

SOUTHWESTERN UNION

Record

JANUARY 2016



She Stood Firm

SPECIAL ISSUE ON RELIGIOUS LIBERTY



6



STAND FIRM AND “COUNT IT VICTORY”

In this Issue...

DEPARTMENTS

- To Your Health 4
- MyFaith 5

FEATURES

- Stand Firm and “Count It Victory” . . 6
- How to Handle Sabbath Conflicts at Work or School 9
- Religious Liberty: An Adventist Tradition 10
- Public Affairs and Religious Liberty: An Inside View 12

NEWS

- Arkansas-Louisiana 16
- Oklahoma 19
- Southwest Region 22
- Texas 25
- Texico 28
- Southwestern Adventist University . . 31
- Southwestern Union 32

ETCETERA

- Classified Ads 34
- Announcements 36
- Obituaries 36
- On the Record 39

Religious Liberty: An Adventist Tradition

10



Public Affairs and Religious Liberty:



An Inside View

12



JANUARY 2016, Vol. 115, No. 1. The *Southwestern Union Record* is a monthly publication of the Seventh-day Adventist churches in Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, New Mexico, and Texas, and is published at the headquarters of the Southwestern Union Conference, 777 S. Burleson Blvd., Burleson, TX 76028, 817.295.0476. www.SouthwesternAdventist.org | www.SWURecord.org

On the Cover

Patty Waldrop faced termination from her job when she took a stand for the Sabbath in 2013. Though she did lose that job in 2014, she was later reinstated with the same company, has received two promotions, and is studying the Bible with her coworkers during her lunch hour. Read her compelling story on page 6. [Photo by Jessica Lozano]

Point of View»

BY JAMES WINEGARDNER



The Adventist Church Supports Religious Liberty for All

Recently, local officials in Texas arrested one of our canvassing young adults for knocking on doors to share the gospel. Your Public Affairs and Religious Liberty Department came to her aid and is currently advising her in an effort to make this right and ensure that this type of mistake is not repeated.

Today, all around the world, many people will be persecuted and even killed for their faith. Growing up in the United States, we have been taught to expect better. Most of us *have* received better. What we expect in terms of treatment by employers regarding our religious beliefs has been codified in Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The act provides that each employee of an employer who hires more than 15 employees must make an accommodation for sincerely-held religious beliefs so long as that accommodation does not cause undue hardship to the employer. The definition of undue hardship has been fought over repeatedly in many contexts since 1964 and sometimes has been defined down to “any hardship.”

As Seventh-day Adventists, we have the privilege of counting our denomination and, specifically the General Conference, North American Division, and Southwestern Union, as firm supporters of religious liberty and of our rights as Americans to practice our faith without discrimination or persecution. I am especially joyful to see the Office of General Counsel at the General Conference pursuing religious liberty not just for Seventh-day Adventists, but for all persons who are being denied fairness in violation of their free exercise of religious beliefs. Todd McFarland and others in Kar-nick Doukmetzian’s Office, General Counsel for the Adventist Church, consistently

provide legal research and support to those discriminated against around the country because of their faith. I count it a privilege to be able to support them through the Southwestern Union Public Affairs and Religious Liberty Department.

The Adventist Review, Liberty Magazine, and other denominational publications attempt to keep us informed of the victories and the struggles of defending religious liberty. No one, including the ACLU, has the high level of sensitivity as that of the Seventh-day Adventist Church on the issue of religious discrimination. We can count ourselves as truly blessed to have an organization so well placed and well respected in the religious liberty debate.

Nevertheless, the struggle continues, and we have an idea how the struggle will ultimately play out. In the meanwhile, there are many things that we can do to assist those who are challenged by employers and the government in the area of religious liberty.

This issue of the *Record* tells some of the basic information we all need. As always, the Southwestern Union provides the opportunity for you to get specific advice and counsel by phone on your religious liberty situation.

James Winegardner, J.D., serves as a consultant on legal matters for the Southwestern Union and is also the senior pastor of the Keene, Texas church.





To Your Health

BY FLOYD COURTNEY AND PAT HUMPHREY

An Invitation to Be the Hands and Feet of Jesus

THE YOUR BEST PATHWAY TO HEALTH MEDICAL OUTREACH held in San Antonio, Texas, last April touched the lives of thousands of people—the 6,000-plus people who were recipients of free health services and also, the 1,700 people who served them. The organizers of that event had hoped that others would catch the vision and that similar events would be spawned around the country, and even around the world. Others indeed have caught the vision, and this coming July 14 and 15, a free health clinic will be held in Killeen, Texas, the first in a series of future free health clinics around the Southwestern Union. JUMPSTART Free Health Clinic is a project sponsored by the Southwest Chapter of ASI, and the Killeen event will be held in cooperation with the Southwestern Union, Metroplex Adventist Hospital, the city of Killeen, the Texas Conference, the Southwest Region Conference, local businesses, and several other entities. This project is modeled after Your Best Pathway to Health, but provides free health care for smaller cities within the Southwestern Union with fewer than 500,000 inhabitants.

Set-up day for the JUMPSTART clinic will be on July 13. The free clinic will run all day Thursday and through early afternoon Friday, followed by a special program on Sabbath, July 16. Special guest speaker Duane McKey, General Conference director of Sabbath School and Personal Ministries, will speak during the Thursday and Friday-evening worship programs for JUMPSTART volunteers and for divine worship on Sabbath morning. On Sabbath afternoon the city officials and others will be honored during a special recognition ceremony.

Volunteers are needed for optometry services, dental services, nursing, and most medical specialties, as well as physical therapy, occupational therapy, audiology, chaplaincy, lifestyle counseling, mental health, medical massage, and hydrotherapy. Helpers are needed for food service to prepare sack lunches and for cooking

demonstrations. Other essential services for which volunteers are needed include child care, hospitality, translation, security, engineering, and set-up and tear-down.

Vitali Prolinski, senior pastor of the Killeen church, is coordinating the chaplaincy services as well as working with the two local conferences and the local churches for follow-up health classes to be held following the two-day clinic. Evangelistic meetings will follow the health education programs.

The need is great, and now is the opportunity to be the hands and feet of our Master. Won't you volunteer to join us in this mission effort to bring comfort, healing, and salvation to the residents of Killeen and surrounding areas? To sign up as a volunteer, or to donate funds toward this worthy project, please visit the ASI website at www.asisw.org.



Jumpstart
Free Health Clinic

Medical and Non-medical
Volunteers Needed
for Free Health Clinic
to Serve 1,500 Patients

July 13-15, 2016
Killeen, Texas

Registration and more information:
www.asisw.org

Sponsored by ASI Southwest Chapter



Jessica Furr, a dental hygienist from Waco, Texas, volunteered for a recent health clinic in San Antonio.

Jesus First—Everything Else Second

GROWING UP IN AN ADVENTIST FAMILY, I lived a fairly filtered life. As an Adventist, keeping the Sabbath comes with many restrictions, things you can and cannot do on our day of rest. These restrictions became very real to me at the age of four when one of my elders scolded me for going out for ice cream on Sabbath with some older kids from church. I also remember going to church with \$2 in hand that were meant for offering but ended up in a machine at the arcade, because I often skipped Sabbath School with some friends. My parents found out about these outings and reprimanded me. These negative experiences as a child made me dislike Sabbath, because it became the strictest day of the week instead of my day with Jesus.

My parents sent me off to a Christian boarding school in South Korea at the age of 11, and with that came more rules, restrictions, and regulations. My Sabbaths became busier with all types of outreach and activities, which seemed unfair to me at the time, because I thought the Sabbath was a day of rest, and I wasn't getting any. After a couple of years, I transferred to Oklahoma Academy, yet another extension of being in a filtered, Christian environment. Thinking about it now, I feel like my parents wanted to keep me in this type of environment, because they didn't want for me to be further harmed by worldly influences, and I am grateful for that. After graduating from Oklahoma Academy my eyes were set on going to Southern Adventist University in Tennessee; however, God had other plans, and I ended up attending Southwestern Adventist University in Texas. Upon arriving, I realized that I didn't have as many restrictions. Yes, I had to attend worship, but it was more of an option and not necessarily mandatory. I had more freedom in choosing how to keep my Sabbath, and how to worship. It could be confusing at times, but I knew what was right and wrong, and I continued keeping the Sabbath.

After a few years of college life in Texas I made my way back to South Korea. As is every male Korean citizen, I was obligated to military service due to the never-ending war between North and South Korea. It was at that moment in life when keeping the Sabbath first became a real problem for me. After being assigned to my unit, I came to find that I was the only Seventh-day Adventist in my unit and I immediately started to question if I would be able to keep the Sabbath. Time passed and I was given time to keep the Sabbath in a small empty office space, but I wasn't allowed to venture out to the local church. Upon hearing about my situation, a local pastor and other Adventist officers advocated for my right to go to church, and soon after, I was allowed to go to the local church every Sabbath. I'm still thankful to the pastor who fought for my right. Without his efforts I would have spent every Sabbath in a small medic office for the years that I served in the military. This is when I started to realize the importance of keeping the Sabbath.

After finishing my military service, I came back to South-

western Adventist University to finish my bachelor's degree, got married, and like all college graduates, began looking for a job. I took an opportunity to work at Texas Health Huguley Hospital as an on-call PRN exercise physiologist and had no problem with keeping the Sabbath. But, being a recent graduate and newlywed, I felt the need for a full-time job. After a long time of searching, I finally got a call to work for a marketing company. It was a completely new environment, as I didn't have any experience in the business field, but I was excited and looked forward to learning new things every day. When I first interviewed for the job I mentioned that I could not work on Sabbath, and they were happy to accommodate me. I worked long hours, got to meet so many wonderful people, and after a few weeks I got promoted to a leadership position. When given this position, I was informed about the leadership meetings every Saturday morning, which I was allowed to miss, but I would miss out on leadership information. It was at this point that I was left to choose between my religion or a career that I enjoyed and which I was making good money at. Every day after I got promoted was a struggle, because I loved my job but I was troubled by the thought of not being able to keep the Sabbath—I knew what I had to do.

Today, I am happy to say that I chose Jesus over a job, thanks to my parents' guidance and my early filtered life that taught me what was right and wrong. Although I didn't understand it then, I understand it now. Jesus first, everything else second. It will probably be another long search, but I know that God will guide me in finding a new career that will respect my religion and honor my Sabbath.



Edna and Seongsoo Kim



STAND FIRM AND “COUNT IT VICTORY”

by Patty Waldrop with Pat Humphrey

I became a Seventh-day Adventist in April of 1989. My older sister had received a handbill for a Revelation Seminar being held at the Fort Worth First Seventh-day Adventist Church. At her insistence I decided to go, and that's when I had my first real experience meeting Jesus. I grew up in another denomination that taught and observed the Sabbath, so the Sabbath wasn't a new concept to me. What was new to me was the concept of knowing Jesus as my personal Savior. In the church of my childhood (which I stopped attending after I left home) I had developed a view of God as Someone who was sitting on His throne watching and waiting for me to make a mistake. But Pastor Don Houghton, who was the pastor of Fort Worth First at the time, helped me to see God as a loving God, one who is interested in me personally and who wants me to look to Him as my friend and Savior.

After my baptism, I wish I could say that everything in my life went great. But it didn't. A series of events occurred in our lives that led to discouragement, which resulted in our leaving the

church for a number of years. Then one day, unexpectedly, my sister asked me if she could take my grandson to church. I guess it was kind of a wake-up call for me, because I thought, *I should be the one taking my grandson to church, not her.* So I did. That experience led me to come back to the Adventist Church after being away. Though I was still faced with life's heartaches and challenges, my faith continued to grow.

One big faith experience I had was related to the loss of income after my husband's truck accident. Though our income had been reduced significantly, I decided to continue returning tithe to see what would happen. Through God's blessings, we were able to pay the bills and we never lacked anything. That was my first big faith experience.

Another challenge that life brought later was the break-up of my marriage. After having been married for 24 years and not having to work for the previous eight years, I was now single and in need of a job, and an affordable place to live. But God provided.



God found me a job and a house that I could afford. In April 2004 I began working as an administrative assistant for a large medical establishment. As I began my new job I promised God that I would continue to be faithful in returning my tithes and offerings, and in February 2005 I moved in to a more affordable home.

In 2009 I was transferred to the lab call center and things went well until November 2013, when my supervisor made an announcement that the call center hours would be expanded from five days a week to seven days a week. I immediately went into his office and explained that I could work on Sundays but not on Friday evenings or Sabbath. "There's nothing I can do," he told me. Then he advised me to go to my coworkers and "see if they will trade with you." When my coworkers refused to switch with me, I told him it didn't work. His response to me was, "There's nothing I can do, and if you do not come in on your scheduled Saturdays, they will be considered unexcused absences, which after receiving eight, you can be terminated."

At that point I contacted my former pastor and friend, Rogers Johnson, who directed me to Elder Terrell McCoy, Religious Liberty director at the Southwest Region Conference, where I am a member. He advised me to have my pastor at Agape Fellowship to write a letter to my employer. I gave the pastor's letter to my supervisor who, in turn, passed it on to the company's Office of Diversity and Inclusion and Equal Opportunity. The response came back that my request for Sabbath accommodations had been denied. Ultimately I was referred to Pastor James Winegardner, who was also the attorney for the union office, who told me, "No matter how tough it gets, do not quit your job."

During this process there was no animosity towards me from any of my supervisors. I believe with all my heart that they were

simply following policy as they understood it. They even told me that I could work with a recruiter (at company expense) so that I could transfer to another department. However, this process required me to take a test, and because some of my administrative skills had become rusty while working in the call center, I failed the test. I felt trapped. Yet despite my feelings of failure I was determined that I would not back down. From the very beginning I made a decision that I was in this for the long haul.

As I continued to follow my convictions to observe the Sabbath, my absences at work led to verbal and written warnings, which indicated that if I continued to miss work I could be terminated. With the untiring assistance from my friend, Natalie Burden, I appealed several times but each request was denied. Through this whole process I had remained steadfast and determined to pursue every option available to me, but at this point I began to get a little nervous that I was about to lose my job. Then a friend reminded me of the story of the three Hebrew boys and how they remained faithful despite their circumstances, and this encouraged me. I was also encouraged when my pastor friend gave me the words to a song entitled "Count It Victory." I desperately clung to the words of one verse, which says, "I've seen too many victories to let defeat have the last word." That song was my song, and it helped to carry me through the difficult days ahead.

Fast forwarding to August 2014, I received an "Intent to Terminate Employment" notice and with that came more appeals. On the day I was terminated I was told that I had 24 hours to appeal the decision. I did appeal, but once again my request was turned down. I appealed a second time, which was also denied. Out of desperation I contacted the North American Division and General Conference departments of Public Affairs and Religious Liberty.

On the third appeal the process changed. This time I wrote a letter and requested a hearing. I was granted a request for a hearing, which was set for December 2, 2014. A committee of three people was chosen to be on the panel, who would hear the case and make a final decision. It was some time before I knew the outcome of the hearing. Finally, in January 2015 I got a call from Todd McFarland, legal counsel at the General Conference, who had been present for the hearing. "I think they want to settle," he told me. I was surprised and so was he.

