

# T Southern TIDINGS

JANUARY 2018

## *Restoring* **HOPE** *and* **WHOLENESS:**

**HUMANITY FOUND IN RELIGIOUS FREEDOM**

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ESPAÑOL  
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SHOOTINGS

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# A Missional Resolution



**Ron C. Smith**, D.Min., Ph.D.  
*President of the Southern  
 Union Conference*

It is an honor to offer prayers of blessing upon each household, family, and member of the Southern Union for this New Year. 2017 was a year of successes and failures, victories and defeats, and triumphs and tragedies. The ebb and flow of life has a unique way of ushering us into circumstances that encourage and discourage us, inspire and debilitate us, and motivate and drain us of hope. This spectrum of divergent emotions predisposes us to make resolutions for the New Year. The resolutions may include things such as weight loss, finding a spouse, acquiring professional status, achieving greater financial margins, enjoying financial independence, or pursuing a closer walk with God. I can attest to the journey of scaling a spectrum of my own. I am poised, by God's power, to unleash my primary resolution. It has become my driving quest to alert as many people as I can to the imminent coming of Jesus.

Civilization, as we now experience it, cannot last much longer. God is about to change the current course of this world's history. With the ascendancy of atheistic philosophy and the upheaval of crime and international contention, planet Earth is on the verge of destruction. Too many responsible citizens of this world are unaware of the nearness of the return of our Lord. My resolution is to warn people to get ready by inviting them into a meaningful relationship with Jesus. I am praying that you will join me this year in our plans to gear up for the Southern Union 2019 Year of Lay and Pastoral Evangelism.

I need to share counsel with you from the Spirit of Prophecy surrounding the rationale and need to reach the Southern Union territory for Jesus:

"The disciples were to teach what Christ had taught. That which he had spoken, not only in person but through all the prophets and teachers of the Old Testament, is here included. Human teachings is shut out. There is no place for tradition, for man's theories and conclusions or for church legislation. No laws ordained by ecclesiastical authority are included in the commission. None of these are Christ's servants to teach. 'The law and the prophets,' with the record of His own words and deeds, are the treasure committed to the disciples to be given to the world," *Evangelism*, page 15.

"Now is the time for the last warning to be given. There is a special power in the presentation of the truth at the present time; but how long will it continue? Only a little while. If there was ever a crisis, it is now," *Evangelism*, page 16.

"As a people we greatly need to humble our hearts before God, pleading His forgiveness for our neglect to fulfill the Gospel commission. We have made large centers in a few places, leaving unworked many important cities. Let us now take up the work appointed us, and proclaim the message that is to arouse men and women to a sense of their danger. If every Seventh-day Adventist had done the work laid upon him, the number of believers would now be much larger than it is," *Testimonies for the Church*, 9:25.

Join me in this 2018 resolution to evangelize the Southern Union territory with fresh ideas and renewed fervor. —RCS

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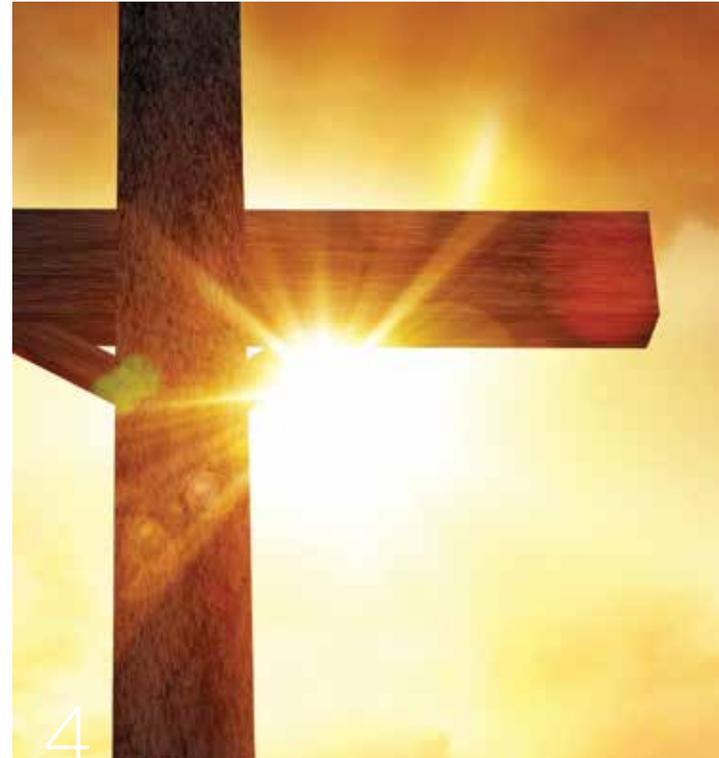
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# RESTORING HOPE AND WHOLENESS:

