

Record

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Young Leaders

God Will Pour Out His Spirit on All People

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Record

September | October 2021
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Our Mission:

The Mission of the Southwestern Union is to equip and inspire the Southwestern Union territory with the distinctive Adventist message of hope and wholeness.

Editor's Note

In this issue of the Record, we explore what it means for God's young people to have visions. We look at the creative and bold possibilities that unfold when we open the pathways to leadership to these youth. We see how they are able to move God's people where He is calling, to fulfill His biblical promises and to bring the lost into His redeeming love.

Visions are focused on the future. Are we acknowledging the perspectives and visions of our youth? Do we mentor and guide them? Do we help them shape these visions of ministry and outreach? Do we block the advancement of these visions when they don't align with our traditions? Acts 2:17 says, "In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams." If the Holy Spirit is being poured out on our youth, how can we equip them to thrive in doing God's will?



Jessica L. Lozano

Cover Photo by Record Staff

Young Leaders

God Will Pour Out His Spirit on All People



Carlos Craig | President

No words could more accurately describe God's work in His Church than Acts 2:17. "In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams." God breathed life into Adam's lungs. This breath is a synonym of life. The Biblical mighty rushing wind is representative of the overwhelming life force that the Holy Spirit brings to our existence; it represents the power of God to transform and renew.

The prophet Joel saw dead dry bones wasting away in the valley in Ezekiel 37. He witnessed the breath of God make a miraculous transformation. John 3:6,8 says: "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit... The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit."

How and when the Spirit manifests is entirely God-ordained. It is in no way governed by human influence. Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty. God works with each of us in distinct and unique fashions. We stand together on the Word of God, yet each of our paths are distinct as they are led by His Spirit. Praise God we don't all have to look the same, talk the same, dress the same or eat the exact same things to be considered children of God and led by His Spirit.

One of the most powerful talents of youthfulness is the seemingly inherent ability to reimagine. Furthermore, this youthful ability becomes a major blessing to the church under the influence of the Holy Spirit; it becomes a visionary for kingdom possibilities. However, it is very important that we understand that I am in no way suggesting that older persons are incapable of being visionaries. The suggestion is that young people tend to have more freedom from traditions and long-standing processes than those of us with many years of experience in doing things a certain way.

Isaiah 43:18-19 says, "Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland." God is not dependent upon traditional modes and methods, nor is He limited by the ways that He has demonstrated His power in times past. God does not require human routines and rituals for Him to move. Therefore, those of us who are more experienced in the church should not feel obliged to rebut youthful visions. Rather, we should pray for a fresh vision from God and mentor the young, and encourage and promote their connection with the Spirit of God, that the young might reimagine ministry in these last days under the influence of the Holy Spirit.



Stephen Brooks
Executive Secretary

It is amazing to see how God used people to give me opportunities in leadership at a young age. When I reflect back on my life and career, I remember the teacher who believed in me and gave me an opportunity in leadership. Others hired me to work for the church before I had all the qualifications, but I had people that mentored me and prepared me for the work I was doing.

As a church, we have to continue to grow young. This should be a focus not only in attracting new members but also in giving opportunities for the young people in our congregations. We need to recognize youth and young adults that are ready to step into leadership. Give them opportunities and mentor them. I am thankful that the church that I attend has asked my youngest daughter, who is only 11 years old, to help with the cameras in media ministry. This impacts her life not only by allowing her to help, but in letting her know that she is a part of the ministry of the church.

Acts 2:17 says, "In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams." The disciples were young men when Jesus called them, and our church was founded by young adults. Let's be very intentional about engaging and turning leadership over to our youth and young adults.



John Page | Treasurer

Leading by Example

Filling the Role God Intends

As soon as she got her master's degree, Cynda Grant was ready to dive straight into serving at her local church. “During graduate school, there really weren't opportunities for me to be involved, so as soon as I graduated, I was more than ready.”

She started with the Adventurer Club at her home church in Baton Rouge, and a puppet team at Ozark Adventist Academy. When she and her husband, David, moved to Shreveport in 2011, Grant gravitated toward the younger members again, and now she's the children's ministries director as well as Adventurer Club leader.

“I love working with young people because they're much more open to and excited about learning new things,” Grant explains. “Plus, I'm shy and I find adults intimidating, so I'm much more comfortable with kids.”

When Grant became a mother, it made even more sense. From the beginning it was important to her and her husband to inspire their children to be active members of the church. Their girls are now 10, 13, and 15, and Grant and her husband simply get them involved in whatever it is they're doing. As a family they've kept Christ front and center, even through the COVID-19 pandemic when the physical church building was closed.

“We got the girls involved in creating church services for our family at home, and they got really creative,” Grant shares. “Our oldest scripted, directed and filmed with her phone a video depicting the story of Saul on the road to Damascus. We posted it on Facebook and the response was overwhelmingly positive, so we started a YouTube channel and made more,” she shares.

Grant's own parents and grandparents were always very active in the church, and they inspired her to be the same. As she aims to pass this dedication to the next generation both in



her home and at church, she helps them learn how to interact with God, the world, themselves and family. “We’re active in the church and we are intentional about making it clear that the kids matter and are important to us,” she adds.

Grant carries this concept into her professional work as well. During the week, she serves as a speech therapist in a skilled nursing facility where she’s worked for the past eight years, and since the pandemic started, she says the already-close-knit community has become even more of a family. “I’ve known many of my patients for a long time, and sometimes our sessions are simply conversations,” she says. “Not all of them have good family support, and even those who do were isolated in 2020, and they really needed the staff to be their family. It’s a role I am happy to fill.”

Once, a patient asked her why people eat bacon when the Bible says not to, and another asked about whether Grant’s belief in Saturday as Sabbath was biblical. “I’ve had patients

get agitated and we pray together for peace,” she says. “Other times I’ve had patients bring up biblical topics, even if they wouldn’t describe themselves as religious. It’s an opportunity for me to share my views and for them to ask questions in a safe space. I think the pandemic has a lot of people thinking about ‘end times’ topics.”

Grant admits that when the COVID-19 pandemic started, it was a relief to stop doing everything. “The hard pause really got me thinking about why I do all that I do, and I’ve started asking myself tough questions,” she says. “I wonder if what I’m doing is out of necessity or for my ego, and whether my Adventurer families need this programming, or if they just need less stuff going on.”

Grant has made it a personal goal to let God help her find a balance in all aspects of her life this year, so that she can serve Him more effectively in ways He wants her to. “One thing this pandemic time has taught me is that maybe I’m so busy serv-


“I love working with young people because they’re much more open to and excited about learning new things.”



ing God that I've actually left Him out," Grant admits. "I just recently told God He'll have to pry my fingers off of whatever it is that I need to let go because I can't do it on my own."

Grant says she tries her hardest to use the skills God has given her to serve others and serve Him in her own unique way. Like the body of Christ referred to in the Bible, she relies on others with strengths she doesn't have and hopes they can rely on her as well.

"I can speak to a crowd of 300 Adventurers just fine, but if

you want me to do the offering call in the sanctuary, I'm a basket case," she says with a laugh. "I'm in my element with kids. But I'm always looking for someone else to organize things and handle finances because that is not my skill set. Doing God's work takes all types and we need so many different things. I'm just honored to be able to do my part." 

By Becky St. Clair. St. Clair is a freelance writer based in the Napa Valley area of California.



The Summer Camp Effect

Changing Lives and Impacting Generations

It's the summer after fifth grade, and at 10 years old, I head off to "Cowboy Camp" at Pine Springs Ranch in California. I've never been away from home and I'm so excited that I choose to stay in a wagon, an old western kind of wagon with no bathroom. I'm roughing it. My horse's name is Minga. She is a paint horse and I love learning all things horse related. I'm nervous and excited all at the same time, but the sounds of nature, the fresh air, my awesome counselor and the rest of my "wagon mates" give me so much comfort and joy. I don't really miss home, and my sister is also at camp, so I see her throughout the day. The animated summer camp staff are full of energy, singing fun songs, doing skits and teaching us about Jesus. I never forget this awesome memory.

In the early 2000s, I'm attending college at Southwestern Adventist University and the opportunity arises to work at a summer camp. Immediately excited, I jump at the chance and work at Camp Kulaqua in Florida for two years, and then at Nameless Valley Ranch in Texas for two years. Both experiences are so different but very rewarding. I grow as a person, not just in maturity, realizing that I have these kids under my care, but also spiritually as I can see that they all come from different walks of life and have lots of questions and doubts. They absorb everything and often seek guidance. It gives me a whole different perspective on the importance of summer camp. I witness so many kids give their lives to Christ in baptism. There are all sorts of activities for the kids to choose from and special moments where you, as a cabin, can come together and bond. Working at summer camp is something I cherish forever.

This summer, I'm a mother of two super energetic boys, ages 10 and 7. I come across a flyer for Lake Whitney Ranch

Summer Camp promoting a combo week for Cub Camp and Jr. Camp. Although the boys have never been away from home, aside from sleepovers with family, I think it is perfect for them since they can go on the same week. I am a bit nervous about the younger one because of his age and his preference to be around others, but after discussing it as a family we are all very excited at the prospect. We decide they will bunk in separate cabins so they can each have their own experience. They are both comforted with the fact that they are able to see each other, and their cousin, at meal times and worship at the firebowl. They make new friends and run into familiar faces. They have amazing counselors who are fun, spiritual, empathetic and responsible—everything a parent would hope for. When we pick them up, there are so many stories, chants, songs and experiences to tell that they almost burst at the seams. It makes my momma heart so happy to see that they have become a little more independent, learned more about Jesus' amazing love and said they want to go back next summer.

Summer camp has been a part of these three stages in my life. I lived it, worked it and encouraged my own children to experience it. I praise God for the opportunity and sacrifices that were made in order for me to have this experience. It is a privilege to pass this gift on to my children. I hope they will attend for years to come and pray that one day they may have the opportunity to work as staff and be a light to those around them. May it be a tradition that reciprocates throughout the generations and impacts the kingdom of Heaven. Summer Camp for life! [®]

By Krystal Alba. Alba lives in Alvarado, Texas, with her husband, Nathaniel, and their two sons, Kian and Elian.

Trust and Obey

A Young Adult's Journey to Overcome Anxiety and Follow God's Call



Gathering her luggage, Denee McClain put on a brave face as she prepared to move away from home for the first time. Dallas, Texas felt comfortable and safe. Friends and family surrounded her at the City Temple Seventh-day Adventist Church, where McClain grew up. Now, she was not only leaving home, but leaving Texas, entirely to attend college in Tennessee.

Because McClain struggled with severe social anxiety, she felt terrified to go somewhere completely new. Yet, through that challenge, God grew McClain's faith unlike ever before. She learned that in spite of fears, God can use anyone if they just trust in Him. "God has done so much for me," said

McClain. "He brought me through so much. Because of that, it just seems like I can't do anything but serve God."

As a child, McClain enjoyed the vibrant youth programs at City Temple. At church, she spent time with friends and the leadership encouraged her.

"One of the things I want to do in church is give opportunities to different people, regardless of age," said Jaime Kowlesar, City Temple pastor. "I'm the youngest senior pastor that City Temple has ever had. Because I was given this opportunity, I also want to give it to everyone else as well."

Yet, McClain still felt social anxiety. For example, she worked at the local Walmart. Going to work each day took a



lot of courage, due to her introverted nature. She tried several methods to overcome anxiety, but to no avail. “I would feel so nervous before a shift,” said McClain. “I would lie in my bed doing breathing exercises just to try calming myself down. Now I look back and realize that God was with me. He walked me down the street. He gave me the strength to go to a job that I was afraid of.”

McClain studied computer science at Southern Adventist University. She did not know a single person on campus. Yet, God helped her overcome her fears in that situation as well. Soon, not only did McClain become comfortable around new friends, but she also helped to lead out in small groups on campus.

These situations taught McClain to trust God’s call. So, when Southern provided mission trip opportunities, she signed up. During the summer of 2016, she preached 16 sermons at an evangelistic series in Cancun, Mexico. “It definitely got me out of my comfort zone,” said McClain. “Going into all these positions was really scary, so I had to pray through it all.”

McClain graduated from Southern in 2016 and moved back to Dallas. Although she still struggled with social anxiety, McClain’s strengthened trust in God gave her a new maturity of faith. As a result, people took notice of McClain’s potential for leadership.

City Temple Church nominated her to be Sabbath School Superintendent in 2018. No one else would accept the position, and the department had greatly diminished since McClain’s time as a teenager. “I was very much not going to do it,” said McClain. “I thought that there was no way that God actually wanted me to do that, but since I was nominated I asked God for a sign.”

“I know it sounds ridiculous,” said McClain, “but God still gave me that sign! That just showed me that, despite our fears and our silliness, if God really wants us to step into a role, He

will give us strength and help us to have faith.”