At the end of February I went back to work for the organization on a temporary assignment as an administrative assistant for the executive vice president for business affairs, which is the same office where they conducted the appeal hearing. God is so good! He placed me with the nicest supervisor. As we conversed about my experience she told me, "You realize God put you at the top, don't you?" Added to all these blessings is the fact that when I returned to work I learned that I had accumulated vacation and back pay as if I had never left the company!

The company assigned me to a recruiter to help place me in a permanent position. I am now happily employed in another department at the same company as an administrative assistant, and in less than a year since starting that job, I've gotten two promotions and two raises! When my recruiter said to me, "I want to

know who your attorney is," I simply pointed upward and said "God is my attorney."

This whole experience has been a blessing for me and for others, and I am sure God had a reason for allowing things to happen the way they did. Not only has He given me a better job with higher pay, He has opened up doors for me to share my faith with others. I remember one time when I was about to lose my job, my supervisor told me that I had actually encouraged *her* by sticking to my convictions—even though she was doing what she felt she had to do.

I have an amazing relationship with my new coworkers. During my lunch hour I study Bible prophecies with six of them, and two of my coworkers are also sharing what they are learning about Bible prophecy with some of their family members. Though at times it has been a difficult and trying experience, my faith has increased dramatically through it all. I am so thankful to my employer for rehiring me, and most of all, I'm thankful to God. He is so good!

Editor's note: Patty Waldrop's story is being featured in Liberty magazine's 2016 subscription campaign. You can watch a video of Patty telling her story and download the campaign materials at this site: <http://www.libertymagazine.org/campaign>.



HOW TO HANDLE SABBATH CONFLICTS AT WORK OR SCHOOL

In recent years in America, religious believers, especially Christians, have been ostracized, faced ridicule, and have been the subject of discrimination. In an increasingly secular society, religious believers often expect to face mounting pressure to conform to a society that is yearly distancing itself from its religious roots. Before drawing the conclusion, however, that freedom of religion is a bygone of yesteryear in America, it is important to recognize that current federal law seeks to provide a balance between employee rights to religious observance and employer rights to operate a business. Through proper communication, most cases can be worked out for a “win-win” situation, but in those few, more delicate cases, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) does exist to help employees navigate through the conundrums of workplace religious freedom rights. For Seventh-day Adventists, the Public Affairs and Religious Liberty (PARL) Department at the Southwestern Union Conference office or at your local conference office is available to offer guidance and assistance.

Know Your Rights

1. In most states, you have the right to work.
2. You have the right to hold and practice your religious convictions.
3. Your employer is obligated, under federal guidelines, to make reasonable accommodations for your religious convictions.
4. You should not have to use paid vacation time for religious observances.
5. You should not be penalized for keeping your faith, such as being written up in your service record for not showing up for scheduled work on Saturday.
6. As you obtain your education, you should never be forced to violate your conscientiously-held religious convictions.
7. You have the right to secure counsel, either through an attorney of your choosing, or by contacting the Public Affairs and Religious Liberty department of your conference.

Steps to Make a Claim

1. If faced with a Sabbath conflict—either by your employer requiring you to report for work on Saturday, or your professor scheduling an exam, or class period on Saturday—you should respectfully explain your conscientious religious convictions about keeping the Sabbath holy.
2. Never say, “Well, then, you will just have to fire me!” Or, “I will just quit!” Or, “You will just have to fail me for the class!” Such statements can be misconstrued against you.
3. Afterwards, keep an accurate record of every conversation and/or correspondence between you and your supervisor/employer, with dates and names of each person.
4. Set aside extra time to pray for God’s grace and aid.
5. Contact your pastor as soon as possible and ask for his intervention by either writing a letter, or scheduling a meeting with your employer or professor.
6. If your employer/professor disregards the letter from your pastor, contact your Conference PARL director and explain your situation.

Dr. Ed Cook earned a Ph.D. in Church-State Studies from Baylor University in 2012. He is an ordained Seventh-day Adventist minister and currently serves as the Public Affairs and Religious Liberty (PARL) director for the Texas Conference. He may be reached at mail@L21C.com.



RELIGIOUS LIBERTY: AN ADVENTIST TRADITION

by Melissa Reid

Every fourth Sabbath in January, Seventh-day Adventist church members have an opportunity to support one of our faith's most sacred beliefs—the right of an individual to obey God and follow their conscience. By contributing to the NAD Religious Liberty Offering, members are able to maintain their commitment to God's incredible gift of freedom, and affirm the church's tradition of respecting and protecting religious liberty for all people everywhere.

Says *Liberty* editor, Lincoln E. Steed, "The annual Religious Liberty Offering helps ensure that we are free to practice our faith and share the good news of the gospel.

We are humbled by our members' legacy of support for *Liberty*, and indebted to their fidelity to the ministry."

The majority of the funds raised during the Religious Liberty Offering sponsor *Liberty* magazine subscriptions to high-level government officials, federal, state, and provincial judges, and prominent social and religious leaders throughout North America. Published continuously since 1906, *Liberty* is widely considered by religious freedom advocates to be the premiere source for religious freedom news and analysis. With a subscription base of just under 180,000, *Liberty's* potential for influence is substantial. The bimonthly publication highlights developments in both domestic and international religious freedom policy, and monitors the progress of relevant legislation and judicial activity.

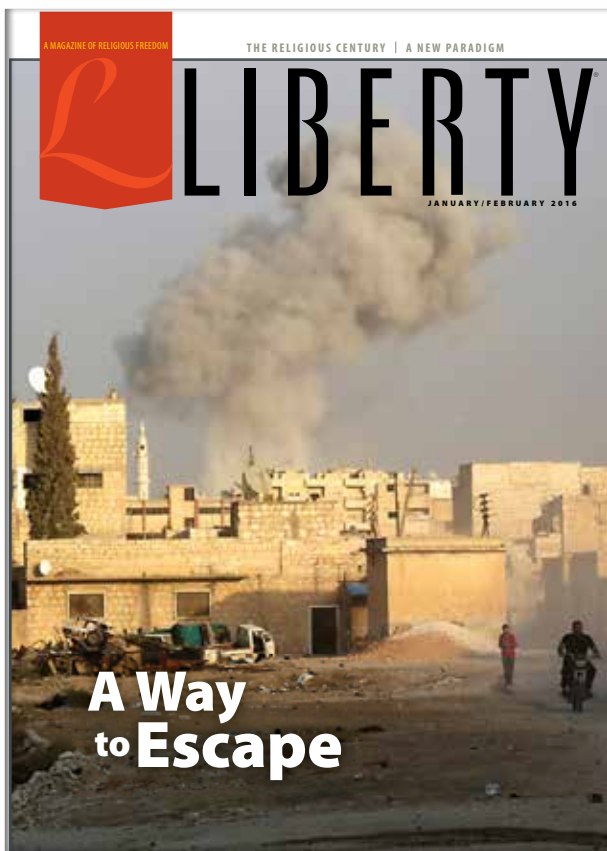
The editorial office regularly hears from individuals appreciative of having been the recipient of a sponsored subscription. Although they are initially curious as to why they began receiving

the magazine, they are equally eager to ensure that it continues to arrive regularly.

"We are often asked if people even read their sponsored *Liberty* subscriptions. It's a legitimate question. We certainly don't want to waste money sending out copies of magazines no one reads," says *Liberty* magazine associate editor, Melissa Reid. "I'm happy to confirm that the answer is emphatically, 'Yes!' People do read and respond to *Liberty*. We hear from judges who are retiring from decades on the bench who wish to continue receiving the magazine; state and county officials who are changing positions and want to maintain their subscription. Each year we receive dozens of letters of appreciation. Whether it is for a specific story, a series of articles, or our coverage and analysis of a particularly complicated issue, people view *Liberty* as a valuable resource, and are grateful for its principled message."

The Religious Liberty Offering also supports the North American Division litigation fund—resources needed to defend and preserve an individual's religious liberty in court when necessary. Says General Conference associate counsel, Todd McFarland, "The Religious Liberty Offering and the resources it provides are crucial to defending the rights of

those who are suffering because of their religion. Religious Freedom has little meaning if people of faith do not have a method to stand up for their rights." The remaining portion of the offering is returned to the Southwestern Union Public Affairs and Religious Liberty department to aid in local religious liberty promotion and education.



The Seventh-day Adventist Church is dedicated to ensuring an individual's ability to obey God and follow their conscience, and the annual Religious Liberty Offering funds that effort. Please prayerfully consider giving an offering to support this ministry on Sabbath, January 23. It is because of the faithful giving of church members like you that the Adventist Church is able to offer legal aid to individuals experiencing religious discrimination in the workplace. And it is because of the sponsorship of *Liberty* magazine subscriptions that thought leaders everywhere are more knowledgeable and responsive to issues of religious freedom.

Liberty Magazine Resources

Website: www.libertymagazine.org

- Complete text of current issue, plus a 10+ year searchable archive.
- Library of *Liberty Insider* television show episodes
- Editor's blog and video posts
- "Lifequest Liberty" podcast with Lincoln Steed and Charles Mills

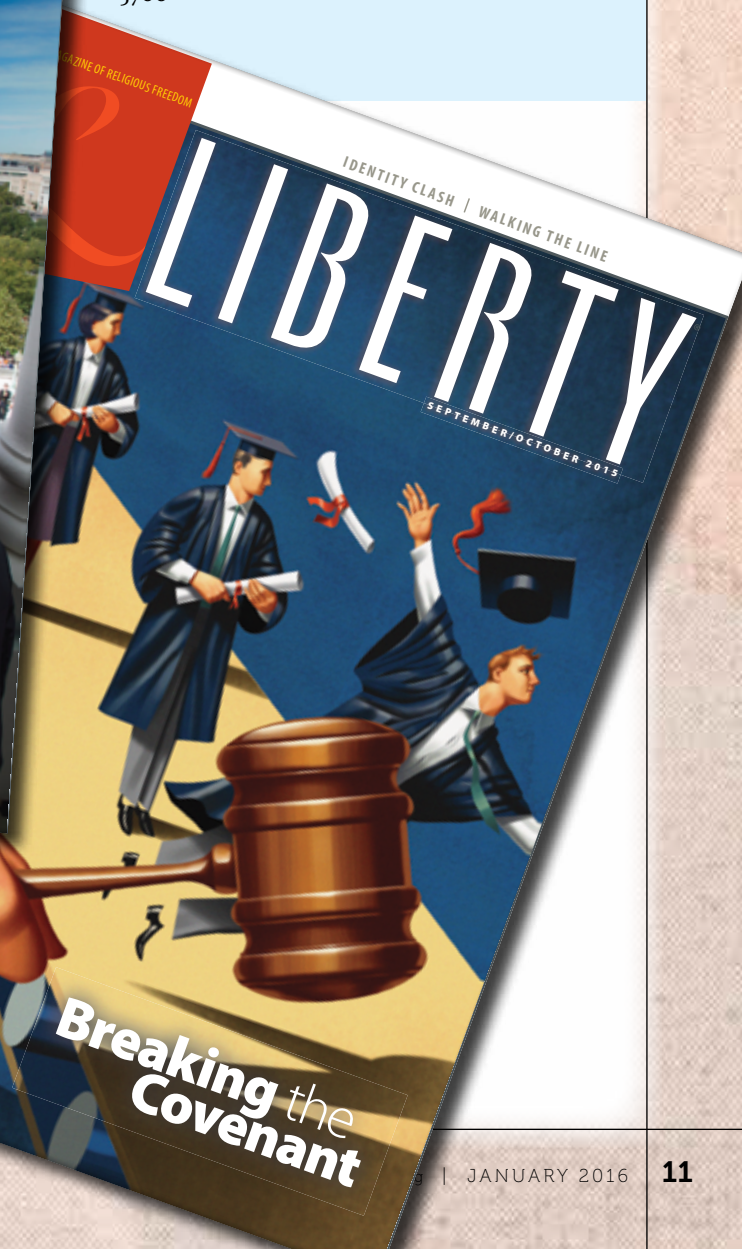
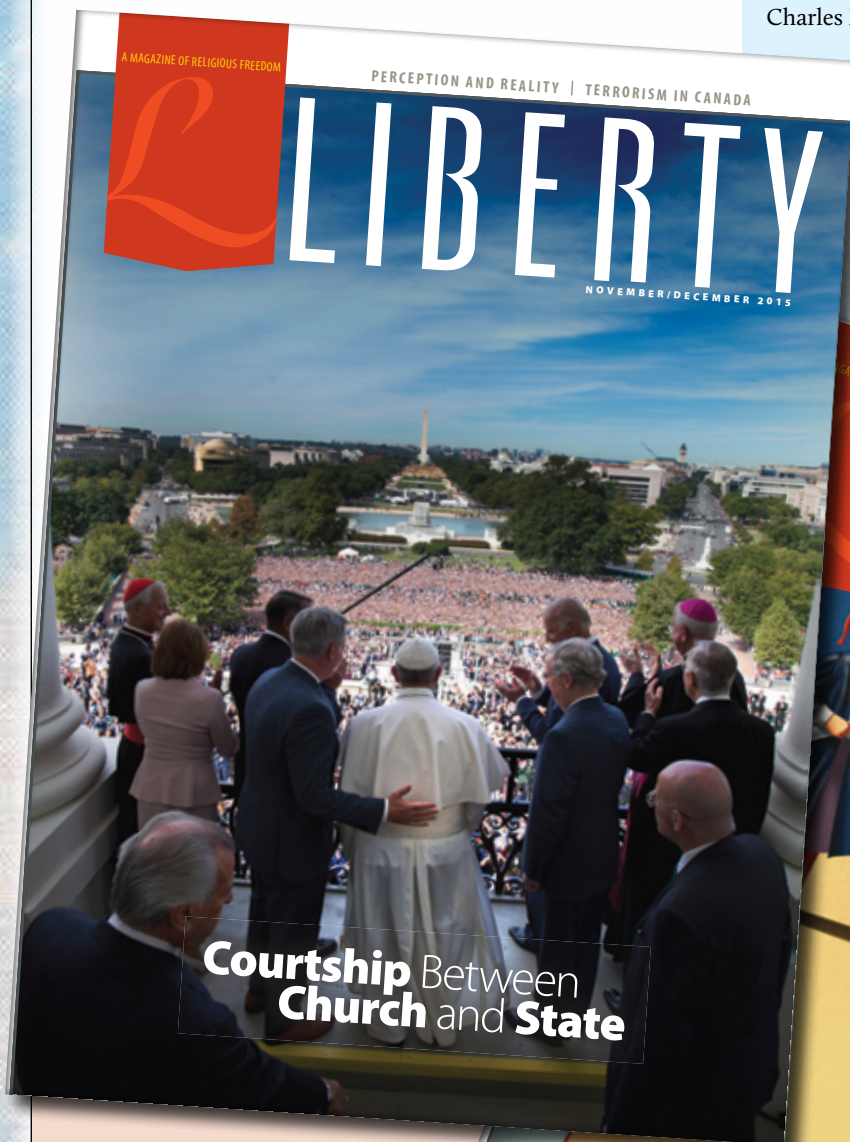
Social Media

Twitter: @Liberty_Mag

Facebook: www.facebook.com/LibertyMagazineSDA

Experiencing religious discrimination?

