had been higher than usual. Bold black letters as a heading above verse 25 caught my eye. **Do Not Worry.** While listening to the raucous blue jays and looking at tiny little wild flowers, I read the section about how much God cares for and feeds the birds of the air, and clothes the flowers of the field. The reminder that we are much more valuable to God than they are seemed very personal.

He is a God of endless creativity, of intricate design, and

of infinite possibilities.

Later that evening we shared with each other as a group how God had spoken to us. One lady shared a very meaningful poem that she had written, and others shared of the encouragement God had brought to them.

Praying without ceasing was Pastor Michael’s emphasis Saturday evening. We need constant prayer and constant connection with God to combat Satan’s forces. We can continually commune with God.



When we pray we can claim God’s promises, and use Scriptures as a foundation for our prayers.

Sunday morning before leaving we all stood in a circle and held hands. Each person prayed for a specific prayer request — our country, our churches, our church leaders, our young people, for the Holy Spirit, and for revival. There was the sense of God’s presence and there was a spoken desire for more opportunities to get together and share and pray.

Susan Jones

A Storm in The Church

TULSA, OKLA. » On a Wednesday in March, I was on my way to prayer meeting on the north side of town. It was a clear, beautiful evening and the sky was blue without a visible cloud. I was on the phone with my 85-year-old mom, when our call was interrupted with a weather alert stating: WARNING, A TORNADO IS IN THIS AREA! TAKE COVER IMMEDIATELY! I looked into the still cloudless sky and there was no wind, rain or hail, nothing to indicate severe weather but my phone alert.

Okay, I thought. I figured it was not in this immediate area, but maybe ten or more miles away.

When I arrived at Bethel Seventh-day Adventist Church where my husband, J. Malcom Phipps, pastors, all was still calm and I took my usual seat after greeting my fellow members', brothers Prevost, and Thompson, and Sister Tracey. Sister Scott and brother Suttle were in the treasurer's office.

After the testimonies and prayer requests concluded, I pointed out that I had received one warning of a tornado while driving and now another alert. "Yes, I am aware and we are on alert," my husband responded.

The church had undergone extensive renovations about a year prior. The church had a very high ceiling with offices upstairs, a large open sanctuary, and two long hallways on each side, no windows, and natural light only from the lobby.

Around 7:18 pm, the wind began moving forcefully through the rafters, becoming disturbingly firmer; a fine sand-like substance started

falling from the ceiling; and at that very moment, Pastor Phipps gave instructions to move quickly from the sanctuary into an alcove in the lobby, encased in brick

and cinder blocks. Vehement winds were firmer, with sharp sand hitting my face like powdered glass. I was praying out loud repeatedly, "Lord, please save us." Mo-



ments later, the offices upstairs collapsed; the roof disappeared; rain was falling hard upon us. Ceiling tiles were hanging from their original places as well as electrical wires; I prayed they were not live. Water invaded the church about two feet deep. I worried about the tangled wires and sharp debris in the once beautiful edifice.

With debris in my eyes and throat, I continued to pray as I witnessed a whirlwind of papers and other debris rotating in the lobby. It sounded like a speeding train and rain kept falling. When we finally reached the sanctuary and gazed up at the blue sky,

I fell to my knees and thanked God for grace.

I repeat, at no time did I witness the sky turning dark or see the tornado. Humanly, I will never understand why the strong, violent, twisting wind didn't lift us through the gaping hole in the roof. Spiritually, I understand perfectly. I know the Lord is a shield in time of a storm. I know the Lord will never leave or forsake me. I know I can walk in the valley of the shadow of death and know the Lord is with me, and that troubles and storms don't last forever.

Our church has the only soup kitchen

on the north side of Tulsa. Through the Lord's grace and his protection during the storm, I know it will be bigger and better in order to serve food to insecure people from the area. Join us in prayer so the "Soup Kitchen at Bethel" will receive donations to restock our shelves. Bethel Seventh-day Adventist Church, P.O. Box 481002, Tulsa, OK, 74148. I'm always happy to share about miracle the Lord performed the evening of March 30, 2016 and trust in His goodness to restore and grow our ministry.

Carolyn Phipps

Go Light Your Corner

ATHENS, TEXAS » The Great Commission calls Christians to evangelize every nation, tribe, tongue, and people. In an-

swer to that call, on October 21-23, 2016, the Southwest Region Conference Women's Ministries Department held its first *Gospel Explosion Evangelistic Boot Camp* at Lone Star Camp. The training was as rigorous as the name implies. There weren't any s'mores by a cozy campfire. Instead, the women (and men) were up early and eager to be trained. They discovered God's heart of evangelism and learned how to share the Gospel to those who need it most. Over 150 ladies and men

decided to step out of the status quo and chose a life of adventure with God.

The goal of the Women's Ministries

Department is to equip others by providing training to all who are willing to help spread the gospel message. The Holy Spirit blessed us in the form of Evangelist Nicolle H. Brise from Southeastern, Florida. Brise gave us the much-needed tools to accomplish the task ahead. We praise God for her and her ministry. We believe more than ever before that Jesus is coming soon and we should be busy about our Father's business "for such a time as this." Be blessed and always be a blessing.

Anysia Archibald, women's ministries director



answer to that call, on October 21-23, 2016, the Southwest Region Conference Women's Ministries Department held its first *Gospel Explosion Evangelistic Boot Camp* at Lone Star Camp. The training was as rigorous as the name implies. There weren't any s'mores by a cozy campfire. Instead, the women (and men) were up early and eager to be trained. They discovered God's heart of evangelism and learned how to share the Gospel to those who need it most. Over 150 ladies and men



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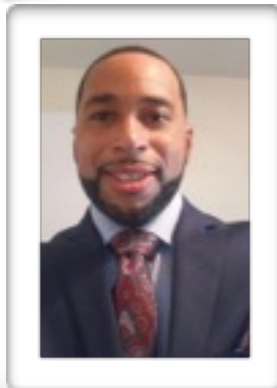
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Guest Speaker-

**Pastor Timothy
Lee**



The Gift That Keeps On Giving



“Thanks be to God for His indescribable Gift” (2 Corinthians 9:15).