Without any more hesitation, McClain accepted the position. The Sabbath School department mainly consisted of senior citizens. McClain longed to grow a strong young adult and teen program where young people could feel safe to ask tough questions.

McClain prayed for help. Four young people asked to join the team that very day. Then, McClain prayed that God would give her and the team creative ideas, and energy began to build. The Sabbath School program took off.

“Denee’s a child of City Temple, so to see her step up and take a leadership role has been amazing,” said Kowlessar. “I would say she single-handedly revived our Sabbath School department. She stepped into that role when nobody else wanted it and did an awesome job.”

Today, McClain is the Adventist Youth leader for City Temple. She took the position in 2020. Although she felt discouraged by the circumstances surrounding COVID-19 as she began her role, she still trusted God. The program grew, meeting virtually on a regular basis. In addition, she planned an in-person parade through the local medical district to show gratitude for medical personnel.

In her spare time, McClain also started a personal blog. She uses it as a platform to discuss the Bible, chapter by chapter. Despite setbacks and perceived shortcomings, McClain continues to trust in God’s leadership. As a result, God is working through her to do great things.

“There are so many different ways to serve God,” said McClain. “It doesn’t have to be just one way. God has something specific and beautiful planned for each of us.” 

By Makala James. James is a freelance writer based in North Texas. Denee McClain’s blog can be found at [Delicatepages.blog](https://delicatepages.blog)



Everlasting Impact

Why One Young Teacher Values Adventist Education

By Becky St. Clair, Record Freelance Writer

“Teaching is essentially the family trade,” says Caleb Minty, Tulsa Adventist Academy (TAA) 5th and 6th grade teacher and high school physical education and health teacher.

Minty’s dad has been teaching in the Adventist system for over three decades, and his grandmother was also a teacher. Minty pursued a degree in physical education, health and wellness from Southern Adventist University, with dreams of being a high school coach.

“I had two of the greatest athletic directors in academy, and they inspired me,” Minty recalls. “It seemed like a really great job, working with young people and being involved with athletics.”

And that’s how he ended up being the boys dean and teaching physical education and health at Wisconsin Academy, and then eventually transitioning to TAA. Minty taught for the public school system in Tulsa until there was a position open at TAA. Though everything went well, he missed the family environment of Adventist schools and the opportunity to be a spiritual guide for his students.

“These are the years kids put their belief systems to the test for the first time, and are beginning to make decisions for themselves, seeking answers to life’s big questions,” he says. “I love that I can be part of their story of how they found God.”

Minty realizes that he isn’t just influencing their walk with Christ, however; he’s impacting every aspect of his students’ lives. “Teaching helps you learn about who you are, and teaches you to be the best version of yourself, because for better or for worse, you are who those kids are looking up to,” he says. “The responsibility of being an example to my students has also brought



me closer to God as I seek to best reflect Him in everything I do.”

Minty remembers every single one of his teachers, and what comes to mind when he thinks back is not the content they taught, but the impact they had on his life.

“Curriculum is important, but building relationships and giving these kids a positive Christ-like example is huge to me,” he says. “Former students come up to my dad—sometimes 20-30 years later—and thank him for what he did, and every time I’m reminded that I

want to be that person for my students.”

Minty is working on his master’s through Southwestern Adventist University, seeking a degree in educational leadership. Though he believes he will always prefer the classroom, he has a sense that administration is a likely part of his future, and wants to be prepared.

“I aspire to be the best God can help me be,” Minty says, “whether that’s a teacher, an administrator, or whatever doors He opens. I just want to be open to those callings when they come.”[®]

Support Along the Journey

Tips to Nurture Relationships with College Students at Home and Church

By Russ Laughlin, Southwestern Adventist University Vice President for Spiritual Development

The Oxford dictionary defines wholeness as “1. The state of forming a complete and harmonious whole; unity. 2. The state of being unbroken or undamaged.” I both like and dislike this definition. I like it when I purchase items; I desire these items to be whole, complete, with all the parts and pieces in working order. I dislike this definition when it comes to life. My life and the lives around me are not always complete and harmonious.

I like the definition that a recent nursing graduate shared with me. Wholeness, they said, is “being satisfied in your situation, knowing that you have done all that you can do.”

It is easy to think that the stress others face is not as great as the stress that you face. Students face papers, tests, clinicals, labs, tuition, grades, relationships, health issues, social media, career planning and lack of reliable transportation, as well as societal issues like equality, poverty and justice.

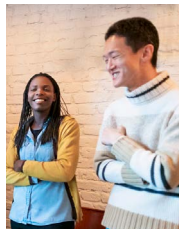
Increased stress may cause students to become moody or to withdraw from peers, classes, work or other activities that they would normally consider important. Some will sleep too much while others will not sleep at all.

To help integrate wholeness into student life, Southwestern Adventist University offers the course, “Wellness for Life.” It is based on AdventHealth’s CREATION Life model: Choice, Rest, Environment, Activity, Trust in God, Interpersonal Relationships, Outlook, Nutrition. Additionally, family and church members can help students by listening, encouraging, including and modeling. If you have a college student in your life or want to reach out to one in your church, consider these tips to support and encourage these young leaders along their journey. [®]



Get Personal

Become acquainted with students. Get to know your students by name and find out what school they attend. Find out when their birthday is and remember to wish them happy birthday and celebrate their accomplishments and graduations.



Check In

Ask how students are doing and really listen. Listen to their stories, concerns, joys, fears and dreams. Avoid downplaying their fears or diminishing their concerns. Please don’t tell them how rough it was when you were younger. Their challenges may differ widely from yours, but they are their real struggles.



Make Deposits

Encourage their dreams and goals. Send an occasional text, email, or better yet, an old-fashioned letter with an encouraging note. Maybe add a \$10 bill (this buys two meals at Taco Bell). If you know of a student struggling to pay their school bill, help pay some or all of it.



Share Leadership

Include students on church planning committees. Engage them in the “ins and outs” of church leadership. Actively seek their ideas and support their creative endeavors in ministry. Be a spiritual guide and a mentor they can rely on.



Model Gratitude

Live an authentic life that reveals that wholeness does not imply that life has no stresses or struggles, but that in the stresses and struggles, your wholeness is dependent upon your trust in God. Share how you can be grateful during difficult times. Help them discover gratitude in their lives.

May God guide us as we care for our young men and women as they become the leaders of today and tomorrow. May we show them the love and grace that God has shown us.

Making Room

Can Churches Engage and Mobilize Their Young Adults?

By Helvis C. Moody, Southwestern Union Young Adult and Youth Director

Young Adult Ministries is very intriguing to say the least. I enjoy studying church growth, but when we look at the trends and the research produced by the Barna Group as well as others, we notice that many young people from the ages of 18 to 35 leave the church. While this is happening in various denominations across North America, we are striving to make a difference with youth and young adults in the Southwestern Union.

Let me share a few things that have worked for me in my ministry, first as a pastor and now as the young adult and youth director for the Southwestern Union. Overwhelmingly, young adults want to feel accepted. While pastoring the Fondren Adventist Church in Houston, Texas, I learned that we have to create a safe environment for young adults. We have to create a social environment where they can feel comfortable, be themselves and study the Word of God together.

In addition to the Young Adult Sabbath School class, the young adults created their own Friday night worship experience—getting together in each other's homes to have Bible studies and fellowship. Being in smaller groups allowed them to express themselves creatively and develop ownership of the ministry. The ministry, Y.A.M. or “Young Adult Ministry,” had the support and encouragement of our church leadership.

Since our young adults ranged in age, we made sure to build mentorship opportunities between the older and younger young adults. We kept it dynamic so the younger young adult mentees eventually became mentors themselves. This helped them give back to their church and their community.

People differ in preferences from appearance to needs and even worship

styles. But we tried to include the youth and young adults regularly in the worship experience so that they could have ownership. This was not just their parents' or grandparents' church, but this was their church. It's encouraging to see young adults actively involved in the church. Be it leading worship, sharing the Word, managing a ministry or working with tech behind the scenes, young adults have tremendous gifts and talents that we must recognize. We should be strategic in making sure that we put young people in areas where they enjoy working for the Lord.

I believe that if we empower our young adults and include them in decision making as well as the worship experience, we will have a thriving church with less negativity that produces positive growth. The goal is pouring into young people and growing the Kingdom of God. **R**

“

We have to create a safe environment for young adults. We have to create a social environment where they can feel comfortable, be themselves and study the Word of God together.



Tough Times

Connecting with God in Prayer



Last year was a scary year for me and my family. But it was also a year where I experienced God’s amazing love. My dad had been feeling sick, and on April 13 we found out he had contracted a new virus called COVID-19 and was being hospitalized.

Around that same time all the schools had gone to “virtual learning” on Zoom classes because of this new virus. It was all very new and confusing. It was also a hard time because I saw that the world just sort of stopped. Everyone had to stay in their homes. There was no school or work, and some people, like my dad, were very sick. The hardest part for me was that we were home, but my dad was not.

My mom would get news from the hospital every day. Sometimes it was good news and other times it was not so good. Even though things were very tough, I remember that our whole extended family would come together on Zoom every night to have worship and to pray.

Those were the best times. There were so many prayers for my dad. Some prayers were short, others were long and some prayers were even in other languages. There were people praying for my dad and my family from all over!

One night we got a call from my dad’s doctor. He said that my dad was not doing well and was not getting better. That night my family got on Zoom together and had a prayer vigil.

The prayer vigil lasted all night. It reminded me of the night when Jesus spoke with His father in the garden of Gethsemane. Jesus poured out His heart to Him in prayer. That’s how we all prayed for my dad that night.

Two days later we got some amazing news. My dad was getting better very quickly! God had answered our prayers!

It was incredible. My dad was finally able to leave the hospital on June 17, two months since I had last seen him!

I see my dad every day now and I think back on how God was with us throughout those incredibly hard times. He never leaves our side even when we see that things are getting bad. God always shines His light on any situation. God has so much love for me, my dad and everyone in the world!

By Luzeli Prieto

September Events

6

Labor Day Holiday:
Conference and Union
offices closed.

10-12

**Arkansas-Louisiana
Conference:** Pathfinder
Leadership, Camp Yorktown
Bay, Mountain Pine, Ark.
DCraig@arklac.org

11-18

Southwestern Union:
Living with Hope
Evangelism, Union-wide with
emphasis on Houston and
Dallas-Fort Worth,
[SouthwesternAdventist.org/
Evangelism](http://SouthwesternAdventist.org/Evangelism)

October Events

1-3

**Arkansas-Louisiana
Conference:** Pathfinder
Teen Leadership, Camp
Yorktown Bay, Mountain
Pine, Ark.
DCraig@arklac.org

22-24

**Arkansas-Louisiana
Conference:** Teen Prayer
Conference, Camp Yorktown
Bay, Mountain Pine, Ark.
PrayerPowerLab@gmail.com

1-3

Southwestern Union:
“Open Range, Narrow Way”
Union Cowboy and Biker
Camp, Lone Star Ranch,
Athens, Tex.
MMauk@swuc.org

28-31

Southwestern Union: “It’s
My Time” Union Pathfinder
Camporee Lone Star Camp,
Athens, Tex.
MMauk@swuc.org

15-18

**Arkansas-Louisiana
Conference:** Women’s
Retreat (English/Spanish)
LDye@arklac.org



For more events and information, visit
SouthwesternAdventist.org.

Arkansas-Louisiana Session

Dye, Villegas and Dyke Elected as Executive Officers



TEXARKANA, TEX. – The 35th Regular Constituency Session of the Arkansas-Louisiana Conference was held June 27, 2021, at 9 a.m., at the Texarkana Convention Center in Texarkana, Tex. More than 300 delegate representatives elected officers and directors for the 2021 - 2025 quadrennial session.

The day began with an invocation from John Page, Southwestern Union treasurer, and a welcome from Richard C. Dye, Arkansas-Louisiana Conference president, who then also presented a devotional message. Lanette Bieber, Arkansas-Louisiana Conference prayer coordinator, then led the delegates in a special season of prayer.

The session officially began with the reading of the call and seating of the delegates by Juan Borges, then-executive secretary for the conference. The regular delegate count was 320. Representatives from the Southwestern Union included Carlos J. Craig, president; Stephen Brooks, executive secretary; John Page, treasurer; Helvis C. Moody, youth/young adult director; and Jessica Lozano, communication director.

Twelve new groups, companies and churches were officially added to the conference: East New Orleans Spanish Group; North Fort Smith Group; Jonesboro Spanish Group; Tontitown Group; Eureka Springs Group; Clarksville Kar-en Church; Havana Spanish Company;

Huntsville Spanish Company; Ebenezer Temple Franco-Haitian Church; Lockport Spanish Church; and South Little Rock Spanish Church. The delegates also voted for the dissolution of the Hot Springs Fellowship Church.