Call the Religious Liberty Helpline: 877-721-3700



2016 Religious Liberty Campaign Resources such as a promotional video and religious liberty-themed sermon are available for download at www.libertymagazine.org under the Campaign Resources heading.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS AND RELIGIOUS LIBERTY: AN INSIDE VIEW

By Derek Morris and Willie Hucks II

The following interview was conducted by Derek Morris and Willie Hucks, editor and associate editor, respectively, of Ministry magazine. In this interview John Graz, former director of the General Conference Department of Public Affairs and Religious Liberty (PARL); Dwayne Leslie, associate director, PARL, and director of Legislative Affairs; and Ganoune Diop, director, PARL, and former director of United Nations Relations discuss the work of the church's Public Affairs and Religious Liberty Department.

Willie Hucks (WH): What does Public Affairs and Religious Liberty (PARL) mean? What do you wish to accomplish in both public affairs and religious liberty?

John Graz (JG): (Editor's note: John Graz retired following the 2015 General Conference Session. The current GC PARL director is Ganoune Diop, who was serving as associate director when this article was written.) The religious liberty department of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists was organized in 1901. After the Second World War, they added Public Affairs to the department. We have several branches—one is defending and promoting religious freedom. Most of the time we work through the International Religious Liberty Association (IRLA) to more easily access authorities, because, in this association, we don't represent just one church, but a group of people who defend religious freedom.

The second branch is public affairs. "Public Affairs" means that everything connected with government comes to our department. It's like a foreign affairs department. We also deal with things con-

nected directly with religious freedom from a legal point of view. We have a congressional liaison, Dwayne Leslie. Everything going on in Washington, D.C., he knows about, and represents the church there.

Another branch, interchurch relations, came under our department in 1980. All connections with other religions, not just churches, go through our department. And we also lead the General Conference council of interchurch relations.

Another branch contains protocol. Every time we receive a dignitary, ambassador, head of state, or minister of government at the General Conference, it goes through our department.

We work in Washington, because we need to know what's going on regarding the United States government, especially legislation that could affect our religious freedom. We need the right information to do our best to protect our freedom.

We are recognized at the United Nations (U.N.) and have a great influence on several problems internationally.



A 2015 meeting of religious liberty experts at Pepperdine Law School in California

Our department is involved in defending and promoting human rights.

Derek Morris (DM): *Dwayne, tell us what you do in regard to interacting with Washington, D.C.*

Dwayne Leslie (DL): It's important for the world church to have a presence in Washington, D.C. So, I am the liaison between the world church and Washington, whether that is the United States Congress, White House, State Department, or other executive agencies—any groups based in Washington that impact the church or church interests. Part of my responsibility is to stay on top of all pending legislation that might impact the church and that relates to religious freedom. I'm part of several interfaith roundtables that are interested in the protection and promotion of religious freedom. And then, where certain topics might be of interest to the church and other faiths, we join interfaith initiatives to promote and protect religious freedom.

We should be tireless advocates for freedom in Washington and elsewhere around the world. I regularly meet with congressional staffers, the State Department, and other government agencies. I also deal with the faith community so that when the church needs assistance, I have those relationships already in place to be advocates for us.

We currently have two Seventh-day Adventist members serving in the United States Congress. The newest member, Dr. Raul Ruiz, was elected in November 2012 from California's 36th District. After he was elected, I made an appointment to sit down with him, introduce myself on behalf of the church, and make connections with his staff. I am a point person for when folks in the church need a contact.

DM: *What about your department's work at the U.N.?*

Ganoune Diop (GD): I represent the Seventh-day Adventist Church at the U.N., probably the most significant international relations forum. All nations have space regarding mediations for relations. My job is to convince world leaders, diplomats, decision makers, lawmakers, you name it, that they gain to have Adventists living in each one of their countries. And in doing so, I have opportunities to articulate who we are, what we believe, and our theology.

The U.N. is based on three pillars: The first one is peace and security; they focus on and have instruments there to solve problems related to wars, conflicts between nations, and how to bring about peace and security. The second pillar is development and justice; without development and justice there will be no peace among nations nor security, because people would be fighting for things like resources. Then we have a third pillar: human rights. It is actually further subdivided into three pillars: freedom, equality, and human dignity. Adventists have much to offer there. Why? Because we are Christians, and Jesus spoke about peace, security, freedom, equality, and dignity.

When it comes to the middle pillar, development in particular, Adventists have probably one of the most significant portfolios as



Dwayne Leslie (left) meets President Barack Obama

far as non-governmental organizations (NGOs). We make contributions regarding education, health, youth, women, humanitarian issues, and, of course, human rights. We are very small compared to other organizations, but I believe we can start building infrastructure in order to be able to make more of a difference than just alliances. Hopefully, as Adventists, we will gradually develop an infrastructure to be able to directly influence the system. Amazingly, I found out at the U.N. that you have theologians and thinkers who are bringing to the table aspects of their core values that sway decisions.

JG: Our department is also in charge of conversations with other churches. The result is that they recognize that Adventists are a Christian church. Many look at us as a sect or cult. Our conversations have changed their vision of us. Now we will focus on how we can promote and defend religious freedom. Dr. William Johnsson, former editor of the *Adventist Review*, is in charge of this conversation with other churches.

Dr. Diop is a member of the Committee of the Global Christian Forum, where everyone can be represented: Pentecostal, Russian Orthodox, and so on. And I have been secretary ten years now of the Christian World Communion, the highest group of religious leaders, and Bert Beach, former PARL director, was secretary for thirty-two years before me. This means that one of the highest interchurch groups has had an Adventist secretary for more than 40 years. Even if we are a minority, we are recognized as being part of a Christian community. Mingling with other Christians gives us an opportunity to talk about religious freedom and about things that are directly connected with our presence in the society and the world.

WH: *How do you see the state of religious freedom in the world today, and on what levels is your department working to promote and defend it?*

JG: The state of religious freedom since I've been here, 18 years

now, has been decreasing around the world. When I came in 1995, we had a lot of hope about countries like Russia. Russia had legislation that was very open. Billy Graham came to Moscow, and Mark Finley gave a big campaign in the Kremlin. Public evangelism would be very difficult today. And all of central Asia was open, but now, it's more difficult there too. There are a limited number of churches, and it's very difficult to open new churches.

We need to know what's going on. We have excellent colleagues worldwide giving us information. And when we have a problem somewhere, we work through what we have. One of our jobs is to build a network with whom we can work. So when something happens, we know who can help and don't waste our time.

The first fruits of religious freedom are the right to preach what you believe; the right to be different, if you want to be different; and the right to be united with others, if you want to be united. And we are defending these basic rights. But we cannot do that alone. We have to work with others, to make friends with others, and we are stronger in doing that. And this is the way we pass legislation that protects Adventists.

DL: The Pew Forum conducts an annual survey that looks at restrictions on religion throughout the world. Over the last few years, the number of people living under restriction has been steadily increasing. The most recent report noted that 77 percent of the world's population now lives under some form of restriction on religion. This is up from 68 percent in 2007. So things aren't getting any better. And so, in a place like Kazakhstan, where they're implementing restrictive religious laws, many churches, including the Seventh-day Adventist Church, lost their legal status and were forced to satisfy both quantitative and qualitative tests to get reinstated as a religion. While the Adventist Church and many other churches have now been reinstated, we still must speak out because these religion laws are still quite oppressive. While reinstatement allows you to meet within an authorized building, it prohibits you from practicing your faith in certain ways outside of that specific location. For example, a Bible study in your home would not be permitted. Many of the churches that did not get reinstated now are subject to raids and actual liquidation. Those things are happening today, and people aren't hearing that. It is important to note that many people of other minority faiths are being persecuted, suffering, and restricted from following their conscience. Those are the kind of things we need to speak against.

GD: When you look at restrictions, you have, on the one hand, government restrictions. But you have also the hostility of the population. Between 80 to 90 percent of those persecuted for their faith in the world are Christians. Every year about 150,000 Christians are killed. I was at the U.N. for the Human Rights Council and was approached by a president of an N.G.O. He specifically told me what is happening right now in Sudan, where Christians are basically killed or forced to leave the country and their churches are burned. And this is happening while we speak. Unfortunately, it is increasing in various parts of the world.

Our job is to look at what is happening, inform the church, and encourage the church on how to do things. We are not going to stop the tide of evil in this world. However, it will help if members are educated and carefully trained on how to relate to others. Bib-

lical foundations and principles help us relate to other people in the way that Christ did.

JG: We have visited countries where people are persecuted. We spent a few days in eastern Indonesia just after the war between Christians and Muslims. We visited both Muslims and Christians and encouraged them to be present in the peace process. We saw the result of religious intolerance—several thousand people were killed and many churches, even mosques, and houses burned. There are also people in prison, like Sajjad Masih, a young Adventist, now 30 years old, accused of blasphemy. He is innocent but was arrested and sentenced to life in prison. In Pakistan and other countries, the blasphemy law and the law on apostasy create a very oppressive situation for religious minorities. Every time we travel, we meet with authorities and religious leaders and see what we can do to help. Sometimes just our presence can help.

DM: *I want to talk about the International Religious Liberty Association. Tell us who can belong and how you see that organization making a difference.*

JG: The first association organized by the church was the National Religious Liberty Association in 1888. They then spread outside of North America and became the International Religious Liberty Association in 1893. In 1946, the association decided to open its membership to all who are really concerned and want to defend this principle, not only Adventists. And if you believe in Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, you can become a member of the association.

DL: The Liberty Dinner is one of the highlights on our calendar every year. The dinner, cosponsored by *Liberty* magazine and the North American Religious Liberty Association, promotes religious freedom for all people. It is also a great vehicle for us to share with government officials and diplomats in Washington, D.C., a bit about the church and the IRLA. Through the years, we have been fortunate to have a very distinguished group of speakers address our attendees. Of course, we make sure the dinner is not seen as a political event, so we invite speakers from both ends of the political spectrum. Past speakers have included Hillary Clinton, John Kerry, John McCain, Orrin Hatch, and U.S. Senate Chaplain Barry Black. A recent article on the dinner noted that this is "the leading religious liberty event in Washington," so we're extremely proud of that.

We usually anticipate around 180 to 200 people including representatives from the White House, members of Congress, congressional staff, ambassadors, and senior embassy staff as well; plus leaders from many of the faith communities in the Washington, D.C., area. We typically have many embassies represented, which provide us with an excellent opportunity to develop relationships.

DM: *Tell us about your annual think tank on religious freedom.*

JG: We organized a meeting of experts in 1999 that became one of the top annual think tanks of religious freedom. Every year we have this meeting with 25 to 30 experts. And, something that is really unique—our meeting of experts is invited by secular universities. We were invited to the University of Sydney, Toronto, and this year we will go to Pepperdine University. Of course, the majority of experts in this group are university professors.

GD: The meeting of experts is like a think tank for religious

freedom. The word “expert” is not meant to be self-serving. Prominent people from several universities come. We meet people who think differently, but we have common ground as far as religious freedom is concerned. You find people of faith or not of faith there. We are able to mingle with people operating at the cutting edge of research, who make needed intellectual contributions. We need to relate to people at all levels of expertise. And I think the meeting of experts allows us to mingle with thinkers, who in turn have an opportunity to know us and for us to know them. We produce mostly joint statements out of those meetings. We look where we have common values with people and build upon those common values.

We choose themes by observing the world—what are the trends? I am working with professors in France and Madrid, of different faiths, by the way. We work on a common value, from which we can build. Being humane together, even if we are from different faith traditions or of no faith tradition, I think it’s a tremendous lesson.

WH: *Why do you hold festivals of religious freedom?*

JG: When religious freedom is threatened, everyone is affected. Instead of having just a confidential meeting, we enlarge and try to reach people; so we started a mass festival. The concept is simple: we believe the time has come to say “thank you” for religious freedom. It means, in every country where we have religious freedom, we should say “thank you” to both God and the government. It becomes an event where many believers realize that if they were born in Saudi Arabia, in Pakistan, now, they would be in prison. Fortunately, they are living in countries where they have religious freedom. When we have large meetings of 15,000 to 45,000 people, people love religious freedom and want to keep it. From 2006 to 2013, two hundred thousand people attended our festivals. More than 15 festivals took place in 2014. No churches or religious organizations have held such mass meetings in the past. It has changed the image of religious freedom, which is no longer a meeting led by a group of experts, but by all people.

GD: The biblical principle behind this is “encourage the good” so that the people can be motivated and continue to promote it.

JG: And everywhere they have a festival; they want to have a symposium, a congress liberty concert, and other events. Because of the festival, the city of Sao Paulo has declared May 25, the day of the festival, the Annual Day of World Religious Freedom. It is the first megalopolis in the world to have its own annual religious freedom day.

WH: *What can pastors and other local church leaders do to help*

defend and protect religious freedom?

DL: One of the main things they can do is help increase awareness in their local congregations. Many church members are unaware of the restrictions on religious freedom across the globe today. Everybody can pray for those currently being persecuted around the world. To be even more active, let your local representatives know that this is an issue that is very important to you. Even though you may think, “Well, what influence can I have on a foreign country here in the United States?” Many of our leaders in Washington are very concerned about what’s happening throughout the world. Follow the many resources to keep up with what’s happening throughout the world. Our department has a Twitter account I manage every day. I read through the domestic and international news and highlight three to five stories of religious freedom issues for people who are interested in keeping up-to-date on a daily basis; that’s a great source to then share with your local congregation. So, please follow us on Twitter: @IRLA~USA and Facebook: facebook.com/IRLA.HQ. You can also watch our

television show, *Faith and Freedom*, each week on Hope Channel. Check online for the broadcast times in your specific location.

JG: We have a scheduled Sabbath of Religious Freedom, the fourth Sabbath of January. Also, every church should have a Public Affairs and Religious Liberty director and could have a club of religious freedom. We can make a difference.

GD: I personally don’t think it’s going to get better, unfortunately, even for Adventists. Ellen White

prophesied about religious liberty getting worse, even here in America. It is going to be terrible, actually. It is rare that she is that specific. But she also says, while we have this freedom, we ought to do all we can to reach out to people. And that time is right now.

JG: She also said that we shall lift up the banner of truth and religious liberty in these last days. When people ask why we are defending religious freedom, I often answer, “Because it’s a gift of God, a human right, a sign of the kingdom of God, and a prophetic message.” As Ganoune said, we know that one day we will lose our freedom. Some people ask, “Why are you doing this?” I answer, “We know that people will die, but we [still] build hospitals. We do that [defend religious freedom] because we know that it’s part of the kingdom of God to protect religious freedom for all.” Religious freedom is one of the best expressions of God’s character of love.

This article originally appeared in the March 2014 issue of Ministry magazine. Used with permission.



Ganoune Diop (far left) at the October 2015 religious freedom talks in Moscow, Russia



Focus on the Sensational or the Mission?

