

# Record

November | December 2021

**4** Growing with Others

**7** Make a Difference

**8** Live It and Give It

**10** No Greater Legacy

**12** For the Next Generation

Center for Adventist Research  
Andrews University  
Berrien Springs Michigan



*Living Legacy*  
*Pouring Into Others Today*

## Living Legacy Pouring Into Others Today

# Record

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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.

- Features { 4 Growing With Others  
8 Live It and Give It  
10 No Greater Legacy  
12 That the Next Generation Might Know Him
- Columns { 6 Wholeness: Addicted to Tech  
7 Equipping: Make a Difference
- News { 13 Southwestern Union  
18 Southwestern Adventist University  
20 Arkansas-Louisiana Conference  
25 Oklahoma Conference  
30 Southwest Region Conference  
35 Texas Conference  
40 Texico Conference
- Back Pages { 45 Classified Ads  
45 Obituaries

## Editor's Note

Think about your community. The people in your life. Your church. Your local schools. It's probably not difficult to think of at least one individual who lives a life of pouring out into others—someone who invests their time, attention, and love into those around them. I can think of a few, and I imagine you can too.

In this issue of the Record, we look at what it means to be a living legacy in Christ—someone who lives to uplift others by sharing His love. Joel 1:3 says, "Tell it to your children, and let your children tell it to their children, and their children to the next generation." One believer can impact the spiritual path of multiple generations. How can we become living legacies, living to share His love with those around us?

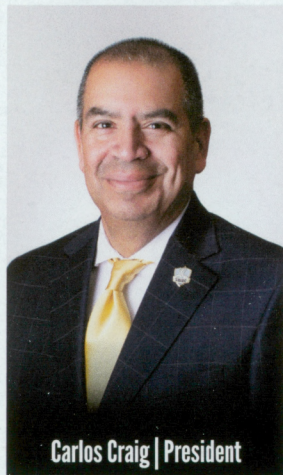


Jessica L. Lozano

Cover Photo by Record Staff

# Be a Living Legacy

## Pouring Into Others Today



Carlos Craig | President

Joel 1:3 says, “Tell it to your children and let your children tell it to their children, and their children to the next generation.” The compelling question here is: What is the “it” that the prophet is referring to? He speaks of the incomparable goodness of God! For a bit of context, the prophet writes here as a prelude to the approaching tragedy and destruction of apocalyptic proportions! The people of that time, even the most aged, could not recall such a time of calamity. But then, just as now, God reigned supreme and brought His people through as He did at the Red Sea!

Those and these marvelous acts of God are the definition of His goodness which must be proclaimed from generation to generation! Sometimes I fear that we are losing our grip of faith and hope in both the presence and providence of God! Sometimes He sees fit to remove the comforts, luxuries and excess in which we have placed our trust and gratification in order to remind us that our help truly comes from the Lord!

Are we emphasizing these things from one generation to the next? God seems to say to us as He did to them: Declare it! Record it! Remember it, so that your children and their children forget it not and that the recognition be perpetual!

One of the greatest blessings of longevity is the potential for knowledge and experiences acquired over many years of living. It is especially felt when one’s life has been dedicated to the service of God. I’ve gained such wealth of wisdom working for the Master in the ebb and flow of life during both trials and victories.

Years of such experiences in God’s service create rich storages of testimonials to the goodness of God. Ask any pastor or teacher. Also, these experiences create a lesson plan, even a curriculum, that could continue to benefit the Kingdom of God long after one’s service has come to an end. Consider that idea for a moment. Consider how you may continue to benefit the Kingdom of God after your time on this earth is through. Joel 1:3 encourages us to, “Tell it to your children, and let your children tell it to their children, and their children to the next generation.”

As we bequeath the knowledge that Christ has allowed us to acquire through our experiences with Him, this heirloom of wisdom will not be lost and will continue as a blessing through generations. How are we being proactive today in passing this knowledge on? How are we inspiring and encouraging others through our learned experiences on our journey with the Lord? May we commit to pouring into the lives of others today; may our life become a living legacy.



Stephen Brooks  
Executive Secretary

Including our children in home projects has taught me a life lesson. When I have a big project, sometimes it seems that it would be easier if I just did it myself instead of teaching one of our three kids how to do it. However, I’ve learned that although it may take longer to accomplish the task when I have to teach them, I’ve imparted to them knowledge that I possessed that they did not. Now they are equipped with the knowledge and experience to take care of things themselves. That lesson reminds me of how Jesus saw that He needed to prepare His disciples for when He was gone.

Jesus has been so good to each one of us. Each one of us has a story, a testimony, of what Jesus has done in our lives. We need to take time to prepare new leaders in our church. Jesus spent a couple of years pouring into the lives of the disciples—teaching them about love, the way they should live and the way that they should treat others. After He taught them, in Matthew 10, Jesus gave the 12 disciples opportunities by sending them out on their own. Then the disciples came back to learn more from Jesus. As leaders, we always need to be ready to learn. We also need to then mentor others around us, even when it seems like it would be more efficient to do things ourselves. We must impart our knowledge and skills and then give opportunities for the younger generation to lead our Church.



John Page | Treasurer

# Growing With Others

*Sharing God's Love Through Partner Gardening*



## His gardening aspirations began five years ago.

Maurice Theriot was motivated by a desire to connect more with God's creation and to develop this skill set. He decided to share his journey with his friends and family through his personal social media, inviting others to join in with him and also develop their own gardening skills. He made his first 4 x 8 raised bed garden, and since that process went well, it made him much more excited to continue sharing his experience.

As he shared his updates, however, Theriot's friends and family began commenting that they did not feel equipped to begin their own gardens. When they shared that they didn't have the skills to do this on their own, Theriot was happy to offer his services to them.

He began helping others create their own raised bed gardens, and what had once been a hobby became something much bigger. He named this endeavor the Theriot Farms No Excuses Partner Program.

Through this program, Theriot helps people get started with gardening by bringing the supplies needed, making their raised beds for them, tilling and making sure the soil mix is right. The only thing he won't do is plant for people. Theriot and his wife, Maxine Theriot, M.D., work together on these partner gardens, and they have now partnered with over 20 other beginner gardeners.

## Reaching Others

Some of the people Theriot has been able to help in this process are friends and family, but this ministry also grew to reach beyond his own social circle and continues to expand. Because of this gardening partnership, he's been able to form connections he wouldn't have been able to otherwise. He models his gardening venture after Jesus' method of ministry.

Theriot often reflects on this observation from *The Ministry of Health and Healing* by Ellen G. White, "Christ's method



## Growing Together

Theriot continues to increase his own gardening knowledge and strives to be a resource for others. The more he learns, the more he passes on to those in his community. He wants others to grow alongside him and share in this experience. He ministers to others by helping them plant their own food and connecting with God through this natural process.

“You retain information the best when you learn it and share it with someone else,” shares Theriot. Just as Jesus told his disciples to go and teach, Theriot feels motivated to go and teach gardening, showing people he cares for them.

Theriot plans to continue partnering with others across the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex and has even received invitations to travel as far as Austin and Houston. His mother, who lives in Huntsville, Alabama, saw what he had been sharing and asked him to help her start her own garden too.

“People don’t care how much you know, they care how much you care,” says Theriot. “People would much rather see a sermon than hear one.” He hopes to live out a sermon through his actions toward others and to form a connection that provides an opportunity to share more about God. He is already providing for people’s practical needs through this program, and that truly is a Christ-like method. **R**

*By Brisa Ramirez. Ramirez is a freelance writer based in Texas. Maurice and Maxine Theriot live in Royse City, Texas, and are members of the Casalita Drive Seventh-day Adventist Church.*

alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Savior mingled with people as one who desired their good. He showed sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He invited them, ‘Follow Me.’”

Theriot believes that when a person’s physical needs are taken care of, it has a deeper impact and provides an opportunity to minister to those people in a much more loving way. As people commented that they were interested in starting their own gardens but needed help, he saw that this was a need he could address. Food is an essential part of life, so Theriot feels grateful to be able to provide help with this resource.

As he has continued to take part in consistently gardening his own food, this practice has shifted Theriot’s perspective on his food. He has intimately experienced nature’s provision, having been able to plant a seed into the ground and watch how it slowly grows into a plant that then provides fruit. In turn, it not only feeds him and his family, but also produces seeds of its own.

Helping other people experience the same process has enriched his connections to others as well. Theriot has been able to further connect with those who were already in his social circle by providing them with the practical service of gardening their own food. He has now also begun to expand his circle because of this program, as his friends share with their friends. As word gets out about his partner gardening program, more and more people are recommending him as a resource for beginners and experienced gardeners alike.



# Addicted to Tech

## Are You Spending Too Much Screen Time on Your Devices?

By AdventHealth



We're constantly exposed to technology, whether from TV, cell phones, video games, tablets or social media. The pandemic certainly didn't help in reducing screen time. In fact, according to Eyesafe Nielsen, the average screen time per person is now over 13 hours a day.

While devices and digital outlets can help us socialize and learn, they also often lead to a sedentary, inactive lifestyle, among other problems that can affect our daily lives. If you're worried that you or your loved ones are spending too much time on your devices, here are signs to look for and how you can cut back on screen time.

### How Much Time Is Too Much?

Digital overload is when you spend too much time on your devices and begin having trouble processing the amount of information you take in online, leading you to feel distracted, anxious, fatigued or even depressed.

While research has not quite figured out what our limit is when it comes to screen time, a study showed that after two hours online, people showed more symptoms of anxiety and depression.

In severe cases, people who use their devices too much may struggle with digital addiction. Digital addiction can affect social, personal, family, educational and occupational areas of life.

Digital addiction and device overuse is not just an issue that affects adults or teenagers; it also impacts children. When a child is in front of a screen, they are not doing the healthy, skill-building activities kids need for their brains and bodies to develop at a normal pace.


We may think we spend a "usual amount" of time on our devices and therefore dismiss any notion that we need to change our behavior. Carefully consider these signs you may be spending too much time on your devices:

- The first thing you do in the morning is check your phone.

- You fall asleep holding your phone.
- You feel anxious when your phone is not with you.
- You look for an outlet to charge your phone when you arrive somewhere.
- You look at your phone while talking to someone.

### Plan to Cut Back on Screen Time

If you're looking to cut back on screen time personally or as a family, the first step is to sit down and track your screen time. After a few weeks, determine goals and guidelines for when you'll use your devices and for how long, and plan fun activities to do in place of spending time on your phone or computer. Ways to minimize digital overload:

- Create tech-free times and zones.
- Prioritize off-screen activities throughout your day.
- Set time limits for your screen time.
- Turn off unnecessary notifications.
- Use only one device at a time. 

# Make a Difference

## What I Learned from a Caring Mentor Who Took the Time and Believed in Me

By Paulo Tenorio, Texas Conference Youth Director

People are starting to realize how important mentorship is. I would say that in the last 10 years, mentorship has become a bit of a buzzword. The significance of investing in the next generation has become increasingly evident.

Jethro mentored Moses. Moses mentored Joshua. Eli mentored Samuel. Elijah mentored Elisha. Even though the Bible doesn't explicitly say these people were mentors, you can see how they played a mentorship role. Jesus mentored the twelve disciples and three of them were mentored even more closely.

I have learned to appreciate those who have invested in me and mentored me. One of those mentors was Will.

A young adult in his late 20s, Will was married and had two little kids. He had recently been baptized and was attending our small church in Woodbridge, Virginia, where I was a teen. Will had this swagger about him; all the teenagers looked up to him, including me. Best of all, he would say hi to us, talk to us and ask us how our week had been.

One time, he came to church sporting a very cool Nautica t-shirt. I told him how nice I thought his shirt was, and the next Sabbath, he walked into church with a little brown gift bag. He reached it out to me and said, "For you buddy." I opened it to find a white Nautica t-shirt. I couldn't believe it! That was my favorite t-shirt for a very long time. At the time, my father was only a part-time pastor, and most of our shopping was done in thrift stores.

Another time, Will asked when I was getting my driver's license. I told him I didn't have a car to practice. He pulled out his keys and said, "Let's go practice." Will had a nice car with a manual transmission. I told him I didn't know how to drive a manual and didn't want to mess up his car, but Will insisted.

I turned the car on, and as I shifted into first gear, it began to shake and rattle before turning off. This happened several times. Even though I told Will we should quit, he made me keep at it. By the end of that Sabbath afternoon, I was driving a stick shift.

That year, I made plans to study high school abroad in Argentina. My last Sabbath at church, Will approached me and said, "Paulo, we are doing a farewell party for you with all the youth at my house. We will have video games and pizza."

At the time, I didn't realize how big of a deal that truly was. Now that I am a husband and father of two little girls, I understand the significance of that gesture. I now have a different understanding regarding bedtimes, the sacrifice of feeding hungry teenagers and the inevitable aftermath of hosting a large party. At the end of the farewell, Will said, "Paulo, go make us proud. You can do big things for Jesus."