Christmas Eve and Christmas Day were always such a wonderful time of the year. My parents allowed us to open one gift of our choosing on Christmas Eve. As the anticipation grew, we found it almost impossible to contain ourselves! As we grew older and wiser, the question became, will we like what’s in the gift, and still later, how long will I like this gift?

As the apostle remarks, thanks be to God for His “indescribable” Gift. Gift with a big “G,” because that Gift is Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Therein lies the key to the answer of the question of “for how long will I like the Gift of Christ in my life?” If the Gift is only received as Savior, then undoubtedly at some point in my life I will become bored and consequently unappreciative of the Gift, feeling like I’ve celebrated it enough. But if I am being fashioned into a citizen of heaven, in the unselfish design of the Spirit, I will increasingly understand my

role as a son of God and subordinate of the Spirit, and accept, receive, and cherish the dominion of Christ over my life. The Gift is no longer simply a saving agent, but a restoring agent that changes and upgrades my desires and inclinations, thinking and reasoning, and my habits and practices.

When I was age eight or nine, I remember wanting a certain train set I had seen in a department store. I told my parents I wanted it, I prayed for it, and I believed I would get it. But when Christmas came and I opened a new train set, I was dismayed to discover it was not the exact train set that I had wanted! I played with it once or twice, but then neatly stored it in the back of my closet. It wasn’t the train set that I had yearned for. In the same fashion, there have been many times in my adult life when I have set Jesus Christ to one side. In the aftermath, I have struggled to return and seek His face again. Why? Because at that moment in my life He didn’t seem to be the Jesus I thought He should be! But that was precisely the issue. When I have tried to fit Jesus into my concept of what He should be, I make Him

far too small and finite. But when I have allowed Him to fit me into what He believes I should be, I am fashioned and shaped into a divine concept, a heavenly pattern, all that I can possibly be by His grace! Who could possibly place a price on that precious life-altering Gift that the Father has so freely given to each one of us?

The humble shepherds certainly realized what an enormous Gift they had been given. The lofty and elegant wise men understood that, although they were royalty, they needed to bring gifts to present to the Lord of the universe! Simeon, advanced in years, with one of his last breaths, stated that he could finally die in peace because his own eyes had seen the Gift above all gifts, the Messiah, the Christ, the Lord! So what is our declaration today about Christ? Have we recognized and furthermore cherished that priceless, matchless Gift that we have unworthily received in the Person of Christ? This Christmas, make a commitment to receive the Gift of God’s restoration.

Carlos J. Craig, president



Theron Collins is creating a legacy of giving. “Having served the church for a number of years in the Trust Services Department, I have had opportunity to encourage our members to consider obtaining a Charitable Gift Annuity, in addition to their basic estate plan of a Will or a Trust Agreement. Since I have retired, I have decided to ‘practice what I preached’. Over the ensuing years, as I acquired more funds than I had need for, I put those funds into Charitable Gift Annuities. At this point in my retirement years I have several Charitable Gift Annuities, and receive a nice income from them. In addition, I have the assurance that at my death the remainder of each annuity will benefit some part of the Lord’s work. I highly recommend the use of this document as a way to be sure that some portion of your estate will benefit the closing work of God.”

To find out more about how to create your own legacy of giving through a Charitable Gift Annuity, Trust Agreement, or Will, contact us by phone at (800) 847-2792 or email trust@txsda.org. Or visit our website, texasconferencelegacy.org.

Texas Conference of Seventh-day Adventists • Department of Trust Services
 P.O. Box 800 • Alvarado, TX 76009 • Phone: 817-790-2255
 Toll Free: 800-847-2792 • Fax: 817-783-2698 • Email: trust@txsda.org • www.TexasConferenceLegacy.org



TEXAS CONFERENCE

Warm is the New Cool

ARLINGTON, TEX. » There is a great article recently published in the *Washington Post*, entitled, “To attract young people to your church, you’ve got to be warm. Not cool.” The article continues, “So many churches pour money and energy into flashy worship services meant to make teenagers and young adults think that church is cool,” cites Kara Powell, PhD, of the Fuller Youth Institute. “But it turns out cool isn’t what young people want. Forget the rock-band vibe and the flashing lights. Warm is the new cool.” Of course this caused me to reflect on what draws me to Younger Generation Church (YG), the vibrant young adult ministry of Arlington Seventh-day Adventist Church. Admittedly for me, amidst all the cool aspects of YG, I am most drawn to the warm-hearted people of YG. Powell, and her co-authors Jake Mulder and Brad Griffin, go on about their recent research, saying, “When we analyzed the terms that young adults used to describe the churches or parishes

that they chose, we noticed repeated words: *welcoming, accepting, belonging, authentic, hospitable* and *caring*. We began to call this the ‘warmth cluster.’” Reflecting personally on Powell’s research, what struck me was how valuable and important the “warmth cluster,” is to the Arlington Seventh-day Adventist Church. In my conversations with young and older alike, I have found people drawn to the “Arlington Experience,” because of the warmth of our people. Sure the “cool stuff” is fun, but when it comes down to it, we are attracted to warm relationships that feel like family. Powell and her colleagues strongly affirm this in their *Washington Post* article:

“Across the board in statistical analyses, this warmth cluster emerged as a stronger variable than any ministry program. . . . By suggesting that churches need to grow warmer, we don’t mean adults should be nice to young people. Nice does not cut it. And warmth is more than superficial community. It’s ‘like family’ — as

young people told us again and again during our interviews and field visits. . . . It takes time and commitment to move past the superficiality of lobby hellos into the intimate space of authenticity.” Again, “warm is the new cool.”

In October, YG launched a variety of initiatives that offer our whole church great opportunities to foster relationships. This includes highlighting and introducing our campus ministry, Adventist Christian Fellowship at University of Texas Arlington [ACF/UTA].

In this next season, may we engage each other and our world with the accepting warmth of Jesus. Yes, it takes time; but if we intentionally are welcoming, hospitable, and faithfully caring to each other—especially to next generations—great lifelong connections can be made. Not only for this season, but also for eternity.

Allan Martin, Ph.D.



Take a Stand for Freedom!