ARKANSAS-LOUISIANA CONFERENCE

I still remember when John F. Kennedy was running for President of the United States. Mr. Kennedy was a Roman Catholic, which raised all kinds of questions and fears around the country as to how the implications of his faith might affect the way he would run the country. Many in our church mirrored the concerns of the general public. Even though I was not even a teenager, I still remember the questions—and predictions—that were raised by church members and leaders alike. Would this be the time that Protestantism would clasp hands with Catholicism? Was Mr. Kennedy to be the one who would introduce Sunday laws in our nation? Would we soon be in the time when no man could buy or sell except those who had the mark of the beast? Were we about to lose all of our religious freedoms?

Above all people, as Seventh-day Ad-

ventists, we have been given much light in our understanding of last-day events. There is no other church that understands and teaches the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation like ours. We know we are living in the final days of earth's history. All time prophecies have been fulfilled; and the final events will be rapid ones. We know that Protestantism will clasp the hand of Catholicism. We know that soon we will see Sunday laws enacted in our land as well as abroad. We know we will lose our freedom of conscience. So how do we handle events like a papal visit to the United States? How should we react to the Pope giving a speech before a joint session of Congress or before the United Nations? There are too many people today who, just like in the day of J. F. Kennedy, want to use such events in a sensational manner. Over the past 50 years

I have seen political conflicts, economic highs and lows, and events in the religious world used in sensational ways to drum up support for various ministries and people who seek to monopolize on any and every event that will support their cause. This must not be how we relate to such events. Rather, our understanding of prophecy and current events should lead us to be sure of our calling and election. It should lead us all the more to Jesus. It should compel us to be careful in the decisions we make now during this time of relative ease so that in the time of challenges and difficulty we will be prepared to stand strong in the Lord. And finally, knowing that our freedoms will soon be gone, we should be all the more driven to complete the mission given to us by Jesus.

Stephen Orian, president

Harrison Church Celebrates Christian Education with Baptism

HARRISON, ARK. » It was an exciting spring for the Harrison church. On May 9, following the Week of Prayer at the Harrison Seventh-day Adventist Elementary School, five students decided to follow Jesus in baptism. They were joined by three adults who had been studying with Daniel Kaffenberger, pastor, and had also surrendered their hearts to Jesus. It was a wonderful day as eight dear people joined the Harrison church family in baptism.

On May 21, the Harrison school held its eighth-grade graduation. Three students graduated with honors. We wish them all

the best as they continue their higher education. During the graduation ceremony, the school's teacher, Patti Castellano, was awarded the Teacher of Excellence cer-

tificate from Arkansas-Louisiana Conference president Stephen Orian and education superintendent Stephen Burton. Kaffenberger presented Castellano with a

beautiful bouquet of flowers in appreciation of her dedication and love for her students. The school is blessed to have such a great teacher.

Mary Ann Kaffenberger



Back row, from left: Daniel Kaffenberger, pastor; David Bogachoff; Ruth Williams; and Kimbra Alexander. Front row, from left: Kari and Kaci Alexander; Sara and Zachary Jones; and Samuel Carrizosa joined by baptism

Hutchinson Family to be Missionaries in Cambodia

CONWAY, ARK. » The Conway church had a going away social and prayer of dedication for Bo and Kristen Hutchinson at the end of September. They are much loved by our Conway members. Bo and Kristen have accepted a call with Adventist Frontier Missions and will be ministering to an unreached people group. The family will be living among them in a common dwelling and will be learning the language so they can communicate directly with them. They hope to start a simple clinic to



Bo and Kristen Hutchinson and their family.

teach basic health and medical care to the people. Please pray for Bo, Kristen, and their children as they endeavor to reach these people with God's Word.

Richard Hall

Baton Rouge Celebrates 90 Years

BATON ROUGE, LA. » More than 90 years ago, Baton Rouge had only a few Adventist members. They met in members' homes until 1925 when C. Ray Kinny, a colporteur, organized the six baptized members into a company. In 1926, tent meetings opened on Plank Road near Choctaw, with Ira C. Pound as the evangelist. A number of people attended, believed what they heard, and were baptized. Shortly afterward the first Seventh-day Adventist church building was erected on Jefferson Avenue. A church school soon became a part of the church program.

During World War II, the church and school sat off Plank Road at Jefferson Street. The school had only one classroom where grades one through six were taught. The upper grades met in the church auditorium. Later the school was moved to a temporary building on Government Street. The Jefferson Avenue church was sold and construction began on a new building. When the basement of the new church was finished, the

members moved in and services were held there while the main sanctuary was under construction. The church on Government Street was dedicated in 1944.

In 1963, a new church site was purchased on Winbourne Avenue. Construction on the church building, with its adequate educational wing was begun in the fall of 1964 and completed in June 1965. The dedication of the Winbourne Avenue church was held on September 26, 1970.

In 1991, land on Jones Creek Road was purchased. At that time, the school at Prescott was closed and the teachers and students moved to an existing building on the Jones Creek property. When the church building on Winbourne sold, the members began meeting in the school building in the "Great Hall." The Jones Creek church construction started in February of 1995

and the church was completed the following year in January. On January 6, 1996, a grand opening was held with many people in attendance and six years later, on January 12, 2002, the Jones Creek Seventh-day Adventist Church was dedicated with celebration and praise to God.

On Sabbath, April 4, 2015, five former pastors and their wives took part in the 90th anniversary celebration. Each pastor had a part in the worship service with Jim Gilley, president of 3ABN, as the guest speaker. Special recognition was given to Catherine Nilson, 102, who is the daughter of a charter member of the very first Baton Rouge church in 1925. Through its doors have passed many, many devoted workers for the soon coming of Jesus Christ.

Joycelyn Fautheree

► Pastors from left: Don Houghton, Bennie Boggess, Charles Ferguson, Don Fortner, Reggie Phillips, and Mike Martinez with guest speaker Jim Gilley

Far right: Catherine Nilson, 102, daughter of a charter member from 1925



Little Rock Adventist Academy Visits the Rice Depot

LITTLE ROCK, ARK. » On Friday, September 18, the students from Little Rock Adventist Academy went to the Arkansas Rice Depot. Eight students from grades 6 through 9 were given the task of boxing up containers of peanut butter. After working for one hour and 10 minutes, the stu-



Little Rock Academy students and teachers work together for hunger relief.



dents boxed 71 boxes that weighed a total of 2,769 pounds.

Frank, a representative from the Arkansas Rice Depot, said, "Four ounces represents a serving for a child, and so the peanut butter that you have boxed equals 11,076 servings." Approximately 158 children could be receiving a serving of peanut butter every minute that the students were working at boxing the peanut butter.

Lowell S. R. Litten



Arkansas Rice Depot
hunger no more



Liberty for a Little Longer

If you are like me, you have been watching with great interest the scenes that are unfolding in our world. So many events are happening around our world. It's enough to make our heads spin.

Today, as almost never before, our world is churning with power, greed, distrust, hate, and materialism. Spirituality and worship have often been trampled and even despised by most of the world.

With the recent terror attacks, such as we witnessed in Paris, there is a growing concern for safety. Daily the media reports of new possible threats. There is a growing unrest among the world's citizens.

To students of the Bible this should not come as a surprise. I am reminded of what Daniel records in Daniel 12:1, "Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise. And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued" (NASB).

Did you notice Daniel says, "a time of

distress such as never occurred since there was a nation"? I believe we are entering that time.

I know there are some who may question and even challenge my assessment, but I believe Jesus is coming soon! And that hope provides a challenge to the church.

When Jesus was ministering on this earth, He was questioned by His disciples about a man that was born blind. They wanted to know who had sinned. Did the man sin or his parents? Jesus had an interesting response. He replied it was neither, but for the glory of God to be seen and then Jesus added this statement: "We must work the works of Him who sent Me as long as it is day; night is coming when no one can work" (John 9:4, NASB).

It was while contemplating that statement of Jesus, I began to see the importance of what He said in reference to our current environment with regard to religious liberty.

I recognize many will argue what the Establishment Clause means and there will be debates about what "free exercise" of religion means. But I can say with great certainty, religious liberty—religious free-

dom—isn't going to last very much longer. And Jesus' counsel is to work, as in preaching, teaching, and modeling the gospel, while we have daylight. Jesus' words are an imperative for you and me today.

Quibbling will not accomplish His mission. As long as He permits, we need to move boldly forward in faith and positively proclaim the gospel with Holy Spirit power. We must make the most of every ministry opportunity for however long the Lord permits. Our focus should be a mighty movement to fulfill the words of Jesus. As a couple of lines from the old hymn says, "Work, for the night is coming, when man works no more...Work, for the Lord is coming, when man's work is o'er."

What a challenge! Religious Liberty is more than just a magazine or a subscription campaign. Religious freedom is our opportunity to complete the Master's assignment before He returns. I pray you will join me in ministering to men and women about Jesus. Let's make the most of the time we have. I'm in, how about you?

Richard C. Dye, Sr., executive secretary

A Great Missionary is Resting in Jesus

OKLAHOMA CITY » In 1985 José Rodarte came from México to visit relatives in Oklahoma City. He was a Catholic, but his sister Lupe had discovered new truth, and she wanted to share with her brother. He was impressed by the Holy Spirit that this new truth was according to the Bible, and when he was invited to attend pastor **Ciro Castillo's** evangelistic meetings and was able to attend a few nights before his return to México. He was convinced and made a special request to be baptized before he went back home, and pastor Castillo baptized him. He had communicated to his wife, Estella, in México, that he was becoming an Adventist. She was greatly alarmed that José was leaving the Catho-

lic faith, and when he returned home, she would not allow him to enter their home.

In her anxiety to refute the biblical ideas that José was studying, Estella searched and found a Bible correspondence course from the Voice of Prophecy. She was unaware that, like José, she was learning the same new truth. After she finished the lessons, a local pastor delivered her certificate of completion. She realized God's miraculous timing. He had them both learning the same new truth, and together they rejoiced at home.

Soon after this José and his family began giving Bible studies in their community, and a new congregation of Seventh-day Adventists was planted in México. Later the family came to Oklahoma City, and together, have

faithfully served God in many ways for 30 years.

José's life remained one of service to his last breath, and this past November 2015, his life was tragically taken as he helped a friend fix his car. We are assured that José is resting until God's trumpet calls him to eternal life, and he will see Jesus coming in the clouds when He comes to take His children home. Until then, we invite you to pray for José's family and their journey with Jesus, until they reunite again as one family, never to depart.

Ciro and Susan Castillo

Abundant Life Becomes a Company

EDMOND » Several years ago, a group of African believers living in the Oklahoma City area wanted to plant a new church in the city of Edmond. They rallied together and began meeting. They grew and prospered. After some time, part of the group decided to go and eventually become the Oklahoma International church in Midwest City. But the rest of the group felt their mission was in the city of Edmond.

And this group has continued to work and develop. Recognizing their growing needs, the

Oklahoma Conference administration created a new district consisting of the Canadian Valley and Stillwater churches along with the Abundant Life group, assigning pastor Delthony Gordon as their new pastor.

God has continued to bless this group and they have grown. A review of their progress was examined by Conference leaders and the Executive Committee voted this group to be officially organized as a Company.

Sabbath, November 14, 2015 was a high Sabbath for the members at Abundant Life. Gordon and his

leadership team planned a special program that day culminating with Oklahoma Conference President



Top right: Delthony and Esther Gordon. Delthony is the pastor of the Abundant Life company in Edmond. The company was officially formed on November 14, 2015.

John Moyer leading these believers in becoming an official Company of the Oklahoma Conference.

Upward and onward in spreading the gospel is their continued mission. We look forward to their continued success and ministry.

Richard C. Dye, Sr., executive secretary

Sabbath Keepers Motorcycle Ministry

VINITA » The season of 2015 has proven to be a great year for the Sabbath Keepers Motorcycle Ministry. We kept busy this year with rallies, church visits, booths, hospital visits, and much more. We had several chapters from around the country meet at the General Conference Session in San Antonio. We were able to talk to many people about what we do to help spread the three-angels message. We met so many godly people filled with the Spirit and heard so many amazing stories. Some of our national officers were able to attend as well. Some of the members of the Kansas and Oklahoma chapters were even interviewed on Loma Linda Broadcasting Network.

In September, members from the Oklahoma, Kansas, and the newly-formed Arkansas chapters met together in Fayetteville, Arkansas, for a large bike rally called “Blues, Bikes, and BBQ.” Several of us ran a booth that was sponsored and stocked by some of the local churches. We passed out many pamphlets and books along with water and

snacks.

The first weekend in October found members from the Oklahoma chapter meeting members from 3AM (3 Angels Messengers) motorcycle ministry at the Southwestern Union Cowboy Camp near Athens, Texas. There were many special ministries at the camp this year, including ARC (Adventist Rodders Club) and Glorified God Riders, a horse riding ministry. This was a wonderfully uplifting weekend for all the ministries, because each had the opportunity to talk with other ministries about using their special interests to get to know others and share God’s love.

The next weekend found Oklahoma members traveling to Duncan, Oklahoma and splitting up for different events. On that Sabbath, the new Duncan church was being dedicated by the Oklahoma Conference, and a rally was being held in Duncan to raise

money for the families of the victims in the Waco, Texas incident. We were able to send members to help at both events, and God’s blessings poured out on each.

The Lord has been with us this year. We have had many safe miles and met many people. It is wonderful to be used by God to share his love with people who are hungry to hear the Word.

Our motorcycle year is coming to a close, but we keep busy during the cold months as well. We will be meeting in January to start planning our events for the year. If anyone wishes to join or has a special event they would like for us to attend, feel free to get ahold of us through our Facebook account or by checking the national Web site at www.skmmnational.org.

R.L. “Toolman” Simpson



The Sabbath Keepers Motorcycle Ministry were very active in 2015, attending rallies, visiting churches and hospitals, and much more. The group is meeting this month to plan events for 2016.



OKLAHOMA CONFERENCE

Longview Church Participates in Emergency Response Training

LONGVIEW, TEX. » The members of the Longview church, along with its pastor, Marshall Gonzales, and his wife, Julie, participated in the Gregg County Community Emergency Response Team Training in August. The training was a week long, with classes in areas of emergency response consisting of fire chemistry, disaster psychology and preparedness, search and rescue, and medical operations. After completing the training, each member received a certificate of completion and became members of the Gregg County Community Emergen-

cy Response Team (G-317). Our church's participation was one of the largest classes held in the Longview area. The coordinator said that she had never seen so many people dedicated to getting certified as a team to help others.

Angela S. Adams



▲ Search and rescue class
 Top right: Fire chemistry class
 ► The Longview church CERT team

2015 South Louisiana Youth Federation

SLIDELL, LA. » “With such an army of workers as our youth, rightly trained, might furnish, how soon the message of a crucified, risen, and soon-coming Savior might be carried to the whole world” (Education, p. 271). This quote more often used in the context of education was most applicable recently as it applied to South Louisiana’s Youth Federation (SLYF). With SYLPF president Earniesha Lott, her officers, and host church Glad Tidings Church of Slidell, Louisiana, the event was ready to live up to its hype. The captivating theme “THIS MEANS WAR!” based on recording artist Charles Jenkins’ gospel song resonated with youth and adults alike as it formed the backdrop for the colorful flyers, the illuminated stage, and the popular blue signature T-shirt and the white “War Time” shirts worn by the praise team all reminding us that “The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world...they have divine power to demolish strongholds” (2 Corinthians 10:4).