## *Humanity found in Religious Freedom*

BY AMIREH AL-HADDAD

So often when we as Seventh-day Adventists look at the role of religious liberty, we relegate it to the confines of what we know about Sunday laws or Sabbath accommodation in the workplace, and very little else. This part of religious liberty work is important, but often we lose sight of greater issues going on around us. While the country as a whole has tuned in to a period of self-reflection and looking inward to our own problems — especially after the events of Charlottesville, Las Vegas, and Sutherland Springs — it may bring hope and wholeness to our souls by concentrating on others for a moment as we begin a new year.

I am hard-pressed to find anyone who lives or works around me who does not see a worrisome trend in the world today, of political division and loss of love and kindness for one another. Certainly, news during the last few months has brought out some points that we as Christians cannot and should not ignore. Current events happening in our world today should be as an alarm sounding, calling all Christians to review how we treat other human beings. In December the Supreme Court heard the case of Masterpiece Cake Shop, raising the question of whether a conservative Christian business owner can be compelled to create a cake as part of the anti-discrimination laws of his state. Religious liberty, and the broader sense of

what we try to accomplish by promoting religious freedom, should give us insight and direction in how to deal with many of the issues involving the current events of our day, because religious liberty speaks to the essence of our inalienable right to follow our own conscience.

When I speak of freedom, I'm not just speaking of our right to live free, but also to be free from that which Satan himself has brought about that would imprison us. While Christ can set us free, Satan still works to forge handcuffs for the conscience of all humankind.

When we speak about religious freedom around the world, it is imperative to recognize the need to make this freedom a fundamental right for every human on this planet. For secular governments, it is an idea that may be born out of love and concern for fellow men. But for the Christian, and certainly Seventh-day Adventists, it is an issue that is patterned on a heavenly precept of what God has given us, just as He did Lucifer and the heavenly host — the gift of freedom of conscience and freedom of choice. For the Christian, if we are to live a life like Christ, we must engender an attitude toward freedom as it is practiced in Heaven.

If religious freedom cannot be found in America, where else in the world would you find it? In the opening preamble



“Today God gives men opportunity to show whether they love their neighbour. He who truly loves God and his fellow man is he who shows mercy to the destitute, the suffering, the wounded, those are ready to die. God calls upon every man to take up his neglected work, to seek to restore the moral image of the Creator in humanity.”

*Letter 113, 1901*

“Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.”

### *Article 18*

of our own Constitution, our founding fathers acknowledge the basic human right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, but we should also include the right to justice and peace. As Christians, we acknowledge that every person living on Earth is a child of God. When we acknowledge our origins, each individual should be treated with dignity despite our own religious differences. How many wrongs could have been avoided throughout history if human beings would treat each other with respect, integrity, and dignity?

Great leaders have spoken out on the issue of religious freedom and the rights of conscience. We find supporting documents in the Declaration of Human Rights, our country’s own Constitution and the Bill of Rights, even *Liberty Magazine’s* declaration of principles which encompasses the rights of conscience and “the essence of the golden rule — to treat others as one wishes to be treated.”

Religious persecution is a real issue around the world, not just in how it restricts freedom of conscience, but in some cases how it restricts inclusion in the community and ownership of property. And in other cases, it can mean imprisonment, or even death. History shows that bad things happen when people disagree about religion. Thus, it

should become imperative that governments protect the conscientious individual. However, the right to believe is meaningless if other rights are not extended. One of Jesus’ last commands to His disciples was, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation,” Mark 16:15. The issue of freedom of religion goes to the very core of who we are and why we are put here on earth. When we allow an individual to interact in every other secular way — voting, property ownership, participating in economic or educational opportunities — but then restrict the individual’s ability to speak and share and participate in worshipping together, then you deny them a necessary part of their own humanity in regards to who they are and why they exist.