HOUSTON » The Texas Conference Public Affairs and Religious Liberty department hosted the “Take a Stand for Freedom!” religious liberty event that was held at the Houston Central Church on October 28-29, 2016. On Friday night, Dr. Paul Hunt preached from Romans 13:1-7, reminding believers to submit to the “powers that be” in all things that do not pertain to God and His worship. During Sabbath morning worship, Lincoln Steed, editor of *Liberty* magazine spoke to a crowd of nearly 600 attendees. He recounted Adventist history and the crisis of a national day of worship during the 1880s.

During the afternoon program, Lincoln

The afternoon program continued with Mark Finkelstein, a Jewish attorney, who addressed concerns of the Anti-Defamation League pertaining to religious liberty and discrimination. Adventist attorneys McKen Carrington and Sam Beale informed the audience of their civil rights to religious freedom and offered practical advice on how to face religious discrimination in the work or school environment. Neale Shields, an Adventist attorney from Rusk, explained the Supreme Court ruling in *Obergefell v. Hodges*, which legalized same-sex marriage throughout the nation, and how it relates to conscientious Christians who operate their own busi-

nesses. Dr. Cook provided a brief overview of changing contours of church and state relations in America. He spoke of current protections under the First Amendment and a potentially dangerous shift from separation of church and state to an accommodation of religion in the public square. The rally concluded with a round table discussion by the panelists answering questions from the audience.

Audience feedback after the event indicated a strong, growing interest in hosting future events of this type to better inform the public, and Adventists, of the importance of religious liberty for people of all faiths, and to protect the freedom of conscience of those who have no faith. Many thanks to the pastors and religious liberty leaders of the local churches, as well as to the speakers and attendees who all made this a wonderful experience! To schedule an event, email ecook@txsda.org.

Ed Cook, Ph.D.



◀ Haitian Bethany Church singing for our event.

▼ Praise team from Houston International Church singing for our event.



reviewed historical issues of church and state relationships during the Medieval period in Europe. Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee joined the audience through a conference call in which she spoke highly of the religious liberties we enjoy in America and the need to preserve them.

As an interlude to the afternoon presentations, the audience was blessed by three singing groups, and a fourth soloist, from area churches. To highlight the theme of the rally, which was diversity and religious liberty, ethnically-diverse churches were invited to participate.



The Fullness of Time



TEXICO CONFERENCE

The Christmas season has long been one of my favorite times of the year. I love the lights, the music and the happy voices of family as we gather to enjoy the holidays together. It seems that the joy of this season grows with each year as I relive the precious memories of Christmases past. One of those special memories happened a few years ago when our daughter and her little ones were living with us.

It was the evening of November 28, 2007 and I was home with my grandchildren—Allison, age 7 and Brandon, who was 5. As we were finishing up some things around the kitchen the kids made their way over to the wall calendar.

Allison was so excited as she told her brother that there were only two more days left in the month. She then called me over to see that November was really almost past. Lifting the page, she exclaimed that in just two more days it would be December. Then she asked if she could go ahead and turn the calendar page to December so they could count the days better. I agreed. They were both so very excited.

I thought I would have a little fun with them, so I asked, “What makes December so special?”

Continuing in their excitement they began the list.

“In December we get a break from school,” Allison said.

“And Uncle Steve is coming to see us,” Brandon continued.

“That’s right,” I said. “And what else makes December so special to you?”

“We can celebrate Jesus’ birthday,” Allison replied.

“Yeah, and it’s Christmas!” Brandon exclaimed.

The crescendo of their excitement grew with each statement as they jumped around the kitchen with glee.

Then Brandon went back over to the calendar and began to look at the December page more carefully. Just like he had seen his sister lift the page for November, he lifted the December page. As he did a puzzled look came over his face. He put the page back down and looked again at the month of December.

He lifted the page and looked again – no more months followed December. I watched him as he tried to understand what that could mean, and then he said something that I will never forget.

“And guess what sissy, do you know the best part about December? *After Christmas we’re going to Heaven!*”

Brandon didn’t see any more months on the calendar, so he concluded that this was it – time would expire – and the next thing that would happen would be the reality of Jesus coming to take us to Heaven.

I was moved by the profound statement of his innocent faith.

Now another Christmas season is here and soon we will move into the pages of a new calendar—2017. But this year I believe as never before that we are not just standing on the threshold of a new year; surely we must be standing on the threshold of eternity as well.

Just as Jesus came to this earth as a baby *“when the fullness of the time had come,”* He will surely come again soon as our Savior and Redeemer. I am grateful for Job’s statement of faith when he said *“For I know that my Redeemer lives, and He shall stand at last on the earth, and after my skin is destroyed, this I know, that in my flesh I shall see God...How my heart yearns within me!”* Job 19:25

How is it with us this Christmas season? Are we longing for Jesus to come? Are we anxious to be with Him? Can we see the gleams of the Golden Morning?

I find that Brandon’s words of anticipation take on a new sense of hope and excitement for me this year. I am so grateful that it won’t be long until time on this earth will expire and that soon, very soon, we will experience the joy of Heaven.

Yes, after Christmas we’re going to Heaven! Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

Phil Robertson, executive secretary/treasurer

Let’s Move Day: El Paso

EL PASO, TEX. » For its fifth year, “Let’s Move Day” is running strong in El Paso. McKelligon Canyon is the site for a 5K run/walk every September hosted by “El Paso on the Move” together with area Seventh-day Adventist churches. Over 600 registered for the September 18, 2016 event. This makes it one of the largest races in El Paso. In fact, we are now included in the El Paso Marathon Series.

Fifty percent of the registered runners/walkers and volunteers are from the community. Health magazines were included

in each participant packet. During packet pick-up, we interviewed people and to our surprise, some have been coming back year after year. It was their 3rd, 4th or 5th time for some runners. The El Paso Striders, a youth running team, has joined us three years in a row. The El Paso High School soft ball team joined us for the first time. Mike Coultier, who had been coordinating races for the last five years, said that he had never seen such “a well-organized church as we are.”

In addition to the run/walk, a health fair

was conducted simultaneously at the amphitheater courtyard. With volunteers and agencies, over 700 people converged at the Canyon. It was fun for all ages as two mascots posed with children and adults for pictures. Booths included blood pressure and blood sugar screening, massage, vegetarian food samples, garden produce, Amazing Facts Bible studies and other agencies from the community. Healthy food was served at the finish line which included fruits, nuts, hot oatmeal, bread, water, soy milk and milk.