The federation, held in the Living the Word International Church in Slidell, began Friday night and was filled with praise in word, song, and action as youth from Baton Rouge, Covington, Lafayette, Lake Charles, and New Orleans shared their God-given talents. We would later learn that our host church was letting us use their facilities free of charge as a way of thanking Slidell’s Glad Tidings for open-

ing its doors to them when their former church was flooded and rendered unusable by Hurricane Katrina.

The Sabbath service featured even more youth, with some adults sprinkled in, representing their respective areas. Character presentations and a drama called “Now Is the Time” accompanied the praise in Scripture and song.

It was the Alexandria church’s Patrick Anderson, the federation’s own maestro of music, with the praise team and Hezekiah Brinson, Jr.’s, group, 5 Young Men, of the Westbank church, that contributed to the tone for the divine worship segment. Glad Tidings’ acting pastor, Ben Francois, provided the welcome. Lott then presented a plaque, Federation tee, and \$200 to a representative from Living the Word International in gratitude. A similar presentation was given to youth director and speaker Tyrone Douglas. Little did Lott know

that she was next in line for a gift as her team surrounded her and presented her with their token of appreciation.

“You know how to have church here in South Louisiana,” said an excited Douglas as he began his message. Announcements such as the 2017 National Pathfinder Camporee to be held at Lone Star Camp-





ground followed. He began his message with the story of how a football team that declared victory in its own strength was defeated. “We may have the best and noblest of intentions but will lose if we fight the devil with our own intentions. The devil is an equal opportunity destroyer.”

Using Revelation 12 as his frame of reference, he expounded on the battle between Satan and the church. We learned that because Satan can’t get to Jesus, he attacks Jesus’ followers; thus we need to have a real relationship with Jesus. “Praise and worship is not a performance, but a response to Jesus; worship is a rehearsal retelling God’s mercy. Therefore, there must be daily participation in prayer and Bible study, because genuine praise requires no coercion. Jesus is my hero. He took Satan on as a man and beat him down. The devil

has come to the end of his time,” Douglas exclaimed. The remainder of his sermon revealed Satan’s “unholy trinity” and its breakdown and ultimate defeat as reported in Revelation 14, which Douglas stated is the climax of Revelation.

Following lunch, we hastened to the Glad Tidings church for the community outreach and the concert that followed. A torrential rain dampened but failed to thwart our scheduled literature distribution with an invitation to the concert. Many Federation officers along with others did brave the inclement weather and knocked on doors passing out *Steps to Christ*, *The Great Hope*, and other litera-

ture. A concert with Lyle Henderson, Arthur Clayton, Keith Rashad, and others followed. Then it was back to the recreational facility where entertainment for all age groups kept us occupied well into the night.

Lott’s assessment of the weekend was summed up with “A blessed high time with the windows of heaven opening wider and wider during my eight years in the Federation. Now that my presidency has been extended for another two years, I look forward to implementing more fellowship and service opportunities as well as promoting evangelism by teaching specific biblical strategies for our youth and young adults. With all that took place this weekend, South Louisiana’s Youth Federation has declared war on Satan as we invite all to enlist in God’s army, because we are ready!”

Evelyn M. Edwards



Reaping the Harvest in Coushatta Louisiana

COUSHATTA, LA. » We praise the Lord because He has worked in the town of Coushatta. Nine souls were baptized into our church.

Coushatta First is a small church located in the smallest parish of Louisiana. As a small town we face some large obstacles. We are constantly asking God to work a miracle in this town. The Bible says that we must humble ourselves and pray, and then we are to go and tell, invite, and encourage the people to come and hear the good news that will set them free. We planned our program, and called for evangelist Howard J. Small, who is an international evangelist

out of California. We put advertisements in the newspaper and on the radio, passed out flyers, made phone calls, and asked God to let us reach all the people who love Him and who want to follow Him all the way. Our 2015 Redemption Revival was held October 3-17, 2015. "Reaping the Harvest" was the theme and our theme song was "I Am Redeemed." We were blessed to have a musical selection each night. Our pastor, Norman Stiggers, introduced Small each night. We had new people attend each evening. We also gave a gift to each new attendee, along with a bookmark with our information on it.

Small made his sermons captivating by using multimedia presentations, which helped to bring the sermons to life. As I looked into the audience I could see the people were paying attention to what was being presented. We thank God for giving us four people for baptism on the last Sabbath of the meetings and six more people two weeks later. As time runs out for this earth, we ask all of you to join with us as we pray for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Coushatta and in all our churches around the world.

SOUTHWEST REGION CONFERENCE



◀ From left: Nancy Williams, LaPorcha Miller, Tyriuna Donner, Jaydah Williams, Betty Cummings, and Latasia Perkins

Bottom left: Small baptizing one of the new members

▼ Evangelist Howard J. Small



How much longer?



September 11, 2001.

I remember as if it were yesterday. I was descending the steps from my second floor office at the Texas Conference, headed into worship, when someone came running down the hall, shouting, "Something terrible has happened in New York City!"

Indeed, the unthinkable had occurred! As we huddled around the only television set in the office at that time, our jaws dropped and a cold helpless feeling fell over us as we watched in horror.

On April 15, 2013, it happened again. My wife and I were sitting in a Chicago Midway Airport terminal when flashing across the screen came the breaking news. There had been a bombing at the Boston Marathon! Terrorism had struck once again! Then of course, most recently, Friday, November 13, a ruthless attack in Paris, France, left nearly 200 casualties and more than 300 hospitalized. The basis for all of these inhumane acts? Religious tension that leads to intolerance. Why do men feel that their personal beliefs and convictions can be forced upon others at the price of loss of life?

Jesus warned us in Matthew 24:10, "And at that time many will be offended, and will

betray one another, and will *hate* one another" (emphasis supplied). An atmosphere of hatred and intolerance would rule the earth. As we live in a land that has ever prided itself in political and religious freedoms, we are not that far removed from enforcing of religious oppression ourselves. Notice the warning given us in the Spirit of Prophecy, "Protestants will throw their whole influence and strength on the side of the papacy; by a national act enforcing the false Sabbath, they will give life and vigor to the corrupt faith of Rome, *reviving her tyranny and oppression of conscience*" (*Maranatha* p. 179, emphasis supplied).

"Satan will place his interpretation upon events, and they think, as he would have them, that the calamities which fill the land are a result of Sunday-breaking. Thinking then to appease the wrath of God, these influential men will make laws enforcing Sunday observance!" (*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 10, p. 239, emphasis supplied).

As the title of Edward Reid's book, *Sunday's Coming!*, clearly states, respect for God and His law is vanishing from society right before our eyes! A blatant disregard for the plain and direct "Thus saith the Lord" is no longer the rule of thumb for American society, or any other around the world, for that matter. Our currency that

bears the inscription "In God we trust" is no longer an accurate motto of our faith and philosophy. We've come a long way in the wrong direction. The book of Revelation's pointed description of the beast that surges out of the earth, unmistakably a portrayal of the United States of America, should be studied carefully by every self-professed Seventh-day Adventist living today. "Then I saw another beast coming out of the earth. He had two horns (political and religious freedom) like a lamb (Christ-like), but later, he spoke like a dragon (Satan). He exercised all the authority of the first beast (Rome) on its behalf, and *made the earth* and its inhabitants worship the first beast" (Revelation 13:11, emphasis supplied).

It's not a matter of if, but rather, when. The question is, will we be found faithful at that dreadful time? Will we be distracted arguing in committees, or perhaps building better barns? Or shall we be standing, word of God in heart, clothed in faithfulness to our very core, anxiously waiting and feverishly working to hasten the coming of our Lord and King! I challenge you today to put on Christ and gear up with His word, since the day quickly approaches.

Carlos J. Craig, president

Week of Prayer at McKinney Church

MCKINNEY » After several months of Bible studies in the homes and at church, the McKinney church had a week of revival with evangelist Mark Fox. On October 31, 2015, seven young people made their public confession of faith through baptism, along with two others by profession of faith. At the end of the baptismal ceremony, each new member chose a spiritual mentor, and immediately the chosen mentors were given a guideline with ideas to help the new members not to fall through the cracks. We pray for the new members, as well as for the old ones that God will keep the flame of revival burning in our hearts until Jesus comes.

Betsy Hurst



Seven people were baptized at the McKinney church on October 31, 2015, following a Week of Prayer.

GODencounters Reveres Jesus at the Center of Revelation

TEXAS CONFERENCE

SAN ANTONIO » “GODencounters was an experience that I will not forget,” lauded high school senior Chrissy Gaban. “It strengthened me mentally and spiritually. It felt like God was specifically speaking to me through the worship sessions.”

Author and missions specialist Steve Case was featured at the 2015 GODencounters Conference, hosted by Younger Generation Church, the vibrant young adult ministry of the Arlington church. The theme, “Jesus Revealed. Jesus Revered,” challenged young adults to explore the book of Revelation and understand the importance of humanity’s worship in the context of earth’s final moments.

“GODencounters made me see that

Jesus is the whole point of the book of Revelation,” confirmed Ian Reyes, a business marketing major at University of Texas at Arlington. “I am no longer too intimidated to study it!”

As a prequel to the conference, Case presented the Week of Prayer for Burton Adventist Academy, as well as Revelation 101: Finding Jesus in the Book of Revelation, a special three-night event for the Arlington church. The intent was to offer great intergenerational opportunities for the entire community to explore Revelation and dis-



cover Christ at the center of it all.

“I was fascinated with the demographics of the turnout,” mused Michael Cuilla, a local businessman who shared he had coordinated many Daniel and Revelation Seminars in the past. “Not only were there young people, [there also was] older people, and very old people—everyone thoroughly enjoyed the week. Made simple enough that a child could understand, I felt I got more out of this in-depth Bible study.”

GODencounters is a young adult movement that started at the turn of the century, encouraging next generations to pursue a 24/7 experience of the living GOD. This year’s conference had over 1,100 in attendance on the culminating Sabbath, and thanks to the Arlington church’s media ministry, more than 250 online viewing sites joined in from places such as Pyatigorsk, Russia; Lagos, Nigeria; Calgary, Canada; and Atlanta, Georgia. All the sessions for GODencounters and Revelation are accessible on demand from Younger Generation Church’s Vimeo channel, <https://vimeo.com/tag:Revelation+YGchurch>.

“My ‘aha’ moment was realizing that the book of Revelation is God telling His story through Jesus—that Jesus is going to win and He’s in control,” added Cuilla. “We just need to stay connected with Him. I felt encouraged that God would be with us. I realized the importance of staying connected through prayer and the concept of claiming territory for God. Why did it take me 49 years to learn these two principles?”

For more information on GODencounters, visit www.GODencounters.org.

A. Allan Martin



Top left and middle right: Author and missions specialist, Steve Case, was featured at the 2015 GODencounters Conference, hosted by Younger Generation Church [ygchurch.com], the vibrant young adult ministry of the Arlington church.

Top right: Young adult volunteers and their mentors help make GODencounters happen.

► This year’s conference had over 1,100 in attendance on the culminating Sabbath, and thanks to the Arlington church’s media ministry, more than 250 online viewing sites from across the world joined the event.



An Invitation to Give

DALLAS » Why do people give? Many times they give simply because they are asked. When North Dallas Adventist Academy asked friends and supporters to give on September 17, they did just that! Gifts and donations from that one day have generated \$65,000 for our school. Here's how it happened.

North Texas Giving Day is a one-day, online giving "event" in North Texas (held from 6:00 a.m. to midnight on September 17 this year). North Texas Giving Day is sponsored by several local foundations to promote charitable giving in the area and help nonprofit organizations raise millions of dollars in just one day. At the urging of our donors, NDAA decided to go all-in for Giving Day 2015. We agreed to push all summer and fall fundraising efforts toward September 17, 2015, including our annual staff and school board giving campaigns.

The idea really took off when \$35,000 in a matching challenge was presented. A group of donors offered to match every dollar donated to NDAA on Giving Day (up to \$35,000)! Even our second-grade class, who has learned about doubles, knew that doubling is a good thing!

This was the motivation our community needed to get involved! Mailings and e-mails were sent, phone calls were made, personal invitations were extended to friends and family out of town, videos and photos were posted on social media, signs were displayed on campus, students were involved and invited to participate. Everyone we could think of was invited to make the most of a donation made on Giving Day.

Then, at 6:00 a.m. on Thursday, September 17, all eyes turned to the giving day website to see what would happen.

7:25 a.m.: Reports in the morning Carpool Line shared that \$23,000 had already

been donated! Parents and staff were almost giddy when they heard we were off to a great start.

8:00 a.m.: More people went online to give. Parents, board members, staff, supporters – and many new friends – showed their support for NDAA by giving throughout the day.

9:30 a.m.: "Thank You" messages were sent out to the first donors of the day via e-mail as well as on Facebook and Twitter.

11:30 a.m.: NDAA won a \$5,000 prize for having the 20,015th donation of the day!

3:00 p.m.: Donors across 11 states from Washington to New Jersey gave online through the day.

7:00 p.m.: The Giving Day Dinner Auction began. Event attendees continued the celebration of giving, watching in real time as the totals continued to rise on the North Texas Giving Day web site – all while they raised even more money for NDAA through both silent and live auctions.

9:00 p.m.: The Dinner Auction ended and everyone went home. Some friends continued to give online. A student video

posted on social media reminds everyone "It's not too late to give!" (You can view the video on our Facebook page)

11:00 p.m.: 15 more gifts were made during the 11 o'clock hour

11:59 p.m.: One last donation squeaked in at 11:59:59 p.m.

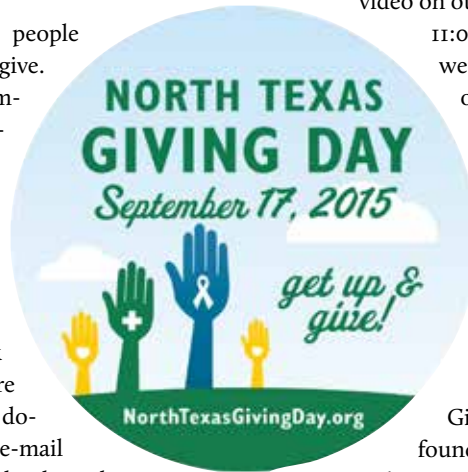
12:00 midnight: North Texas Giving Day ended.

Once North Texas Giving Day ended, the foundations coordinating the event have added additional bonus funds to every donation made over \$25, making funds raised go even farther. The impact continued days later when the support shown through Giving Day helped NDAA receive an additional \$12,000 grant from a foundation not connected to North Texas Giving Day at all.

Funds raised on Giving Day will go to the three areas of NDAA's 2015 Annual Fund: Tuition assistance, classroom furnishings and technology, and outdoor campus areas.