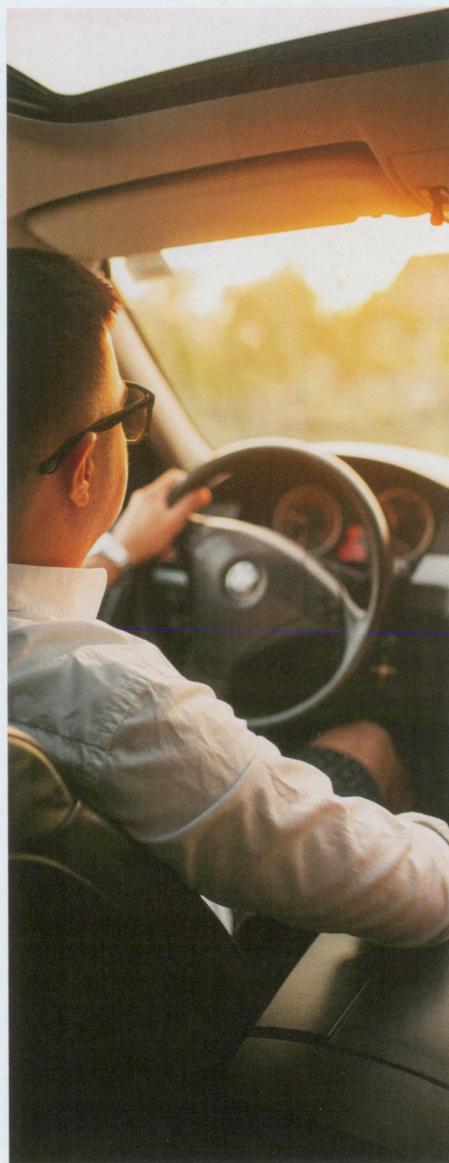
That stuck with me. As I write this story, I'm moved and feel my eyes getting watery. Will saw something in me that I didn't see, perhaps something even the rest of the church didn't see.

When I was in Argentina, I got a call from my mom that left me cold. On the other end of the phone, she said, "Paulo, I'm sorry to tell you this, but Will passed away. He was in a car accident. I know he meant a lot to you." After I hung up the phone, I went to my bed and cried and cried. It was then, even as a teenager, that I began to realize how much of an impact he made in my life.

You see, Will and I didn't have the most spiritual connection. He didn't pray with me or give me Bible studies. The key elements in his mentorship towards me were simple: he cared, he

was available with time and resources and he believed in me. That made all the difference in the world.

You may not be able to be a mentor to everyone, but you can ask God to lead you to that one person whose life you can impact for eternity by caring, being available and believing in them. Make a difference—be like Will. **R**





# Live It and Give It

*The Spiritual Legacy of a Lifelong Teacher*

**Joyce Fortner was adopted at an early age.** In her new devout Christian home, she was raised to understand that Jesus was coming soon. Her parents cared for many foster children throughout the years. They instilled in each child the importance of sharing the gospel with the world and to “do well whatever their hands found to do.”

What Fortner’s hands found to do was to teach. “I was 14 when I was called by the Holy Spirit to be a missionary,” she says. “Though I had little clue what that was going to look like, my heart burned with the desire to live a life of service.”

Fortner was sponsored through a partnership between her local Adventist and Methodist Churches to attend Andrews

University. There she earned an associate’s degree in bio-chemistry and a bachelor’s degree in education.

Fortner taught in Champaign-Urbana, Illinois for two years, teaching 27 students in the one-room Adventist schoolhouse. In 1973, she married Don Fortner, a pastor, with whom she adopted four children in addition to their two biological children, raising them all to be witnesses for Christ.

“My mother has always been first and foremost a Christian educator,” says Melissa Ramirez, Fortner’s daughter, who has followed in her mother’s footsteps to become a Christian educator. “Whether at home or in the classroom, each day brought reminders of how God lives in and through our lives.



I daily use her words of wisdom with my own students.”

Fortner leaves a lasting impression on anyone she meets. Former students state with fondness that she exudes passion, optimism and energy for teaching which remains unmatched.

“Mrs. Fortner always had a thunderous personality, in the most positive way,” recalls Czerny Avance, one of Fortner’s former students. “It was always clear that her ministry ran deeper than her classroom; it stretched to her family, community and church as well.”

Fortner taught for 22 years in the Oklahoma Conference, in addition to serving as the director of Children’s Ministries and secretary for Pathfinders and Adventurers. For the past 26 years, she has taught in the Arkansas-Louisiana Conference and served as shepherdess president.

She is the children’s ministries director for the conference and has worked with the North American Division developing curriculum for both children’s and youth ministries.

“I learned from my parents that nothing matters more than sharing the gospel,” Fortner says. “My interpretation of that was to pass it on to the next generation, so that the legacy of sharing Christ’s love and salvation continued.”

As a teacher, Fortner has been formidable both in her creativity and her store of energy. Not only has she been a quality instructor, but she has always gone above and beyond for her students. She has coordinated numerous outreach programs, brought in guest speakers, directed Christmas programs, created science projects, organized field trips to unique locations and provided loving spiritual counsel for those who needed it.

Fran Harper-Wilson, former student and later colleague of Fortner, recalls that, even after moving to a different town, Fortner continued to stay in touch, often stopping by to visit and bringing gifts for her and her elderly mother. When her mother died, Joyce and Don attended the funeral. “Her unselfish service to the Lord is a witness to everyone,” Harper-Wilson adds.

Despite a severe back injury and a bout with cancer along the way, Fortner has remained active in the church, trusting

God to provide what she needs to fulfill her calling. “God is the very essence of my success in life,” Fortner credits. “He’s the one who has given me time and breath—twice over—to do what I do for Him.”

Fortner challenges everyone she meets to “walk it, talk it, live it, give it, teach it, preach it, know it and show it.” It was a mantra she shared with all of her students and children, urging them to be “a sermon in shoes.” Many have accepted that challenge; some are teachers today because of the positive influence and encouragement of Joyce Fortner.

“I am where I am because of her inspiration,” points out Charise Sandoval, Fortner’s former student who now teaches at an Adventist school in Yuma, Arizona. “It is my desire to faithfully serve Jesus and minister to His children, just as Joyce has always done.”

Today, Fortner has seven grandchildren, nine great-grandchildren, numerous “school children” who have made their way through her classrooms and countless “school grandchildren” who are now learning from those Fortner taught through the years.

After more than six decades of passing the light of Jesus to the next generations, Fortner feels no less on fire for Him than she did as a young farm girl skipping out to the barn to milk the cows before dawn and singing hymns as she worked.

“A spiritual legacy is not formed by religion or rote,” she says. “It is demonstrated by a life that walks and talks daily with God, applying promptings of the Holy Spirit and biblical principles in daily life. It’s a continual process every day of our lives, and it is very important that the hearts and minds we are teaching, caring for and guiding are nurtured and prepared well, encouraged to daily seek the Lord’s will in their lives for success today, tomorrow and for eternity.” **R**

*By Becky St. Clair. St. Clair is a freelance writer based in California. Joyce and Don Fortner live in Maumelle, Arkansas, and are members of the Little Rock Seventh-day Adventist Church.*



# No Greater Legacy

## *Three Generations of Adventist Education*

### **Adventist education tends to have a ripple effect.**

Josie Reeves is a junior nursing major at Southwestern Adventist University (SWAU). Though she started attending only three years ago, her connection to SWAU goes back all the way to 1955, when her grandfather, Gary Heinrich, headed off to attend Southwestern Adventist Junior College.

“There were eight kids in my family, and six of us went to SWAU,” Gary says. He attended four years of academy, then two of junior college, earning Associate’s Degrees in business and religion.

“Spiritually, SWAU gave me a great foundation,” says Gary, “Even today I hate to miss church; some of my classmates are still here, and it’s a great feeling to continue worshipping with them after all these years.”

Gary Heinrich (class of 1961) and his wife, Betty (class of 1961 and 2002), met at SWAU. Their two children, Kristi and Steve, also graduated from SWAU. Sixty years later, Gary and Betty’s granddaughter is on her own path at the same university.

“My mom once asked me and my siblings which had had the greatest effect on our spiritual lives—home, school or church. Each of us said ‘school’ without hesitation,” Josie recalls. “Going to SWAU with so many people who have a personal connection with God has inspired me to develop my own. SWAU has given me the opportunity to create my own spiritual identity apart from that of my parents. It’s become personal to me.”

Kristi Reeves (class of 1994) is Josie’s mom. She says it’s hard to pinpoint exactly how SWAU influenced her spiritual

life, because it wasn’t a separate part of the experience. “All the aspects blend into one at SWAU,” Kristi recalls. “Academics, spiritual life, social activities—they’re all interconnected. Growing in one aspect of your life at SWAU meant developing the others as well.”

Betty Heinrich, Kristi’s mom and Josie’s grandmother, transferred to SWAU in her junior year of high school. She immediately noticed that her classmates at SWAU were different from her classmates in public school. “They were friendly, and didn’t care about what your name was or how much money you had,” she recalls. “They showed me what a Christian life could look like.” In 1959, at the age of 18, Betty was baptized into the Adventist church. “That’s the biggest thing SWAU did for me,” she says.

Steve Heinrich (class of 1995 and 1997), Josie’s uncle, adds that the professors left an impression, as well.

**“My mom once asked me and my siblings which had the greatest effect on our spiritual lives—home, school or church. Each of us said ‘school’ without hesitation.”**

“I always appreciated math classes with Dr. Chin,” Steve shares. “He opened class every day with a spiritual thought, and they always

had meaningful application to real life. I had many good instructors at SWAU, but Dr. Chin made a distinct impact on me with his humble, thoughtful, caring spirit. He made a connection with God practical and attainable.”

Josie enjoys when her parents visit SWAU. She and her dad, Charles, also an alumnus, often walk around campus together as he points out various things of interest.

“He’ll show me where buildings used to be, tell me stories about things he used to do with his friends,” Josie says. “It’s

Marisa Long Photography



really neat to go to the same school my parents and grandparents did. We've all had different experiences with the same place, and yet we've also experienced some of the same things—like the family atmosphere and closer relationships with God.”

Even at 80 years old, Gary still talks about seeing the “kids” he went to school with every alumni weekend, and says he would never miss a reunion. “Adventist education draws you together,” he says. “You eat, sleep, play, study, go to church, and pray together. I’m so glad I got that opportunity and have been able to pass it on to my children and my grandchildren.”

Kristi, who got a degree in elementary education, tries to convince everyone she meets that Adventist education is what they need in their lives. “It’s not just about education, it’s about getting our children into the kingdom,” she says. “It’s a complete package. I saw what it did in my life, and I want that for everyone’s children.”

Kristi’s daughter Josie has always felt her calling was to identify people in need and be their supporting shoulder, listening ear and prayerful friend. As a result, she chose to follow her uncle Steve’s footsteps and study nursing at SWAU. It’s a choice she has never once questioned as being God’s plan for her life.

“SWAU has provided me with an opportunity to find something I’m passionate about and what God is really calling me to do,” Josie shares. “I get to help people, and I love it, because that’s what we as Christians are meant to do for the world. SWAU has provided me with both the education and the opportunities to find what I’m truly meant to be doing.”

In 1989, Gary and Betty set up an endowed scholarship at SWAU in Gary’s father’s name, specifically to benefit elementary education majors. “We need our kids invested in their faith and their church,” Gary says. “We need to mentor them into their roles and keep them connected to the church even after graduation. No matter what their career, they are a testament to Adventist education, and a testament to Christ. There’s no greater legacy than that.” **R**

*By Becky St. Clair. St. Clair is a freelance writer based in California. Gary Heinrich is the mayor of the city of Keene, Texas. The Heinrich and Reeves families are pictured above. Front row: Gwyneth Reeves, Charlie Reeves, Gary Heinrich, Betty Heinrich, Molly Heinrich, Macie Heinrich. Back Row: Josie Reeves, Charles Reeves, Kristi Reeves, Robyn Heinrich, Steve Heinrich.*

# That the Next Generation Might Know Him



**They are not done yet.** Though they've finished their careers, Chuck and Donna Hill are by no means retired. Donna volunteers with the American Red Cross, and Chuck manages their lawnscape business and Airbnb rental properties.

The Hills also make time for some of the most important people in their lives: church youth. "I love their enthusiasm," Donna says. "They have such an energetic desire to learn and experience life, and it's contagious. It's an awesome responsibility to lead these young people to Christ."

Over the last 50 years, the Hills have dedicated themselves to ministering to young people. They have started Pathfinder clubs in several conferences and unions. Serving as directors, counselors and instructors, they've become confidants for many youth along the way.

"Often they feel like no one is paying attention," Donna points out. "All they want is to be heard." It may take years for a young person to open up fully,

Chuck points out, but if you're patient and consistently listen, it will happen.

The Hills say a lot of prayer goes into their ministry—praying that they "don't screw up." They know they are scrutinized at every turn, because young people notice so much more than they let on. "One of the most important things is just to be honest," Chuck says. "To say, 'Hey, I messed up; can you forgive me?' To model forgiveness and the concept of simply being human."

Donna and Chuck don't see the generation gap as an issue, despite technological growth and shifts in culture over the course of their 50-year ministry. They've done well keeping up, and when they hit a snag, they simply ask a young person. "The trick to staying relevant is to adapt," Donna says. "And not being afraid to show those kids we don't know everything!"

Chuck adds, "Let them talk—and listen to them. Be real with them. Once they start trusting you, they'll be more willing to hear what you have to say."

It starts, Chuck says, by simply greeting the youth on Sabbath. Striking up a conversation. Getting to know what's important to them and being willing to talk about those things.

"It's incredibly motivating to see young people faithful in coming to church and drawing closer to their Lord," Chuck says. "All we've got to do is point the way, and the Holy Spirit will do the rest."

The Hills hope that the young people they've engaged will become examples and witnesses to the next generation, that they will know how to approach young people and start building bridges. "Hopefully something we do sticks,"

Chuck says, "so that when they're challenged by younger generations, they'll ask themselves, 'How would Mrs. Hill respond? What would Mr. Hill do?'"