As runners raced to the finish line, they were greeted by cheerleaders from Andres High School, who had now have participated for the past four years. The first 300 finishers received a McKelligon Canyon medal. First, second and third place medals were also given according to age category. Beatrice Brunken, Texico health ministry director and Phil Robertson, Texico executive secretary/treasurer assisted with the awards. Grants were awarded to organizations promoting health and physical activity in the amounts ranging from \$250-\$750. Grant recipients were the Northeast Navigators, Western Eagles Adventurers, Western Eagles Pathfinders, Dunais Pathfinder Club, El Paso Central PBE, El Paso Striders and EHS Ladies Soft Ball Team.

As the runners/walkers dotted the Canyon with their neon green technical shirts

words and explanation. It is mission accomplished. We mingled with the people, went about doing good and now have won their confidence. Surely, the health message is the entering wedge that will cut through tough barriers of prejudice and indifference.

Another memorable event has passed and we look forward to the next one in September 2017. What a tremendous opportunity for the church to serve the community. Someday, the seeds of love that have been planted will germinate to a hundred fold and beyond. Let God be praised!

Norma Rivera,
R.N./M.N.

Top: Healthy snacks were provided after the race.

Middle left: The grateful recipients of grants which were awarded to organizations promoting health and physical activity

Middle right: Norma Rivera (left), health ministries director for the El Paso Central Church poses with Beatriz Brunken, Texico Conference health ministries director

Bottom: Fifth Annual McKelligon Canyon Race in El Paso, Texas



and volunteers busied themselves at the water stations, parking, registration, finish line, ambulance service, directions, food line and health booths, a symphony was created. Like an orchestra, everyone played their part and a harmonious melody echoed throughout the Canyon. Team spirit was high and the event was a success.

While the runners received their medals, the volunteers received even more. When we give of ourselves without expecting anything in return, we are blessed beyond



Texico Conference Hosts New Believers' Retreat

ALBUQUERQUE, N. MEX. » The Texico Conference hosted a New Believers' Retreat in September at the conference office and what a blessing it was! New members from around the territory came and received inspiration, edification, fellowship and great food.

Pastor Buford Griffith, Jr., and his wife, Carmen Fuentes-Griffith, from the Southwestern Union Conference, were guest speakers. Other presenters included, pastors David Merling, Lee-Roy Chacon and Phil Robertson. Special music was provided by Carmen Griffith and Nelva Chacon.

Feedback from the attendees included comments such as "This weekend has en-



ergized and solidified my faith in God and in the Seventh-day Adventist Church," "It has brought me closer to God and my church family," "Now I understand Ellen White," and "Many of the questions that I have had were answered."

It was a privilege to spend time with the new believers and hear testimonies of how God has been working in their lives.

Sue Hinkle, communication director

▲ Buford Griffith, Jr., Southwestern Union Conference executive secretary, was the main presenter for the weekend.

◀ The retreat concluded with a circle of prayer.

▼ New Believers' Retreat at the Texico Conference office





Student Highlight

“I didn’t even know about Seventh-day Adventists until this past summer. I got baptized when I was ten, but then I left the church. I remembered who God was, who Jesus was, but I never really prayed, or



Freshmen Jason Fuller shares how God’s perfect timing led him to meet a Southwestern alumnus, who first led him to Jesus, and then to Southwestern.

went to church much. High school came, I started drinking and smoking every single week, then every single day. Parties happened every weekend. It got to the point that I brought these things to my home. I started smoking and drinking not because it was a social thing, but because I needed it. My mom tried to give up drinking. She would tell me, “Hey, I’m giving it up!” but then a week later, alcohol came back to her. If it wasn’t for my friends, I would have failed high school. Even though I didn’t know it, God was watching me every step of the way and gave me the right people to be around.

I was questioning: Who am I? Why am I here? What am I supposed to do? I was still smoking every day, but in those moments when I was alone I felt the urge of knowing the answers to these questions. I wanted to know where I was supposed to be. So I asked God. I sought Him.

God’s timing is just perfect! A gentleman who attended Southwestern held a seminar at a church

across from my mom’s work place. He brought me to Jesus. After work, my mom started going to the seminar too, and she also gave her life to Christ.”

Jason Fuller, freshman theology major

This is an excerpt from the Humans of Southwestern project that the Spiritual Life and Development (SLAD) Media team started based on the Humans of New York project. We seek to share Christ’s impact on the lives of Southwestern Adventist University humans, through their personal stories with Him. To read more stories, follow SLAD on Facebook or Instagram @swauspiritualife.

New Rankings

Southwestern Adventist University is now ranked #21 in the US News Best Colleges West rankings, up from #22 last year. The University is also ranked as the 36th safest college in the United States and the second safest college in the state of Texas, up from a ranking of the third safest college in Texas last year.

Department of Nursing

The Department of Nursing graduating class of 2016 has a 97% pass rate on the NCLEX. Each year graduates of every nursing program across the United States are given a National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX) to determine if the new nurse is safe to begin practice at an entry level. These exams have progressively become more difficult, measuring the new graduates’ abilities to use critical thinking skills and make sound nursing judgment while providing quality care to patients in

our communities.

Within the state of Texas, there are 113 Schools of Nursing and Southwestern Adventist University Ranks in the top 10% at number 10 out of 113. The National NCLEX average pass rate across the nation was 84%, and Southwestern Adventist University once again outperforms most with a pass rate of 97%.

“We would not be able to meet such high standards without an incredible group of nursing professors who have strategically contributed to, and implemented changes in our nursing curriculum to improve the rigor of our program,” says department chair Dr. Sallieann Hoffer. “Needless to say, we are extremely proud of our 2016 Senior Nursing Class who worked diligently in meeting benchmarks of excellence in the Department of Nursing.”

New Dino Museum Opens

Southwestern Adventist University hosted the grand opening of the new Dinosaur Science Museum and Research Center in early November. The Museum is home to over 20,000 dinosaur bones spanning 20 years of research and excavation, interactive displays, skeleton replicas, a 3D printer, videos, and opportunities to observe the preservation process. The new space allows for better on-going preservation and research on the bones as well as enhanced educational opportunities for Southwestern students and the DFW community. For more information about the Museum, visit swau.edu/dinosaurmuseum.