We share our experiences from North Texas Giving Day as a response to the direction given in 1 Chronicles 16:8. The inspired writer instructs God's people to "Give thanks unto the Lord, call upon His name; make known His deeds among the people."

With grateful hearts, we tell of His mighty works in our community one special September. We anticipate how these dollars given will impact students' lives for years to come on campus. And we earnestly invite you to be a part of His work. We're glad to ask!



The students at North Dallas Adventist Academy will benefit from the funds raised on North Texas Giving Day.

Religious Liberty: Roots



TEXICO CONFERENCE

I would venture a guess that most Adventists have at least an elemental understanding of religious liberty. That understanding no doubt includes an appreciation for the plight of the pilgrims who fled religious persecution in the Old World in order to enjoy the freedom to worship and practice religion, according to their unique set of beliefs, in the New World. For many Adventists, the concept of religious liberty has been distilled down to a singular phrase: separation of church and state. In all of this, people correctly hark back to the language of the First Amendment of our Constitution, which specifically states that Congress shall not make any law “respecting an establishment of religion, (or) prohibiting the free exercise thereof.”

I would contend, however, that the roots of religious liberty go all the way back to

the original conflict in heaven. Lucifer—a created being—was endowed, as we all are, with the power of choice. He wasn’t persecuted or coerced because of his choice. He was eventually, of course, required to leave heaven. His citizenship was revoked in order to preserve the peace and harmony of that unique Kingdom. Even then he was given another place to live and to rule. His rebellion wasn’t quashed and his accusations were allowed to be tested over time and proven founded or unfounded. Ironically, his very life was sustained by the same creative power source at whom he aimed all those charges. When the end of this tragic drama does come (and I pray it is soon!), Satan will be destroyed because he will then stand before that Great Judge without a redeemer and clothed in his own filthy unrighteousness! I hope you don’t think that, standing at this portal to eternity, God will now decide to remove this

freedom of choice that He had so intentionally granted to each one of us! I believe totally in His assurance that sin will never rise again. I don’t, however, believe that this will come at the cost of our right to choose.

And what’s the point of all of the above? I’m hoping to deepen your appreciation of religious liberty as you realize that it originates much further back than the signing of the constitution, and has much more significance than a group of New World patriots in powdered wigs could possibly give it! It goes all the way back to the great heart of God! In spite of the ridiculous charges brought against Him, God is the very essence of choice, the total personification of tolerance, and the universal and complete manifestation of love.

Jeff Metherell, planned giving and stewardship director

Welcome to a New Pastoral Couple

LUBBOCK, TEX. » The Texico Conference welcomes Geraldo Alonso and his family as the new pastoral family for the Lubbock church. We are happy they have accepted the call to be a part of the Texico team. To help acquaint you with this family, Pastor Alonso tells a little bit about themselves.

“I was born in San Antonio, Texas, and lived there until I graduated with a degree in political science from a local university. I then decided to follow God’s calling to be a pastor. In 2006, I moved to Keene, Texas, to pursue and accomplish a degree in theology with a minor in biblical languages.

“While in Keene I fell in love with my wife, Suzy, and shortly after graduating, we were married. We moved to Oklahoma where I was the senior pastor of the Muskogee church and camp director at Wewoka Woods Adventist Center for three

years. Prior to this new assignment, I was the youth ministry pastor at the Keene church and I served in this capacity for the last three years. When it comes to ministry I am deeply passionate about discipleship and soul winning. As a pastor, I have enjoyed building up programs and initiatives to encourage members in growing the

Kingdom of God as disciples of Jesus.

“My wife, Suzy, and I are the proud parents of two beautiful girls, Adelynn, who is three, and Ellanor, who is one. Suzy is a nurse at the University Medical Center in Lubbock, where she works in the pediatric ICU department. As a family we love the great outdoors, photography, traveling, and cycling. We are settling into our new home and are so excited to hit the ground running with our new church family in Lubbock.”

May God richly bless pastor Geraldo and his family as they begin their ministry in the West Texas area.

Sue Hinkle and Geraldo Alonso



Geraldo Alonso with his wife, Suzy, and daughters’ Adelynn and Ellanor.

A Heartfelt Prayer

We've heard of many instances where someone's prayer was answered in an amazing way. But we've never heard from someone who was more excited than Katherine Dennis!

"I was born and raised here in Roswell, New Mexico," she begins, "and my mother and father were divorced when I was eight years old. I never saw much of my father after that, and as a single mother, my mom struggled to raise my two brothers and me. We grew up in poverty, and to make things worse, we grew up in a godless family. I don't ever remember my parents mentioning God to us, but the Lord looked out for me and got my mother to dump me off at a Nazarene Vacation Bible School one day. That was my first real encounter with Jesus, and I just loved Him."

Although she was just a child, Katherine found her way to a Baptist church, where she attended for the next few years.

"But I grew up wild," she says. "I married young and had my only child a year later. I also divorced young, and later married again. But this time we've been married for 46 years!"

Disappointments

Katherine and her husband moved to Clovis, New Mexico, where she worked as a beautician, and then enjoyed a career in banking. However, when she began having problems with her teenager, she decided she needed the support of a church again.

"I began attending the Baptist church, was convicted, and then baptized. But when we moved away to a smaller town, my choice of churches was very limited."

Katherine and her husband began attending a church, but sadly, they suffered a bad experience there.

After her mother died, Katherine and Ed moved back to Roswell, and once again, the Holy Spirit began impressing her to find a church.

"This time I didn't just check out the Baptist church; I visited the First Christian Church, the Lutheran church, a charismatic church, the Assemblies of God—and just about everyone else. I even went to the library and looked up all their beliefs!"

A Heartfelt Prayer

Finally, Katherine settled on the Baptist church again, since it was familiar. But her spirit was not at peace.

"Every Sunday I'd go to church and come home feeling like something was missing," she explains. "It got so bad that as I drove home one day I just said, 'God, this does not feel like the Sabbath I read about in my Bible. Something is wrong. Please show me the church you want me to be in!' And I'm still amazed how He answered my prayer!"

Katherine says she was suffering from insomnia, and would often stay up watching television. "I had noticed there were a lot of religious channels on our cable lineup, and usually I wasn't interested. However, that night I stopped on a channel I didn't recognize called 3ABN. The man's name was Lyle Albrecht, and he was talking about the end times and the three angels' messages of Revelation 14. He was interesting, so I began watching him every night—until he said that Saturday was the real Sabbath!

"I remember thinking, *This man is out of his mind!* so I poked my husband, who was reading a book, and said, 'Ed, this man is saying that Saturday is the Sabbath! He's crazy!'"

Katherine was fired up, so she got out her Bible concordance and began reading every reference she could find about the Sabbath. What she discovered really stunned her. "I can't tell you how angry I was!" she says. "I felt like I'd been deceived all these years! Then I began finding out *all kinds* of things I'd been taught weren't so.

"Pretty soon I was watching 3ABN all the time, since I was so hungry for truth! When I heard of the book on the fundamental beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, I went directly to the library and checked it out!"

After about a year of studying and taping 3ABN sermons, Katherine felt she needed to find a Seventh-day Adventist church. "I was just praising God for how He'd answered my prayer, and that I'd finally found a church that believed what I believed. So I found an Adventist church, walked in, and sat down. But I couldn't tell if they had a pastor or not since there was a young girl up



front reading something. She was scared, and her voice was so soft I couldn't understand what she was saying. I struggled for a while and finally decided they must not have a pastor, and that this was some sort of children's church! So I left, and by the time I got home, I was crying, *Lord, I can't go there! Where can I find a real church?*"

God Moves

Of course, God had not abandoned her, and actually, He was about to move in a big way!

"My husband had a small pool table, he wanted to sell to get a bigger one," she recalls. "So I called a woman who said she'd send her nephew over with a truck to take apart the new one and set it up in our house.

"He showed up that Saturday, and when I told him I was selling the smaller one, he said, 'My mom was looking for one. Let me call her and see if she wants it. If she does, she'll have to come by tomorrow to pay for it, though, since she doesn't do business on the Sabbath.'

“That got my attention, so I asked him what religion she belonged to, and when he said Seventh-day Adventist, my heart leaped for joy. I couldn’t wait for her to come, and when she showed up the next day I practically yanked her in the door!”

“I told her about my experience at the Adventist church, and she laughed and explained that the pastor had three churches, so he wasn’t there that day. ‘What you heard was just a young girl reading something for the church service,’ she explained. ‘Come and visit us again and meet our pastor.’”

Katherine was greeted the moment she got out of her car the following Sabbath,

and soon she had joined the pastor’s Sabbath School class.

“I told Pastor Ken Davis right away that I wanted to get baptized!” she says. “And although he indicated he wanted to study the beliefs of the church with me, he quickly realized I was no beginner, since I’d been learning for years from watching 3ABN and from my own Bible study. I was baptized ten years ago, and I’ve been on a wonderful journey ever since!”

Pastor Davis says she that since Katherine joined his congregation, she has blessed her church family. Today she is a deaconess, but she’s also served as assistant

church treasurer. In addition, she’s organized fellowship meals, and helped in any other way she can.

Katherine exclaims, “I just can’t praise God enough for answering my prayer. Today I am in a church that teaches the truth, and I just wish I could stand on a mountaintop and shout it out! The years I’ve been a Seventh-day Adventist have been the best years of my life!”

Bobby Davis

Reprinted with permission from the 3ABN World Magazine, November 2015 issue.

Thirty Take Their Stand for Christ in Odessa

ODESSA, TEX. » The Odessa Church conducted one of the most successful evangelistic campaigns in recent years in its territory. The crusade was held on August 15-29, 2015. The church was packed each night for most of the meetings. Members showed their support by their presence and inviting friends, relatives, classmates, and co-workers. Willy Ramos, “The Ghetto Preacher,” presented a topic each night centered on the theme “Lead Me to the Cross.” After each Christ-centered message, he had an altar call and challenged the audience to accept Jesus as their Lord and Savior.

During the meetings, Abner Razon, Odessa Church pastor, conducted three baptisms. At the conclusion of the crusade 18 new members were baptized, five individuals joined the church by profession of faith and seven people were re-baptized. A total of 30 individuals took their stand for the Lord! This rich harvest of souls for Jesus brought tears of joy to many on the last Sabbath of the meetings.

This evangelistic endeavor brought the church together in one accord. The united efforts of the leaders and church members was key to success of the meetings. All the church elders, led by head elder Mike Simmons, took turns in leading out and hosting the meetings. Dan and Olivia Nastansky, proprietors of a glass business, invited their



employees to the meetings. Some of them, together with their families were baptized. Adelaida Burciaga and Helen Faderon coordinated a simultaneous prayer vigil during the meetings. Daniel and Savannah Morales also provided a catered dinner every night. All of these endeavors contributed to the success of the crusade.

There were still six individuals who stood up contemplating being baptized in the future. Follow-up is being done on Tuesday, Friday and Saturday evenings. Imagine the magnanimous rejoicing in heaven for these individuals that are making their decisions for Christ.

Ellen White wrote, “It is not the most brilliant or the most talented whose work

produces the greatest and most lasting results. Who are the most efficient laborers? Those who will respond to the invitation, ‘Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart.’ We are to be partners in the work of God throughout the world; wherever there are souls to be saved, we are to lend our help that many sons and daughters may be brought to God. The end is near, and for this reason we are to make the most of every entrusted ability and every agency that shall offer help to the work” (EV 468).

Please pray for the new members who joined our church.

Nefritre G. Razon

Understanding God's Answers

One student's experiences deciphering God's answers to her prayers

Everyone told Alondra Zavala that attending college was impossible. She had her heart set on Southwestern Adventist University, because she had heard it was a place where she could be involved and grow spiritually. But the reasons why it couldn't work kept piling up: it was too expensive, she lived in another country, she couldn't expect the same opportunities as other people, it would be a



waste of money to even try, and on and on.

Alondra wasn't taking "no" for an answer—unless the "no" was from God. When she called Southwestern she received a resounding "yes!" Alondra was accepted into Southwestern Adventist University. Through scholarships, hard work, help, and a lot of prayer, she is now a junior education major. Alondra's signature smile can be seen all over the campus—she's enthusiastically involved in everything.

Last summer, Alondra was invited to once again be involved, this time in literature evangelism. Should she go? She had faced tough decisions before. So, like before, she put it to prayer.

"I asked God to make His plan clear to me," recalls Alondra. "I didn't want to do it for the money, even though I needed it. I

wanted to do this, because I felt God calling me to go. I prayed about it and then read Isaiah 61:1-3 where it says that God has anointed us to go help. And there was my answer."

Although she didn't expect it to be easy, Alondra found it hard to get in the door. She started every day with prayer, but the lack of responses made her question that she'd heard God correctly. Alondra asked God for reassurance.

At the next door she knocked on, Alondra started her presentation. Soon, she and the man at the door were chatting about life and their

mutual interest in psychology. She was about to leave when he called her back and began to tell her a story: there was a missionary pastor who began to question his effectiveness. He wrote to his family asking for their advice. The response simply said: forget about yourself and just do the work.

"When I heard those words I felt that the Holy Spirit, through this random stranger, gave me a sign that I was focused on the wrong thing and should keep on with my work."

This experience was exactly why Alondra wanted to attend Southwestern so badly that she risked going against the opinions of so many people in her life.

"I truly felt that Southwestern was going to give me a better chance to get closer to God," says Alondra. "I study the Bible with friends. I lead out in clubs and help people. My professors pray in class. These are the life experiences I was looking for."

Saul Flores, senior communication major

Financial Aid Guidance Seminars available in your area!

Good eats. Door prizes.
Questions answered.

BAA Jan. 13 @ 6:30pm	DCA Feb. 2 @ 6:30pm
TAA Jan. 19 @ 6:00pm	The Oaks Feb. 3 @ 7:00pm
CTA & Local Students Jan. 20 @ 6:30pm	JCA Feb. 4 @ 6:30 pm
PAA Jan. 20 @ 6:00 pm	SVA Feb. 8 @ 6:30pm
Ozark Jan. 21 @ 7:00 pm	STCA Feb. 9 @ 6:30 pm
ACAT Feb. 2 @ 7:00pm	NDAA Feb. 11 @ 6:30pm

Find more info at swau.edu/enroll
or call 800-433-2240.



Romania's Palace of the Parliament Hosts Third International Religious Liberty Event

BUCHAREST » Romanian politicians and thought leaders, along with academics and religious liberty advocates from around the world, gathered recently in central Bucharest for a major conference focused on law, ethics, and religious liberty. The third International Religious Liberty Conference was held November 19 in Romania's renowned Palace of the Parliament, one of the world's largest buildings and seat of the nation's legislative assembly.

The conference focused on legal protections for religious freedom in today's increasingly pluralistic world, and the challenges that arise when different faith groups must share the same space.

Ganoune Diop, secretary general of the International Religious Liberty Association, was one of the plenary speakers, and in his address he recognized the important role that laws play in both protecting individual freedoms and promoting harmonious relationships within society. Diop described religious freedom as a multi-faceted human right, and one that is central to all other human freedoms. As such, it "can function, at the intersection of law, ethics, and religion, as a moral center for pluralistic societies," said Diop. "Each human being is treated

with dignity and allowed to develop his or her potential for the common good, and for the benefit of the human family."

