

# 100 Years Remembered in the Shadow of Tragedy

Renewing...awe-inspiring...touching. Words alone can't explain the emotions experienced by the approximately 6,000 people who attended the Southern Union Centennial Celebration, broadcast live on 3ABN and ACN from Atlanta, Georgia, on September 14 and 15.

They came together to remember a rich heritage of

history and, at the same time, to grieve over the nation's loss. They heard sermons to grip the soul, witnessed pageant and fanfare, and poured out their pockets in donations for the victims of terrorism. They visited booth after booth representing publishing, education, ministry, service, and more. They were saturated in the blessings of music and witness.

The following pages share a few moments from an event that one person described as "the best I've ever been to."



*The United States flag held a position of honor during the weekend. At left, Skip Culpepper, Vietnam veteran, salutes the national emblem. Below, Walter Pearson, speaker/director for Breath of Life, called all to reconsecration; Don Schneider, president, North American Division, addressed the world Church in the wake of the terrorism; and Mark Finley, speaker/director of It Is Written, pointed the audience towards hope for the future through focus on God. All spoke from the heart, touching the approximately 6,000 people in attendance.*



RON QUICK

TIBOKSHELLEY





RON QUICK



A highlight of the event was all the colorful costumes and presentations from different cultures. At far left, Fred Rogers, director of Native ministries, updated the audience on their health and education thrust. Below that, Stephanie Demetrius, teacher at Decatur Adventist Junior Academy, amazed the crowd by greeting them in

100 languages—all from memory. To her right, flags of many nations were born by Union personnel in costumes as part of the processional for World Sabbath. Ginger O’Neal (Atlanta-North) and Mike Leno (Conyers) reported news from around the Adventist world during the World Sabbath event coordinated by Gracie Culpepper, Southern Union registrar.



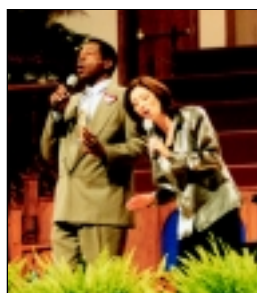
RON QUICK



Following the terrorism in Washington and New York, the weekend theme pointed its focus toward patriotism. Three offerings were redirected to ADRA, and those in attendance gave a total of \$20,000 to assist the victims.



Music gifted every service as more than 30 different groups and soloists performed. At left, the hearing impaired joined in congregational singing by lifting hands rather than voices. Below, (l to r): Inspiración, a Spanish-speaking quartet; Charles Haugabrooks and Jennifer LaMountain; and the Oakwood College Aeolians and Southern Adventist University Orchestra were just a few of the exceptional musicians.





*Johnny Johnson (left), the U.S. government official responsible for getting the Seventh-day Adventist group safely out of Vietnam during the war, recounted his story and experienced an emotional reunion with Thien Pham, Vietnamese pastor and refugee.*



*Adventist Health System reported on a patient who was experiencing miraculous progress after sustaining paralyzing injuries in a fall. He also made his decision to accept Christ through the influence of the hospital chaplain. AHS has committed to assisting him to finish school and pursue his goal to be a pastor.*

## Nine Adventists Missing After Terrorist Attacks

Silver Spring, MD—Nine Seventh-day Adventist members are among the more than 6,000 missing and presumed dead following the September 11 terrorist attacks in New York City and Washington, D.C. Adventist conferences have reported as follows:

### *Chesapeake Conference*

Ted Moy, a deacon at the Spencerville church in Silver Spring, Maryland, worked at the Pentagon. He was on a training exercise at an office very close to the point of impact. Moy leaves behind a wife and two teenagers.

### *Greater New York Conference*

Michael Baksh, mid-30s, a very involved member of the Church of the Advent Hope in upper Manhattan, was working in the Tower 2 of the World Trade Center (WTC), his first day on the job. He leaves behind a wife and two children.

Lissy Martinez, late 20s, Pathfinder leader of the Spanish Fort Washington church in upper Manhattan, was working in Tower 2. She leaves a husband and two children.

Maxima Jean-Pierre, mid-40s, Sabbath school teacher at the Spanish Patchogue, in Long Island, worked in Tower 2. She leaves a husband and four children.