The administrative officers presented their official video reports, sharing the many blessings and challenges faced by the conference. Treasurer Rodney Dyke shared that tithe and offering had been down prior to 2020, but that, with God's blessing, it was up in 2020, even in the midst of the pandemic.

Following the administrator and departmental reports, Roderick Cowley, CPA, CA, General Conference Auditing Service audit manager, shared the Dec. 31, 2020, 2019, 2018 and 2017 audit report for the Arkansas-Louisiana Conference. The conference received an unmodified or "clean opinion," which is the best opinion review an organization can receive, for all four years.

Delegates discussed proposed changes to the constitution and bylaws for the conference. Delegates voted to adopt some of the proposed changes and refer some back to the Constitution and Bylaws Committee. Delegates also voted on five goals for the next four years.

Carlos J. Craig, Southwestern Union president, introduced the nominating committee report to the delegates. He thanked the committee for their work.

The nominating committee report was read and voted, and the following positions were confirmed:

Officers: President, Richard C. Dye; Secretary, Jeff Villegas; Treasurer, Rodney C. Dyke; Undertreasurer, Roger Driver. Departmental leadership: Planned Giving/Trust Services/Association Secretary, Tony Cash; Communication Director, Frances Alcorn; Education Superintendent, Stephen Burton; Youth Ministries Director. The position of ministerial director was referred to the forthcoming Executive Committee, which was voted in addition to a new Association Board and a new Constitution and Bylaws Committee.

During the session, Juan Borges officially retired and was honored with his wife, Betty, for their years of service to the Arkansas-Louisiana Conference and the Adventist church.

The meeting came to a close just after 4 p.m. The administration thanked the delegates and staff for their work during the day and dismissed the meeting with prayer.

Congratulations to all of the elected personnel and we pray for God's guidance for those individuals elected to serve the Arkansas-Louisiana Conference for the next four years, their families and their ministry efforts.

By Jessica Lozano
Communication Director

Living With Hope

Southwestern Union Partners with AWR for Evangelism

BURLESON, TEX. – The Southwestern Union has partnered with Adventist World Radio (AWR) to reach cities within our territory through an evangelism project called “Living With Hope,” on Sept. 11-18, which will include more than 200 churches. The churches, which are receiving substantial resources from the union, conferences and AWR, are within the union territory and mostly centered around the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex and Houston, with participation by officers and pastors from the Southwestern Union, Southwest Region

and Texas Conferences, North American Division and General Conference.

“Our mission with these meetings is to reach as many people as possible with the message that there is hope in the midst of a time where there is so much anxiety and fear. We want to share the good news that there is hope to be found in Christ,” says Osvaldo Rigacci, vice president for multicultural ministries.

To learn more about how your church can participate in evangelism initiatives with the Southwestern Union, visit SouthwesternAdventist.org/evangelism.



Intergenerational Adventism

A Resourceful Conversation About Growing Young

BURLESON, TEX. – The Southwestern Union’s Youth and Young Adult Department has partnered with the five conferences of the union to bring a video series to our members discussing the Growing Young Adventists program promoted by the North American Division and which has been successfully implemented in several churches within the territory. Many more churches are interested in taking part but aren’t sure where to begin. The six-video series begins with a discussion of what the program is and how churches can get in-

involved and shares several testimonies of how following the program has changed a church’s dynamics from dying to thriving.

The video series can be viewed at the Southwestern Union’s website or its YouTube channel. Who should view these videos? According to Helvis C. Moody, youth and young adult director for the Southwestern Union, the videos are intended to be viewed together with church leaders and members to spark a conversation about how our churches can proceed with growing young.

“Everyone participates when we implement the growing young initiatives. It doesn’t leave anyone out! Our older members, middle-aged members, young adults, youth and children—they all are part of creating an intergenerational church that thrives and brings Christ to their communities,” says Moody.

For more information and to watch and share the videos, visit SouthwesternAdventist.org/GYA.

— *By Jessica Lozano*
Communication Director



Open Way, Narrow Range

Cowboy and Biker Camp is Oct. 1-3

BURLESON, TEX. – The Southwestern Union’s 11th Annual Cowboy and Biker Camp, themed “Open Range, Narrow Way,” will be held Oct. 1-3, 2021, at the Southwest Region Conference’s Lone Star Camp in Athens, Tex.

The Cowboy Biker Camp was the creation of Helvis C. Moody, young adult and youth ministries director and prayer ministries coordinator for the Southwestern Union, when he was a local pastor for the Southwest Region Conference, and began in 2008. “This is a unique group of people who may not normally interact with each other and who run in different groups in our society. The Cowboy Biker Camp gives these groups a chance to get to know God and Christians in a different kind of environment, and to enjoy fellowship

and worship together. We invite anyone who has an interest in horses or ‘iron horses,’ motorcycles, to join us,” says Moody.

According to Moody, many different groups have been attending the camp, including chapters from the Sabbath Keepers Motorcycle Ministry group, Adventist Motorcycle Ministry, bikers from Hammond, Baton Rouge and Alexandria, La., and another group called the 3 AM Riders, who provide a scholarship to Southwestern Adventist University students and many others.

“At our last camp, two brothers rode their motorcycles 500 miles from Kansas to Athens, Tex. Needless to say, they won the long-distance riders competition,” says Moody.

The camp’s Sabbath tradition is to

spotlight ministries, where each ministry is given the opportunity to share their opportunities and testimonies. According to Moody, the number of bikes has begun to outnumber horses, but campers love to ride the horses to church and participate in a camp rodeo. There is also a motorcycle show, where trophies are given as awards for different classes at this family-oriented event which has more than 200 in attendance each year.

“The Lord has been blessing this event. If you haven’t experienced it, I challenge you to come and check it out,” says Moody. For more information or to register, contact the Southwestern Union at 817.295.0476 and speak with Helvis C. Moody or Melisa Mauk.

By *Jessica Lozano*
Communication Director

COWBOY AND BIKER CAMP

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It's My Time

Register Now for Southwestern Union Camporee

BURLESON, TEX. – Registration is open for the Southwestern Union’s Pathfinder Camporee, “It’s My Time,” to be held on Oct. 28-31 at Lone Star Camp in Athens, Tex.

The Union and its five conferences have been prayerfully planning and preparing for the camporee, themed “It’s My Time.” We are excited about this opportunity for our youth and young adults to learn more about Jesus Christ, to engage with nature, to make new friends and to work hard to earn honors.

Our theme, “It’s My Time,” is intended to let our youth and young adults know that it’s their time to shine for Jesus Christ! We have to shine at school. We have to shine at home. We have to shine in our jobs. Even during a pandemic, we have to shine for Jesus

Christ! Our theme is based on the Bible passage in Matthew 5:14-16. Verse 16 says, “Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.”

Our last Union-wide camporee, themed “Stand Firm,” took place at Lake Whitney Ranch in Clifton, Tex. It was exhilarating to see over 4,000 Pathfinders and leaders.

One of the most exciting things that we see at our club events such as a camporee is to see precious lives decide to give their hearts to Jesus Christ and be baptized.

There is no greater joy than seeing young people say yes to Jesus Christ, accepting Him as their Savior and dedicating their lives to serving Him. When I think of Pathfinder Ministries, I think of

an army of young people trained to do the work of God and sharing this gospel with all the world as witnesses for Christ. I pray that over the last few years Pathfinders and Master Guides have been “Standing Firm” for Jesus Christ.

Pray for our leadership teams as we prepare for this camporee. Let’s pray that we will “let our light so shine” and our Pathfinders will know that this is their time to shine.

For registration and more information, visit SWUCamporee.org.

By Helvis C. Moody
Young Adult and Youth Director



SOUTHWESTERN UNION PATHFINDER CAMPOREE

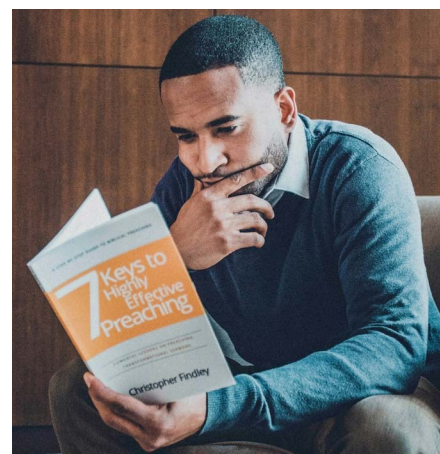
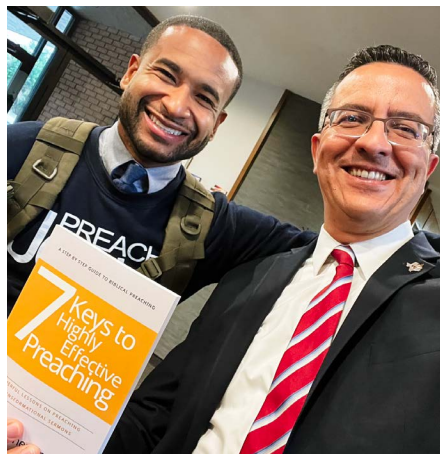
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LONE STAR CAMP | ATHENS, TEXAS

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Preach Jesus

SWAU Theology Major Launches New Ministry



KEENE, TEX. — “I feel a calling from God to be active with everything I’m learning on my journey with Him, and to share that love through service,” shares Christopher Findley, Southwestern Adventist University (SWAU) theology major.

While attending SWAU, Findley has served as religious vice president for the student association, worked with small groups for Spiritual Life and Development and led in the school’s canvassing program. His passion for preaching led him to create and launch AdventPreaching, an online platform with a mission to train and equip others on how to effectively share the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Findley and his team have begun conducting seminars and workshops to their global audience, consistently growing their network of pastors and

elders—which currently stands at over 1,200. “It all boils down to this: Preach Jesus,” Findley says. “The goal of every single sermon we preach should be to introduce, abide with and surrender to Christ.”

Findley points out that AdventPreaching is especially helpful in places where pastors may serve many churches. Online training resources, such as AdventPreaching, open doors for anyone to learn how to share the gospel through effective biblical preaching. “God has placed this on my heart and I’m very passionate about it. It brings me life and joy to follow where He’s led.”

It wasn’t always that way. At 19, living in Brooklyn, N.Y., Findley felt God tugging at his heart and, like Jonah, he ran. The siren call of earthly riches and

success was more enticing, but he soon realized they weren’t fulfilling. When his younger brother died in a motorcycle accident when Findley was 25, it changed his life.

Findley hopes to gain experience as a pastor. Long-term, he feels God calling him to dedicate his life to training and equipping leaders worldwide to effectively preach the gospel.

“The least I can do for the Somebody who saved a nobody like me is share Him with the world and help others do the same,” he says. “Our church is filled with young people with ideas and talent,” he says. “God is pouring out His spirit and we must not wait for someone to tell us how to serve God. The time is now and God will lead the way.”

— By Becky St. Clair

Kinesiology to White House

Taking A Nontraditional Path to Healthcare Policy



KEENE, TEX. — “Poor health has a cost,” Cesar Puesan, a 2017 Southwestern Adventist University (SWAU) kinesiology graduate, points out. “It’s either going to come out of the individuals’ pocket or the taxpayers’ pocket.”

Throughout his time at SWAU, Puesan appreciated the initiative the university took to help its community. “I was always more efficient after spending some time focusing on something other than myself,” Puesan shared.

With a passion for community service, Puesan planned to go to medical school. Then his focus shifted. “I knew I wanted to do something in healthcare, but my interest wasn’t in direct care,” Puesan explains. Taking a gap year after graduation, he applied for an internship focused on healthcare policy.

Following a rigorous application process, he was accepted as a White House intern under the National Economic Council working as a research assistant to the special assistant to the president for healthcare policy.

During his internship, Puesan regularly attended a weekly Bible study hosted by then Vice President Mike Pence. That opened doors for Puesan to join the advance team for the office of the vice president. In that role, Puesan traveled with the vice president’s team to nearly every state within the United States, including some overseas trips.

In 2019, Puesan worked at the United States Department of Health and Human Services as the briefing coordinator to former Secretary Alex Azar.

Throughout the pandemic, Puesan was part of the federal government’s COVID-19 response team. As part of his responsibilities, he assembled daily interagency situational reports working with the Department of Defense, FEMA and the Department of Homeland Security. Eventually, Puesan was promoted to policy coordinator, working on healthcare policy such as Medicare and Medicaid.

“It was so many long hours,” Puesan recalls. “There was nonstop work. But as I look back, I am very proud of what we accomplished. It was a once-in-a-lifetime experience that taught me a lot about healthcare policy and opened many doors to my future career.”