"What we want more than anything is to know these young people will remain in the church into adulthood and for life, continuing the work of Christ in the lives of the youth who come after them," Donna says. "That's really what it's all about." **R**

*By Becky St. Clair. Chuck and Donna Hill live in Davis, Oklahoma, and are members of the Arbuckle View Seventh-day Adventist Church.*



# \$73 Million Expansion

## Huguley to Add Patient Tower, Expand ER and ICU

**FORT WORTH, TEX.** – Texas Health Huguley will soon be able to care for even more people thanks to a \$73 million expansion project that will add more than 108,000 square feet to the hospital. The expansion will significantly increase the size of the hospital's emergency department by adding a new four-story patient tower for enhanced intensive care, cardiac, surgical and other services.

“This is exactly what our community needs,” said President and CEO of Texas Health Huguley and the Southwest Region of AdventHealth Penny Johnson. “We’ve seen tremendous growth in the number of families moving south of Fort Worth. This expansion is another milestone in our longstanding commitment to provide the highest quality health care in South Tarrant

and Johnson County, so residents do not need to travel outside of our community for care.”

Texas Health Huguley has seen an increase in the number of patients needing emergency care. This expansion will increase capacity, and the design will allow for patients to be cared for faster, improving the experience and efficiency of care in the emergency department.

Operated as a joint venture between Texas Health Resources and AdventHealth, Texas Health Huguley believes that total health is achieved through a balance of physical, mental, social and spiritual well-being. Texas Health Huguley currently includes a 291-bed acute care hospital, a medical intensive care unit and a cardiovascular critical care unit, an accredited bone and joint

center, an accredited chest pain center, behavioral health center, women's services, an award-winning emergency department and both assessment and fitness centers.

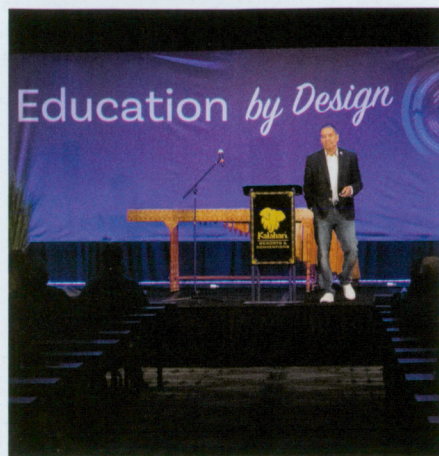
Texas Health Huguley continues to expand to support our community's growth, our patients' needs and advances in medical technology. Texas Health Huguley is driven by its mission to provide Christ-centered care and continuously advance the level of services provided to the community.

Construction is expected to begin in early 2022 with a projected completion date of 2023. Continuing a long-term partnership, the architect and contractor for the project will be The Beck Group. For more hospital information visit, [TexasHealthHuguley.org](http://TexasHealthHuguley.org).



# Education Convention

## Educators from Union Meet for Training and Inspiration



**BURLESON, TEX.** – From Aug. 2-5, 2021, the Southwestern Union held an Education Convention at Kalahari Resort and Convention Center in Round Rock, Tex. Approximately 325 educators from across the Union were in attendance. On the opening night, attendees enjoyed a concert by the A'Men quartet and presentations by North American Division Vice President for Education Arne Nielsen and General Conference Education Director Lisa Beardsley-Hardy.

Each morning, Justin Yang, young adult ministries director for the Texas Conference, challenged our thoughts and minds on educational topics as our devotional speaker. Jeremy Anderson, an Adventist motivational speaker, shared how educators could fight burnout and boost morale.

Attendees were also able to hear professional speakers from the field of education. John Almarode spoke about teaching by design, Marie Alcock discussed the topic of standards-based learning and Jay McTighe spoke about performance-based assessment. There were also various breakouts and presenters who covered a wide variety of topics which educators were able to select from. Opportunity was also provided for the secondary teachers to have some professional dialogue with colleagues of the same discipline.

For the first time, educators who were willing, were given a chance to share some great teaching ideas with fellow teachers in a program called EDTalks; each speaker was given two minutes to share ideas.

On our last morning together, we enjoyed a marimba concert followed by a presentation by psychologist Ken Jones on stress management during COVID-19. Before we parted, a consecration service was led by Southwestern Union President Carlos Craig.

Recreational time was provided between meetings so that educators could rest and enjoy the resort. Our hope is that all educators felt blessed, refreshed and ready to take on the school year.

We also hope that we are all better prepared to lead our students into a closer relationship with Jesus and to become service-oriented citizens until Jesus comes.

By Mike Furr  
Secondary Education Director

# A Vision of Collaboration

## Anobile Shares Ministries Goals for the Union

**BURLESON, TEX.** — It is a joy to be a part of the Southwestern Union family! As I look to the future, I am grateful for Southwestern Union President Carlos Craig’s vision for the union. We’ve been challenged to grow the kingdom of God in our territory. To that end, I am excited, as the vice president for ministries and ministerial director, to assist all of our conferences in three main areas that I have always believed are important.

First—bring people in! The Great Commission compels us to grow and expand the kingdom of God. In the short time I have been in the Union, I have been so impressed with our leadership’s emphasis on evangelism. Our churches are engaged in evangelistic series all throughout the Union. Our schools are evangelizing every day as our teachers

prepare our children for service in this world and the world to come. As the ministerial director, I am committed to giving my full support to all entities to grow God’s kingdom.

Second—keep people in. As a Union family, we must do everything we can to keep our church family committed, connected and involved. As a former young adult director, it saddens me to see the proverbial “back door” of the Church wide open. Our churches must be safe havens for all who want to follow Jesus. We must continue to be intentional about the environments we want to create, foster and maintain as we wait for Jesus’ soon return. If we baptize 100 souls, praise the Lord! When Jesus comes, I want those 100 souls to still be in love with Jesus and excited about their

church community. I am committed to helping all our churches, wherever they are on the journey, to be the churches Jesus has called them to be.

Third—keep people active and healthy. We often refer to the “Four Ts”: time, talents, treasures and temple. There is wisdom in being intentional about developing and maintaining these areas. Training events, seminars and conventions, using the incredible talent, knowledge and experience that we have all throughout the Southwestern Union, will allow us to equip our community of believers to serve and serve well.

I’m excited to be a part of this incredible team. Together we can win the Southwestern Union territory for Jesus!

By *Tony Anobile*  
Vice President for Church Ministries



# God Made Me!

## March 11-13: Children's Ministries Training and Retreat

**BURLESON, TEX.** – The Southwestern Union invites all Children's Ministries leaders to attend its Seventh Annual Children's Ministries Training and Retreat on March 11-13, 2022. Themed "God Made Me! Exploring Children's Spiritual Styles," the retreat will be held at Lone Star Camp in Athens, Tex. Registration opens on Dec. 13 at [SouthwesternAdventist.org/Children](http://SouthwesternAdventist.org/Children).

"Last year we weren't able to meet together in person, so we are very excited to host our children's ministries in person for 2022," says Sonia Canó, Children's Ministries director. "We will be following safety precautions to keep everyone safe and healthy, and we're looking forward to being together for this event."

Our theme, "God Made Me!" focuses on a new track from the North Amer-

ican Division (NAD) which teaches us that God made each of our precious children uniquely—physically, mentally and spiritually!

The event begins on Friday, March 11, with a fellowship and worship session. On Sabbath, attendees will be inspired by devotionals and will meditate on the Word of God together.

On Sabbath afternoon, seminars will be presented, as well as certification for a special track from the North American Division, Spiritual Styles: Sensing, Intellectual, Bold, Idealistic, Authority-driven, Sharing, Enthusiastic, Sacramental, the Holy Spirit and the Fruit of the Spirit.

On Saturday evening, there will be a celebration with food, games and prizes to let our leaders know how much we value them.

On Sunday, March 13, attendees will be treated to a full demonstration of the NAD's Vacation Bible School program for 2022, "Casper Canyon." The Adventist Book Center and AdventSource will be on site to show attendees the resources that are available.

Early bird registration of \$109 opens Dec. 13 and goes through Feb. 13. Regular registration of \$129 will begin Feb. 14 and close March 4.

Register early to save your spot! Visit [SouthwesternAdventist.org/Children](http://SouthwesternAdventist.org/Children).

By Sonia Canó  
Children's Ministries Director

CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES TRAINING RETREAT

# GOD MADE ME!

EXPLORING CHILDREN'S SPIRITUAL STYLES

**MARCH 11-13, 2022**

REGISTRATION OPENS DECEMBER 13  
[SOUTHWESTERNADVENTIST.ORG/CHILDREN](http://SOUTHWESTERNADVENTIST.ORG/CHILDREN)

**LONE STAR CAMP**  
6894 FM1317, ATHENS, TX 75752

Seventh-day Adventist Church  
SOUTHWESTERN UNION

CHILDREN'S  
MINISTRIES

JOIN US FOR  
VBS 2022

*Casper Canyon*



# Executive Committee

## Meeting Highlights Strategic Plan, Evangelism and Ministries

**BURLESON, TEX.** – The Executive Committee of the Southwestern Union met for its regularly scheduled meeting on Sept. 22 both virtually and in person.

Carlton Byrd, president of the Southwest Region Conference, presented a stirring devotional message to the committee, challenging them to remember that God is in control. We should check for spiritual “blind spots” in our lives. Byrd’s message was followed by Elton DeMoraes, Texas Conference president, reporting on the conference’s recent activities, highlighting their “Determined” initiative benefiting Adventist education. Ana Patterson, newly elected president of Southwestern Adventist University, also presented an inspiring report on the status and future plans of the university.

### FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN

Southwestern Union President Carlos J. Craig presented an eight-point strategic plan for the Union’s next five years. The plan was developed on the scriptural basis of Hebrews 10:22-24, and is geared toward developing leaders, assisting churches in growing young, maintaining a godly spirit and unified church body and winning souls for God’s kingdom. The full plan can be read at [SouthwesternAdventist.org](http://SouthwesternAdventist.org).

### MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Southwestern Union Executive Secretary Stephen E. Brooks presented the Southwestern Union membership report. As of Aug. 31, 2021, membership across the Southwestern Union territory was 125,004, with an average attendance of 88,031 or 70.4 percent.

### OPERATING STATEMENT AND REVOLVING FUND REPORT

John Page, Southwestern Union treasurer, presented the July 31, 2021, operating financial statement and revolving fund report, noting appropriations to conferences and new church loans. Page reported that through Aug. 20, title



remains strong across the Southwestern Union with an increase of 13.1 percent compared with 2020.

### EVANGELISM INITIATIVE

In addition to serving as executive secretary, Stephen Brooks is also the Southwestern Union evangelism and personal ministries director. Brooks shared evangelism initiatives for 2022 and 2023. In 2022, the Union plans to partner with conferences to train, inspire and equip pastors with the goal of baptizing 10 percent of their congregations, thus increasing the Union’s membership by 10 percent. In 2023, the union will deploy resources in what Brooks calls “an all-out gospel invasion to reclaim cities for Jesus.” The cities of focus in 2023 will be New Orleans and El Paso.

### FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

The executive committee voted to provide direct financial assistance to the Southwest Region Conference to assist in eliminating existing financial debt

so it may move forward in its mission without this limitation. The Union will provide a \$500,000 appropriation to be paid out over one to five years.

### MINISTRIES REPORTS

The meeting ended with reports from the following departments: multicultural ministries, church ministries, youth and young adult ministries, children’s ministries, ministerial spouses, women’s ministries and family ministries. Each of the departmental leaders shared highlights and plans for the ministries’ continued growth in the next year. All upcoming training, meetings and events can be viewed on the Union calendar at [SouthwesternAdventist.org](http://SouthwesternAdventist.org).

The meeting was adjourned with prayer by Tony Anobile, Southwestern Union vice president for church ministries. The next executive committee meeting will take place on Nov. 11.

By Jessica Lozano  
Communication Director

# University Legacy

## Providing a Chain of Connections to Future Generations



**KEENE, TEX.** — Brandon is a hard-working accounting major who appreciates the opportunity to work in the grounds department. During lunch in the cafeteria, you may find him reading the Sabbath School lesson. In the evenings, he likes to take a stroll around the pond while singing. Diego, a nursing major and son of a Southwestern Adventist University (SWAU) alum, loves to fish. Even though he is busy with clinicals during the school year, he also volunteers as coach at one of our local Adventist schools. During the summer, you may find him working at an Adventist summer camp. Naomi, a kinesiology student, spent this past summer assisting the SWAU Office of Advancement calling to pray with our friends and supporters.

In talking with them, I learned of several common threads: They are in search of God's plan for their lives. They're glad to be in a setting that feels like family. They understand that many help make their educational goals a reality. It is a privilege they don't take lightly. We have a wonderful responsibility as an educational institution to be part of their journey.

SWAU was created by fearless leaders wanting to prepare young minds who would go into the world to share the good news of the gospel. Acknowledging the growing Seventh-day Adventist movement in the southwest at the time,

SWAU was established in 1983 to fulfill three main objectives according to *The Chronicle of Southwestern Adventist College*.

First, to furnish the youth with an education which will prepare them for the practical duties of life, and to do so under the influences favorable to the promotion of reverence for the Word of God and to the development of Christian character. Second, to train laborers for the ministry and for other branches of Christian work. Third, to provide daily employment for the students, not only for its influence upon their health and their character, but also to enable them to pay for their expenses.