Making religious freedom a foundation block upon which all other blocks within our society rests should be our primary goal. Stemming from this action alone will be the birth of other humanitarian efforts, such as the goals for peace and security all governments and people should be striving to achieve. By allowing religious liberty to flourish, you can incorporate other humanitarian goals, like bringing justice to the wrongly accused and development to the economically, physically, or socially oppressed. Being alert to the needs of the

different peace-loving religious groups around us brings us to a closer understanding of those who are different from us. You cannot defend religious liberty without being for justice, and you cannot defend religious liberty without being for equality. By celebrating religious freedom in this way, we bring hope to the oppressed masses.

I know that to some this might seem like a political stand. After all, as conservative Christians we see governments leaning to a more secular view of human rights, thus giving every appearance that biblical principal is being discarded in favor of human rights. However, the true Christian should not allow any government or political worldview to turn them away from our biblical responsibilities. As Christians, we must hold ourselves to a higher standard. Separate yourself from trending ideas or popular political views, and look instead to the true essence of what it means to live for God and serve humanity.

As the nation becomes more divided, our churches and the members who worship within them should unite, not on a shared political view, but on a shared biblical view — understanding, as Ellen White says, that, “The banner of truth and religious liberty held aloft by the founders of the gospel church and by

God's witnesses during the centuries have passed since then, has, in this last conflict, been committed to our hands. The responsibility for this great gift rests with those whom God has blessed with a knowledge of His Word," *Acts of the Apostles*, p. 68.2. Religious liberty is not something that only one segment of the church should uphold, defend, and preserve. It is a precious gift from God that should be nurtured so that it will grow and bring a better life to all humanity.

When we divide ourselves on our differences, when we fail to come together as a people of God, when we lose the power of love and grace, we separate ourselves from God, fragmenting, not

just the body of Christ, but also the body of humanity itself. We separate ourselves from the task of showing others how they can be made whole in Christ.

"Today God gives men opportunity to show whether they love their neighbor. He who truly loves God and his fellow man is he who shows mercy to the destitute, the suffering, the wounded, those are ready to die. God calls upon every man to take up his neglected work, to seek to restore the moral image of the Creator in humanity," *Letter 113*, 1901.

"Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either

alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship, and observance," *Article 18*.

Religious liberty must incorporate freedom of thought, choice, expression, and assembly. Can we as Adventists change the world? Can we do better to help change and restore the image of God to humanity? Let us move forward with purpose to restore *hope* and *wholeness* to our fellow humans in this New Year. ☉

**Amireh Al-Haddad**  
is the director of religious liberty and public affairs at the Southern Union in Norcross, Georgia.



# DEADLY CHURCH SHOOTINGS:

## *How to Prepare for a Potential Attack*

BY ALVA JAMES-JOHNSON

It's a scenario that seemed unimaginable just a few years ago — a gunman walking into a house of worship to slaughter the faithful.

But, in the wake of horrific church shootings in Charleston, South Carolina; Antioch, Tennessee; and most recently in Sutherland Springs, Texas, where 26 people were massacred, churches face a new reality. Once considered places of refuge, sacred buildings are not off limits when it comes to violent crime. In fact, churches can be among the most vulnerable of places if proper precautions aren't taken.

Vilma Reynolds, Adventist Risk Management account executive for the Southern Union, said Seventh-day Adventist congregations aren't immune from such tragedy, and many church leaders are concerned. She receives emails from pastors daily asking what they should do to better protect worshippers.

"Times are changing; it's not business as usual anymore," Reynolds said. "We can't just sit there and not be aware of the risks in the world."

In the aftermath of the November 5, 2017, shooting at the First Baptist Church in Texas — the worst in American history — Reynolds sent an email to conferences within the Union, warning them that safety must become a priority.

"Violence in our churches continues to be a pressing matter, as the recent shooting at a Texas church reminds us," she wrote. "This is why Adventist Risk Management,

Inc. (ARM) encourages local churches to practice regular safety drills and implement risk management procedures."

The email included a compilation of resources to help churches improve safety preparedness for a potential emergency, disaster, or attack. Reynolds also encouraged conference officials to disseminate information about a Safety Sabbath scheduled for March 2018 throughout the North American Division, and she encouraged congregations to register at [SafetySabbath.com](http://SafetySabbath.com).

"ARM is providing resources for: Active Shooter, Earthquake, and Fire Drills," she wrote in the email. "... This is a practical way to implement a tone of risk management into the daily life of the local congregation."

Reynolds said there are a couple of conferences in the Southern Union that are already seeking to have security guard coverage through risk management, which can be an expensive proposition. Some conferences may require churches that choose the coverage to absorb the additional expense.