Today, Puesan is the program and policy coordinator for the Texas Health and Human Services Commission in Austin. He oversees a \$65 billion budget for client services such as Medicaid, Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP), Food Assistance and other healthcare benefits.

“I utilize my kinesiology degree regularly,” Puesan says. “As I participate in meetings talking about preventive actions and how we can better assist people within the scope of social

determinants of health, we find one of the biggest problems related to preventable diseases is the lack of exercise and healthy eating habits. The foundations of my degree are the core of how I approach these issues.”

Puesan says SWAU faculty encouraged him to find what he was truly passionate about and equipped him with everything he needed to make it happen. “My path is a nontraditional one and at first I was intimidated trying to figure out how to get from the traditional medical route to healthcare policy,” Puesan admits. “But with the tools SWAU gave me and with the help of God, I easily competed with other internship applicants, some of whom graduated from Ivy League schools. Since then, doors have just continued to open.”

“SWAU taught me that if you improve the quality of life for individuals through a responsible and healthy lifestyle, you therefore improve entire communities. This is my vision for our country at a policy level. If I can raise awareness and set an example for someone else to pick up on later, I will have made a difference. And that, to me, is success.”

Visit SWAU.edu/Kinesiology for more program info.

By Becky St. Clair

Let the Kids Do It...

Not Just the Future, But the Present of the Church



One of my mentors used to say often to church members and churches, “Let the kids do it.” He was a great visionary who was not afraid to engage young people for the cause of Christ. He knew that teenagers and young adults were the key to the gospel message going forward and for the work to be finished. He never wavered from that understanding.

His influence had an impact on my life. Over the years of doing ministry, I have found when the church embraces the youth and young adults in ministry as partners, or equals, the church moves forward in a powerful, meaningful way.

My dad would often say that young people never knew they couldn’t succeed. Their energy, love for the Lord and vision would carry them beyond their experience. He was right. Young folk are not afraid to dream and vision about the present and the future. This is essential to the church.

Christian author Charles R. Swindoll says, “Vision is the ability to see God’s presence, to perceive God’s power, to focus on God’s plan in spite of the obstacles.” He continues, “When you have vision it affects your attitude. Your attitude is optimistic rather than pessimistic...So, when a situation comes that cuts your feet out from under you, you don’t throw up your arms and panic. You don’t give up; instead you say, ‘Lord, this is Your moment. This is where You take charge. You’re in this.’”

“Vision requires determination,” Swindoll says, “a constant focus on God who is watching and smiling.” I find that our youth and young adults often have this vision and determination. They simply need the opportunity to exercise it.

We find in Joel 2 and again in Acts 2 the promise of God outpouring His Holy Spirit on those willing youth for His service. The truth is we need the young to be engaged. They are a vital part of the body of Christ. Far too many churches in North America are suffering because of the lack of youth in their congregations.

Our trend needs to change, must change. To have that change we must give our young folk the opportunity to take leadership and be supportive and encouraging. I have often heard that, “the youth are the future of the church.” Frankly, if we are to finish the gospel soon, the youth and young adults are the present of the church! Let’s make every way possible to help them lead with Holy Spirit vision.

By Richard C. Dye, Sr., President



Reports and Blessings

35th Regular Constituency Session Held in Texarkana



TEXARKANA, TEX. – The Arkansas-Louisiana Conference met in the Texarkana Convention Center for its 35th Constituency Session with 320 delegates present. By 8:45 a.m. a quorum was met and the session began with a devotion and prayers for the conference and session; afterwards the nominating committee convened.

During the reports, the conference officers reported the progress experienced through the last five years, including numerous challenges such as hurricanes, floods and a pandemic. As the pandemic

began, we expected significant decreases in giving. However, with God’s blessing, our faithful members rose to the occasion, and tithe actually increased in 2020. One of the blessings was that none of our pastors had to be laid off because of funding.

Juan Borges, executive secretary, retired and recognition was given to him and his wife Betty for their work with the Arkansas-Louisiana Conference during the last nine years. The delegates voted that Jeff Villegas, the current Ministerial/Evangelism director, take his

place as the new Executive Secretary.

All the other officers were re-elected as follows: Richard C. Dye, Sr., President; Rodney Dyke, Treasurer; Roger Driver, Under-Treasurer; Tony Cash, Trust Services Director and Association Director for both Arkansas and Louisiana Conference Associations.

Before the meeting adjourned, some of the changes brought by the Constitution and Bylaws Committee were discussed and voted into place.

— *By Sylvia Downs*
Communication Administrative Assistant

Bible Heroes

Tontitown Holds Vacation Bible School

TONTITOWN, ARK. – The Tontitown Arkansas Group held its first VBS from June 21-26, 2021. Everyone in Cactusville enjoyed learning about Abraham being faithful, John the Baptist being different, Joseph being forgiving, Deborah serving and Jesus giving. There were story, prayer, craft and food stations to visit. The children sang, learned memory verses and had a lot of fun. Thanks to Susie Neal, Crusty, Sheriff Dusty, Digger, Wendy, Brenda, Carole, Josie, Adrianna and Alex for all of your help.

— *By Monica Thames*



Go, Grow and Multiply

Northwest Arkansas Spanish Camp Meeting

GENTRY, ARK. – The Northwest Arkansas Spanish Camp Meeting was held June 11-12 in the Ozark Adventist Academy Gymnasium. Jose Cortez, Sr., retired New Jersey Conference president, was the speaker. Everyone enjoyed a wonderful fellowship in a very spiritual atmosphere as Cortez spoke on the theme of “Go, Grow and Multiply.” Jose Pagan was the speaker for this and the children’s departments were swarming with activity. A farewell tribute was held for Juan and Betty Borges on their retirement.



Celebrating Growth

Mission of Karen Refugees Results in a New Church

CLARKSVILLE, ARK. – During the fall of 2016 and early spring of 2017, a group of refugees from the Republic of Myanmar began a small settlement in the Clarksville area of Arkansas.

They began meeting as a small group affiliated with the Clarksville Seventh-day Adventist Church. Most of the members only speak Karen, a language akin to Burmese, and very few speak English. They were welcomed and a meeting place was shared where they could hold Sabbath services in Karen.

On March 24, 2018, the group became a company under the leadership of Poe Stanley. Since forming the company in 2018, they have grown to a church of 62 members. They are in the process of obtaining their own building for worship and have a new pastor, Nayklowha Moo.

On June 19, 2021, the company was organized into a church and accepted into the Arkansas-Louisiana Conference on June 27 at the Conference Constituency Session. We are happy to welcome

the Clarksville Karen Seventh-day Adventist Church into the sisterhood of churches in the Arkansas-Louisiana Conference. The celebration of this organization took place on June 19, which was the day before World Refugee Day.

— *By Sylvia Downs*
Communication Administrative Assistant



Treating the Body and the Soul

Bringing New Light to the Community

EUREKA SPRINGS, ARK. – Abundant Health Wellness Center (AHWC) was established as a non-profit lifestyle treatment center in Eureka Springs, Ark., five years ago by two doctors, a dietitian and a motivational counselor. AHWC practitioners are committed to applying Biblical principles for the well-being of the whole person, cooperating with the Creator in His compassionate work of restoration and desire to help patients achieve their individual best health.

When COVID-19 hit, their doors never closed and God blessed. After four years of serving the community through lifestyle medicine and Bible study groups, the staff witnessed two patients get baptized in November 2020. Dana West is the registered dietitian at AHWC and volunteer Bible instructor.

She is a graduate from the Lay Institute of Evangelism in Lady Lake, Fla.

AHWC is now open on Sabbaths also; not for medical consultations, but as a spiritual hospital known as Eureka Springs Seventh-day Adventist Fellowship. What began with a small Bible study of a few ladies in January 2020 has become a small group. “We are very excited about what we are learning, both for our health and from the Bible. I have learned more from Dana and Rex in the last year than I have since I accepted Christ as my Savior in 2016,” said Janice Dorsey at her baptism. Retired pastor Rex Frost is the volunteer pastor of the church plant. He also volunteers at the Rogers Seventh-day Adventist Church, which is sponsoring Eureka Springs Fellowship.

Eureka Springs Fellowship began January 2021 with a communion service. “I felt the presence of God; He was right here in the room. It is an amazing step of faith to surrender everything to God. I appreciated the preparation for communion. People think you go to church and have communion and then go on with life. Here, it is the beginning of a new life. I love it!” said Jenny Pierce, one of the original group members.

For more information about Abundant Health Wellness Center or Eureka Springs Fellowship, visit AbundantHealthWellnessCenter.com or call 479.363.6585 or 471.459.5201. AHWC is also on Facebook and YouTube.

By Nancy Riedesel



Bursting with Joy

Northwest Arkansas Family Camp Meeting

GENTRY, ARK. — On June 1, 2021, the North West Arkansas (NWA) Family Camp Meeting kicked off with Eric Flickinger, associate speaker for *It Is Written*, in the Gentry Seventh-day Adventist Church. On the weekend, John Bradshaw, main speaker for *It Is Written*, took his place. Over 1,000 people were packed into the Gentry church and children’s classrooms to enjoy fellowship, music and worship.

The young people’s class sounded like they were having fun and it seemed to get louder every night.

The primary classroom in the Pathfinder building behind the Gentry church was camouflaged and decorated with the Bible verse found in Ephesians 6:11, which says, “Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand

against the devil’s schemes,” an anthem the kids sang in praise.

There were activities set up for the young people of all ages to enjoy. There was a knotted rope for the kids to climb, a balance beam rope they could walk across and slabs of wood resting over top of the cylinders to give the kids another balance challenge. Guest speakers shared with animated puppets, and service members from different branches of the military taught kids about their uniforms.

The kindergarten class had the farm theme of “Where God’s Fruit Grows.” The junior class focused on the Fruits of the Spirit. On the wall in the Earliteen Class were the words, “To Know Him is to Love Him.”

In the afternoon, outdoor activities

for all the children’s divisions were held, including water balloons from a giant slingshot, and on Thursday there were blow-up slides and climbing areas. Friday was water day with slides and splash pools or a big blow-up slide to see how far you could slide.

The children’s division at NWA Family Camp Meeting went all out to make learning more about Jesus and the Bible fun, and they taught that serving God is a joy and a delight. If you missed out on this year’s Camp Meeting, check out the Gentry church website or Facebook page (@GentryAdventist) for pictures from this year’s Camp Meeting and upcoming information about next year’s meeting.

By Debbie Upson



Leadership Embracing Youth

Preparing Young People with a Spirit of Love and Patience



What does it mean to “grow young” in our ministry for Christ? A thought immediately comes to my mind of a small church in a small community. My boys were very young at that time. The nominating committee voted to ask my first son of just eight or nine years old to be one of the main pianists for worship. His feet didn’t touch the ground, and his head couldn’t be seen over the upright piano, but he was voted in and played for ten years.

Young people from the juniors class graced the front entrance of the church, welcoming people while other young people from the teens or the youth group led the song service in the sanctuary. There were a lot of seniors in this church that would high-five the kids as they went down the hallway or compliment them on a scripture reading or special music. I remember this specific senior leadership intentionally calling every child by name as they greeted them or the many times this senior leadership went to the church school to celebrate birthdays or read. Why does this scene come to my mind when I think of Christ’s ministry?

Christ was all about relationships and service that glorified His Father. That is what “growing young” in our church ministry is all about. Building relationships, bridging generation gaps, mentoring young people with patience and allowing the Holy Spirit to express His love and work through these young people that soon will be or are currently leading our churches.

Acts 2:17 says, “In the last days, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams.” Are we preparing our young people with a spirit of love and patience, mentoring them in ways that they will desire to be one of those that has the visions and dreams, or do we treat them in such a way that they would be afraid to tell us of these dreams and visions and not even want them because they have yet to see the love of God through the leadership at hand?

Today, that small church in that small community is full of different generations reaching out to their neighbors and town through their community service center, evangelistic efforts and programs, the result of a young generation that was mentored with patience and love. This story is about “growing young” by a senior leadership embracing their youth.

Let us be prepared for God to spill His Holy Spirit on His children of ALL generations to allow our youth to finish this work He has set before us.

By Apple Park, Executive Secretary



First Master Guide Camp

Clubs Initiate Annual Event with Honors and Activities

WEWOKA, OKLA. – A successful first annual Master Guide Campout was held on May 14 at Wewoka Woods Adventist Center with two clubs: “Emmanuel” from the Midwest City church and “Polaris” from the Independence church. Noemi Jimenez, master guide conference director, led out with various activities including training, honors and team building activities. May the Lord continue to bless this ministry.