These main objectives bring to mind the words of Ellen G. White in her book *Education*: "True education means more than the pursuit of a certain course of study. It means more than a preparation for the life that now is. It has to do with the whole being, and with the whole period of existence possible to man. It is the harmonious development of the physical, the mental, and the spiritual powers. It prepares the student for the joy of service in this world and for the higher joy of wider service in the world to come."

Student stories remind us of God's plan to advance His kingdom here on earth. It's God's plan to prepare a generation to share His hope with others. The connection continues as a chain linked

to the previous generations following the Bible's words: "Tell it to your children, and let your children tell it to their children, and their children to the next generation." Joel 1:3.

Whether or not a student comes to SWAU knowing God's story of hope, we want to make sure the student leaves knowing His redemption story. It is even more joyful when we learn of a student's desire to serve God and share His love with others.

That is why legacy is so important. As we extend and expand, in a chain-like manner, it requires a God-given vision and generosity from students, families and community alike.

Our greatest desire and prayer is for Brandon, Diego, Naomi and our many other current and prospective students to experience Christ-centered knowledge, to grow in their faith walk with God and then to experience the overflowing joy that comes from serving God and community. What a Legacy! To explore more stories about the legacy others have left for SWAU students, [SWAU.edu/StoriesOfScholarships](http://SWAU.edu/StoriesOfScholarships).

By Tony Reyes  
Vice President for Advancement

# A Culture of Innovation

## New Entrepreneurship Center Opens at Southwestern



**KEENE, TEX.** – Today’s college students are always on the lookout for creative ways to find early financial freedom, and Southwestern Adventist University (SWAU) has created a life-size tool to help them on their way.

The SWAU Innovation and Entrepreneurship Center launched at the start of this school year. This interdisciplinary hub caters to students of all areas of study who have ideas for opening a small business. The center will provide workshops, coaching, CV reviews, roundtable events with successful entrepreneurs, mentoring and more. Over

150 students participated in last year’s pre-opening event, hosted by SWAU’s Enactus club. At the pitching competition, ten students pitched business plans for funding and \$10,000 was given away.

“Many students are interested in entrepreneurship, yet they don’t know where to begin,” says Ana Patterson, SWAU president. “This initiative will provide a framework for students to gain the knowledge and skills necessary to pursue entrepreneurial ventures. By providing access to information, connections with community leaders and opportunities for funding, the program

creates a bridge that allows for ideas to become reality.”

Ultimately, the center hopes to support not only students, but also staff, faculty, alumni and community members. “We want this center to be a special place for creative individuals to experiment and grow,” says Licci Zemeluch, professor of communication and business and founding director of the center. To support student entrepreneurs at SWAU, email [StartUp@swau.edu](mailto:StartUp@swau.edu).

By Becky St. Clair

# SWAU’s Social Mobility

## US News & World Report Recognition

**KEENE, TEX.** – *US News & World Report* continues to rank Southwestern Adventist University (SWAU) as a top institution. Ranked once again at #2 for social mobility within the Regional Colleges West, SWAU continues to stand out amongst top performing colleges and universities in the United States.

*US News & World Report* utilizes 17 factors to compile the rankings. Higher education institutions are organized into 10 distinct rankings based on academic

mission. For the past three years, social mobility has been ranked as a distinct category. The indicator measures an institution’s performance in graduating economically disadvantaged students who received federal Pell Grants.

SWAU ranked #3 in the inaugural 2020 rankings, #2 for 2021 and once again ranks #2 for 2022. Financial support, academic development and hands-on learning experiences contribute to this ranking.

“Beyond a ranking, social mobility closes the gap of inequity by providing resources, access and support for students to thrive,” shares Ana Patterson, president. “One example of SWAU’s success is that 32 percent of our 2021 graduating class identified themselves as being the first in their family to graduate from college. That is a statistic to be proud of!”

By Tim Kosaka

Director of Marketing and Public Relations

# Pass Your Torch

## Live and Leave a Legacy of Light



**M**any years ago, I was a part of the seminary chorus at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary on the campus of Andrews University. It was an incredible privilege and responsibility to represent the world Church and to share the gospel through music. On one occasion, we were invited to sing for the North American Division (NAD) year-end meetings in Minneapolis. It was a closing event, and the challenge was made to the leadership during that meeting to finish the work, move forward and pass the torch to the next generation.

Charles Bradford, then NAD president, was leading out in that meeting; he and his team had special brass torches to commemorate the event, and they were to be an incentive to advance the work in North America. When we finished singing, he made his final appeal and asked for the torches to be distributed. He turned to us and acknowledged our call to ministry, challenging us to pick up the torch of ministry for life. With that, he made sure each member of the chorus received a brass torch.

I still have that torch, believe it or not. Each time I look at it, I remember Bradford and the charge and challenge that he gave us that evening long ago. I feel now much like I assume he did then; we must continue to pass the torch. We must leave a legacy that will be a beacon to shine a light for the future.

Several years ago, singer and musician Steve Green made popular an incredible song written by Jon Mohr, "Find Us Faithful." Consider a couple of excerpts from the lyrics: "Oh, may all who come behind us find us faithful, may the fire of our devotion light their way, may the footprints that we leave lead them to believe..." Consider the words, "Surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us run the race not only for the prize, but as those who've gone before us, let us leave to those behind us, the heritage of faithfulness passed on through Godly lives."

Frankly, the goal of every believer is to leave a powerful legacy of walking with Jesus. The world and the church are in greater need now than ever before of your great example. Would you join me, as Bradford did long ago, and leave a great legacy and pass your torch?

*By Richard C. Dye, Sr., President*



# For One Child or Many

## Slidell and Baton Rouge Churches Host VBS



**SLIDELL, LA.** – The Slidell Seventh-day Adventist Church hosted Vacation Bible School (VBS) themed “Athens, Greece” each evening from July 19-23 with combined support from the Mandeville and Bogalusa Seventh-day Adventist churches. There were 10-13 children attending nightly. The closing program, held at the 11 a.m. service on Saturday, showcased what the children learned during the week about Paul and his journeys, along with the crafts they made, games they played and a video that included the children and helpers.

Jerson Sical, pastor of Slidell church, said, “Whether we have one or more children, we will have VBS.” Angelina Jones was the volunteer leader: God was good and helped make VBS successful. Thanks be to God, and a big thank you to the leaders and helpers.

The Baton Rouge Seventh-day Adventist Church chose “Bible Heros” as their theme, teaching children that true superheroes can be found in the Bible. They met at the Jones Creek Adventist Academy each night and ended their program at the worship

service on Sabbath. The biblical town of Bethany was recreated in the school to include different stations for Bible stories, crafts, prayer, games and snacks. The children learned about Miriam, Samuel, Naaman’s servant girl, Rhoda and the boy with the loaves of bread and fish who were real kids who did real things that made a big difference. The VBS program was directed by Kathy Weigand along with six adults and four teen volunteers.

— By Vernella Rogers and Tracy Francis

# A Birthday Surprise!

## Slidell Church Celebrates with Oldest Member

**SLIDELL, LA.** – Several of the Slidell Seventh-day Adventist Church members participated in a surprise pre-birthday car parade on Sunday, July 25, 2021, for Elsie Gelbke’s 97th birthday with cards, balloons, posters, a plant and lots of love. Elsie says she became an Adventist in 1977, by way of George Vanderman sermons and a few Revelation seminars. She remembers it vividly and fondly as she talks about it with members. She was a member of New Orleans First Seventh-day Adventist Church for many years before moving to the Northshore

and becoming a member of the Slidell church family where she has held many church offices and dedicated her time to further the word of God. Elsie has been homebound for several years, yet she still keeps in touch with the members, even sending in newsletter articles for the monthly church newsletter. She says she misses her church family so much. Elsie’s daughter, Susan, thanked everyone who came out, including several neighbors and friends. She said her mom had a wonderful time and loved it!

— By Vernella Rogers



# New Lives in Christ

## Mammoth Spring Church Welcomes Two Through Baptism

**MAMMOTH SPRING, ARK.** — The Mammoth Spring Seventh-day Adventist Church welcomed Gina Wilson and her son, Jett Wilson, into a new life with Christ and into church membership as they were baptized in Spring River by Elroy Tesch, pastor of the Mammoth Spring church, on July 24. Many of the Mammoth Spring church's members were present at the baptism in the river.

By Rita Neptune



# Declaring His Love

## Choir Sings with Composer and Singer Mireya Mayo

**BONNERDALE, ARK.** — Mireya Mayo's composition, "The King of Love," echoes the closing paragraph of *The Great Controversy* by Ellen G. White: "The great controversy is ended. Sin and sinners are no more. The entire universe is clean. One pulse of harmony and gladness beats through the vast creation. From Him who created all, flow life and light and gladness, throughout the realms of illimitable space. From the minutest atom to the greatest world, all things animate and inanimate, in their unshadowed beauty and perfect joy declare that God is love." Mayo wanted her composition "to portray the teachings of the Bible and beliefs of her church from the creation to the second coming of Jesus." The hallelujahs celebrate the glorious moment when He is crowned king.

Mayo is the daughter of a pastor and was raised in the church. However, most of her family has left the church, and she hopes that maybe they will listen to her song and be led to return to the faith in which they grew up. Hearing the gospel in song touches the heart more than any other vehicle. Divine power

combines with human talent to make the difference in whether the word is accepted or not. It is the Holy Spirit who works to touch hearts and change lives.

From a young age, Mayo has always wanted to do missionary work, and she finds it exciting that she can do this through her music. "Music is powerful, more powerful than the spoken word... It's another way to reach a heart. It's a joy for me to do this while we still have time, before it's too late," she says.

While writing the music, she became

so overwhelmed at the realization that day when she would see her Lord and Savior and sing before Him was actually coming soon that she literally had to stop writing.

Watch Mayo and the Bonnerdale choir sing "The King of Love" directed by Kristen La Madrid, pianist and organist, who also transcribed the music and sings with Mayo online at [YouTube.com/watch?v=wAYdhOiy0Yw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wAYdhOiy0Yw).

By June Bates



# Ozark Adventist Academy

## A Mission Field and a Training Field

**GENTRY, ARK.** – The halls that sat so silent over the summer have once again been filled with smiling, laughing students after August's registration day, forever turning that page of the calendar.

Students shop for those perfect shoes, those pencils that have that new school year smell and that fluffy pink rug that will look so perfect in their new dorm room. Ozark Adventist Academy staff are praying, planning and working so that this new 2021-2022 school year will make a lasting impression on the hearts of Ozark's students.

Despite the necessity of wearing masks, social distancing and the extra care that was needed last year because of COVID-19, there was a different feeling on campus.

On Sabbath afternoon, you would sometimes see a self-led group of students congregating in a circle with their Bibles and a devotional book to learn, encourage and support one another. If you were to ask some of our students about last year, they would probably tell you it was more like a family on campus than it was before.

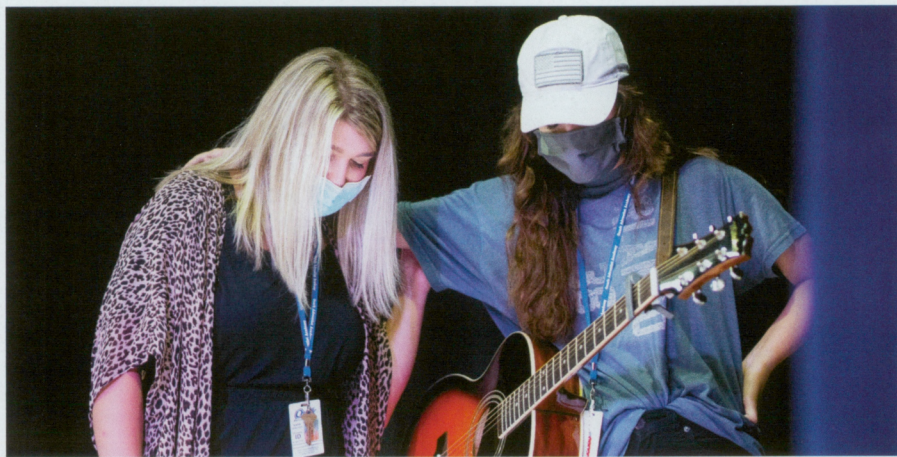
Robert Fetters took the helm as Ozark's principal late last school year. He wants to encourage and nurture that close-knit feeling of family and spiritual interest that pervaded our campus. His goal in the 2021-2022 school year is not only to lead students to Christ but to encourage and develop in them the leadership skills that are needed in the church not just tomorrow but today.

Robert believes we should be "intentional about training students for leadership and giving them opportunities to lead."

Ozark Adventist Academy is a mission field and a training field. As we embark on a new school year at Ozark, please pray for our campus, our students and our staff, that God's spirit will be present and we will be able to help finish the work God has given us to do.

To keep up with what is happening on our campus during the school year visit us at [OzarkAcademy.org](http://OzarkAcademy.org) or follow us at Facebook/OzarkAdventistAcademy.

By Debbie Upson



# Heading to Academy

## Baton Rouge Church Showers High School Students

**BATON ROUGE, LA.** — Three students from the Baton Rouge Seventh-day Adventist Church began planning to attend Ozark Adventist Academy this fall: Isaac (10th grade), Pearl (11th grade) and Vashti (12th grade). It's a long way from home, and although the church members are supportive of Christian education, they will miss them dearly. The church came together this summer to show their love and support and "showered" them with items for their dorm rooms to provide the personal comforts of home.