While that might not be an affordable option for all churches, she recommends that each church appoint a safety officer to lead the congregation in safety preparedness efforts, and to establish relationships with local first responders such as police, fire, and EMS workers. She said some churches have tapped Pathfinder leaders for that role since they're already involved in such training.

"We do not have liability coverage for any weapons in the Church," she said, "so we suggest that weapons not be in the churches

unless, of course, they are carried by police or retired police officers."

Bill Wells is the security director for AE Global Media in Charlotte, North Carolina. The company designs, installs, and maintains technology in worship spaces at more than 2,700 churches worldwide. He conducts worship facility safety seminars and training for congregations. Some Adventist leaders have participated.

Wells said the frequency of recent church shootings has heightened everyone's awareness about the potential danger that congregations face in today's world. He said sexual abuse of a minor, personal injuries, financial issues, and other church liabilities are much more rampant than shootings, but the recent spate of violence has convinced leaders to re-evaluate their safety measures.

"The things you see on the news are probably the things you don't have to worry about; they're on the news because they're out of the norm," Wells said. "But, the reality is there are people that want to hurt the body of Christ, and we're just seeing more shootings on the rise. Anytime that happens, we have more and more churches calling us up and saying, 'Help us out. What do we do?'"

People believe churches always should be open to the community, Wells said, and that makes them very vulnerable.

"I think it just makes us a soft target, and that's the big thing that I talk about in the classes — hardening the target," he said. "There's a 45-second rule that I learned years ago, and it's if you can deter someone

from committing a crime or coming onto your property to do harm for 45 seconds, there's a 95 percent chance they will go somewhere else. Our big thing is: What's your plan?"

So, what can congregations do to build a safety barrier around their churches?

Wells recommends adopting a "centric circle philosophy," dividing church grounds into perimeters. The outer perimeter secures large zones such as church parking lots and sidewalks. The middle perimeter secures areas between the inner and outer rings, to include church foyers, halls, and secondary rooms, for example. The inner perimeter secures immediate areas used mainly by pastors and other leaders, such as the sanctuary and offices.

Wells said it's also important to develop a security ministry team. The group should include parking attendants, greeters, ushers, and others who have first contact with people entering the worship space.

"One of the most disarming thing is a smile, and to shake someone's hands and say, 'Hello,'" he said. "If they're stressed out, you can just bring them some peace."

With greeters and parking attendants involved, it's easier to notice when something is amiss. Wells said those furthest from the building should have radios or some device to communicate with others on the outside. The goal is to prevent a problem from entering the building.

"If they see a dispute in the parking lot, they should have someone competent enough around to help resolve the dispute; you don't want to bring it inside," he said. "So, you're working from the outside in, being aware of people's situations and how they're feeling. If the problem is in the lobby, don't let it come in the sanctuary.

"You may just be a parker and a greeter with a smile, but your job also may include being aware if you see something that just may not

seem right," he added. "If you see a guy putting a mask on, for example, communicate that to the next level of the circle, so they can be aware of what to look for and determine how to deal with it."

Wells said churches should identify weak spots and areas of concern, paying close attention to areas where children, youth, money, and parking lots are located. And, he suggests taking the following steps:

1. Create a church security plan.
2. Install church video surveillance inside and outside of the property.
3. Never allow an adult in children's areas without proper identification.
4. Make sure to have a plan for Sabbath services in the event of a shooter, fire, or other incident.
5. Ask a local police officer to do a walk-through of your facilities and offer feedback.
6. Train all leaders on how to respond to emergency situations.
7. Define an official spokesperson for the church.
8. Ensure emergency lights are installed and tested around the entire campus.
9. Create public and private wireless networks that use different routes.
10. Designate someone "official" to patrol the parking lot regularly.
11. Don't allow volunteer leaders to work alone in the church building.
12. Test your security systems and routines at least annually.
13. Create a clear protocol for handling money.
14. Make sure people handle money in groups rather than alone.
15. Never assume everything is fine and doing well. 🕊

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**Alva James-Johnson** is a reporter and columnist at the *Ledger-Enquirer* in Columbus, Georgia. For more of her writing, visit [www.facebook.com/AlvaJames-JohnsonLedger](http://www.facebook.com/AlvaJames-JohnsonLedger).