By *Yésenia Ortega*
Communication Administrative Assistant



Growing Ministry

Myanmar Adventist Fellowship Becomes Company

TULSA, OKLA. – July 3, 2021, was a historic day for Myanmar refugee Adventists in Oklahoma as Myanmar Adventist Fellowship (MAF) was organized into a company with special guests in attendance including the Oklahoma Conference officers, Asian ministries director and youth and communications director.

The MAF members are Adventists relocated in Tulsa, Okla., as refugees. The company is composed of 59 adults and over 60 children. The group has been worshipping on their own for a year and half after having worshipped with

the Tulsa Zomi Seventh-day Adventist Church. The organization of the group was accomplished by the sheer initiation of the Oklahoma Conference.

Thirty believers from the Guymon Adventist Church joined many members from the Zomi Tulsa church for this occasion. The church leaders of the Myanmar Zomi Baptist Church, where MAF held the organization ceremony, also attended.

Oklahoma Conference President James Shires was the main speaker, encouraging to remove differences, to

promote unity and work for world evangelism. Executive Secretary Apple Park declared MAF as a company, joining the 90 churches in the Oklahoma Conference.

It was a blessed occasion that gave the MAF a new direction, a new purpose and a new commitment in the mission of the church. We are grateful to God, to the Oklahoma Conference and to all who attended the meeting for joining hands into the Christian journey as the people of God.

By *Lun Cing Huai Huai*



Zomi Annual Convention

Wewoka Woods Hosts NAD Gathering

WEWOKA, OKLA. – Zomi Seventh-day Adventists in the North American Division came together to hold their eighth annual convention at Wewoka Woods Adventist Center (WWAC) this summer. From June 10-12, 2021, the group gathered and worshiped with the theme: “Create in Me a New Heart.” It was a fruitful spiritual and social gathering and nearly 400 were in attendance on Sabbath.

On June 10, new officers and departmental leaders were elected for the 2021-2023 two-term. The newly elected officers are Gin Sian Mung, president; Mang Sawm Lian, secretary; Pau Suan Khai, treasurer; and departmental leaders: Thang Khan Mang, church ministries; Jerry Mungtong, children’s ministries; Nang Khan Mung, community services; Mung San Lay, youth; Tu-

angboih, music; and Khaiboih, media.

Throughout the meeting, separate classes and activities were held for children, youth and adults.

Everyone enjoyed the campground activities that included horseback riding, swimming, canoeing and more. The professionalism, understanding, politeness, courtesy and exemplary Christian manner that was shown to the guests by the staff was impactful. The nutritious and tasty food served each day was phenomenal.

Because of the wonderful physical and spiritual experiences, the committee unanimously voted to hold its ninth Zomi Annual Convention in 2022 at WWAC.

We thank the Oklahoma Conference leadership for the love, kindness

and generosity shown to us by making the convention possible. It was beyond comparison.

By Lian Mang
Pastor



Working Together

Native Ministries to Launch Pilot Program



SEMINOLE, OKLA. – On May 10 the Native Ministries department met with the Second Chief of the Seminole Nation, Lewis Johnson, at Wewoka Woods Adventist Center to discuss Diabetes Undone, a program from Life and Health Ministries. In 2020, Chief Johnson attended a Diabetes Undone seminar conducted at the Shawnee Seventh-day Adventist Church and he shared that, following the principles of Diabetes Undone, he had lost 100 pounds and no longer needed diabetic medication. He shared that the Seventh-day Adventist

Church has the right spiritual message.

In addition to Diabetes Undone, Native Ministries is partnering with the Seminoles on an agricultural program. Using the program in the Pacific Union Native Ministries Department, under director Nancy Crosby, and utilizing students from Andrews University, the plan is to teach Tribal members how to grow their own food. In addition to homegrown food being a healthier alternative to processed and pre-packed, this program ties those participating back to their heritage.

Wewoka Woods holds a special place in Chief Johnson’s heart, as he and his wife were married on the grounds over thirty years ago. During the meeting, it was discovered their anniversary was the next day. He and his wife were invited back to camp where a special ceremony was held, complete with a small cake. These pilot programs with the Seminole Nation will eventually be taken throughout the conference, impacting both Native and non-Native populations.

By Jim Landelius
Pastor

Celebrating Baptisms

30 Young People Make Decision for Christ

TULSA, OKLA. – The Zomi Tulsa Seventh-day Adventist Church has grown rapidly over the last couple of years. Their membership consists mostly of children, youth and young adults. At the beginning of 2021, a couple of church leaders committed to studying the Bible with their young people. They used the “It Is Written” Bible study guides over the last few months to do a weekly Bible study. At the end, 30 young people made a commitment to be baptized. On Saturday, June 26, the church celebrated as these 30 young people walked into

the baptismal waters to be baptized in the name of our Lord. Daniel Ortega, conference youth director, shared a message to encourage both the baptismal candidates and their church parents and church leaders before stepping into the water. Ortega was assisted by Oklahoma Conference President James Shires and Executive Secretary Apple Park in performing the baptisms.

By Yesenia Ortega
Communication Administrative Assistant



We're Back!

Summer Camp Held This Year at Wewoka Woods

WEWOKA, OKLA. – After not having a regular summer camp last year due to COVID-19, the Oklahoma Conference was excited to once again have camp this summer.

It has been a great year as we brought new activities to the program. Our obstacle course was one new event that the campers really enjoyed, testing their physical abilities and aiming for personal records. Additionally, we were able to sport our new go-karts, which were a big hit among both the campers and the camp staff.

As always, one of the greatest blessings of summer camp is providing a space where young people can profess their love to Jesus through baptism. This year 16 campers gave their lives to Jesus. We praise God for the work that He is doing at Wewoka Woods Adventist Center through the ministry of our youth and young adults who serve tirelessly as summer camp staff.

By *Yesenia Ortega*
Communication Administrative Assistant



New Addition

Wewoka Woods Receives Truck Donation



WEWOKA, OKLA. – Wewoka Woods Adventist Center thanks the Oklahoma Native Ministries department for its recent donation of a 2020 F-250 XLT truck. The truck replaces our 1996 Dodge Ram, which has served the camp well.

The new truck will serve the camp for years to come, providing safe and mechanically sound transportation for plant operations and for the camp ranger. We will be able to haul heavy loads for moving equipment and care for the needs of the camp. The truck has already been set up with tools to meet

the needs for facility operations around Wewoka Woods. We are grateful for this blessing and look forward to putting it to good use.

By *Sam Hutchinson*
Wewoka Woods Adventist Center
Camp Ranger



BREATH OF LIFE TELEVISION MINISTRIES

P R E S E N T S

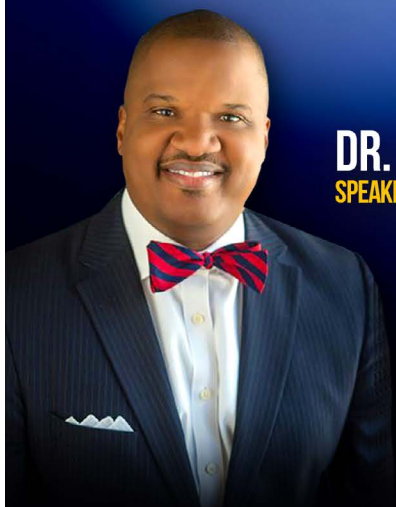
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A Southwest Region Welcome

Conference Receives New President and Family



DALLAS – Carlton P. Byrd, newly elected president of the Southwest Region Conference, was born in Baton Rouge, La. He is a graduate of Oakwood University in Huntsville, Ala., and has dual degrees, a B.A. in Theology and a B.S. in Business Management. At Tennessee State University, he earned an M.B.A., and at Andrews University, he earned both M. Div. and D. Min. degrees.

In his 27 years of pastoral leadership in Mississippi, Alabama, Tennessee, Texas and Georgia, Byrd has constructed and renovated churches and schools, baptized over 20,000 persons, and served on numerous denominational and community boards, along with serving as a guest minister on several religious television networks.

A very active participant in the community, Byrd founded the Berean Outreach Ministry Center in Atlanta, Ga., which housed a food pantry, clothes closet, barber shop, hair salon and fitness center. Under Byrd's leadership during his pastorate at the Atlanta Berean Church, the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development awarded a \$5.2 million grant to the church, and the church constructed a 50 apartment senior citizens' housing

facility for church and community senior adults alike.

Most recently, he served as the senior pastor of the Oakwood University Church. During his pastorate there, over 750 individuals were baptized, the church was completely renovated and two new buildings were constructed during his tenure: the Oakwood Adventist Academy (K-12th grade) building and the 22,000 square foot Oakwood University Church Family Life Center, housing a vegetarian food market, barber shop, health clinic, gymnasium, commercial kitchen, classrooms and community service areas.

The recipient of numerous honors and achievements, Byrd received the coveted "Chosen Pastor Award" for Atlanta's Gospel Choice Awards in 2007, was selected as the Oakwood University Alumnus of the Year for 2008, was inducted into the Martin Luther King Board of Preachers at Morehouse College in Atlanta in 2008, was selected as the 2016 Pastor of the Year for the Alabama NAACP – Huntsville/Madison County Branch, was named the South Central Conference Pastor of the Year in 2012, 2018 and 2019, was the recipient of the prestigious 2019 North

American Division Achievement Award for Evangelism and was listed among Marquis' "Who's Who in America" in 2020. Byrd also serves as a member of the United Negro College Fund's National Faith Initiative Advisory Council.

Byrd is currently speaker/director for the Breath of Life Telecast, a role he has served in for 11 years and through December 2021. Under his leadership at Breath of Life, four churches have been planted and thousands baptized. He has authored three books, and the scope of the media ministry advanced to include six nationally televised holiday specials on ABC and NBC.

Byrd is happily married to his wife of 23 years, the former Danielle Mouter, and they are the proud parents of three daughters; Christyn, Caleigh and Carissa. The Byrd family loves Jesus and seeks to share Christ's love with others in the hope that individuals will engage in a saving relationship with Him.

We welcome the Byrd family home to the Southwest Region Conference and the Southwestern Union and pray God's blessings on their ministry!

By Norman Jones
Communications Director

New Executive Secretary

Southwest Region Conference Names Jason C. North



DALLAS— Jason C. North is the new Executive Secretary for the Southwest Region Conference. He holds a B.S. in Physical Education from Oakwood University and an M.A. in Youth Ministry from Andrews University. North began his professional career in the Bermuda Conference, then served as chaplain and religion teacher in the Michigan Conference. North pastored in Michigan, Illinois and Indiana and has served as youth ministries director in the Lake Region Conference. Most recently, he served as one of the associate pastors at

the Oakwood University Church.

North has a passion for authentically sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ and empowering, equipping and igniting individuals to pursue their God-given passion. His goal is to reach the world, reclaim the lost and restore the image of Jesus Christ through the transformational power of the Holy Spirit. He and wife, Angie, have three children: Dijae, Jadae and Jason, Jr. Welcome to the Southwest Region Conference and the Southwestern Union North family!

By Norman Jones, Communications Director

The Challenge

Addressing Health Equity in the Black Community

ALEXANDRIA, LA.— On June 19, the Southwest Region Conference with Friends and Family for Health Equity (FNF4HE) produced a live webcast focused on black men's health entitled "The Health Equity Challenge of Freedom." Listeners found the program fast-paced, informative and inspirational. The webcast addressed black men's reluctance to see doctors and the statistical tendency for a shorter life span among black men.

"I feel well. Why should I snoop around and find something wrong?" said small business owner Mike Mitchell. "We are in a grab and go society, no time to read the ingredients," said Sylvester Dotson, an elder of a church in Central Louisiana.

Dr. Julian Watkins of New York outlined the most common causes of black men's premature death: heart disease, cancer and violence, and when asked by Dr. Vernetta Sampson Johnson if the problem was genetic, he answered an emphatic "No." "Most of the causes of the gap in longevity are social determinants of health," said Dr. Watkins. Dr. Watkins also discussed the importance

of finding a physician who will listen to you and understand your culture. NBA player Harrison Barnes described how he chose his primary physician because he was a man who looks like him, understands his background, and is someone whom he feels comfortable with.

Dr. Denese Hunter of North Carolina interviewed Dr. Leon Seard, a urologist at UC Irving who outlined what to look for in a checkup. "Is it possible to close the longevity gap? The answer is an emphatic yes, with equal treatment," said Dr. Seard.

Dr. Tamara Smith, an educator from Reading, Penn., started out imploring husbands, in general, to get a checkup. "There are still bills to pay," she said with a broad smile. She interviewed experts Dr. Fred Johnson from Northern California and Dr. Gloria Westney from Atlanta Ga., as well as infectious disease specialist, Dr. Marcia Mitchell from Central Louisiana. They discussed Covid-19 updates and pertinent courses of action. Dr. Mitchell said, "My 17-year-old is vaccinated and I am scheduling an appointment for my

14-year old." The panelist concluded that the pandemic is not over for the unvaccinated.