The Nursing Class of 2016 (just a portion of the class pictured) passes the NCLEX at 97%, putting them in the top 10% of Texas nursing schools and well above the national average.



Dr. Art Chadwick, lead paleontologist for the Dinosaur Research Project and long-time volunteer David Stair prepare one of the exhibits for the new Dinosaur Science Museum.

Southwestern Union Pathfinder Camporee Draws 5,000

A perfect recipe for the Southwestern Union Pathfinder Camporee “Stand Firm”—Bring 5,000 Pathfinders and staff to Lake Whitney Ranch. Add more than 80 different events and activities. Combine with great programs, speakers, music, singing, and drama. Add a little rain for spice, mix with lots of good October-Texas-sun, and a heaping helping of the Holy Spirit. You have a recipe for success for youth who face great peer pressures in these trying times: “Stand Firm.”

The Stand Firm Camporee saw Pathfinders from all the Southwestern Union Conferences—Arkansas/Louisiana, Oklahoma, Southwest Region, Texico and Texas—all camping at Lake Whitney Ranch, the Texas Conference Youth Camp, Thursday, October 13 to Sunday, October 16, 2016. The theme of the Camporee

was “Stand Firm.” At each of our programs, beginning on Thursday night, we featured one area in the life of our youth that we may stand firm in Jesus Christ, beginning with standing against bullying. The Pathfinders themselves were featured through



special music from each Conference and drama presented by the Tulsa Twisters of Oklahoma and the Robertson Rams from Houston. A special feature was having youth speakers at each of the programs, again featuring how we can Stand Firm. The speak-



ers were Jeager Watts from Oklahoma, Kaitlyn Litten from Arkansas/Louisiana, Brendon Bolanos from Texas, Kiron Dixon, Southwest Region, and Sadie Herrera from Texas. Elder Tracy Wood from the North American Division Youth Department tied all elements together at each program to show us how to live a life Standing Firm for Christ. Events and activities of all kinds were featured for the Pathfinders to par-



Helvis Moody (above), Southwestern Union youth and young adult director, and Gene Clapp (left), Southwestern Union Pathfinder Camporee chair and NAD Pathfinder Bible Experience coordinator



ticipate in all day Friday. The choices of activities ranged from horseback riding, quilting, painting Korean masks, balloon art, model airplanes, Legos, Hillbilly horse-shoes, obstacle courses, soccer, football, flags, communication, paper quilling, tie dye and many others. With the distance between the events and the bright sun, the flavored ices for sale were a welcome break! A special feature was the AY Museum provided by Arnold and Dixie Plata from the North American Division, showing the history of Pathfinders in the NAD.

An event of this size is not possible without volunteers who are totally dedicated to ministering to our youth! Volunteers from each conference planned this event, meeting regularly for the last three years. Countless hours of time have been donated in the planning, setting up of facilities, making the events and activities happen and making sure that all had a great time

and an opportunity to meet Jesus Christ. We want to thank all of you, whether camporee executive staff, local club staff or conference and union staff for all your hard work, using your vacation time and in many cases taking time from work to be with your young people. We had Master Guides from the Texas Conference

who gave of their time, paid to attend and worked the entire weekend. Teen Leadership Training Pathfinders were a great support to all events and activities, earning community service hours for helping out all around the camp to help make things run smoother!

Sabbath was a huge delight when 25 Pathfinders committing and recommitting their lives to follow Jesus Christ all the way and were baptized! One of the young ladies baptized was Ana Villarreal. She shared with us, "At the Southwestern Union Pathfinder Camporee I had the privilege of getting baptized. It was a truly amazing experience. I had been reconsidering re-baptism for a long time during summer camp, discussions with Pastor Tenorio, and the Iquitos, Peru Texas Youth mission trip. This camporee finally made me commit to this thought of a new relationship with the Lord. I wanted to fully devote

myself to God in all that I do. I wanted to start a new, fresh committed lifestyle fully devoted to Him. Camporee was a place I could clear my mind and think of the relationship I had with the Lord and it is where I made the ultimate decision to devote my life to Him under the waters of Lake Whitney Ranch; where I could become "God's missionary for life."

Lily, another young lady who got baptized, shared, "I was touched by God at church and had plans to get baptized. What touched me at camporee was what the pastor preached. The theme song "This I Believe" touched me even more. I felt the Spirit of God by my side and decided to give my life to God the Father, Christ the Son and the Holy Spirit. I want to Stand Firm in Christ!"

We consider the Stand Firm camporee a tremendous success due to answered prayers, such as, no major injuries, safety over the dangerous highways and bi-ways, and that the Pathfinders have been energized by the Word of God. Enough cannot be said about precious lives going down into the watery grave of baptism and coming up a brand new creature in Christ. It is our spiritual desire that we all will stand firm until the coming of the Lord. Let's all keep the faith. Let's all hold on to God's unchanging hand. And let's all Stand Firm.

New Additions to the Southwestern Union

BURLESON, TEXAS » Philip “Bo” Just has joined the Southwestern Union and will serve as its undertreasurer, as well as treasurer for Southwest Estates Services, Inc. In this position, he will support the Union treasurer and treasury department.

Prior to joining the Union, Just served as business manager and treasurer of Chisholm Trail Academy in Keene, Texas for eleven years. Just brings with him more than 30 years of experience in finance, including 25 years of service with the General Conference Auditing Service. He is a graduate of Southwestern Adventist University and a Certified Public Accountant. A Tennessee native who grew up in the Southwest, he is an avid sports fan, and supports the Dallas Mavericks, Dallas Cowboys, and Oklahoma University’s Sooners. He and his wife, Ruth, reside in Keene, Texas, and have two adult

children, Jonathan and Bree Anne.

According to John Page, Southwestern Union treasurer, “We are excited to have Bo Just as part of our treasury team at the Southwestern Union. He brings a tremendous amount of denominational and financial experience to the treasury department and to assist the conferences.”