In his presentation, Deputy Bogdan Ciucă, president of the Committee for Legal Matters of Romania's Chamber of Deputies, said that legal provisions for religious freedom are in vain if they are only respected because of legal coercion and not willingly, out of love for others.

"It is love that makes me respect the right to happiness of those around me, and it's also love that makes me respect their right to life," said Ciucă, referring to recent acts of religiously motivated violence in France and Romania. "This love will also make me respect all the other rights and liberties of those around me, including religious liberty."

Dr. Nelu Burcea, president of the Conscience and Liberty Association, was one of the main organizers of the event. Until recently, he served as director of the Public Affairs and Religious Liberty (PARL) and Communication departments for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Romania, but in July this year he was elected as associate PARL director for the Adventist world church.

In his address to the conference, Burcea

referred to the event's theme: "Law, Ethics and Religion in the context of Religious Liberty."

"Even though these three elements seem to be incompatible, a holistic perspective can uncover various unifying elements," he said. "We can easily see that religion has a powerful influence in enacting laws, but that without a framework of ethics in enforcing those laws, the result will be subjective, partial, and inadequate for creating true religious freedom."

The papers presented during the conference have been published in the third edition of the *Journal of Freedom of Conscience*, one of Romania's premier publications in the area of freedom of religion and belief. Sponsors of the event included Romania's Conscience and Liberty Association, the Committee for Legal Matters of Romania's Chamber of Deputies, the International Religious Liberty Association, the International Association for the Defense of Religious Liberty, and the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Romania.

Anamaria Maier/International Religious Liberty Association Staff

Southwestern Union Purity Conference Scheduled for February 11-13

KEENE, TEXAS » On February 14, 2015, the Southwestern Union's Young Adult Department hosted a purity conference at the Grace Temple church in Dallas, Texas. There was dynamic preaching, church at study which explained the thought pattern of millennials and adults and three breakout seminars. One was led by Keith and Molly Grey which dealt with couples. The second was led by Kenn Dixon and was about not getting caught in the web. The third was by Troy Beans and was about educating parents about the mental and psychological effects of sexual sins. We ended the day with youth and young adults making pledges to God to keep themselves pure until holy matrimony. The reviews that the Union received of the event were phenom-

enal—so much so that a request for the next one came immediately. Because of this, the Union planned the second purity conference in Houston, Texas, on August 14-15, 2015. It was hosted at the World Harvest Outreach church. The program, which began on Friday night, dealt with human sexuality and was well attended. The Sabbath program included seminars conducted for youth by Maria Long and Etser Edouard, pastor. Pastor Tyrone Douglas led a seminar for the young adults. Helvis Moody led a seminar for married couples. The day also ended with Purity Pledges. The reviews of the conference were also overwhelmingly positive, and so a third conference has been planned for February 11-13 on the campus of Southwestern Adventist University in

Keene, Texas. The youth directors of the Southwestern Union Conferences are fully supportive of this effort to equip and empower our youth and young adults regarding the topic of human sexuality.

Yes, we are bombarded by the enemy with sexual sins all around us. Let us pray, let us read, let us study the Word of God to be the Christians that God would have us to be. You are invited to our February 11-13 Purity Conference. Please register at www.southwesternadventist.org/youth.

Parents, youth leaders, young adults—come one, come all. There is something for everybody!

Helvis Moody, Southwestern Union, youth and young adult director

A close-up photograph of two hands shaking, symbolizing agreement or partnership. The hands are positioned diagonally across the frame, with the left hand on the left and the right hand on the right. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light blue and white.

PURITY CONFERENCE

SPONSORED BY THE SOUTHWESTERN UNION

February 11-13, 2016

SOUTHWESTERN ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY

Registration and Information:
www.southwesternadventist.org/youth

Classified Ads

REAL ESTATE/HOUSING

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

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

Great Retirement Area in Jefferson, TX: 2-Story (1600 sqft) 3/2 on 2 acres, carport (1200') on slab. Keyless entry, granite kitchen, updated

full bathrooms. Tile, carpet, laminate, central H/A, propane FP, utility room. Appliances included, 50" TV mounted, RV parking w/hookups, new roof, greenhouse, fenced yard. 903.665.4851, \$184,500.

Choice Property for Country Living: 3-bedroom, 2 bath, doublewide manufactured home on 15.7 acres. Garden area with a variety of fruits and berries. Water in year-round Kates Creek. Southwestern Arkansas. Now \$69,900, as is. Call owner: 956.565.4256.

EMPLOYMENT

Union College seeks a Seventh-day Adventist Masters Prepared PA faculty member. The ideal candidate will have clinical experience in Family Practice and Emergency Medicine. Prior teaching experience is desired but not necessary. Start date June 1, 2016. Send CV and references to Jodi Chewakin, jochewak@ucollege.edu.

Andrews University School of Business seeks Dean for the School of Business Administration. This individual is responsible for the operation of the SBA and will report to the Provost. The candidate must be dedicated to excellence in teaching, research, and service, and is expected to cultivate strong alumni and external relationships to support and grow the SBA. Candidate must have a terminal qualification in Business or Educational Administration and have administrative/mid-management experience in higher education or in a business setting. The candidate should also have some knowledge of accreditation processes. For more information and to apply, visit: <https://www.andrews.edu/admres/jobs/900>.

Decatur, IL SDA Church is looking for a Bible worker. Please contact Pastor John Lewis at jelewis727@gmail.com for details. One-year contract, full or part-time. Need resume and references.

Adventist Health System is seeking a Summer Associate to work in their Corporate Legal department for at least six weeks in 2016. Candidate must be in top 25% of class. Interest/experience in healthcare industry preferred, but not required. Duties include legal research and other projects, totaling 40 hours per week. Pay is \$20-\$25 per hour; reasonable relocation expenses will be reimbursed. Please send transcript and resume to Manuela.asaftei@ahss.org.

GET READY

ASI SOUTHWEST CHAPTER
SPIRITUAL RETREAT

 WITH GUEST SPEAKER STEVE WOHLBERG
OF WHITE HORSE MINISTRIES

MARCH 17-20, 2016

LA TORRETTA LAKE RESORT & SPA, MONTGOMERY, TX
REGISTER AT SOUTHWESTERNADVENTIST.ORG/ASI

ASI
ADVENTIST LAYMEN'S
SERVICES & INDUSTRIES

Andrews University seeks Faculty—Teaching Learning Curriculum Assistant Full Professor to teach, advise and direct student projects. Expertise in teaching reading, and/or special education and/or science desired. A minimum of three years K-12 US/Canada teaching experience required. Position may require teaching in any or all semesters, including summers. Person chosen for this position is expected to be involved in research as well as teaching and supervision of student teachers or graduate internships. A wide variety of responsibilities are expected, including accreditation and assessment as required by the university and outside accrediting bodies. For more information and to apply visit <https://www.andrews.edu/admres/jobs/735>.

Walla Walla University is looking to fill several full-time tenure-track faculty positions in the areas of Educational Psychology, English Education/Children's Literature, Industrial Design, Nineteenth Century British Literature, Research Services Librarian, Music, Psychology, and Social Work. For a detailed description of each position and to apply, please visit: <http://jobs.wallawalla.edu>.

MISCELLANEOUS

Authors of cookbooks, health books, children's chapter and picture books, call 800.367.1844 for your FREE evaluation. We publish all book formats, distribute to over 39,000 bookstores in 220 countries. Find our NEW titles at your local ABC or www.TEACH-Services.com. USED SDA books at www.LNFBooks.com.

Move with an award-winning agency. Apex Moving & Storage partners with the General Conference to provide quality moves at a discounted rate. Call us for all your relocation needs! Adventist beliefs uncompromised. Contact

Marcy Danté at 800.766.1902, for a free estimate. Visit us at www.apexmoving.com/adventist.

Wellness Secrets' 5 day Health Retreat could be the most affordable, beneficial, and spiritual vacation you've ever experienced! Get help for hypertension, high cholesterol, arthritis, cancer, obesity, depression, stress, smoking, and other ailments in beautiful Northwest Arkansas. Visit us at WellnessSecrets4u.com, or call 479.752.8555.

LOLO HARRIS, Gospel Music Recording Artist: "Sharing the GOSPEL through song." For CD's and additional information, visit www.LoLoHarris.com, call 937.545.8227, or write P.O. Box 492124, Atlanta, GA 30349. LoLo is currently accepting ministry requests for concerts, evangelism, AYS, retreats, conventions, and more for 2016 and 2017.

Free Adventist TV on high quality StarGenesis satellite system, complete system with a self-install kit is only \$99 plus shipping or can be picked up at Sunnydale. Many other free channels available also. Discounted shipping/delivery on multiple systems. \$9 donated to IA/MO refuge relief fund. Call Micky Burkett at 1.877.687.2203.

Butler Creek Health Center Victorious Living Seminar: A live-in lifestyle change program for those seeking victory over depression, stress, smoking, alcohol, drug-related dependencies, and lifestyle diseases. Included are hydrotherapy treatments, personal one-on-one counseling, cooking classes, personal fitness plan, and a lecture series on the physiology of change and developing will power. Programs are tailor-made for each individual guest; beginning and ending dates are flexible. Register online or call: 931.213.1329. www.butlercreekhealth.org.



D2U is a delivery service. If you do not place an order, it will not be on the truck. Each order will be charged a \$5.00 delivery fee

Direct to You
Austin/San Antonio/Valley Route

We will remain at each stop for 30 minutes

Monday, February 8			
		Arrive	Depart
Georgetown, TX	5105 S I-35, Georgetown, TX 78626	10:30 AM	11:00 AM
Austin South	132 Eberhart Ln, Austin, TX 78745	12:15 PM	12:45 PM
San Marcos	1523 Old Ranch Rd 12, San Marcos, TX 78666	2:00 PM	2:30 PM
San Antonio Valley View	6630 FM 1516 Converse, TX 78109	3:45 PM	4:15 PM
San Antonio Highland Hills	2526 Goliad Rd, San Antonio, TX 78223	4:55 PM	5:25 PM
Floresville	724 US Hwy 181 S, Floresville, TX 78114	6:10 PM	6:40 PM
Tuesday, February 9			
		Arrive	Depart
Beeville	902 N Polk St, Beeville, TX 78102	9:30 AM	10:00 AM
Corpus Christi	6645 Downing St, Corpus Christi, TX 78414	11:30 AM	12:00 PM
Alice	924 N Johnson St, Alice TX 78332	1:45 PM	2:15 PM
Brownsville Spanish	3515 Old Hwy 77, Brownsville, TX 78520	4:45 PM	5:15 PM
Harlingen	20811 Montezuma Rd, Harlingen, TX 78550	6:00 PM	6:30 PM
Weslaco	1200 S Bridge Ave, Weslaco, TX 78596	7:15 PM	7:45 PM
Wednesday, February 10			
		Arrive	Depart
McAllen Spanish Valley Central	6901 N Ware Rd, McAllen, TX 78504	8:45 AM	9:15 AM
Publicaciones Cristianas	6500 N 10th St, Suite L, McAllen, TX 78504	9:45 AM	10:15 AM
Edinburg	602 W Wisconsin Rd, Edinburg, TX 78539	10:30 AM	11:00 AM
Laredo Spanish North	3919 McPherson Ave	2:30 PM	3:00 PM
San Antonio Laurel Heights	703 W Ashby Pl, San Antonio, TX 78212	6:00 PM	6:30 PM
Thursday, February 11			
		Arrive	Depart
San Antonio Scenic Hills	11223 Bandera Rd, San Antonio, TX 78250	8:20 AM	8:50 AM
Kerrville	611 Harper Rd, Kerrville, TX 78028	10:05 AM	10:35 AM
Killeen	4700 E Rancier Ave, Killeen, TX 76543	1:50 PM	2:20 PM
Temple	1911 W Avenue H, Temple, TX 76504	3:00 PM	3:30 PM
Waco Mt. Lebanon	4298 Meyers Lane, Waco, TX 76705	4:20 PM	4:50 PM

Order Deadline for Austin/San Antonio/Valley Route is Thursday, February 4. Call 800-333-1844 to Order.

2016 D2U Routes

Austin/San Antonio/Valley Route	February 8-11
Houston Route	February 22-24
East Texas/Louisiana	March 7-10
West Texas Southern New Mexico	March 21-24
Eastern Oklahoma/NW Arkansas	April 4-7
Arkansas/East Texas	April 18-21
Western Oklahoma/N New Mexico	May 2-5
Austin/San Antonio/Valley Route	May 16-19
Houston Route	May 30-June 1
East Texas/Louisiana	June 13-16
West Texas Southern New Mexico	June 27-30
Arkansas/East Texas	July 11-14
Western Oklahoma/N New Mexico	July 25-28
Eastern Oklahoma/NW Arkansas	Aug 8-11
Austin/San Antonio/Valley Route	Aug 22-25
Houston Route	September 5-7
East Texas/Louisiana	September 19-22
West Texas Southern New Mexico	October 3-6
Eastern Oklahoma/NW Arkansas	October 17-20
Arkansas/East Texas	October 31-Nov 3
Western Oklahoma/N New Mexico	November 14-17
Austin/San Antonio/Valley Route	Nov 28-December 1
Houston Route	December 12-14

ADVENTIST BOOK CENTER | 201 S OLD BETSY RD | KEENE, TX 76059
817.558.0100 | TOLL-FREE 800.333.1844 | D2U.ABC@TXSDA.ORG

Announcements

La Sierra Academy Alumni Weekend 2016 is April 22-23 on the LSA campus. Please update your mailing address and contact info: JNelson@lsak12.com, 951.351.1445, ex. 244. Honor Classes '56, '66, '76, '86, '91, '96, '06 and pre-50 year classes. Info: www.lsak12.com.

Broadview Academy Alumni Association: BVA Alumni Weekend is April 30 – May 1, 2016. All alumni are encouraged to attend. Mark your calendars. Call your classmates and start planning for this weekend now. Honor classes: 1946, 1956, 1966, 1976, 1986, 1991, 1996, and 2006. N. Aurora SDA Church, N. Aurora, Ill. Friday night Vespers, SS, Church, Lunch and afternoon music program. All ideas and information welcome. For communication purposes, we need your e-mail addresses, as postage is too expensive. Send it to: Ed Gutierrez at edjulie1@att.net; or call: 630.232.9034.

More Information to come. Don't miss it!

Obituaries

CASAGRANDE, Dewey Floyd, born May 22, 1930, in St. Louis, Mo., and died December 31, 2014 in Hot Springs, Ark. He was a member of the Bonnerdale church. He was a veteran of the U.S. Army and the Navy reserve. He worked as a respiratory therapist and was a teacher. Survivors: wife, Sherry Casagrande of Hot Springs; son and one daughter-in law, Gary Allen and Donna Marie Casagrande of Bridgewater, N.J.; son, David Lee of Tampa, Fla.; Hannalee Casagrande of Hawaii; stepson, Eddie Wynn and wife, Darla, of Bonnerdale; stepson, Anthony Troy Wynn of Hot Springs, Ark.; two brothers, Fredrick James Casagrande, of Lawrenceville, Ga., and Richard Leon Casagrand and wife, Marilyn Belle, of Harleysville, Penn.; sister and

brother-in-law, Shirley Ann and Robert Mitchell Stewart of Krum, Tex.; 12 grandchildren, and five great-grandchildren.