The program was interspersed with questions from the audience and interviews with pastors who outlined briefly what they were doing in their community to close the health equity gap. Two pastors said they focused recently on police and community relations. Another pastor stated they were focusing on mental health. Jaime Kowlessar, James Co, Calvin Watkins II, Robert Norwood and Tyrone Boyd were engaged and supportive of this project, with the modest goal of saving lives. Admiral Barry Black, as he opened up the webcast quoted John 8:36, saying, "So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed." We pray for deliverance from sin, poor lifestyle and health inequity. Actually, we should do a little more than just pray.

By Christine Ince

The Future Is Now

Emphasis Areas for the Next Two Years

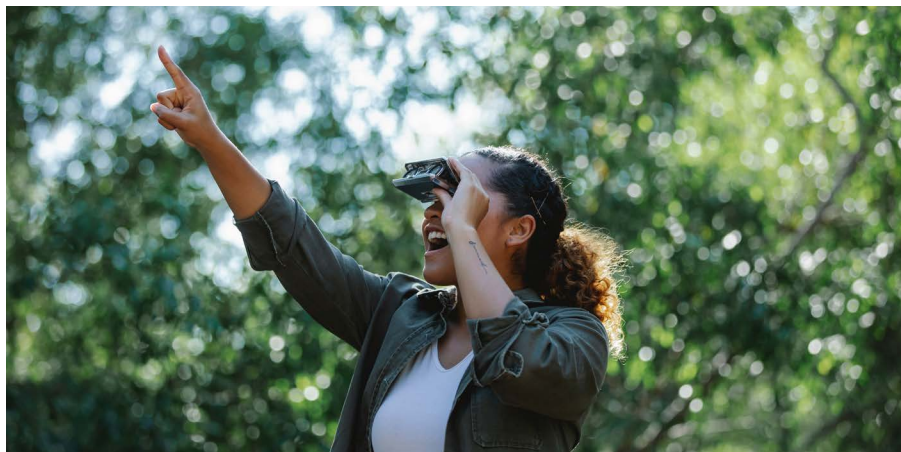
DALLAS – The Southwest Region Conference has adopted four essential areas of ministry emphasis over the next two years. They are evangelism, education, media and digital ministry and Youth/Young Adult engagement and retention.

In Matthew 28:19-20 (KJV), Jesus said, “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”

The goals for evangelism are for each Southwest Region Conference (SWRC) pastor/district to conduct one (minimal) public evangelistic campaign annually; for each SWRC pastor to mobilize and equip local church membership to do the work of evangelism and general ministry; to work in collaboration with the North American Division (NAD) and Southwestern Union on urban evangelism plans; and to develop and implement innovative evangelistic initiatives via media and digital ministry.

Isaiah 54:13 (KJV) says, “And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children.”

The goals for Adventist education are to increase enrollment by 50 percent for the upcoming academic year, 2021-2022; to intentionally recruit at SWRC churches in areas where SWRC schools exist; to provide online learning opportunities for students in the SWRC territory where there is no SWRC school, enabling students to enroll virtually in our SWRC schools; and to offer Three-Way Scholarships (SWRC President’s Office, local church and local school) across the SWRC schools. Twenty-five (25) Three-Way Scholarships will be given for the 2021-2022 academic year, reflecting 10 percent of the SWRC enrollment for the 2020-2021 academic year; and to host the 2022 NAD Adventist Robotics Tournament promoting Adventist Education throughout the



SWRC territory.

Isaiah 43:19 (KJV) says, “Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert.” In her book *Evangelism*, Ellen G. White says, “Means will be devised to reach hearts. Some of the methods used in this work will be different from the methods used in the work in the past; but let no one, because of this, block the way by criticism.” In *Letters and Manuscripts*, she goes on to say, “Men (and women) are needed who pray to God for wisdom, and who, under the guidance of God, can put new life into the old methods of labor and can invent new plans and new methods of working the interest of church members and reaching the men and women of the world.”

The goals for media and digital ministry are to create and produce an eNewsletter to be disseminated monthly throughout the SWRC; to create and produce weekly worship broadcasts to be shown on SWRC social media platforms; to repurpose and rebrand SWRC website and social media platforms; to develop a new ministry mobile app for the SWRC; to repurpose and rebrand the SWRC YouTube Channel providing inspirational worship content which meets the needs of intergenerational viewers; and to create the Southwest Re-

gion Conference Annual Film Festival.

In *Ministry to the Cities*, Ellen G. White says, “There is no class that can achieve greater results for God and humanity than the young.”

The goals for youth and young adult engagement and retention are to underscore the importance of youth and young adult engagement in church ministry and overall church life, inclusive of the intentional placement of young adults in local ministry leadership positions; to engage and seek to include young adults in conference-wide governance as reflected in representation on SWRC standing committees; to activate youth and young adults in evangelistic and mission opportunities; to train, equip and empower youth and young adults in general church ministry and programming including Sabbath School, Worship, AYM, Adventurers, Pathfinders, Bible Bowl, etc.; to provide support to youth entities within the SWRC (Youth, Pathfinder and Adventurer Federations, Bible Bowl, etc.); to actively listen to youth and young adults relative to their ministry needs, ideas and interests; to implement media and digital ministry opportunities specifically geared to reach youth and young adults; and to provide worship and service opportunities specifically geared to reach youth and young adults.

————— By Carlton P. Byrd President

4 MOVING Evangelism - Education - Media - Youth & Young Adults WARD

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SAVE THE DATE

Growing Together

An Army of Workers Sharing a Vision for Mentoring



Acts 2:17 says, “In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams.” One of the greatest gifts given to humanity was the gift of vision. Sight is the function of the eyes, but vision is the function of the heart. Nothing remarkable on earth has been accomplished without vision. No invention or deed has occurred without the inspiring power of this mysterious source called vision. It is the vision that makes the invisible visible and the unknown possible. Vision gives us hope.

On the day of Pentecost, after receiving tongues of fire as evidence of the Holy Spirit, the apostle Peter preached in the power of the Spirit to thousands of people in Jerusalem. The early New Testament church was undoubtedly a Holy Spirit-empowered movement, and the Spirit-filled youth would have visions! Young men and women full of God have a mission to fulfill here on earth, and they are ready to be deployed.

In *Education*, Ellen G. White says, “With such an army of workers as our youth, rightly trained, might furnish, how soon the message of a crucified, risen, and soon-coming Savior might be carried to the whole world!” What a vision!

Through the young adult department and in collaboration with our entire team, the Texas Conference established an important initiative called Growing Together. Utilizing the resources found in the book *Growing Young: Six Essential Strategies to Help Young People Discover and Love Your Church*, it is a method that teaches church leaders how to position their congregations to reach out and mentor younger generations in a way that revitalizes the entire congregation.

If you are already mentoring the youth in your church, I applaud you for making an impact! If you are not mentoring youth at this time, I invite you to pray about how you may get involved. It is an honor to mentor young people. It can be a short-term approach that bears fruit for a lifetime. Is this something you could implement in your church today?

By Elton DeMoraes, President



Summer Camp Memories

Grateful to God for His Blessings at Lake Whitney Ranch

CLIFTON, TEX. – Having summer camp was such a blast this year. We are so grateful to God, the camp staff, the volunteers, the parents and the campers that we could have summer camp in person. God blessed in so many ways, changing lives for eternity.

We also want to thank Hector Perez, Lake Whitney Ranch (LWR) camp director; and the LWR operating committee for all the improvements to the ranch. We look forward to seeing the next phase of improvements next year.

By Deborah Gendke



Jesus Does the Impossible

VBS Program Features God's Wonders to Kids

EDINBURG, TEX. – On June 6-12, 2021, the Edinburg Seventh-day Adventist Church held their Vacation Bible School (VBS) program with the theme God's Wonder Lab: Jesus Does the Impossible.

The team included Lucy Sanchez, director; Zymarie Deocampo, Doven Jae Almaiz, Melody Luikham, Adrianna Padron and Charito Regalado.

The pandemic brought a lot of anxieties and uncertainties, but God showed His marvelous work as the team prepared a hybrid VBS program.

It started with a drive-in sneak peek

of the week's VBS program and distribution of materials on June 6.

Fifty-nine volunteers signed up to help with registration, crafts, AV, praise team, games, snacks and the program.

Ferdinand Regalado, pastor, monitored safety. John Gonzalez, pastor, assisted AV. Orland Rosales, who just recently joined the pastoral team, delivered the message and is featured below with attendee Joash Juanite.

Approximately 55 kids participated either in-person or virtually.

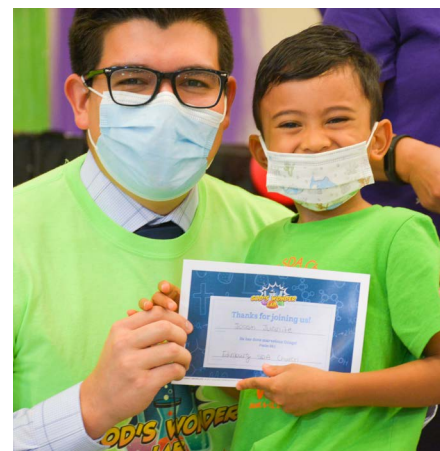
In God's Wonder Lab, the kids were

taught that if Jesus can turn water into wine, walk on water, give life, die and rise again, and make the blind to see, then He can do marvelous things in their lives. He can make the impossible possible because He loves you.

The week culminated with the review of the daily songs and messages and presenting certificates to all participants and volunteers.

The virtual VBS program can be viewed on the Edinburg Seventh-day Adventist Church YouTube channel.

By Leah Par



Connecting with Community

Richardson Church Volunteers Partner with the Network

RICHARDSON, TEX. — On Sabbath, April 3, 2021, Richardson Seventh-day Adventist Church volunteers partnered with the Network to give away 150 boxes of nonperishable food items.

The Network, which stands for Network of Community Ministries, “is a non-denominational, community-based organization serving nearly 30,000 individuals annually through over 142,000 units of service,” according to its website. They also provide senior citizens with home repair services and toys for children during the holiday.

During the outreach ministry that Sabbath, guests were invited to return the next day for a community event.

Community Spring Fest provided a family fun time with food and fellowship in the Richardson church parking lot from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Approximately 70 community members enjoyed the festivities, including hayrides, an obstacle course activity, food, snow cones and other games.

Every Sabbath, the Richardson church opens its small food pantry after the second service to share nonperish-

able food items with those in need.

Those needing additional help are referred to the Network, as it is currently expanding its facilities and services to better accommodate residents.

During the pandemic, many unemployed church members and visitors were given food and other necessities.

Jesus asks us to help those in need, sharing, “Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for Me.” Matthew 25:40.

By Sharon Petchkurow



An Eggstra Special Sabbath

First Reading and Baptism Makes Easter Sabbath Special

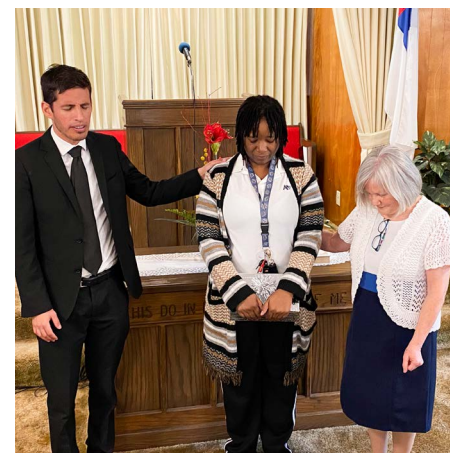
MARIETTA, TEX. — It was the first reading for my husband Lonny and me to transfer our membership to the Marietta-New Hope Seventh-day Adventist Church when Tiffany Caez gave her life to Christ Easter weekend.

Caez was raised Jehovah’s Witnesses, but always felt like something wasn’t quite right. She prayed to God over and over to show her the truth. When she moved to the Marietta area, she met Jimmy Lindsey. Lindsey was headed to church one Sabbath when Caez asked where he was going dressed up on a

Saturday. He shared that he was going to church. Puzzled, she explained that she’d been reading about the Sabbath, but didn’t realize there was a church that kept Saturday as the true Sabbath. Jimmy invited her to visit.

The next Sabbath, Caez attended the New Hope church. After Bible studies with Judy Fincher and Ernesto Illingworth, pastor of New Hope church, Caez made the decision to give her life to Christ and became a baptized member of the New Hope church family.

By Bonnie Weitzel



DETERMINED

Campaign Focused on Helping Our Students

ALVARADO, TEX. — On Sept. 12, 2021, a group of DETERMINED cyclists will begin their ride from McAllen, Tex., to Richardson, Tex. They will be cycling more than 800 miles over two weeks. Even though they enjoy cycling, they are accepting this challenge to help raise awareness for taking care of one’s health and to raise funds for an Adventist Education Endowment in the Texas Conference. Interest from that fund will go to assist any student wanting to attend a Texas Conference school but needing financial help to do so.