Josue Velasquez worked at Tower 1. He was a very faithful and active member of the Spanish Intervale church in the Bronx and helped out with camp meeting programs. He leaves a wife and three children.

### *New Jersey Conference*

LeRoy Homer was copilot of United Airlines Flight 93 that crashed in western Pennsylvania. He was a frequent visitor to the Mt. Holly English church in New Jersey where his wife Melodie is an active member.

Jorge Velazquez, a member of the Passaic I Spanish church in New Jersey. As chief of security at Tower 2, he was busy ushering people out of the building from the 31st floor. He called home to communicate with his family at that time, but has not been heard from since.

“Your father is a real hero,” the company president told his family in a telephone conversation.

### *Northeastern Conference*

Steve Bunin, late 40s, was active in the audio visual department of the Corona church in Queens. He worked for Cantor Fitzgerald on the 103rd floor of Tower 1. He leaves behind a wife, Hyacinth.

Michelle Nelson, 27, clerk, AYS leader, youth choir member at the Linden church in Queens, also worked for Cantor Fitzgerald on the 103rd floor of Tower 1.

### MANY PEOPLE REPORTED MISSING, MOST FOUND

Seventh-day Adventist members have also lost family and friends in the tragedy. Joan Silver, a member of the Sligo church in Takoma Park, Maryland, lost a daughter, Valerie, 46, who worked near the top of one of the towers.

Dick Stenbakken, chaplain of the North American Division, reports that Rear Admiral Barry Black, chief of chaplains for the US Navy, is alive and well: “Chaplain Black was on a classified mission when the attacks occurred and was safe.”

### NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION PRESIDENT RESPONDS

“Our family has been hurt deeply in this tragedy,” said Don Schneider, president of the North American Division, upon reading the conference reports. “But I imagine that upon seeing our anguish, the angels in heaven once again urge Jesus to come and put an end to this chaotic world. ‘Let’s return to earth and get the faithful right now,’ somebody says. And Jesus says, ‘If we wait another day, maybe someone else will choose eternal life.’ And I believe that just at the thought of being able to save another person, another one of us, everyone in heaven agrees to wait a little longer. This thought encourages me to work even harder to share the hope that comes from knowing Jesus Christ. Let’s pray for the families and let’s work harder for the kingdom.”

*By Celeste Ryan, media relations director, North American Division; Rebecca Brillhart, C.A. Murray, Dionisio Olivo, Carlos Turcios, and Steve Willsey also contributed to this report.*





RON QUICK

*At left, Pathfinder Master Guides: Ernestine Lockett (Augusta), John Swafford (Georgia Cumberland), Allan Williamson and Malcolm Gordon (Southern Union), and Julian James and Magalene James (Augusta).*

*Several retired officers and Church leaders were honored on Sabbath: Warren S. Banfield, Mardian Blair, Charles E. Bradford, Theodore Cantrell, Oscar and Judy Heinrich, LeRoy J. Leiske, Alfred C. McClure, Ralph P. Peay, Don R. Rees, Harold F. Roll, Harold H. Schmidt, and J. Henson Whitehead.*



*Brenda Wood, WXIA-TV news anchor, served as a host with President Malcolm Gordon for the afternoon events. They are pictured with Bill Beckworth, director of publishing, and many of the publishing leaders and students from the summer MagaBook program.*



*Delbert Baker, Oakwood president, and Gordon Bietz, SAU president, shared the progress at their respective schools and detailed the cultural student-exchange program between the two campuses.*

*Minneola Dixon, director of archives for Oakwood, shares with Secretary Ward Sumpter a short history of the Morning Star, the boat used in early evangelistic contact with the African-American population along the banks of the Mississippi River.*



TIBOR SHELLEY



*Many of those baptized at the Hispanic evangelistic outreach were in attendance Sabbath afternoon.*

***Helping the victims of terrorism***

If you would like to give a donation to assist the victims in New York and Washington, DC, you may write a check to ADRA and mail it to ADRA, c/o Southern Union Conference, 3978 Memorial Drive, Decatur, GA 30032.



*Sheila Elwin is webmaster for the Southern Union Conference.*