Another addition is Kristina Pascual Lockhart, who has joined the Southwestern Union as the associate director of communication, as well as the associate editor of the *Record*. In this position she will manage the production of the *Record* magazine and assist with training, conference support, and project management. Lockhart was previously the director of communication for the Texas Conference. A Texan with Argentine roots, she enjoys traveling, cultural studies, and spending time with

family. Lockhart has a communication degree from Southwestern Adventist University and also holds an MBA from the University of Texas at Arlington. In 2012 she was named Young Professional of the Year by the Society of Adventist Communicators. According to Jessica Lozano, Southwestern Union communication director and *Record* editor, “Kristina’s breadth of knowledge and experience in the communication field have already proven to be an asset to our department.”

Below left: Bo Just is the new Southwestern Union undertreasurer and Southwest Estate Services, Inc. treasurer.

▼ Kristina P. Lockhart is the new Southwestern Union associate communication director and *Record* associate editor.



Classified Ads

REAL ESTATE/HOUSING

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

Enjoy worry-free retirement at Fletcher Park Inn on the Fletcher Academy campus near Hendersonville, NC. Spacious villa homes and limited rental apartments available NOW. Enjoy a complimentary lunch at our vegetarian buffet on the day of your no-obligation tour. Contact Loretta for details at 1.800.249.2882 or www.fletcherparkinn.com.

EMPLOYMENT

The Department of Curriculum and Instruction at La Sierra University invites applications for a full-time, tenure track faculty position. Applicants must hold a PhD degree with Curriculum and Instruction as the preferred specialization, and must have taught for at least five years in a K-12 classroom setting; be a member of the Seventh-day Adventist church; and have demonstrated effectiveness as a teacher and scholar. Additional details and application instructions available at lasierra.edu/jobs.

Assistant/Associate Professor of Physics: La Sierra University Physics Department invites applications for a full-time, tenure-track faculty position in the assistant to associate professor level to begin in Fall 2017. Candidates must have a PhD in Physics, Biophysics, Optics/Photonics or a closely related field. ABD candidates will be considered if the anticipated degree completion date is before July 2017. Please send a CV and a statement of research and teaching interests to Dr. Elvis Geneston, Chair, Physics Department, egenesto@lasierra.edu.

Dental Associate wanted! Looking for an individual of character and skill to join my general family practice. I will mentor and assist a potential new owner with the goal of transitioning out of full time practice. Our office technology is up-to-date, our patient trust level is high and the potential income is great. We are a fee-for-service practice with five operatories and a tremendous team located in South Central PA, near Gettysburg, Baltimore and Harrisburg. Contact me at drbillwaring@gmail.com.

Walla Walla University has two faculty openings in the School of Education and Psychology. For details and to apply, please visit: <http://jobs.wallawalla.edu>. To learn more about Walla Walla University, please visit: <https://wallawalla.edu/>.

Andrews University Seeks Nursing Faculty: Responsibilities include, but are not limited to: teach and supervise skills/simulation lab for

all student levels. Participate in skills and simulation lab for clinical groups with assistance from course instructors. Complete students' lab evaluation, grade skills, care plans and concept maps where applicable. Collaborate with department chair for lab budget and acquisition of lab supplies. Teach assigned courses and/or clinical to make up for full-time position. For more information or to apply visit: <https://www.andrews.edu/admres/jobs/1199>

Andrews University Seeks an Assistant/Associate Professor of Nursing: Responsibilities include teaching didactic and clinical nursing, skills lab and simulation along with other applicable assignments to make a full-time position.

Other duties include: teach didactic and clinical nursing courses, teaching/supervising skills and simulation labs, attend all departmental meetings, advise students, attend pinning, dedications, and graduations, and participate in writing program self-study and preparation for accreditation visits. For more information or to apply visit: <https://www.andrews.edu/admres/jobs/1135>

Andrews University seeks HVAC Technician who will maintain, repair, and install HVAC and refrigeration equipment in campus housing and university buildings. Associate's degree (A.A.) or equivalent from two-year college or technical school; or at least two years related experience and / or training; or equivalent combination of

ASI
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SPRING CONVENTION
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E-mail: asisouthwest@swuc.org

education and experience is required. Must obtain current USA or Canadian driver's license, Refrigerant Recovery License. For more information or to apply visit: <https://www.andrews.edu/admres/jobs/1202>.

Now Hiring Early Childhood Teachers to be based in Chengdu, China. Competitive salary package based on competence and experience. Native English speaker, hold a Bachelor's degree, preferably with early childhood teaching experiences. Education Center runs by Adventist professionals. Visit <http://sgg.com.sg/career/jobs.htm> or email gateway@sgg.com.sg for more details.

Adventist University of Health Sciences (ADU) seeks a full-time physical

therapy faculty to teach in one of the following areas: therapeutic exercise, musculoskeletal, cardiopulmonary or pediatric PT. The optimal candidate will be an Adventist with a Christian world view who embraces the mission and ethos of ADU; has an earned academic doctorate, teaching experience and a scholarly agenda and is eligible for licensure in Florida. A candidate with a Doctor of Physical Therapy and a clinical specialist certificate would be considered. Position begins August 2017. Send CV to Donna Meyer, at donna.meyer@adu.edu.

Union College seeks an Adventist, Masters-Prepared PA faculty member. The ideal candidate will have clinical experience in Family Practice and Emergency

Medicine. Prior teaching experience is desired but not necessary. Start date June 1, 2017. Send CV and references to Jodi Chewakin, jochewak@ucollege.edu.

Union College seeks full-time professor of Communications and English with strong skills in magazine journalism, editing, and writing instruction for position beginning July 2017. Doctorate is preferred. Please submit curriculum vitae to Dr. Mark Robison, Humanities Division chair, at marobiso@ucollege.edu.

Southwestern Adventist University's English Department is seeking applications for a full-time faculty member specializing in British literature of the 18th or 19th century. Preferred candidates will have a Ph.D.; a creative writing background is a plus. Send CV with cover letter to Dr. Judy Myers Laue (lauej@swau.edu).

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Announcements

Alumni Reunion La Sierra Academy

April 28-29, 2017, 4900 Golden Ave., Riverside, CA. 95th Year Celebration! Honor Classes 2's and 7's. Welcome Reception at 7:00 pm on Friday, April 28 at LSA Library. Honor Class Services Registration April 29 at 9 a.m. Services at 10 a.m. Potluck Luncheon. Alumni/Varsity Basketball 8:30 p.m. Sat evening. Please update your contact info. JNelson@lsak12.com; 951.351.1445 x244; www.lsak12.com.