At each Texas Conference school stop along the way, the cyclists will share their stories and encourage the students.

For those who are not serious cyclists, on your own options were offered so people could walk, run or cycle in their area while promoting the DETERMINED campaign. When individuals sign up, a personal web page is created for them to share with family and friends to show their support with donations.

A president’s challenge was given, encouraging 500 people to donate \$1,000 each to show support for our students.

That \$500,000 would be a wonderful start to the endowment.

In July, “Texas Conference of Seventh-day Adventists” was added to the list of charitable organizations for Amazon Smile. For the remainder of this year and next year, any donation received through Amazon Smile will be added to the DETERMINED funds.

Follow the cyclists during the ride on our social channels @TexasAdventist.

Find more information at TexasAdventist.org/Determined.

By Elton DeMoraes, President

Give while you shop

Smile.Amazon.com
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When you shop at smile.amazon.com and select “Texas Conference of Seventh Day Adventists” as your favorite charity, Amazon will donate 0.5% of the price of eligible purchases to the Texas Conference at no cost to you.



ABC Comes to You

Purchasing Bibles, Books and Food is Easier with D2U

KEENE, TEX. — For several years now, Texas Adventist Book Center (ABC) staff have delivered Bibles, books, Sabbath materials, music, food and more to individuals through a Direct 2 You program also known as D2U.

Guests simply call 800.333.1844 or email Food.abc@txsda.org to place their order. An ABC staff member will confirm the order. The items will be delivered to their requested D2U drop off.

Visit AbcKeene.org to find the latest D2U route and schedule.

By Mickey Johnson



Conference Office Changes

The Lord's Work Continues Through Transitions

ALVARADO, TEX. — The first half of this year saw quite a few changes in the Texas Conference office staff.

The Texas Conference Executive Committee (Texas ExCom) voted Elton DeMoraes as Texas Conference president during its May 2021 meeting. Carlos Craig, previous Texas Conference president, was elected Southwestern Union Conference president during its 31st constituency session in April.

Texas ExCom also voted Ismael Castillo, formerly Texas Conference Hispanic Ministries & Spanish Evangelism associate director, as vice president for the department after Osvaldo Rigacci was elected vice president for Multicultural Ministries for the Southwestern Union Conference during the same constituency session. Sergio Rodriguez, formerly Texas Conference pastor for Burleson Spanish and Joshua Spanish Seventh-day Adventist churches, was then elected by Texas ExCom as associate director. He will continue to serve as Spanish Men's Ministries coordinator.

Texas Conference Associate Education Superintendent Renee Whiting will assist North Dallas Adventist Academy (NDAA) for the 2021-2022 school year as interim principal.

Levi Whitcomb, former NDAA teacher, was hired for one year as a Director of Induction & Mentorship. He will oversee some of the areas Whiting is responsible for while she is serving NDAA.

Robyn Grimsley, former Fort Worth Junior Academy principal, was hired as an associate superintendent.

Texas Conference education superintendents assist the 23 schools in the Texas Conference with staffing, budgeting and training. They regularly visit each school and attend its school board meetings.

Texas ExCom elected Lynette Ecord, formerly Planned Giving & Trust Services associate director, to director for the department beginning in March. She was also voted association secretary

for the Texas Conference Association. Both positions were previously held by Roger Mekelburg, who retired in March.

Jerrod Songy, former trust officer for Planned Giving & Trust Services, was elected by Texas ExCom to associate director of the department in May. He will still cover the North Texas area.

Texas ExCom also asked the trust officers to be Stewardship coordinators for their respective areas. That includes Songy in North Texas, Uzziel Maldonado in the Houston/East Texas area and Deyvy Rodriguez in the Central/South Texas area.

Claudia Dominguez was re-hired as part-time administrative assistant for the Planned Giving & Trust Services and Information Systems departments. Her position was previously eliminated during the 2020 reductions in force.

Becky Bochaberi was elected by Texas ExCom as director for the Human Resources department in February, a position previously held by Renee Crawford.

Raul Del Valle was appointed to serve as property manager in February to assist churches and schools with construction projects, purchases and sales of buildings. As part of the treasury team, he also handles property leases, tax exemptions and property code violations.

Teresa Bonilla was hired as an accountant in the treasury department to process accounts payable and risk management following Letty Craig's departure to coordinate the Ministerial Spouses Association, Women's Ministries and Family Ministries for the Southwestern Union Conference.

Aaron Sotelo joined Publishing & Student Literature as a part-time office assistant in April, helping Joshua Reyna, director, with the student literature program.

With the goal of streamlining the work at the conference office, several individuals took on additional assignments in February related to their current field.

Texas Conference English Evangelism

Director Dan Serns added Sabbath School coordinator to his area of responsibilities. Knowing the importance of small group ministry and global mission, it was a natural fit to combine the two areas.

David Runnels, hired as field secretary following the 2019 Texas Conference constituency session, was given another title as quality assurance for the Texas Conference, managing pastoral information and data.

Deborah Gendke, administrative assistant for Young Adult Ministries and summer camp coordinator, is also the Children's Ministries liaison, fielding calls and directing them to the appropriate resource or contact. Alexis Rivera was Children's Ministries director before the 2020 reductions in force.

Randy Phillips, a physician, was voted as volunteer Health Ministries coordinator for the Texas Conference. Physician Errol Bryce previously held that position.

In addition to personnel changes, several staff changed office locations as the administration worked to geographically combine departments together for better workflow. Previously, some departmental staff were separated in different areas in the building.

In addition to these transitions, several pastors, teachers and Bible workers joined new areas.

The great Advent movement is alive and well in Texas. Lives are being changed and members are stepping up to make a difference in their communities either personally or through church-planned events.

Thank you for keeping these transitions in your prayers as we share the love of Jesus with everyone.

Visit TexasAdventist.org/staff for an updated office staff list with extensions.

By *Tamara Michalenko Terry*,
Associate Director for Communication
& Public Relations

I Will Pour Out My Spirit

The Power of God Changes Hearts Today



Joel 2:28-29 says, “And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days.” When Seventh-day Adventists think about prophecy, we immediately think about last-day events. We are reminded of the early and latter rain. The “Loud Cry” comes to mind, and we await the “times of refreshing” that are promised. These words are thrilling because they point to a time when the Holy Spirit will be poured out in a mighty way as in the day of Pentecost. I especially enjoy knowing that young people will take part in this special moment. There is no greater joy than believing that God’s promise is sure—God will pour out His Spirit on all people.

Although we are still waiting for this to happen, it is important to understand that we do not need a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit in order to live in His power. All believers in Christ can be filled with the Holy Spirit today, all we have to do is surrender to the work that He is doing in our lives.

It was by the confession and forsaking of sin, by earnest prayer and consecration of themselves to God, that the early disciples prepared for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. In *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, Ellen G. White reminds us that “unless we are daily advancing in the exemplification of the active Christian virtues, we shall not recognize the manifestations of the Holy Spirit in the latter rain.” In the *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, she adds, “[The latter rain] is coming upon all who will recognize and appropriate the dew and showers of grace that fall upon us. When we gather up the fragments of light, when we appreciate the sure mercies of God, who loves to have us trust Him, then every promise will be fulfilled.”

My counsel for you is to not sit idle on the sidelines waiting for the prophecy in Joel 2 to be fulfilled. Instead of looking to the future, I encourage you to turn your heart and life to God. Today is the day of salvation.

Now is the time to seek forgiveness. Now is the time to allow God’s power to work in changing your heart. Now is the time to have a relationship with Christ—a deeper infilling of His righteousness. The Holy Spirit wants nothing more than to dwell with you. We can experience an outpouring of His love today, just as it was felt on the day of Pentecost.



By Lee-Roy Chacon, President

Five Young Lives for Jesus

El Paso Northeast Church Celebrates Baptisms

EL PASO, TEX. – At the El Paso Northeast Seventh-day Adventist Church, Eliab Quiñones, pastor, believes that “God does not put an age restriction on when you can have a relationship with Him.” In Matthew 19:14 Jesus says, “Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.”

Quiñones began Bible studies with five young people from the El Paso Northeast church earlier this year, including Aalyah Flores, Ian Rosalez, Eliana Flores Frej, Ernesto Mena and Aaliyah Reyna Aranda. “It was amazing how even though I was giving the Bible studies it felt like I was being taught once again how to have childlike faith,” said Quiñones. “My favorite topic was the one on the importance of Sabbath.”

On May 15, these young people were baptized. There is no doubt that on that Sabbath morning, there was singing in heaven, with great joy and jubilant celebration, as the angels witnessed all these children making this most important decision for Jesus!

“My favorite topic was when we talked about baptism, which is a new beginning with Jesus,” said Ernesto Mena. “Since I have been baptized, I feel happy and brave, and I am excited for each day!” Ernesto’s favorite Bible text is Galatians 3:26-29.

Eliana Flores Frej’s favorite lesson was about what happens when people die. “We sleep until Jesus comes and calls our names,” said Eliana. “I knew I wanted to be baptized when Lee-Roy Chacon, Texico Conference president,

asked in church if there was anyone who wanted to dedicate their life to Jesus. I raised my hand. Jesus is my Savior, and since I have been baptized, I feel closer to Him and I want to keep learning more about Him.” Eliana’s favorite Bible verse is Philippians 4:13.

Ian G. Rosales enjoyed studying about clean and unclean foods. He said, “I wanted to give my heart to Jesus when I saw so many other kids giving theirs to Him. Being baptized is my way to show Jesus that I love Him and want to obey Him.” Since being baptized, he feels like he is a part of a big family.

Please join the El Paso Northeast church in prayer for all these newly dedicated children and young people.

By Lori Humble



We Chose Not to Say Goodbye

Dalhart Bids Farewell to Their Beloved Pastor



DALHART, TEX. – In the fall of 2017, Isai Ramírez became the pastor of the Dalhart Seventh-day Adventist Church along with three other churches located throughout the Texas Panhandle and Northeastern New Mexico.

After much anticipation, the congregation felt blessed to welcome him as their new pastor. For the past four years, Ramírez has led the Dalhart church and has also been very involved in the Texico Conference Young Adult and Youth Ministries. On April 24, Ramírez preached his final sermon at the Dalhart church. A graduate of Southwestern Adventist University, Ramírez began his seminary studies at Andrews University this summer.

“It was a touching and memorable message that we can all relate to,” said

Fayrine Benavidez, member. “Our heavenly citizenship on earth is something we live out each day, in real, earthly time. Sometimes the simplest pathway out of conflict is deciding to love one another,” said Benavidez. “God commands us to have this kind of love—to set aside our differences and to care for ‘the least of these’ among us. It is our desire to love like Jesus that deserves our loyalty and faithfulness.”

Following the worship service, members and friends of Dalhart gathered to bid farewell to Ramírez and thank him for his dedication and commitment.

The Dalhart church family wishes Isai Ramírez joy and happiness as he begins a new chapter in his life. We believe farewells are windows to a brighter future, so as a church, we chose not to

say “goodbye,” but “thank you.” We are confident that Ramírez will be a blessing to his next church family as well.

————— *By Russell Ballew*

Sharing the Love of Jesus

Texico Launches Redesign of Texico.org

CORRALES, N.M. – This summer, the Texico Conference was pleased to announce the launch of its redesigned website. Visitors can now find Texico’s latest news, events and information on the new Texico.org.

The new look and feel of the website was designed to reflect the visual branding that was introduced by the North American Division in 2018. However, Texico hopes that the newly redesigned website, which features pages that are visually updated and more easily navigated, will also reach a broader audience.

“Although branding was important to the development of the design, our main goal was to create a website that will connect with our Texico Conference family and community at large,” said

Debby Marquez, Texico Conference communication director.