FARWELL, Madeline Beasley, born June 23, 1933, in Springdale, Ark., and died October 21, 2015, in Springdale. She was a member of the Springdale church. Madeline retired from Tyson Foods, after more than 20 years of service. She enjoyed singing, listening to country music and looking at Christmas lights. She was preceded in death by her husband, Bud Farwell, in 2010; as well as three grandchildren, David Farwell, Jr., Brandy Farwell Eursery and Joseph Erin Hamley. Survivors: son, David Farwell and wife, Gina, of Springdale; daughter, Mary Farwell Hamley, of Springdale; sister, Mary Jo Tankersley, of Springdale; five grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

FEDERICO, Angelita, born on October 9, 1942, in Odiongan, Philippines, and died August 14, 2015 in Choctaw, Okla. She was a member of the Summit Ridge church. Angelita, a third-generation Adventist, grew up and lived in the Philippines most of her life. She became a teacher after completing college, teaching for several years at West Visayan Academy, where she also became registrar as well as vice principal. After praying many years to come to the United States, she and her husband, John, immigrated in 2000. The Summit Ridge church has been so blessed to have them as members and Angelita will be greatly missed by the community. Survivors: husband, John; daughter, Weva Magluyan and husband, Tito, of Choctaw, Okla.; son, Dennis and wife, Banie, of the Philippines; son, Edgar and wife, Marvin of Fresno, Calif.; and three grandchildren.

FISHER, Mary L., born August 7, 1927, in Waurika, Okla., and died October 30, 2015 in Marietta,

Okla. She was a member of the Ardmore church. Survivors: son, Harold Dean; and daughters Shirley Newman and Marilyn Thurman.

GOTTFRIED, Jerald W., born July 12, 1945 in Jamestown, N. Dak., and died November 28, 2015 in Plano, Tex. He was a member of the Jefferson Academy church. After receiving his bachelor's degree, he went to work in business administration for Adventist Health Systems. Later, while working full time, he obtained his MBA. He continued to work for Adventist Health Systems, retiring in 2009 to Jefferson, Tex., where he volunteered as treasurer for Cypress Bend Adventist Elementary School. Survivors: wife, Donna Hicks Gottfried; sons, Scott, Shawn, and Shane Gottfried; and daughter, Sheree Schrader.

HOLD, Gorman, born February 28, 1947, in Punxsutawney, Philadelphia, and died October 14, 2015 in Tulsa, Okla., after a long illness. He was a member of the Adventist Fellowship SDA Church in Tulsa, OK. Survivors: wife, Sandy Hold, and daughters, Michelle Carlile and Melissa Hold, of Tulsa.

JOHNSON, James Lloyd, born December 26, 1949, in Miami, Fla., and died October 22, 2015 in Longview, Tex. He was a member of the Jefferson Academy church. Survivors: daughter, Kimberly Lance, of Arden, N. C.; son, Matthew Johnson, of Jefferson; and sister, Linda Johnson, of Edneyville, Ark.

MCNITT, Margaret Roelke, born April 20, 1921, in Brunswick, Md., and died November 5, 2015 in Harrah, Okla. She was a member of Summit Ridge church in Harrah. Marg received her B.S. degree in nursing in 1943 and in 1947 her B.S.N. in Nursing Education. She worked in Washington Sanitarium & Hospital and later

LIBERTY
IMAGINE YOUR WORLD WITHOUT IT
WWW.LIBERTYMAGAZINE.ORG

BEFORE THEY CALL

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY OFFERING
JANUARY 23 2016



CHANGING
THE WORLD.

it
ALL
BEGINS
WITH
YOU



This holiday season, buy a gift that can change the world. It's easier than you think. With ADRA's *Change the World Kit*, you can provide water for an entire community, rescue a pre-teen from sex trafficking, and more. It's easy. And, it all begins with you.

Call **1.800.424.ADRA (2372)** to request
or visit GiftCatalog.ADRA.org.

CALL TODAY FOR YOUR

FREE
CHANGE
THE
WORLD **Kit**
1.800.424.ADRA (2372)

in mission work in Biafra, India, Burma, and Pakistan. When she returned to Maryland, she met and married Larry McNitt, who was a college professor. They retired to Summit Ridge Retirement Center in April, 2009. She was preceded in death by her husband, Larry McNitt.

MOENKHAUS, Charlene Betty, born March 6, 1943 in Indianapolis, Ind., and died November 6, 20115 in Beaumont, Tex. She graduated from Indiana Academy in 1960 and later attended Southern Adventist College. In 1962, she married Wayne W. Moenkhaus in Phoenix, Az., and then obtained her certification as a medical assistant. Born to them were Wayne W. II, Renee, Timothy, and Kristie, and they later adopted Mikell, Rose, Erika, A.J., Mike, and Jynifer. She was a homemaker, foster mother of more than 100 children, Pathfinder Master Guide, member of several lapidary societies,

and loved all of God's creation. She had a passion for rocks and seashells, Native American culture, and she loved to read. She was preceded in death by her infant son, Timmy, husband, Wayne, and two brothers, Gene and Harvey Quilter. Survivors: children, Wayne and Melissa Moenkhaus, of Paoli, Ind.; Renee and Daniel Recchia, of Collegedale, Tenn.; Kristie and Michael Stacey of College Station, Tex.; Mikell and Monica Moenkhaus, of San Antonio, Tex.; Rose and Jesse Nash; Erika Moenkhaus; Jynifer Moenkhaus and Jonathan Robinson; A.J. Moenkhaus; and Mike Moenkhaus, of Woodville, Tex.; brothers, Marion Quilter, of Indianapolis, Ind., Jim and June Quilter, of Washington, Daryl Neville, of Indianapolis; sisters-in-law, Mary Quilter, of Indianapolis, and Jeannie Quilter, of Florida. Her ashes were placed at the "family" cemetery at the St. John's United Church of Christ cemetery in Bretzville,

Ind., beside her husband.

TRUJILLO, Mary Jean Yanes, born March 7, 1928 in Riverdale, Calif., and died November 1, 2014 in Albuquerque, N. Mex. She was a member of the Albuquerque Heights church. Mary attended Paradise Valley SDA School of Nursing in San Diego, Ca. and became a registered nurse. She was the first member of her family to graduate from college. She worked as a nurse in labor and delivery and psychiatry for many years. She also worked with her husband, Antonio (Tony), and son, Sonny, running their family business, Mountain View Trucking in Albuquerque. Mary was an avid reader, loved to cook, garden, sing, and play the piano, but especially take care of her family. She loved plants and flowers and her pet Chihuahua dogs. She was preceded in death by her husband, Tony. Survivors: brother, Daniel Yanes and wife, Martina, of Fresno, Calif.; daughter, Glenda, and husband, Richard, of Burleson, Tex.; son, Peter (Sonny) Trujillo and wife, Tonya, of Albuquerque; daughter, Pamela and husband, Richard Langford of Albuquerque; and seven grandchildren.

WALL, Jack L., 89, born December 16, 1925, in Kansas City, Mo., and died November 17, 2015, in Tulsa, Okla. He was a long-time member of the First Seventh-day Adventist Church of Tulsa where he served for many years in various capacities, such as elder, church clerk, and deacon. He was a retired purchasing agent/traffic manager for Yuba Heat and Transfer Company. Jack was a veteran and served in both WWII and the Korean Conflict, a member of the Veterans of Foreign War Post 577. He enjoyed participating in the Tulsa Veteran's Day Parade, including the one just days before his death. In 2008, at the age of 83, he graduated with an associate of arts degree from Tulsa Community College. He was preceded in death by his wife, Dorothy Sturch Wall (2003) and daughter, Kim Leslie Wall McGehee (2001). Survivors: dear friend and partner, Nina Briggs of Sand Springs, Okla.; son, Jack R. (Josefina) Wall of Austin, Tex.; daughter, Delynda J. (Jerry Johnson) Wall of Bridgewater, N. J.; step-daughter, Gail (Gary) Fortner of Inola, Okla.; six grandchildren, two step-grandchildren, and nine great-grandchildren.

21 Adventist Channels
Plus more than 60 other FREE Christian Channels and News Channels on Adventist Satellite Dish

Official Distribution Partner for all Adventist Broadcasters

High Definition and DVR

Connect to any TV • Record your favorite shows*
*optional USB memory required for recording

Complete satellite system only \$199
Plus shipping

No Monthly Fees
No Subscriptions
Includes 36in Dish
FREE Install Kit

Two Room System \$299
Plus shipping

Please ask us about INTERNET options:

SafeTV Television
Positive Life Radio,
Walla Walla

866-552-6882 toll free www.adventistsat.com

SABBATH SUNSET CALENDAR						
	Jan 1	Jan 8	Jan 15	Jan 22	Jan 29	Feb 5
Abilene, TX	5:44	5:49	5:55	6:02	6:08	6:15
Albuquerque, NM	5:05	5:10	5:17	5:24	5:31	5:38
Amarillo, TX	5:45	5:51	5:57	6:04	6:11	6:19
Brownsville, TX	5:50	5:54	6:00	6:05	6:10	6:16
Dallas, TX	5:31	5:37	5:43	5:49	5:56	6:02
El Paso, TX	5:12	5:17	5:23	5:30	5:36	5:43
Fort Worth/Keene, TX	5:34	5:39	5:45	5:51	5:58	6:05
Gallup, NM	5:12	5:18	5:24	5:31	5:38	5:46
Galveston/Houston, TX	5:33	5:38	5:44	5:50	5:56	6:02
Gentry, AR	5:13	5:19	5:25	5:33	5:40	5:47
Little Rock, AR	5:09	5:14	5:21	5:27	5:34	5:42
Muskogee, OK	5:18	5:24	5:30	5:37	5:44	5:52
New Orleans, LA	5:11	5:16	5:22	5:28	5:34	5:40
Oklahoma City, OK	5:27	5:33	5:40	5:46	5:54	6:01
Roswell, NM	5:01	5:06	5:12	5:19	5:26	5:32
San Antonio, TX	5:46	5:51	5:57	6:03	6:09	6:14
Shreveport, LA	5:20	5:25	5:31	5:38	5:44	5:51
Tulsa, OK	5:19	5:25	5:32	5:39	5:46	5:53



On the Record »

BY PAT HUMPHREY » COMMUNICATION DIRECTOR, SOUTHWESTERN UNION

Liberty for All

I AM SO THANKFUL that we live in a country that upholds the principles of religious liberty. While I must admit that this freedom is something that I have often taken for granted, I am lately becoming keenly aware that worshipping according to the dictates of one's conscience is a wonderful privilege that isn't necessarily afforded to those who live in some parts of the world. How thankful I am that I can freely attend church on Sabbath or bow my head in prayer before partaking of a meal in a public restaurant without fear of religious persecution.

I'm also thankful that I work for an Adventist employer, and that Sabbath work conflicts are not an issue in my workplace. Even when I was employed by a secular organization, I was grateful that my immediate supervisor—who happened to be Jewish—understood and respected my convictions about keeping the Sabbath. She never once asked me to work on Sabbath, even though on rare occasions she would come into the office on Sabbath for what she considered to be an "emergency."

In that workplace our small staff was comprised of people who all considered themselves to be people of faith, although each of us held differing beliefs. In the seven and a half years that I was employed there, we all worked harmoniously together, each showing respect for

one another. Sometimes we'd talk about religious subjects, and though my coworkers recognized that some of my beliefs (such as the Seventh-day Sabbath) were different from those of other Christians, I never felt condemned or ostracized. All this was possible, I believe, because we live in a country where the right to practice your faith (in most cases) is still honored and respected—at least for now.

As I was preparing this issue, I came across a statement that caused me to stop and think. So often as Christians, when we speak of religious liberty, we think of it as the right and freedom to practice our *Christian* beliefs, but we forget that people of other faiths have that same privilege too. You may recall that in June of 2015 the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in favor of a Muslim

woman who had been denied a job because she wore a hijab (head covering). Lawyers from the Adventist Church's religious liberty department filed an amicus brief (friend of the court brief with other faith groups) in support of her case. Why? Because a favorable ruling in such cases helps to protect the rights of *all* people of faith in the workplace—whether Adventists, Muslims, Jews, or any other religious group.

In an article posted on the NPR website on December 11, 2015, Russell Moore, president of the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, said, "If we really believe in religious liberty, then religious liberty applies to everyone, and that means I'm not threatened by non-Christians having religious liberty."

Adventist church teachings admonish us to uphold, defend, and protect religious liberty. As we do so, let's remember that this liberty is a privilege that people of *all* faiths are entitled to.

Pat Humphrey

Record

EDITORIAL STAFF

- Editor** Pat Humphrey
phumphrey@swuc.org
- Associate Editor** Jessica Lozano
jlozano@swuc.org
- Assistant Editor/Designer** Reggie Johnson
rjohnson@swuc.org
- Advertising Manager** Dianne Jones
djones@swuc.org
- Circulation Manager** Rocío López
lopez@swuc.org
- Proofreader (off-site)** Debbie Sasser

SOUTHWESTERN UNION OFFICERS

- President** Larry Moore
- Secretary** Buford Griffith, Jr.
- Treasurer** Deryl Knutson

- Vice-President** Eddie Canales
- Vice-President** Randy Gilliam
- Vice-President** Minner Labrador

DEPARTMENT DIRECTORS

- ASI/Communication** Pat Humphrey
- Children's Ministries** Sonia Canó
- Church Ministries/Stewardship** Minner Labrador
- Education** Randy Gilliam
- Evangelism** Eddie Canales
- Family Ministries** Buford Griffith, Jr.
- Health Ministries** Pat Humphrey
- Information Systems** Jerrilyn J. Bicek
- Ministerial/Men's Ministries** Minner Labrador
- Ministerial Spouses** Carmen Fuentes-Griffith

- Multicultural/Personal Ministries** Eddie Canales
- Religious Liberty** Buford Griffith, Jr.
- Revolving Fund** Carlos Ribeiro
- Sabbath School** Minner Labrador
- Trust Services** John Page
- Women's Ministries** Carmen Fuentes-Griffith
- Young Adult/Youth Ministries** Helvis C. Moody

Subscriptions

Free to all Southwestern Union church members. Non-member subscription is \$12/year.

Submissions

Articles for the Record will be edited for length and content. Because space is limited, stories and articles are selected on the basis of interest and relevance to those around the Southwestern Union.

I came so that they may **have** and **enjoy** life, and have it in **abundance**.

— John 10:10

Abundant Life

Adventist Health System takes a Christ-centered, whole-person approach to healthcare, serving more than 4.7 million patients each year. To do this, we look to the principles of Creation as the blueprint for helping others live an abundant life. Explore these eight principles of CREATION Health at CreationHealth.com.