## CHURCH SHOOTINGS IN AMERICA

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### **Sutherland Springs, Texas — November 5, 2017**

Devin Patrick Kelley, 26, allegedly opens fire at the First Baptist Church, killing 26 people and injuring others, in the deadliest church mass shooting in U.S. history.

### **Fresno, California — November 5, 2017**

Manuel Garcia, 64, allegedly kills his 61-year-old wife, Martha Garcia, who had filed for divorce, and her 51-year-old boyfriend, in the St. Alphonsus Church parking lot.

### **Antioch, Tennessee — September 24, 2017**

Emanuel Samson, 25, allegedly guns down a woman while she walks to her vehicle, and then enters the rear of Burnette Chapel Church of Christ and shoots six other people, police said, walking silently down the aisles with a .40-caliber handgun.

### **Charleston, South Carolina — June 15, 2015**

White supremacist Dylann Roof, 23, fatally shoots nine people at the historically black Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church during a Bible study. Those killed include the pastor and a State House representative.

### **Knoxville, Tennessee — July 27, 2008**

Jim D. Adkisson, 58, opens fire at the Tennessee Valley Unitarian Church, killing two people and wounding six others at the liberal church, which he called a "den of un-American vipers" in a suicide letter. The shooting occurs during a children's musical performance.

### **Brookfield, Wisconsin — March 12, 2005**

Terry Ratzmann, 44, fatally shoots seven people and hurts four at a Living Church of God hotel church service before killing himself. The church pastor and the pastor's son were among the dead.

### **Fort Worth, Texas — September 15, 1999**

Larry Gene Ashbrook, 47, kills seven people and hurts seven others at the Wedgwood Baptist Church, and later takes his own life.

*Source: Associated press and other media reports.*

# ADVENTIST COMMUNICATORS

## “Build Bridges” at Portland Convention

BY **KIMBERLY LUSTE MARAN**

Although a cool fall rain streamed outside for most of the event, spirits were bright, minds were eager, and conversations were lively at the 2017 Society of Adventist Communicators (SAC) convention held in Portland, Oregon, October 19-21. A blend of more than 250 professionals and students attended communication workshops, expert panel discussions, area media tours, special worship services, and an Adventist film screening — all geared toward “Building Bridges” of communication with other Adventists and within the community.

“My favorite part of SAC is the people,” said SAC president Tammy Fisher, communication director for the Georgia-Cumberland Conference in Calhoun, Georgia. “Social media is great for keeping in touch, yet nothing beats sitting around a table and talking, looking people in the eye, and connecting over work and the Adventist faith.”

During the Sabbath morning worship service, 919 new pairs of socks were collected for Portland’s homeless as attendees filled red shopping bags and 12 baskets with their donations. In this drive coordinated by Adventist Health, the donated socks were handed off to a representative in attendance from the Portland Rescue Mission.

“So often church groups arrive in a city for a convention, we gain knowledge and insight — and then we leave without impacting the local community in a positive way,” said Dan Weber, director of communication for the North American Division (NAD) and executive director of SAC. “We are so glad for the opportunity to partner with a local organization that is providing for the underserved population of Portland.”

Another highlight from the event included a panel discussion on crisis communication. The dialogue centered around the



Society of Adventist Communicators 2017 convention attendees in Portland, Oregon

PHOTO BY: PIETER DAMSTEEGT

convention theme, “Building Bridges,” and addressed how several Adventist communicators have handled crises that have impacted Adventist organizations — schools, conferences, hospitals, and local churches. The discussion provided practical tips on how to navigate the unthinkable. Case studies included how communicators dealt with institutional closings, media inquiries, and tragedy.

The three-day event culminated with an awards banquet where almost 90 certificates were distributed to both professionals and students for communication projects in several disciplines: written word/print media; spoken word (radio/podcast); video (broadcast and web); design; and campaign (advertising and promotions).

“There were so many great projects submitted this year,” said Fisher. “I’m excited for the future of Adventist communication on all our media platforms!”

Fisher, who completed her term as president at the conclusion of this year’s convention, is ready to welcome new board members. “My dad always told me to be the best you could be, whatever you are doing. He also said that you are replaceable. I know the new board is made up of fantastic people who will lead SAC to a bright future.”

SAC’s new president is Libna Stevens,



Adventist Health, Portland, provided red tote bags to collect the donated socks.