By Tracy Francis



# Blessings Abound

## Gentry Church Celebrates Mothers and Babies

**GENTRY, ARK.** — In August, the Gentry Seventh-day Adventist Church celebrated the upcoming births of five babies! While some people were unsure about a shower for five women (and for most of the women, it was their third child), they were sure people wouldn't want to bring that many gifts.

But it turned out to be a very wonderful and positive thing for our church. Emily (Fisher) Kurtz just had her first boy after two girls; Courtney Timms, Brooke Hiebert and Brittany Hagele are going to be blessed with sons, while

Bridget (Darmody) Smit was just blessed with her third daughter.

One mother said she was so tickled with the gifts; she thought the Gentry church a very giving church. Another mother thanked the church for the shower and said, "It has made me a lot more excited about having my baby."

We are proud of the new babies that God is blessing our church with and proud of the parents who are faithful in bringing their babies to church.

It will certainly increase the attendance in our Tiny Tots classroom.

We pray God blesses each of the families that are growing, as it helps grow our church as well.

By Charlotte Robinson

*Left: Gentry showered five expectant mothers with gifts and love.*

*Right: Shower sponsors were happy to celebrate the growing families.*





# Investments

## Impacting the Lives of Others as Jesus Did



**I**nvestments in others always have an impact. Jesus said it this way in Luke 6:38, “Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.”

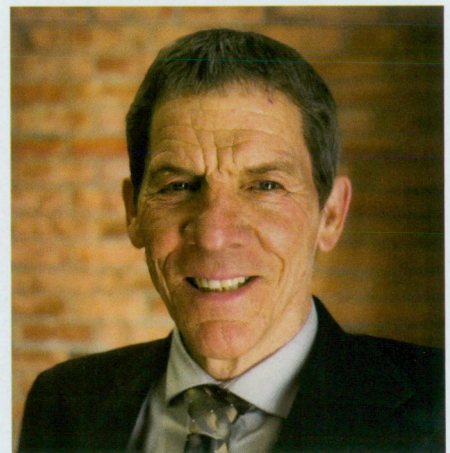
The people I remember the most in my life were ones who took time to invest in me. These were my parents, grandparents and other relatives. Then there were teachers, coaches and other adults who took an interest in me and poured into my life as I grew older.

I remember a drill sergeant in basic training and other leaders in the military who took time to give of themselves and the impact it had on me as a young man. Spiritually, there were pastors, elders and church members who greatly impacted my life. Included in the list of people who influenced me were teachers throughout my Adventist education. Later in my life, as my career took shape, there were conference presidents and other conference leaders who took time to invest in me; that made a difference in my professional and spiritual development.

I believe that the time and energy we invest in others are like seeds we gently plant that can eventually bear fruit in a changed and strengthened life. Jesus poured Himself into the first disciples. They in turn did the same for others and so on, down to our day.

Consider what an impact this has had on our world. Many people have poured into our lives to help make us who we are today. Of course, it was by the power and inspiration of the Holy Spirit. We now have chances each day to seek to impact and influence others by a life of giving and self-sacrifice. Let’s pray for the Holy Spirit to bring to our minds people who He wants us to influence for God and eternity. I believe He will answer that prayer and give us the grace to do it.

*By James Shires, President*



# Ministering to Parents

## Children's Ministries Training in Tulsa Area

**TULSA** – The Tulsa area Spanish churches came together to receive children's ministries training on Aug. 21 to help them better serve children. We had representatives from Broken Arrow, Garnett, Independence and West Siloam Springs churches. Almost 50 people attended the training.

The theme of this training was "Ministering to Parents," and participants learned the great responsibility of increasing Christian values in our children. The event was held at the Tulsa Central Spanish Seventh-day Adventist

Church, which did an excellent job hosting. Enriched by the seminars and eager for more training, members asked when the next training would be held. It is our desire to continue to provide opportunities for future certifications in which we hope many more will join.

By Damaris Prieto  
*Children's Ministries Assistant Coordinator*



# Wewoka Welcomes Volunteer

## Young Man from Argentina to Serve for Six Months

**WEWOKA, OKLA.** – On Aug. 10, Wewoka Woods Adventist Center received volunteer Andrew Block who will be serving with us for six months. Block, who is from Buenos Aires, Argentina, recently finished high school and committed the next six months to serve in a mission field abroad before starting college.

Through our denomination's worldwide volunteer program, Adventist Volunteer Service, Block applied and was accepted to serve in our conference. Block's main responsibility will be to assist our camp ranger, Sam Hutchin-

son, with the various needs throughout the camp. In addition, as time permits, he will be preaching at some of the local churches.

When asked why he decided to leave the comforts of his home country and travel thousands of miles away to serve in a place he didn't know, he gave many great responses.

One that stood out was that he wanted to be in a place where he had to rely fully on God and trust His promises, strengthening his relationship with Him.

We are thankful for young men and

women like Andrew who are willing to dedicate their lives for a period of time to serve fully in the Lord's work. We pray that other young people will be inspired and will consider taking time off to serve as missionaries. If you or a young person you know is interested in serving as a missionary overseas, please contact the Oklahoma Conference youth department for guidance and counsel on how to make this a reality.

By Daniel Ortega  
*Youth and Communication Director*



# I Will Go

## Oklahoma Families Attend Spanish Camp Meeting



**WEWOKA, OKLA.** – The sunny days and high temperatures of this summer were no obstacle for the families of the Oklahoma Conference who declared “I Will Go” to the Spanish camp meeting which was held from July 23-25, 2021. We were richly blessed by the messages from José Pagán, Keene Spanish Seventh-day Adventist Church pastor, and by his altar calls to surrender our lives to God and to allow the Holy Spirit the opportunity to do the work of reconsecrating our lives. Three lives sealed their pact with heaven through baptism.

More than 200 youth met with Paulo Tenorio, Texas Conference youth and club ministries director, who motivated them to serve and have a personal encounter with Jesus. The children were an important part of the services, both with assisting but also with the message that we have a great future ahead of us. Our guest singer, Felipe Garibo, called us to God through special music and a very spiritual concert. The central part of our camp this year was the “passion play.” Different scenes were represented by different churches. It dramatized the



life, death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ and the hope of seeing His return in glory.

We thank God for the privilege that He gave us to present this program to around 1,200 people who accompanied us. We hope that, if it is His will, in 2022 we will be able to have a similar experience where we can marvel at His great love and find strength in the surety of His promise: “Behold, I am coming quickly...” Revelation 22:7.

By Luis Prieto  
Hispanic Ministries Coordinator

# Muskogee Pantry

## Open and All Are Welcome

**MUSKOGEE, OKLA.** – The Muskogee Seventh-day Adventist Church’s food pantry, Joseph’s Storehouse, held its first drive-by food giveaway on Monday, Aug. 30, 2021, and distributed 125 bags of food.

Joseph’s Storehouse held the special food giveaway in August in order to reach more people in need and make them aware of our presence in the community.

Joseph’s Storehouse is open each Monday, except on major holidays, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., at the Adventist

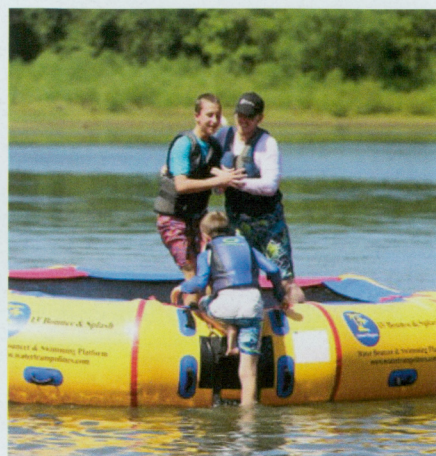
Community Services Center, located at 615 South Main Street in Muskogee, Okla. Anyone needing food is welcome to come up to twice per month and select items they need. We’re blessed by this ministry of blessing others!

By Cindy Adams



# Father/Son Lake Escapade

## Spiritual Growth and Family Bonding



**WEWOKA, OKLA.** — The Oklahoma Conference children's ministries department hosted its first ever Father/Son Lake Escapade at Wewoka Woods Adventist Center on Aug. 22. The day started off at 8 a.m. with the option to go mountain biking, disk golfing or catch and release fishing. By 10 a.m. most everyone had arrived and we gathered together at the lakeside amphitheater for worship. Rex Shepherd led out with his focus on the parable of the prodigal son and the importance of the father-son relationship.

Four of our wonderful summer camp

staff returned for the day to be life-guards. The pool was open for those who wanted to swim and also the lake-front was open for canoeing, kayaking, paddle boating, swimming and playing on the water trampoline. We had a picnic-style lunch and afterwards, the boat took the group tubing.

Another fun activity was the inflatable obstacle course. It was enjoyable to watch the fathers and sons in action as they raced each other. We had other games set up to be played, but the biggest hit was being able to play in the

water on a hot August day.

It is the mission of the children's ministries department to provide opportunities for families to connect not only on a spiritual level but in a fun and safe environment. Thank you to all the fathers who brought their sons to this special event. Thank you to Daniel Ortega, youth director, and to the children's ministries team who worked together to make it happen!

By Norma Shepherd  
Children's Ministries Coordinator

# Children in the Park

## Adventist Fellowship Community Outreach

**TULSA** — During the first week in August, Adventist Fellowship hosted an outreach called "Children in the Park." It happened at a local park around the corner from the church. The outreach team knocked on doors and passed out fliers in the community within close proximity to the church and the community came out. Each day children were taught a bible lesson, made a craft, played games and were provided a snack. They learned that Jesus loves them and so do their neighbors at Adventist Fellowship.

By Karol Mosebay



# Ribbon Cutting

## Muskogee Academy Joins Chamber

**MUSKOGEE, OKLA.** – Muskogee Seventh-day Adventist Christian Academy held a ribbon-cutting ceremony on Aug. 30, 2021, to celebrate joining the Muskogee Chamber of Commerce. In attendance were members of the Muskogee Chamber of Commerce; Pat Milligan, Muskogee church pastor; Tim Kripps, Oklahoma Conference superintendent and Muskogee Mayor Marlon Coleman. We had a special prayer ceremony for our students, staff and future students. Guests were then given tours of the facility.



# Finances and Stewardship

## Native Ministries Hosts Seminar for Pastoral Couples

**OKLAHOMA CITY** – During camp meeting, the Native Ministries department invited pastors to bring their spouses to Oklahoma City for a finance seminar. On Sunday morning, Aug. 22, nearly a quarter of the pastors and their wives, along with a retired minister and a pastor from the Southwest Region Conference, responded to the invitation of Jim Landelius, who, with his wife, Tammy, organized the event.

Mark Eaton, former treasurer of the Oklahoma Conference and current treasurer of the Indiana Conference, began

with a seminar on pastoral taxes. Some of the content he covered was familiar to the pastors. The United States Tax Code has become so complicated, most individuals would do well to consult a CPA or similarly trained financial consultant. Pastors, whose tax situation is often very different from the general population, need to make sure their consultant is well versed in the portions specific to ministers.

Robert Burnette, assistant to the president and director of Native Ministries for the Oklahoma Conference, gave the

next presentation, on investing for the future, both temporal and eternal. On the temporal side of things, Burnette spoke of ethical investing. There are certain companies whose practices make it unethical for a Seventh-day Adventist Christian to invest in them. Burnette demonstrated how companies can be searched and investigated to ascertain whether a company is ethical or not for the purpose of investing.

After lunch, the group came back together to discuss the most important of the weekend's topics: stewardship. Burnette pointed out it is far more than just returning tithes on Sabbath morning. Not all who practice some aspects of stewardship are Christians, but all Christians should follow the practice of stewardship. Burnette counseled the group that seeking God with all of one's heart is the cornerstone of true Christian stewardship.

— By Jim Landelius  
Native Ministries Assistant Director



# An Enduring Legacy

## Telling Our Stories and Listening to Our Elders



If you have lost a parent or a grandparent to death, you've lost all the stories they didn't tell you. You may look through an old photo album and realize you don't know the names of some of your ancestors. You don't know the occasion they're celebrating. You don't know the relationships, and there's no recovery of those stories. Moreover, it may occur to you that all your stories will someday be gone, as well.

Joel 1:3 says, "Tell it to your children, and let your children tell it to their children, and their children to the next generation." Throughout Scripture, and through those followers of Christ who came before us, we see how just one believer can impact the spiritual path of multiple generations. We must tell the important, essential story of the gospel to our children and to our children's children. We must tell our story of what the Lord has done in our lives. By doing so, we build up the body of Christ.

Consider this. Are you leaving a strong legacy of love, leadership and ministry for those who will come after you? How are you pouring into others today, so that future generations may come to know and serve the Lord? While we may say that we lead by example, we must also lead by instruction, by teaching and by remembrance. Our example is important. But it is limited. We need to speak.

Yes, we must tell our stories. We must also listen. What about the testimonies of other elders? Do you, and we as a church, seek spiritual wisdom from our elders? What are their stories? Have we asked them? What can they teach us?

As Christian believers, we also have a duty to remember. In Deuteronomy 11:18-19, we read, "Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds; tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up."

Each year at Passover, Jewish children hear the biblical account told to them by their elders. Together, they remember God's faithfulness and His rescuing power. Likewise, our stories of God's powerful work in our lives, the memories we have to share with one another, are a vital part of our legacy.

So let us listen to the wonderful stories of our elders. Let us hold them in our hearts and remember them. And let us pass on our hard-won lessons to others, and so leave a legacy that endures.