Obituaries

BLEHM, Dorothy J., born September 22, 1926, at Roosevelt, Okla., and died September 15, 2016. She was a resident of the Golden Oaks Independent Retirement Living in Yucaipa, Calif. for four years. She graduated from Omega High School and became a member of the Okeene, Okla., church. Dorothy worked as a nurse's aide at the Watonga Hospital then changed careers working at Tyler's Department Store in Watonga, Okla., as a clerk and seamstress altering

clothing. Dorothy married Virgil L. Blehm, of Omega, Okla., in Abilene, Texas, on September 2, 1944. They shared 62 years of marriage. She was preceded in death by her parents; husband, Virgil; son, Darrell; three sisters, and two brothers. Survivors: sons, Dennis V. Blehm of Hemet, Calif., and Douglas G. Blehm of Loyal, Okla.; daughter, Sonya DeLange of Redlands, Calif.; brothers, Bob Metheny, Jack Metheny and Charles Metheny; six grandchildren, and seven great-grandchildren.

FRITTS, David Roy, born August 11, 1937, and died August 13, 1916 in Grove, Okla. He was a member of Jay church. Survivors: wife, Rosalie Fritts, of Grove, and son, David Fritts, of Tulsa, Okla.

JOHNSON, Bernice B. Madear, born May 10, and died October 11, 2016 in Baton Rouge, La. She was a member and ordained elder of the Baton Rouge Berean church, having been baptized in 1958 by the late W. J. Cleveland. Her post-education pursuits resulted in more than forty years of nursing in hospitals, Head Start programs, and private practice in the Baton Rouge and New Orleans areas. She successfully operated the Professional Nurses' Home Health Agency and the Louise D. Blunt Adult Day Care for many years. She was also a lay-chaplain for the incarcerated, sponsored a "Toys for Tots" Christmas program, and organized a program which offered prayers, food, clothing, and monetary gifts to those in need. She sponsored all six of her children

in the Berean church school. As a school board member, she supported Berean and Martin Luther King Christian Academy. She was preceded in death by parents Willie and Louise Blunt; husband of 25 years Felbert R. Johnson; brothers Willie, Foley, Gilbert, Noise, and Henry Blunt; sister, Mary Smith; a nephew, Larry Adams, and a grandson, Michael Moore, Jr. Survivors: sons, Alfred Moore, Jr. and wife, Rose, of Newport News, Va.; Charles Moore and wife Pattie of Williamsburg, Va.; Mark Blunt and Felbert Johnson, Jr. of Baton Rouge; daughters, Donna Beauchamp and Cheryl Moore of Baton Rouge; sixteen grandchildren, 20 great grandchildren, one great-great grandchild; and three sisters-in-law.

KASTEL, Candice Lynette, born November 13, 1977, in Little Rock, Ark., and died September 29, 2016, in Armond Beach, Fla. She was radiant, happy and fun loving. She loved get-togethers with family and friends, especially during the holidays. She loved her church and was involved in many activities. As an R.N. she worked at the Halifax Hospital in Florida and joined the ROTC. She loved the beach and enjoyed walking with her dogs. Survivors: dad and step-mother, Bruce and Coleen Kastel, of Little Rock, Ark.; her mother and step-father, Joy and Dallas Allen, of Mabelvale, Ark.; sister and brother-in-law, Renee and Jerry Allen, of Bauxite, Ark.; sister, Marie Lancaster, of Atlanta, Ga.; aunt and uncle Debbie and Roger Gudith of Roland, Ark.; grandmother, Johnnie Mae

Frazier, of Booneville, Ark; three other aunts and uncles; five nieces; one nephew, and three great-nieces.

MARTIN, Joan, born in Oklahoma on November 14, 1943, and died on July 7, 2016. She graduated from academy in Madison, Tenn., in 1960 and Southern Missionary College in 1965. In 1966 she moved to Sheridan, Wyo., where she taught first- through eighth-grades for two years. She married Don Martin on July 18, 1971. They were married 45 years. She had her first bout with cancer in 1996. Around 2002, Don and Joan were asked by Carlos Craig to be the Master Guide Directors for the Texas Conference. This led to the involvement in planning and assisting with major Union and Worldwide Camporees. Later, they became Pathfinder historians for the Texas Conference. They were involved in numerous camporees, training courses, investitures, and planning sessions. All through Joan's life she was involved in teaching and assisting at several different schools. When she was diagnosed with cancer a second time she began a cancer survivor/prevention group at the Richardson Church.

MARTIN, June Patricia, born in 1926, and died September 12, 2016, in Broken Arrow, Okla. She was a member of the Broken Arrow SDA church. June was well known in the area as a cashier for Walmart for 29 years. Customers would come by for a prayer and a hug from June. She was preceded in death by her

parents, Frank and Dorothy Bishop; her husband, Pete; and her daughter, Sherry. Survivors: three children, 10 grandchildren, and four siblings.

MCCORMICK, Elmer

James, Jr., born February 2, 1919 in Goodrich, Mich., and died September 14, 2016, in Clovis, Calif. He was a member of the Clovis church. He had previously been a member of the Texarkana Church for 28 years where he served as an elder. Earlier, he had lived in Tempe, Ariz., and was a member of the Tempe SDA Church for 16 years. Elmer and his wife, Doris, helped start the Payson Spanish church in the Phoenix Valley. While in Arizona, Elmer was Pathfinder Director of the Tempe Pathfinder Club. In 2004 he moved from Texarkana to Clovis to live with his son and daughter-in-law, Tim and Delnita McCormick. He was preceded in death by his wife of 51 years, Doris McCormick; one brother, four sisters, and one grandson. Survivors: son and daughter-in-law, Terry and Virginia McCormick, of Greenwood, La.; son and daughter-in-law, Tim and Delnita McCormick, of Clovis; two daughters, Vickie Metteauer of Gray, Ga. and Nancy Hissa of Espoo, Finland; 10 grandchildren, and 20 great-grandchildren.