PHOTO BY: PIETER DAMSTEEGT

assistant director of communication for the Inter-American Division, with headquarters in Miami, Florida. Fisher moves to the past-president board role.

Next year’s event will be held October 18-20, at the new NAD headquarters in Columbia, Maryland. Visit [www.adventistcommunicators.org](http://www.adventistcommunicators.org) for more about the 28-year-old organization and periodic updates on the upcoming convention. 📍

**Kimberly Luste Maran** is the assistant director of communication for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America, Columbia, Maryland.

# COMING JANUARY 2018



**ALL OF US ARE ON A JOURNEY. EACH JOURNEY IS DIFFERENT.**

*Florida Hospital Doctors Return from Puerto Rico,*

# SHARE RIVETING EXPERIENCES

BY FLORIDA HOSPITAL MEDIA RELATIONS



The physicians traveled via Black Hawk helicopters to treat patients in remote areas, worked at hospitals on the brink of shutting down, and performed surgeries in challenging conditions.

They found a diabetic elderly woman covered in insects, disoriented on the floor of her home. Another day, they helped local doctors perform heart surgery. And on another, they were forced to read an X-ray outdoors, using the light of the sun.

The Florida Hospital emergency physicians were the first to receive provisional licenses to practice medicine

in Puerto Rico — their license numbers 001, 002, 003, 004, and 005, respectively. After returning to Orlando, Florida, on Sunday evening, the doctors gathered to share their experiences for the first time.

The team began their relief efforts nearly two weeks ago. While their initial goal was to assess the island’s health care needs, they began providing medical and humanitarian aid immediately.

“We could not have accomplished all we did were it not for divine intervention,” said Julian Trivino, M.D., who works at Florida Hospital Orlando.

As they landed in a military helicopter in a rural area one day, an orphanage operator pleaded for help. There was no drinkable water for the children. The doctors, in many situations, worked with multiple agencies to provide relief.

“With the help of the U.S. Army, we were able to deliver drinkable water to the kids in the orphanage within the hour,” said Katia Lugo, M.D., a Puerto Rico native who works at Florida Hospital Orlando.

When the Florida Hospital team, working with Puerto Rico’s Health Department, learned a hospital was on the brink of shutting down, they

facilitated the delivery of water and other critical supplies, allowing the hospital to remain open.

Despite the challenging conditions — roads were closed, communication nearly nonexistent, emergency department temperatures were in the high 90s — the physicians touched countless lives.

But, the impact may have been greatest on the doctors.

“It changed my life,” said Alfredo Tirado, M.D., also a Puerto Rico native who works at Florida Hospital Orlando. “You get into medicine because you want to help people — and being able to get there and see the needs down there, I was very heartbroken.” 📍



The team provided immediate medical help, including assisting local doctors to perform open heart surgery.



Due to power outages, Florida Hospital doctors had to improvise and used sunlight to read patient X-rays.



After visiting the area, the physicians worked to ensure the delivery of clean water and other critical needs to families in need.

# WHO IS MY NEIGHBOR?

BY RACHEL LASSEL

Hurricane Irma came and went. We were told to prepare. We were told to prepare a lot, and often, for many days ahead of the storm! What equals prepared enough? What does it look like to be prepared? Can we stop the storm with our preparations? NO!

As preparations for the storm were made, Mark Reams, youth ministries pastor at Forest Lake Church in Apopka, Florida, planned beyond the storm on his radar. He wanted to offer an opportunity to serve after Irma made her exit.

Up went a post on the Sabbath School Facebook page. In addition, one blast text was sent to all youth with the option to RSVP and join in. Barbara McCoy, children and women’s ministries pastor, offered to arrange lunch for the volunteers after the clean-up effort.

Last year after Hurricane Matthew, 25 people came out to help in response to a notice on Facebook. This year, 191 volunteers quickly committed. More than 30 Pathfinders were there in force and contributing as part of the total number of helpers. With the large turn out, it became a scramble to identify more homes needing help. Many groups worked additional hours after stopping time!

“My dad and I went to four houses where the storm had blown down trees and branches,” said Pathfinder Blake Bergherm. “We helped break down branches and cleaned up the mess. Some of the people were older and could not have cleaned up on their own. It made me feel good that we could help.”

More than 25 households were served by 191 ready and willing sets of hands. Some of these families had not yet cleared their own properties, but were showing up to



PHOTO BY: K. SIMONS

“I never thought trees could lose so many leaves,” said Pathfinder Justin Wu.