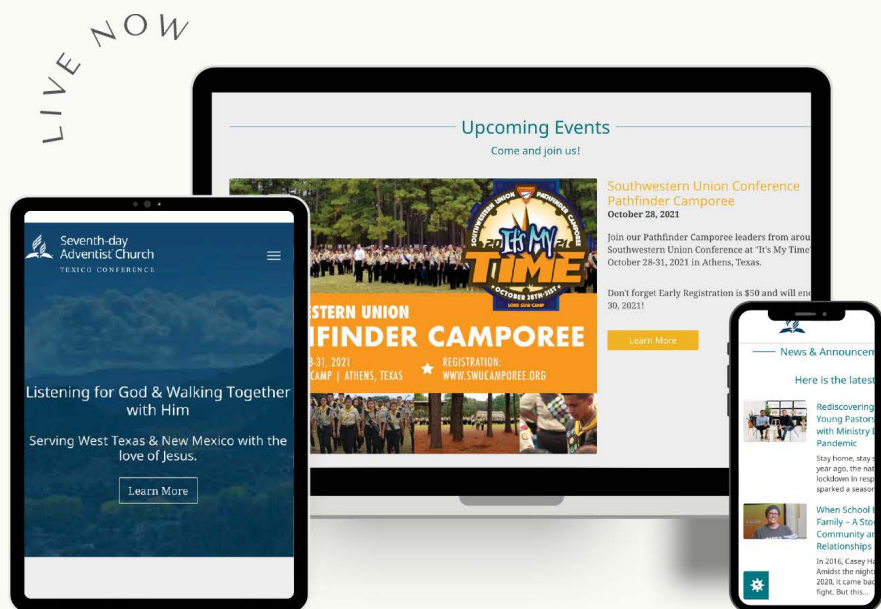
One way the new site differs from the prior site is that it allows visitors to connect with Texico Conference churches directly.

On the new site there is a page for each local church which provides helpful details such as a map with driving directions, church history, current ministry programs and other information of interest. There is also the ability to connect with the pastor, link to the local church web presence, and make church contributions of both tithe and local church offerings to that church through Adventist Giving.

In the coming months, the Texico Conference plans to add dynamic and

fresh content to its site, including an employee portal, a store front, and a resource page that includes multimedia elements and a spiritual growth section.

“The new Texico.org is intended to be a useful resource with meaningful content that will both encourage and draw you closer to Jesus,” said Marquez. “We hope users have a very positive, user-friendly experience on our site and we invite people to help us spread the word about it.”



WWW.TEXICO.ORG

Eager To Work For The Lord

Northern New Mexico Church Starts New Spanish Group

ESPAÑOLA, N.M. – On May 1, the Española Valley Bilingual Seventh-day Adventist Church resumed their plans for a long-awaited dream to have a Spanish church plant.

This was a cherished idea that began to take shape in recent years with the help of Española's previous pastor, Ricardo Castro. However, due to some challenges, including the COVID-19 pandemic, the dream was put on hold until this past spring.

Since then, a new Española Spanish group has been meeting consistently and is developing plans for their future. One of them is to establish a weekly

small group that will reach and serve the Spanish-speaking people in the community. The hope is to bring more souls to Christ and see growth that will result in a potential future Spanish church.

The group is currently made up of two families that alternate leading Sabbath services. Rafael Esparza and his family are a fundamental part of this effort. He has been a member of the Española church for several years and is thrilled to be collaborating with his friend Saul Esparza. Saul and his family recently arrived from California, and they are eager to work for the Lord in the Española community.

The Española group is also happy to be receiving support from the Spanish churches in Santa Fe, under the leadership of their pastor, Alex Ruiz. The Santa Fe churches, along with others, are providing speaker support and have offered to help in other efforts. The Española Valley Bilingual church and its new Spanish group would like to solicit your prayers for this endeavor and for those who are looking to share the good news in Española.

By Jerry Pinzon, Pastor



Growing Congregation

Artesia Group Becomes Artesia Company

ARTESIA, N.M. – The Artesia Seventh-day Adventist Group is quickly growing and recently changed their status from that of a group to a company. The Artesia company was started by three families from the Roswell Spanish Seventh-day Adventist Church who were looking to connect with the New Mexico towns of Dexter, Artesia and other neighboring communities that did not have an Adventist church presence. The status change was approved in June by the

Texico Conference Executive Committee. The Artesia company currently conducts Bible Studies and is in the process of forming Pathfinder and Adventurer clubs. Weekly services are bilingual and simultaneously translated from Spanish to English.

According to their mission statement, "The Artesia Company strives to make disciples for Jesus through biblical training, loving fellowship and service for their community." They are a caring

community of believers that are looking forward to continuing the work in extending the love of Christ to every individual in their communities. They also hope that their efforts will lead them to obtain church status one day soon.

CLASSIFIED ADS

EMPLOYMENT

Full-time food service coordinator position available at Glacier View Ranch, Ward, Colo. Job description and application: RmcSDA.org/job-posting-food-service-coordinator.

Union College, Lincoln, Neb., seeks candidates for Vice President for Academic Administration to provide strategic direction, leadership and oversight for the college's academic programs and fulfillment of strategic goals. Earned doctoral degree required. Apply at UCCollege.edu/employment.

REAL ESTATE/HOUSING

Summit Ridge Retirement Village, an Adventist community in a rural setting, offers affordable homes or apartments and caring neighbors, with a fellowship you'll enjoy. On-site church, planned activities and transportation, as needed. Also, Wolfe Living Center offers independent living and nursing homes. Contact Bill Norman 405.208.1289 or visit SummitRidgeVillage.org.

MISCELLANEOUS

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To Christ saved me." (By M-TX Prison). We are grateful for all contributions. Contact David or Tiffany Stevenson at 469.867.8727.

ADVENTIST TOURS 2022. Israel in Jesus' Steps, March 9-17 & June 12-21 (optional Jordan/Egypt); New Testament Alive/7 Churches, June 2-12, African Safari & Service, May 24-31; Germany-Austria: Luther to WW2, June 22-July 1 (includes Oberammergau Passion Play); Thailand, July 27-Aug. 7. All tours are Adventist-led with excellent rates and beautiful experiences for all ages. \$1,750+/person. For full details, contact TabghaTours@gmail.com or Facebook.com/TabghaTours or call 423.298.2169. "The best trip I've ever had! Nothing comes close." "Fabulous!" "The Bible comes alive." "An awesome experience!"

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Announcement

The Southwestern Union Filipino Convocation will be held Oct. 15-17, 2021 at Lone Star Camp in Athens, Tex. Info at 281-499-1846 and RHomher@gmail.com.

Obituaries

Bottsford, Beverly, born Jan. 23, 1937, Portland, Ore.; died July 7, 2021, Mexico City, Mexico. Church membership: Texas Conference. Preceded in death by her parents, husband, sister and brother-in-law. Survivors: daughters, Tina Bottsford and Tammy Muse (Tony) of Keene, Tex.; grandsons, Tyler Muse of Algeria, Africa, and Trent Muse (Jacquelyn) of Keene, Tex.

Chitwood Bascom, I. Beatrice, born Aug. 31, 1934, Fletcher, N.C.; died June 4, 2021, Cleburne, Tex. Preceded in death by her parents, sister, grandson and sister-in-law, all from Texas. Survivors: Winston Bascom of Ar-

Back Pages

kansas; Steven Chitwood, Brent Chitwood and Brenda Chitwood Ramos, all from Texas. Seven grandchildren, four great-grandchildren and many nieces and nephews.

Decker, Debra Matherne “Debbie”, born Jan. 5, 1951, New Orleans, La.; died May 10, 2021. Church membership: Baton Rouge Seventh-day Adventist Church. She spent over 35 years as a leader of the Pathfinders. She was also area coordinator for the Arkansas-Louisiana Conference Pathfinder Clubs in southern Louisiana. Survivors: her husband, William “Wolfe” Decker; two daughters, Melissa Ann Decker and Jeannine Marie Decker (fiancé, Edward “Tommy”

Plemons). Preceded in death by her parents, Alvin J. Matherne and Mercedes Morales Matherne.

Donnelly, Grace Elizabeth, born July 1, 1930, Johnson City, N.Y.; died April 16, 2021, Tyler, Tex. She was a Lieutenant Colonel in the United States Air Force. Church membership: Chandler Adventist Fellowship Church. Preceded in death by her parents, Grace and Robert Donnelly; sisters, Catherine Macy and Dolores Donnelly; nephew, John Macy. Survivors: brother, Robert Donnelly and many nephews, nieces and their families.

Foster, Betty Jean Seidel, born Jan. 26, 1931, Jones, Okla.;

died June 6, 2021. Church membership: Choctaw Seventh-day Adventist Church. Survivors: daughter, Donna Foster-Boland (David) and a number of grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Giddings, Anne Louise (Jensen), born May 10, 1951; died June 7, 2021, Keene, Tex. Survivors: brothers, David and Jim Jensen of Gentry, Ark.; sons, Lucas and Philip Giddings of Keene, Tex.; and grandchildren, Anthem, Solace, Banner and Beckon Giddings from Keene, Tex.

Marquette, Maurice, died April 8, 2021. Church membership: Broken Arrow Seventh-day Adventist Church. Survivors: wife, Judy; four children, Lori

Foreman, Greg, Brent and Sean Marquette and many grandchildren.

Perez, Antonio (Tony), born Aug. 10, 1952, Colon, Panama; died March 13, 2021, Midwest City, Okla. Church membership: Choctaw Seventh-day Adventist Church. Survivors: sister, Sandra Yvonne Bartaniyan of Laguna Niguel, Calif.

Reich, Dorothy Jean, born Nov. 15, 1932, Keene, Tex.; died May 12, 2021, Sherwood, Ark. Preceded in death by her parents, William Harrison and Ethel Tucker Harrison; son, William Reich. Survivors: her daughters, Brenda Sanders (William) and Pamela Reich; grandson, Ricky Carroll;



Ouida Stayton was born July 7, 1935, to Leonard and Goldie Stayton in Flagg, Tex. She was the eighth of 10 children. Her father was a farmer, and the family moved from Flagg to Dimmitt, then to Hereford, Tex., where Ouida graduated from high school in 1953.

While working in Amarillo, she met Johnny Wray whom she married in 1958, and later that year her first child, Thomas Wray, was born. Early in 1960 Johnny was killed in an automobile accident in Tennessee. Later that year, her second child, Johnene, was born. Ouida and her kids lived in Hereford with her mother and older sister, while she worked for the ASCS office in Hereford.

In 1968, Ouida and the kids moved to Amarillo where she began working for the Texico Conference office and worked there until 1984. In 1978, Johnene had a baby girl, Kandy,

whom Ouida started raising. Also in 1978, John Mandaville moved to Amarillo and worked as a Literature Evangelist for the Texico Conference office. He and Ouida got married in 1980, and now Kandy had a grandpa and grandma!

In 1984, Ouida and her little family moved to Burleson, Tex., so Kandy could attend an Adventist elementary school, high school and finally the Adventist university in Keene, Tex. Ouida worked at several odd jobs. In 1986, she started working as a church secretary at the Burleson Seventh-day Adventist Church which she did until 1998.

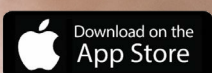
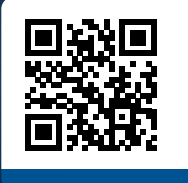
In 2000, Kandy was killed in an automobile accident near Fort Worth. Also in 2000, Ouida became an assistant church secretary at the Arlington Seventh-day Adventist Church. In 2004, Ouida and John moved back to the Amarillo area where Ouida fully intended to retire; but in 2005 she became bulletin secretary for the Amarillo Seventh-day Adventist Church until 2009. John worked as a copy machine repair man until he retired in 2017. In the last four years of her life, Ouida faced several health challenges and finally passed away on May 31, 2021.

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Beeson, Margie E. Fisher Leggett, 100, born Dec. 14, 1920, Denham Springs, La.; died March 8, 2021, Oakdale, La. Church membership: Central Louisiana Seventh-day Adventist Church. Preceded in death by her parents, Ambrose and Fannie Fisher; one son, Henry Howard Leggett, Jr.; grandson, Mike Leggett; three sisters, Inez,

Mildred and Ernestine. Survivors: one daughter, Jeraline Leggett (Steve) Saia of Oakdale, La.; one son, Ronald Lee Leggett of McComb, Miss.; daughter-in-law, Dawn Leggett of Palm Springs, Calif.; three grandsons, Greg Ritchie of Houma, Mark and Warren Leggett both of California; two granddaughters, Lisa Ritchie West (Robert & Shelby) of Oakdale, La. and Lynda Leggett Shaw of Thibodeaux; 10 great grandchildren; three great-great grandchildren; along with a host of family and friends.

granddaughter, Kimberly Carroll Brown (Derrick); two great-grandsons, Derrick Brown and Jarod Brown; sister, Bobbie Pannell; and several nieces and nephews.

Salzman, Michael, born Aug. 6, 1946, Salem, Ark.; died March 29, 2021. He was a Pathfinder Hall of Fame Award Recipient and an area coordinator for the Arkansas-Louisiana Conference Pathfinder Clubs in Central Arkansas. Survivors: his wife, Marsha Arthur Salzman; daughter, Jennifer Jureski (Bill); son, Nathaniel Salzman (Kate) and grandson, Sebastian Jureski; sister, Louise Fox (Charles).

Submissions

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News and Articles: Send local news for your church or school, along with high-resolution photos, to your local conference communication department listed on page 2.

If you are interested in writing for the *Record*, email Record@swuc.org.

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