*By Carlton P. Byrd, D.Min., President*



# A United Front

## Churches in the New Orleans Area Come Together

**NEW ORLEANS** – The theme of “one church in several locations” has always permeated the air in the New Orleans area churches. As a result, the Greater New Orleans United Seventh-day Adventist Church group, GNO.3, was formed. This group consists of representatives from the six area churches—Ephesus, Caffin, New Orleans East, Emmanuel, Glad Tidings and Westbank United.

The vision is “to operate as one united and consolidated pool of resources, ripe for real and relevant ministry in the New Orleans metropolitan area.” Committee leaders were chosen to implement this vision and plan programs

that all churches would participate in together. The committees consisted of the departments of Community Service, Children’s Ministry, Youth, Family Life and Health Ministries.

Several programs have taken place since the formation of the GNO.3. All churches come together monthly via YouTube, Facebook and Free Conference Call for prayer meeting each first Wednesday. United Children’s Day on July 24 was at the Caffin church. The following day was the United church picnic.

Upcoming events, which include the support of all churches, are: Caffin Ave

Evangelistic Crusade, Ephesus Evangelistic Crusade, United Thanksgiving Services and Holiday Banquet at the end of the year.

The GNO.3 continues to move forward under the direction of the Lord. The area ministers are all interested in implementing the vision with one goal in mind—to prepare for Christ’s soon return.

By Patrice F. Haywood

# Through the Storm

## Praises and Prayers in the Aftermath of Hurricane Ida

**ATHENS, TEX.** – We praise God for His blessings on His people individually and collectively as a conference family! This is especially true when we consider the impact and effects of Hurricane Ida which most recently swept through Southern Louisiana. Although property was damaged, electrical power was challenged and water issues were paramount, God spared the lives of His people within the Southwest Region Conference territory as we have not heard of any of our members who lost their lives due to this catastrophic storm. However, we pray for those individuals who did lose family members within our communities, coupled with the thousands (inclusive of our churches and church members) who must now pick up the physical, financial, and emotional pieces of rebuilding after such a storm.

Special thanks to our conference officers, our departmental directors, pastors, conference workers, Lone Star Camp staff, Community Service/ Disaster Response team leaders and



members and church members for your prayers, support and relief efforts in the aftermath of Hurricane Ida. Across the conference, you have labored, sacrificed and supported in this process. We thank you!

Lone Star Camp has served and continues to serve as a haven for those who have had to evacuate from their homes. Should individuals need continued shelter at our campground, kindly contact

our conference office at 214.943.4491.

Most recently, the Disaster Response Leadership Team of the North American Division visited Lone Star Camp to provide support to our evacuees. Derrick A. Wiltz (pictured above), a Louisiana resident who was housed at Lone Star Camp, shared his experience. Watch it now at [vimeo.com/600569417](https://vimeo.com/600569417).

By Carlton P. Byrd, President

# Wilderness

## Women's Ministries Growing Off the Grid Series

**DALLAS** – In the month of August, the Women's Ministries Department of the Southwest Region Conference hosted a 4-week spiritual growth series entitled "Wilderness - Growing Off the Grid."

We explored a variety of topics that deal with the realities of everyday life. We discussed and shared guidance on how to safely traverse difficult seasons in life. The event was virtual and took place every Friday in Spanish and every Sunday in English. Some of the topics explored included living through and growing from trials and pain, as well as learning to increase listening skills and patience.

The English speakers included Desiree Bryant, associate director of ministerial spouses for the North American Division; Adrienne Townsend Benton,

pastor and chaplain; Alicia Trusty-Jones (pictured left, third row), pastor, and Heather Dawn-Small (pictured center, second row), women's ministries director for the General Conference.

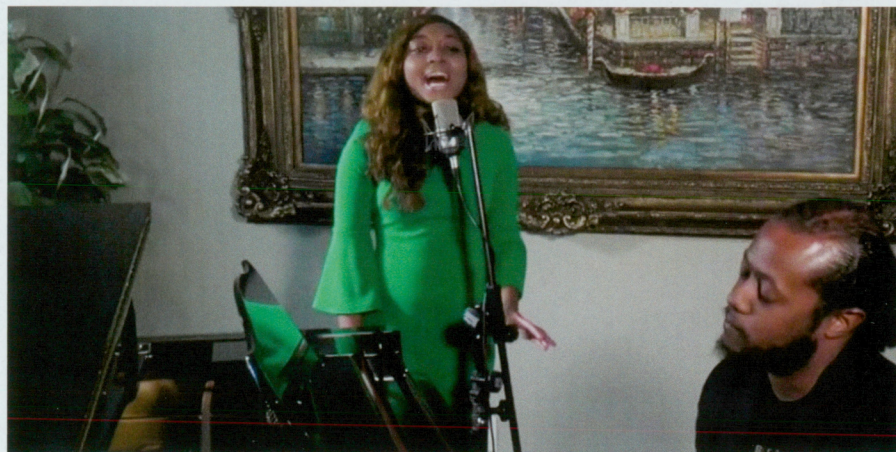
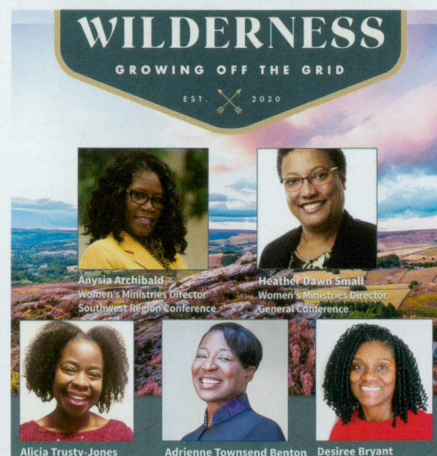
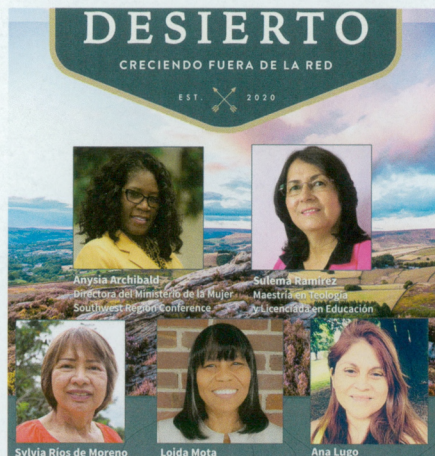
The speakers for the Spanish event included Loyda Mota, Ana Lugo, Sulema Ramírez, pastor and educator, and Silvia Moreno, psychologist.

We were reminded that God's desire is that every person reach their full potential. But this growth does not happen when we are at ease. This growth requires grit and tenacity. We grow most when off the grid and in the wilderness of life. That is where we find out who we truly are.

It is in those tough moments and spaces when our faith is tested that we learn to trust most fully. Those moments

are when we realize God holds us in the palm of His hands and is with us every step of the way.

By Leslie Soupet  
Assistant Communication Director





# Worship Experience

## Follow In-Person or Virtually

**DALLAS** – In collaboration with the Southwest Region Conference and Breath of Life TV ministry, Carlton P. Byrd has been bringing worship experiences all around the conference.

On Aug. 28, Byrd and his wife and daughter visited the Alpha Seventh-day Adventist Church in Austin, Tex. Byrd shared a relevant, inspiring message that encouraged hearers to pray and praise their way out of their own personal caves. Leaning on the classic story of David hiding from King Saul, we were reminded that God will carry us through

our cave situations when we exalt Him even in dark times.

Additionally, four persons were baptized from Austin, who, during the COVID-19 pandemic, had been viewing Byrd and Breath of Life TV. Two were siblings and two were a husband and wife. She planned to be baptized, but after hearing the sermon and the Spirit of God moving on him, the husband was also baptized!

By Norman Jones  
Communication Director



# New App and Newsletter

## Staying Connected With Your Southwest Family

**DALLAS** – One does not have to wonder what is happening in the Southwest Region Conference. There are two new and great ways to be in the know and stay connected thanks to a team of dedicated communicators who are on the lookout for top stories, ministry happenings, inspirational testimonies and photos that are worth a thousand words and more.

One way to stay connected is through the new mobile app, *Southwest+*. Inspiring and uplifting sermons, general

information and giving opportunities can be accessed at the tap of a phone or tablet screen. The mobile app is available for download in the Apple Store for Mac users and the Google Play Store for Android users.

Another way to know the latest happenings is by browsing the new electronic newsletter that is published bimonthly. The newsletter features messages from Southwest Region Conference President Carlton P. Byrd, upcoming events, a pictorial presentation of the ministry

life around the conference, executive committee actions, tithe giving reports and more. Subscribe to the electronic newsletter at [MySouthwestRegion.org/News/Sign-up-for-our-swrc-enewsletter](https://MySouthwestRegion.org/News/Sign-up-for-our-swrc-enewsletter)

A Spanish version is also available! Subscribe at [MySouthwestRegion.org/News/Newsletter-en-espanol](https://MySouthwestRegion.org/News/Newsletter-en-espanol)

By Leslie Soupet  
Assistant Communication Director



DR. CARLTON BYRD  
SPEAKER

KURT CARR & SINGERS  
OCTOBER 23

KIERRA SHEARD  
OCTOBER 24

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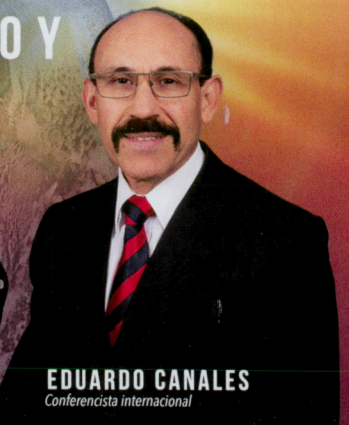
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# A Continuous Flame

## What Legacy Are You Leaving for Future Generations?



Joel 1:3 says, “Tell it to your children, and let your children tell it to their children, and their children to the next generation.” In 1791, John Wesley inspired William Wilberforce (former member of Parliament in the United Kingdom), through a letter, to continue his struggle for the abolition of slavery. Four days later, Wesley died, but his influence in Wilberforce’s life continued for many years.

Wilberforce was unable to convince Parliament to abolish slavery, but he did not give up. Despite the slanders, he continued to fight. When he felt unable to proceed, he would read the letter Wesley sent him. Finally, in 1807, the slave trade was abolished. In 1833, after Wilberforce’s death, slavery was made illegal throughout the British Empire.

These days we need to stand firm, without wavering, in what we believe. We must analyze our lives according to the legacy we are leaving to future generations. We need to sow in the people around us the testimony and virtue of the true God. Our testimony and our trust in God will always be crucial for others to reach salvation.

When it came to our multigenerational focus, Ellen G. White had some wise words in her book, *Testimonies to the Church*: “Let not the youth be ignored. Let them share in the labor and responsibility. Let them feel that they have a part to act in helping and blessing others. Let the overseers of the church devise plans whereby young men and women may be trained to put to use their entrusted talents.”

Many leaders make a significant impact while with us; however, when they are gone, oftentimes their influence vanishes. What can we do about this? I remember reading about the Olympic torches. They are designed and prepared to burn continuously. Legacy is very similar to these torches.

During our journey as leaders, we must ensure that the only position people see in us is servants of God. Even when our leadership time ends, or should we pass to our rest waiting on Jesus’ return, let the torch of our legacy continue to burn from generation to generation.

*By Elton DeMoraes, President*



# Education By Design

## A Summer Family Reunion, Teacher Edition

**ROUND ROCK, TEX.** – Family reunions are great. It’s a time to see people you haven’t seen in a long time.

The Texas Conference education staff meet every year for training and fellowship. When it is time for the North American Division or Southwestern Union Teacher Conventions, it is a special treat, like a family reunion. Even new people know somebody who knows somebody.

This past Aug. 2-5, 2021, the Southwestern Union education department hosted a union-wide teacher convention at Kalahari Resorts and Conventions in Round Rock, Tex.

Texas Conference officers Elton DeMoraes, president; David Montoya, secretary and Randy Terry, treasurer, greeted the Texas group gathered.

“We can’t thank you enough for your service to our young people,” DeMoraes said. “You all are a vital part of our mission for evangelism in the Texas Conference.”

“Working at a small school is very lonely from a professional/colleague perspective,” said Ana Luna, pictured left. She is the principal/head teacher for the Coggin Memorial School in Corpus Christi, Tex. “Gathering together with other teachers helps me feel part of a larger group. My very first teacher’s convention filled me with indescribable awe and joy.”

Smith Castillo, pictured right in the green shirt, is the principal of Houston Adventist Academy. He shares, “The teachers’ convention is a time to connect with fellow educators who share the

vision of ministering and educating students for service on this earth at the same time preparing to live with Jesus for eternity.”

Thank you to the Southwestern Union education staff for coordinating such a wonderful event.

Thank you to our administration for coming to show your support, your gifts and dedication to Adventist education. Thank you to our conference education team for your passion to help our schools succeed. Thank you, most of all, to the education staff at the schools. You all truly make an eternal difference at your school with your young people.

Find a list of our schools by visiting [TexasAdventist.org/Schools](https://TexasAdventist.org/Schools).

By Kisha Norris  
Vice President for Education



# Summer Camp Evangelism

## Time Together in God's Nature Plants Seeds for Eternity

**CLIFTON, TEX.** – Summer camp at Lake Whitney Ranch (LWR) in Clifton, Tex., was truly amazing. Over 350 campers, ranging from ages seven to 35, enjoyed many activities during the five different summer camp weeks.

Thanks to Hector Perez, Lake Whitney Ranch director, volunteers and donors, the archery range and horse program received a new look, and a beautiful nature center was created.