PEGANYEE, Clotilde, Benavides, born June 3, 1931, in Cardenas, Cuba, and died August 15, 2016 in Houston, Texas. She was a member of the West Houston Southern Church. She was introduced

to SDA education when a colporteur came to speak to her parents. She graduated from Artiles College in Cuba. Upon graduating, she worked with the SDA Cuban Union as an executive secretary to the Union president for two years. She then transferred to the Spanish Voice of Prophecy in Glendale, Calif., and worked there for two years. She married Dr. S. S. Peganyee, and later graduated from nursing school. She taught Vacation Bible School for several years. She traveled with Maranatha International to Africa as a medical missionary. She was the Adventist Community Service leader with Houston Central church for 15 years and for West Houston church for 15 years. She then founded the nonprofit called HACS, Inc. Her passion was to serve the homeless, and people who were poor and hungry. She dedicated her life to doing this through the community center. Survivors: Husband, Sukhdev S. Peganyee; sons, David Peganyee and Steve Peganyee; daughter, Sheila Peganyee; 10 grandchildren; and sister, Robertina.

TAYLOR, Dwight L., born December 25, 1929 in Mosca, Colo., and died September 28, 2016, in Alvarado, Texas. He was a member of the Alvarado church. He served the Adventist church from 1956 to 1995 in the following capacities: Director of Nevati Mission Station, Peru; Departmental Secretary, Iquitos, Peru; President of North Peru Mission; District Pastor for Kansas Conference; Sabbath

School and Lay Activities Secretary, Southern New England Conference; OFASA Director, Peru; ADRA Director, Mozambique. After retiring in 1995 to Alvarado, Texas, he served as intern ADRA Director for Azerbaijan, Bosnia, Yemen, North and South Sudan, Bangladesh, Albania and was a long-time elder of the Alvarado church. What brought him the most joy was working for the Lord, spending time with his family and his hobby of bird watching. He was preceded in death by his wife, Betty Jane Luke Taylor. Survivors: daughter, Beverly Stafford and husband, Steve Stafford, of Keene, Texas; daughter, Renita Turner and husband, Mark Turner, of Taunton, Mass.; son, Donald Taylor and wife, Karey Taylor, of Calhoun, Ga.; son, Alvin Taylor and wife, Dee Ann Taylor, from Olalla, Wash.; sisters, Thelma Huffman and Evelyn Bennett, of Cañon City,

Colo.; 21 grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren.

VOSS, Carolyn Jean, born December 28, 1937, and September 29, 2016 in Harrah, Okla. She was a member of the Summit Ridge church. Carolyn earned her Ph.D. in nursing. During her career she was involved in patient care nursing and nursing education. Her acute hearing loss required that she retire at 62. She spent her last 10 years at Summit Ridge Retirement Village, where you could find her giving an occasional Sabbath sermon. Carolyn was preceded in death by her identical twin sister, Marilyn. Survivors: sister, Alice Doolittle, of Indiana; nephew, Douglas Hill, of Cherry Valley, Calif.; nephew, Daryl Hill, of McAllen, Texas; and niece, Peggy Hill, of Beaumont, Calif.

SABBATH SUNSET CALENDAR

	Dec 2	Dec 9	Dec 16	Dec 23	Dec 30	Jan 6
Abilene, TX	5:33	5:34	5:35	5:38	5:43	5:48
Albuquerque, NM	4:54	4:55	4:56	4:59	5:04	5:09
Amarillo, TX	5:35	5:35	5:37	5:40	5:44	5:50
Brownsville, TX	5:38	5:39	5:41	5:44	5:49	5:53
Dallas, TX	5:21	5:21	5:23	5:26	5:30	5:36
El Paso, TX	5:01	5:02	5:04	5:07	5:11	5:16
Fort Worth/Keene, TX	5:23	5:23	5:25	5:28	5:32	5:38
Gallup, NM	5:02	5:02	5:04	5:07	5:11	5:17
Galveston/Houston, TX	5:22	5:22	5:24	5:27	5:32	5:37
Gentry, AR	5:03	5:03	5:04	5:08	5:12	5:18
Little Rock, AR	4:58	4:58	5:00	5:03	5:08	5:13
Muskogee, OK	5:08	5:08	5:09	5:12	5:17	5:23
New Orleans, LA	5:00	5:01	5:03	5:06	5:10	5:15
Oklahoma City, OK	5:17	5:17	5:19	5:22	5:26	5:32
Roswell, NM	4:50	4:51	4:52	4:55	5:00	5:05
San Antonio, TX	5:35	5:36	5:38	5:41	5:45	5:50
Shreveport, LA	5:09	5:09	5:11	5:14	5:19	5:24
Tulsa, OK	5:09	5:09	5:11	5:14	5:18	5:24

2017 Sunset Calendars are now available at
www.SouthwesternAdventist.org/sunset



On the Record »

BY JESSICA LOZANO » COMMUNICATION DIRECTOR, SOUTHWESTERN UNION

No Crib for a Bed

I ARRIVED HOME LATE ONE EVENING AFTER A LONG DAY. As I stepped out of my car, I noticed that the sky was dark and clear, and I could see one star that seemed to shine more brightly than the rest. It reminded me of the star that the wise men followed from the east in search of the Savior.

It was an unseasonably warm evening late in November, and although scholars tell us that Christ was born in the spring, I imagined that it must have been a night much like this night that Christ was born.

As I stared up at the sky, I could see hundreds of other stars twinkling, which brought to mind the heavenly host who must have been waiting in anticipation for the birth of the King. These innumerable angels announced His arrival to the shepherds tending their flocks and praised God saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men" (Luke 2:14).

The powerful story of Christ's birth inspires hope, joy, and peace at the fulfillment of God's promises. One part of the

story, however, has always given me pause.

Many years later, during Jesus' ministry, He spoke of separating the sheep from the goats, the righteous from the unrighteous. "The King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance...For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in...Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me'" (Matthew 25:34-36, 40).

Mary and Joseph were strangers far from home. The

Bible tells us that there was no guest room available for them, so they laid their newborn child in a manger, a feed trough, to sleep.

We like to think we are among the righteous sheep. We think, Who among us would not give our very own bed for a woman who has just given birth and her newborn baby?

As we celebrate the birth of Christ, let us not forget the "least" among us. By loving and honoring them, we love and honor Him.



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