Summer camp is a place where kids can come and experience things that they've never experienced before.

Being out in nature, removing the distractions of mobile phones or social media, helps people engage differently. They are focused on their activity. They are more connected with the people around them. Some are building life-long friendships.

For many, this is their first time hearing about God and His love. We are blessed, as a staff, to be able to show campers God's love.

The Lord blessed us with amazing pastors sharing how we are "Marked by the Holy Spirit," the theme for the week. Focusing on Ephesians 1:13, which says, "And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit," we were excited when 11 campers

requested baptism.

Following COVID-19 protocols, the weeks were shortened, Sunday through Friday. We didn't get to spend Sabbath together, but each morning and evening we had devotions together building upon the theme.

Summer camp is such a loving Christian home environment for the campers. "LWR has been a blessing for our three children," shared Janet Frias, parent. "Our oldest would never go to another summer camp. She is now a senior at Burton Adventist Academy in Arlington, Tex. She can't wait until next summer when she can become a staff member at LWR. It's the best place my kids can spend a summer surrounded by a loving staff that has the love of God to spread."

"I was able to not only grow as a person and leader, but see God work in tangible ways. It is an experience I will always look back on fondly," Raquel Sorto-Robles shared. She was the activities director this summer.

We have campers who turn into staff. Later, after entering the workforce, they still come back as volunteers. "My experience with summer camp has shown me how camp is just like a miniature, magnified model of 'The Great Controversy.' As the counselors encourage and pray with one another, accept campers into their cabins and share Jesus with the children, so we also should encour-

age and pray with like minded believers, accept nonbelievers into our circle of influence and show Jesus to His children by our living example," shared Thomas Gordon, former staff who returned as a volunteer nurse.

"Summer camp is consistently the place where Jesus meets me. At camp, I got rebaptized. I accepted God's calling on my life to be a pastor and I had the poetic joy of pastoring during tween week! At camp, I met Jesus, true ministry and my best friend. I know Jesus is real today because He was real to me there," said Jonny Wilczynski, a former camper, staff and now Texas Conference pastor.

Coming together as summer camp staff you become family. We are grateful to the Texas Conference administration for seeing the benefit of having Summer Camp 2021, and to Hector Perez and Pila Telefoni for leading so diligently in their respective areas, as well as to Michael Gibson for really stepping up to affirm our staff. We were blessed that the Lord kept us safe throughout the summer.

Lake Whitney Ranch Summer Camp is a light in the heart of Texas, a home away from home for some of us and true summertime evangelism.

*By Deborah Gendke*

*Texas ACS Associate Director and former Summer Camp Coordinator*



# Giving New Hope

## Church Members Embrace Rise in Membership

**MARIETTA, TEX.** — The Marietta-New Hope Seventh-day Adventist Church in Marietta, Tex., grew its membership by 16 percent in just a few months.

Between a baptism, new memberships and transfers, this small, hometown church is embracing its singles, couples and families alike.

With newly revised Beginner/Cradle Roll and Primary classes available, New Hope is on the rise.

We praise God for His blessings and look forward to continued growth.

By Bonnie Weitzel



# East Texas Stewards

## Sharing What God Entrusted to Create a Living Legacy

**MARSHALL, TEX.** — After they married, Cheryl and David Steingas, pictured right, found employment in Marshall, Tex. When it was time to buy a home, there weren't many options, so they turned to God in prayer. They asked God to expand their family and provide a home where they could serve Him.

First, God helped them find land that was just the right size. "We felt the Lord placed us right here," David shared. Then, God helped them find more land across the street.

When Cheryl's now-widowed aunt needed a new home closer to family, God answered her prayer. The Steingas had a one-bedroom home moved on to the property for her.

After she passed away, they continued to use this "mission home" as a temporary shelter for Hurricane Katrina victims, as well as a home for family, friends, gospel workers and many others.

This year, the Atlanta, Linden, Marietta-New Hope and Marshall churches met on the property for an area camp

meeting. After Sabbath morning service and potluck, two new members were baptized by Ernesto Illingworth, district pastor. "We never imagined we would see baptisms on this property," David shared. "Praise God we get to serve in this capacity."

Have you considered how the Lord wants you to use the assets He entrusted to you? You may be able to create a living legacy now. Find ways to give at [TexasGiving.org](http://TexasGiving.org).

By Uzziel Maldonado, Trust Officer





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Seventh-day Adventist Church  
TEXAS CONFERENCE

# Future Dividends

## The Investment Opportunity of a Lifetime



Perhaps one of the greatest responsibilities that God has given to parents and leaders is the privilege of passing along the stories of His relationship with us to our children. With each new generation comes the challenge of transferring our faith to those who have not yet experienced the faithfulness of God.

It was a blessing for me to grow up in a family where the things of God were held in high regard. Our family's values were built on a firm belief that God was real, that He loved each of us and that He was involved in our lives every day. These lessons were confirmed by convincing stories of how God had provided for my parents and for their parents over the years.

Our little church was made up of people who became my extended family, and their faith experiences were shared with all of us who were younger. As we listened to testimonies about some pretty overwhelming challenges that some faced, their need for God's intervention seemed very real. We joined them in prayer, and as time passed, we heard expressions of gratitude for how God had provided, protected, healed, strengthened and carried them through their times of trouble.

Those stories may seem far away, but the seeds of faith that were planted continue to bear fruit in my life. Sharing these stories with my own children and grandchildren has become an important mission for me. God knew how important it would be to keep the stories of His faithfulness alive and meaningful to subsequent generations. Evidence of what He has done in the past provides an important basis for developing belief in the hearts and minds of those who come along in later years.

As the children of Israel crossed over the Jordan River and entered the Promised Land, God told Joshua to send a man from each of the 12 tribes to get a large stone from near where the priests had stood as they crossed over. Joshua set up these stones as a memorial of what God had done for His people. What happened that day is one of the most dramatic accounts of God's intervention for His people. He wanted them to always remember that He performed a supernatural miracle that would have no other acceptable explanation but that it was an act of God. In Joshua 4:21-22, God said, "In the future when your descendants ask their parents, 'What do these stones mean?' tell them, 'Israel crossed the Jordan on dry ground.'"

God calls us to invest our time in sharing our faith that has been confirmed throughout our lives with those who follow after us. As we pour into their lives, we can provide the seeds of faith that will grow into their belief that God is who He says He is, and He will do what He says He will do. This investment will yield dividends into the future as new faith is born, grows into maturity and is shared again.



*By Phil Robertson, Executive Secretary/Treasurer*



# Tuning In

## Reaching the Navajo Nation During the Pandemic

**GALLUP, N.M.** — Like most of the United States, the Navajo Nation in the Southwest has suffered greatly, even disproportionately, from the COVID-19 pandemic. The Navajo reservation, the largest in North America, occupies portions of New Mexico, Arizona and Utah in the Four Corners region. In May 2020, the Navajo Nation's infection rates surpassed that of New York, which had been, until then, the highest in the country.

Experts say that the pandemic devastation is due in part to underlying health factors and living conditions among the 300,000 tribal members. Under such conditions, there is widespread hopelessness; many people are feeling abandoned, isolated and forgotten.

The desire to bring hope to the tribe has become a major objective of Seventh-day Adventist churches in the area. Four Adventist congregations meet regularly on the reservation, and nearly a dozen other Adventist churches can be found around the edges of Navajo territory.

In addition to the Texico Conference, the Rocky Mountain Conference, the Nevada-Utah Conference and the Arizona Conference all have territory in the vast reservation. Even though obstacles are many, Adventist members believe they have found a way to reach across this large mission field through radio. However, it will require help from beyond the reservation and a good deal of cooperation among church entities if the dream is to be realized.

According to Loris Ann Taylor, executive director of Native Public Media, a nonprofit organization that is spearheading a surge in tribal radio stations nationwide, "radio is one of the only ways for American Indians to get information." She says less than ten percent of families on native reservations have broadband connections, and one-third still don't have telephones.

At a time when most of America is



inundated with new forms of communication technology, she says Native American reservations represent one segment of the country where a radio is still the most essential medium.

While our churches in the Navajo region hope that one day they will have their own station to broadcast programs of hope and wholeness to the people in their language, last year they launched a pilot project that shows what radio can do. With funds provided by the Pacific Union Evangelism endowment, they embarked on a weekly half-hour program on the largest radio station on the reservation, KTNN, "The Voice of the Navajo Nation."

After only 25 hours on air, responses to offers of the Native New Day Bible course neared 200. Dale Wolcott, Arizona Conference Native Ministries director, has been monitoring the correspondence and shared Janice's story.

"Like many of our students, Janice lives in a remote rural area of the Navajo Nation," said Wolcott. "She mailed us a quiz sheet from one of the lessons, and we noticed that she had answered all the questions about the Sabbath correctly."

Janice was happy to receive a phone call. She said she has often wondered about the Sabbath day and now has a clearer understanding. She loves the Lord and loves the Bible lessons, but she does not have a church to attend. She

would especially like to fellowship with Sabbath-keepers.

"Janice requested to be put on our church list and wants to join church services by teleconferencing. Please pray for Janice and many more like her. We continue to receive Bible study requests after almost every broadcast," said Wolcott.

The weekly programming is supervised by Jonathan Chitwood, pastor, and programs are produced in small production studios funded by the Texico, Arizona and Rocky Mountain Conferences, in strategic locations where Navajo members can most conveniently record their inspirational, health and educational messages.

The Gallup All Nations Seventh-day Adventist Church was chosen as the home for the Texico studio that is funded by the conference. Adventist World Radio also sponsored a fourth studio at Holbrook Indian School, and has pledged to match local fundraising if a church-owned station becomes a reality. In the meantime, the weekly half-hour program serves as a small piece of the Master's plan.

By Allen Steele

# Blessed to Serve

## Food Pantry and Clothes Closet Continue to Grow

**AMARILLO, TEX.** — As the season of giving gets underway, the Amarillo Seventh-day Adventist Church is grateful for how God has blessed their food pantry and clothes closet over the years.

The Amarillo church's food pantry and clothes closet was started in 2016 by Jacque Hollingsworth, the church's community services director. Hollingsworth was raised in the San Jacinto neighborhood of Amarillo and was aware of the hardships in this community. Hollingsworth began to give away clothing and other miscellaneous household items to people as she became aware of their needs.

In October of 2016, the church became involved and started the Three Angels Food Pantry and Clothes Closet. Serving the public every Tuesday in the

Amarillo church's community center, the church gave a bag of non-perishable food items and a few clothing items as needed. Soon, the Amarillo church began partnering with the local Amarillo food bank which expanded food items that were available, including fresh food items.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the highest number of persons served on a single Tuesday was 52. During the pandemic, the Three Angels Food Pantry and Clothes Closet has continued to serve the public under COVID-19 guidelines which includes curbside pick-up. Today, the average number of people served is 98; however, the program was recently suspended to allow time for remodeling and expansion into a bigger area.

Amarillo church volunteers have been told by visitors that their food pantry and clothes closet are the best in all of Amarillo. Donation bags always include something special like a mug, seasonal toy and inspiring Christian literature. These goodies make visitors feel special, and they do not receive them at other locations. The Amarillo church is thankful that the Lord has inspired and blessed them to share His love in the community of Amarillo through this very important ministry.

By Anna Swingle



# Christmas in May

## Santa Fe Students Participate in Virtual Mission Trip



**SANTA FE, N.M.**— Last May, the students at the Adventist Academy of Santa Fe (AASF) participated in a unique virtual experience with Las Palmas Children’s Village in the Dominican Republic. AASF partnered with Global Health N.E.E.D.S., a nonprofit based in Riverside, Calif., and International Child Care (ICC), which facilitated connecting them with the Adventist orphanage and made it possible to participate in the mission project. The “virtual mission trip” involved starting a school garden and interacting with Las Palmas through sharing videos, writing letters and providing school supplies/gifts.

AASF students had fun writing letters to 40 students from Las Palmas. They also sent gifts that included school supplies, personal items and a check for

\$1,500 to help with operations of the school and its residential homes. After receiving the gifts and letters, the Las Palmas students not only sent “thank you” letters, they also made a video highlighting their lives at Las Palmas.

In addition, the Las Palmas students prepared a special Christmas program video which AASF presented during a “Christmas in May” celebration. AASF students and staff enjoyed a typical Caribbean Christmas lunch and they decorated the room with a Dominican Christmas tree, flags and banners.

The students listened to the Las Palmas children’s choir sing Christmas carols in Spanish and learned about the local customs while eating the delicious Caribbean cuisine. The AASF students expressed that they were reminded how

blessed and grateful they are to have their own parents and homes.

Overall, AASF students were thrilled to participate in this experience and have plans to do it again this year. AASF would like to encourage more schools to participate. This is a very inexpensive way to provide students with a positive learning experience, where they broaden their perspective of the world, build relationships and learn about serving others.

By Raian G. Villacruel

# Coming Together

## Churches Unite for Baptisms of New Members

**RESERVE, N.M.** — On July 31, the Reserve and Grants Seventh-day Adventist churches celebrated the addition of new church members with a baptism in Reserve, N.M. This Holy Spirit-produced celebration combined the ministries of Jerry Pinzon, former pastor of the Reserve and Grants churches, and their current pastor, David Merling.

In 2013, Jerry Pinzon became the pastor of the Grants and Reserve churches. In the following years, he conducted several Revelation seminars and developed a close friendship with Dale Knighton, a member of the Grants church, and the Swenson family, members of the Reserve church. Those friendships blossomed and led to Pinzon officiating the marriage of Dale to a young woman by the name of Ambrosia. He also began

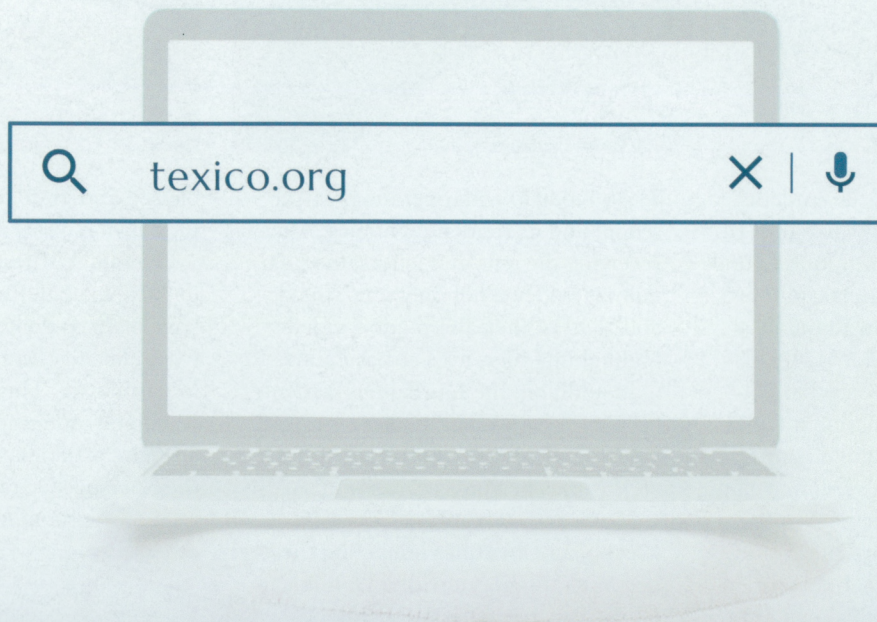
Bible studies with Elias Swenson, the youngest of the Swenson family.

Although Pinzon left the Texico Conference in 2017 to pursue a master's of divinity degree at Andrews University, he continued to give Elias Bible studies. Most recently, Pinzon returned to the Texico Conference; although he is now pastoring a new church district, he completed his Bible studies with Elias. Ambrosia and her daughters, Isela and Amara, also became increasingly convicted of their desire for baptism and responded to the gospel call. On the Sabbath morning of the baptism, it only seemed right to honor the faith of the Swensons, who had built a baptismal tank with the expectation that their son would use it, by combining these four young people in a joint baptism and led



by Pinzon. Both churches are ecstatic to welcome each member to their respective churches. Praise God from whom all blessings flow!

— By David Merling, Pastor



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## Obituaries

**Blakely, Kenneth F.**, born May 5, 1947, National City, Calif.; died Jan. 21, 2021, El Paso, Tex. Church membership: El Paso Northeast Seventh-day Adventist Church. Ken faithfully served our country as a Combat Medic in Vietnam and is simply known as "Doc" to the many whose lives he saved. He was awarded the Silver Star, two Bronze Stars and the Purple Heart for actions that he rarely spoke of. Preceded in death by his mother, Virginia. Survivors: father, Fred; wife, Rose Mary; daughter, Mishelle (Keith) and their children Lilli, Dylan and Cody; daughter, Tanya (Tim) and their children Zachary and Marin; son, Brian (Mary) and their children Wesley, Tyler and Payton; two siblings, Carol and Wayne; brother-in-law, Dick and several cousins, nieces and nephews.

**Burton, Esther Louise Hoehn**, born Oct. 6, 1933, Valley View, Tex.; died July 24, 2021, Lincoln, Neb. Esther taught Christian education all over the world, including Idaho, Guam, Palau, Vietnam, Texas, and Kansas. Preceded in death by her parents; husband, Wilbur Burton; infant son, Wilbur Eugene; sister, Thelma Kelley and brother Clarence Wilbur Hoehn. Survivors: children, Mary Burton, Ardmore, Okla.; Joy Burton, Lincoln, Neb.; Reginald Burton, Omaha; Jamie



**Michael Brian Peterson**, age 57, passed away on Aug. 11, 2021, at Methodist Mansfield Medical Center with his family by his side.

Michael was born in White Sands Missile Range, N.M., to Clyde William (Bill) Peterson and Mary Ellis Louis on Jan. 9, 1964. Michael grew up in El Paso, Tex., and enjoyed playing sports and eating at Chico's Tacos.

He made a point of eating at Chico's every time he went back to visit. Michael attended the University of Texas at El Paso after graduating from Irvin High School and before enlisting in the U.S. Air Force in 1983. He served in the U.S. Armed Forces in various roles including fuels and cryogenetics and is extremely proud of his time with the Honor Guard before completing his military service in 2008.

Michael married Christina Peery of Grand Prairie, Tex., on Oct. 17, 1999, in Grand Prairie, Tex. After becoming an instant father to Jessica and Amanda Goodrich, Michael and Christina welcomed daughter Emily Peterson in 2000 and the family of five lived in Grand Prairie, Tex., before moving and settling in Arlington, Tex., in 2005.

Michael enjoyed traveling, collecting sports cards and

coins and serving in various roles in the church. He was a member of the Fort Worth First Seventh-day Adventist Church of Fort Worth, Tex., but was baptized in 2000 into the Grand Prairie Seventh-day Adventist Church of Grand Prairie, Tex. He served in various roles at the church, as Deacon and in Men's Ministries, and would always lend a helping hand in any area of the church. He enjoyed almost any opportunity to be with family and visit with his friends, with always a good meal included. He was also very proud of his Choctaw Indian heritage and that his grandfather, Solomon Louis (Sr.), was one of the original code-talkers from WWI.

He was preceded in death by his grandfather, Solomon Louis Jr.; mother, Mary Louis Tolbert and his grandmother, Wahnetah Louis. Those left to treasure his memory are his wife, Christina; daughters, Emily, Amanda Cisneros (Martin) and Jessica Garcia (Rod); grandchildren, Noah, Nathan, Nicolas, Margot and Milo; his brother, Donald Leavenworth; his uncle, Michael Louis; his cousins, Kathy Butts, Kevin Louis and father, Bill; as well as his mother and father-in-law, William and Barbara Peery; extended family and a significant number of friends.

Michael will be remembered for his love, patience, generosity, always knowing the best places to eat, his brisket-making skills, his kind and gentle character and being a good friend. Michael's favorite charities were the Tarrant County Food Bank and Police & Sheriff Support Alliance.

Snyder, Loma Linda, Calif. and Wilma Bing (Doug), Lake Tapps, Wash.; adopted children, Yasko Mendiola and family; Surangel Whipps and family and Chely Dicken and family; grandchildren, Benjamin Burton, David Burton (Jennifer), Chelsea Macgowan (Dan), Alex Burton, Tristan Burton, Jake Minesinger (Jess), Eric Bing (fiancé, Jamie Hiplar), Kaleigh Morgan (Jordan) and Ryan Bing (Jasmine); great-grandchildren, Ada, Ian, Andrew and Aubriella Burton, Carter

Macgowan, Nick, Katie and Isabelle Minesinger.

**Evard, Dr. Michel**, born Aug. 28, 1937, Gland, Switzerland; died July 23, 2021, Norman, Okla. Church membership: Ardmore Seventh-day Adventist Church. Preceded in death by his parents, Frederic Henri Evard and Jeanne (Gilles) Evard; his brothers, Rene and Jean-Paul Evard and his sister, Christiane (Evard) Poublan. Survivors: wife, Janene (Odom) Evard; son, Remy Evard (Michele

(Pezet)); daughter, Melina Evard; and grandchildren Andre, Rose and Joelle Evard.

**Harbeson, Leonard**, born Dec. 14, 1932, Nebraska; died May 19, 2021, Harrah, Okla. Church membership: Summit Ridge Seventh-day Adventist Church. He was preceded in death by his parents, Ralph and Esther Harbeson. Survivors: wife, Ruth of Oklahoma; son, Keneth Herbeson of Washington; daughters, Cheryl Barill of

Washington, Merita Hall of Arizona; nine grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

**Page, Marian Syfert**, born Dec. 8, 1933, Oklahoma City, Okla.; died March 9, 2021, Harker Heights, Tex. Church membership: Harker Heights Seventh-day Adventist Church. Survivors: one son, Bruce, Austin, Tex.; one grandson, Justin; three brothers, K. Eugene Syfert, James William Syfert, Donald Wade Syfert and three sisters, Louise Syfert Gusso, Marjorie Syfert

**Joan Doris Bromme** (nee' Frederickson) passed to her rest in Jesus on Sept. 21, 2021. She was a resident at Fletcher Park Inn in Hendersonville, N.C. Bromme was born in Lake Lillian, Minn., on March 27, 1938. She married Bill Bromme, who survives her, on Aug. 16, 1959.

Bromme was a registered nurse, serving in hospitals, nursing homes and home health agencies in Kansas, Texas and Maryland. Her long nursing career ended with many years of service at Adventist Healthcare in the latter state. She also shared the ministry of her husband on the campuses of Southwestern Adventist University; Enterprise Academy; Champion Academy; Highland View Academy and Spencerville Academy. She was a loving mother to Jeff, Shayne and Ginger, all of whom, with their spouses, Nichole, Rick and Jeff, survive her. She cherished her grandchildren as well; Max, Juliet, Andrew, Kari, Nathan, Nicholas and Leif, all of whom survive her. Mrs. Bromme was a person of many gifts, interests and talents. Her family and friends will remember her kindness and committed faith.

Campbell and Bobbi Syfert Litzenberger. Preceded in death by two sisters, Bonnie Syfert Bodnar and Inez Jeanette Syfert Williams.

**Reich, Dorothy**, born Nov. 15, 1932, Keene, Tex.; died May 12, 2021, Sherwood, Ark. Preceded in death by her parents and son, William Reich. Survivors: daughters, Brenda Sanders (William) and Pamela Reich; grandson, Ricky Carroll; granddaughter, Kimberly Carrol Brown (Derrick); two great-grandsons, Derrick Brown and Jarod Brown; sister, Bobbie Pannell; and numerous nieces and nephews.

**Westcott, Harold Stanley, Jr.**, born Sept. 29, 1931, Niagara Falls, N.Y.; died Aug. 25, 2021, Oklahoma City, Okla. Preceded in death by his

parents; step-father, Glen Wilson; sister, Ruth Wilson; two half-sisters, Arlene Jerla and Lois Gombert. Survivors: wife, Marlene; three sons, Carl Richard Westcott (Diane) of Texas; Lee Daniel Westcott (Jackie) of Texas and Paul David Westcott of Missouri; one daughter, Janet Lynn Huff (Roger) of Arkansas; three granddaughters, three grandsons and five great-grandchildren.

Tell it to your children,  
and let your children  
tell it to their children,  
and their children to  
the next generation.

Joel 1:3

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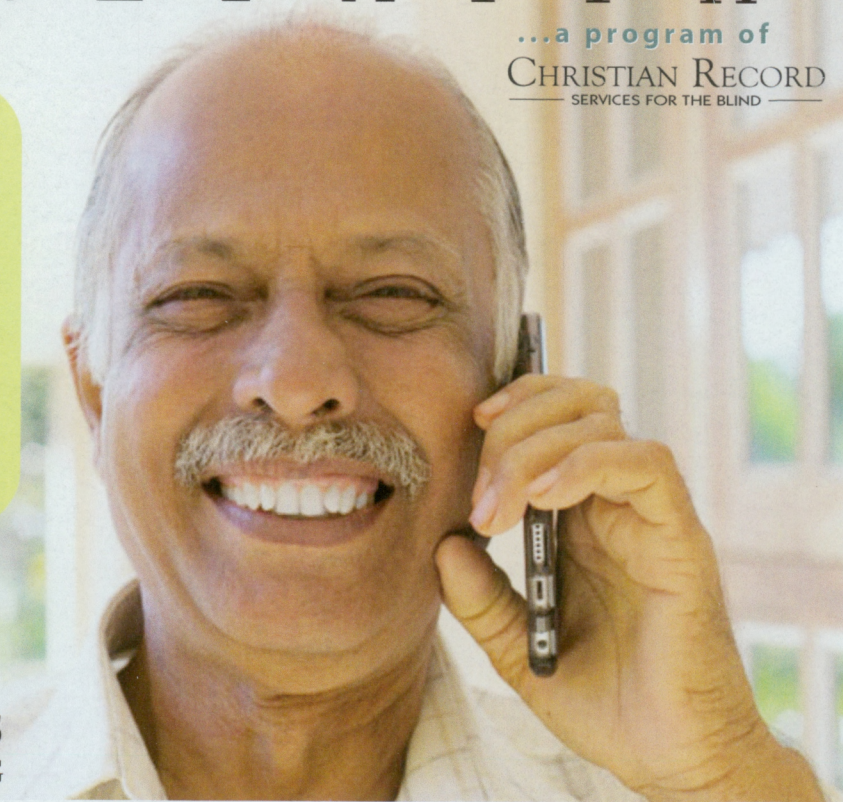
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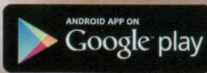
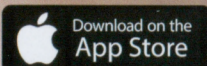
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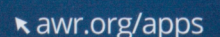
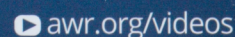
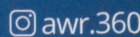
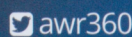
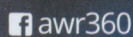
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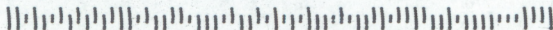
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