PHOTO BY: K. SIMONS

Catherine Alves was part of the Forest Lake Pathfinder Club that helped clean up 25 yards following Hurricane Irma.

help from homes still without power and water. People helped were a mix of church families, neighbors of volunteers, and those neighbors asking us to help other neighbors in Apopka, Pine Hills, Winter Springs, Mount Dora, Altamonte Springs, and Longwood.

We received hugs, some tearful thanks, a lunch that broke the budget, and lovingly earned blisters. All 191 participants were grateful to be able to serve. God receives the glory! 🙏

# South Central HIGHLIGHTS

BY MICHAEL HARPE

**B**enjamin Jones, president of South Central Conference, shared the theme for 2018 at the annual fall Worker’s Meeting last month in Huntsville, Alabama. Last year was the first full year for the new administration: Benjamin Jones, president; John Nixon Sr., D.Min., executive secretary; and Sonja Crayton, treasurer. It was a great year!

The apex of the year was Camp Meeting, with the theme, “We Would See Jesus,” held June 2-10. New for 2017 were the Plenary Sessions introduced by Jones, which included a young adult segment on Wednesday. “Plenary” means to be attended by all participants at a conference or assembly, who otherwise meet in smaller groups. Prior to this year, a myriad of smaller workshops were held during the regular 10 to 11:45 a.m., and 3 to 5 p.m. workshop spots. In previous years, these time periods were reserved for various departmental workshops.

For 2017 the president’s vision for Camp Meeting was to convert these periods into themed plenary sessions, that were received well by the campers. Each day there were different presenters, starting with Ty Gibson, co-director of Light Bearers and pastor of the Storyline Church, who dealt with “Christ our Righteousness.” Craig Newborn, Ph.D., retired South Central departmental director, shared important highlights on the Spirit of Prophecy with Jud Lake, Th.D., D.Min., professor at Southern Adventist University in Collegedale, Tennessee. On Wednesday, Marquis Johns, lead pastor of the North Philadelphia Church, spoke to the idea of “Inter-generational Connectedness,” a special young adult topic; Nadine Joseph Collins, Ph.D., SanareLife, Inc., dealt with “Women in Leadership”; and South Central’s new educational superintendent, Johnny Holliday, and asso-



PHOTO BY: GIANNA SNELL

**Ordination and Commissioning participants with their spouses and family: H. Micah Weech (left), pastor, and his wife, Natalie; Ifeoma Kwesi, D.Min., and her brother, Frank Hale III; Kimberly Mann, chaplain, and her husband, Robert; Jacques Francois, pastor, and his wife, Katherine; M.C. Burks, chaplain, and his wife, Mary; and Bryant Herbert, pastor, and his wife, Charla.**



**Benjamin Jones, Conference president**



**John S. Nixon Sr., D.Min., Conference executive secretary**



**Sonja Crayton, Conference treasurer**

ciate, Queen Robinson, Ph.D., featured the “Relevance of Christian Education Today.” The regular adult workshops by departments were adjusted to the first Sabbath afternoon through the first Sunday, unless otherwise indicated.

Camp Meeting concluded with an inspiring Ordination and Commissioning Service for six participants. Ordination candidates were Jacques Francois, pastor; Bryant Herbert, pastor; H. Micah Weech, pastor; M. C. Burks, chaplain. Commissioning candidates were Kimberly

Mann, chaplain at Oakwood University; and Ifeoma Kwesi, D.Min., commissioning participant from Oakwood University.

This year is on track to be spirit-filled and a banner year as well. Jones is inspired with the motif of “Changed” for the theme, “Changed by His Presence, by His Promise, and by His Power.” Camp Meeting is scheduled for June 8-16. See you there! 📍

**Michael Harpe** is the former communication director at the South Central Conference.

# AHS's Record-Breaking United Way Campaign Raises Funds in Critical Time of Need



The annual corporate fundraiser for Heart of Florida United Way raised nearly \$300,000.

In its partnership with Adventist Health System (AHS), Heart of Florida United Way provides support, resources, and solutions to help improve the health, education, and financial stability of those in the community. AHS recently held its annual corporate services fundraising campaign where employees generously donated to Heart of Florida United Way, which supports 40 local nonprofit agencies and their programs.

The 2017 campaign ran October 9-20, 2017, collecting \$294,273, and making it AHS's highest-grossing United Way fundraiser to date. The theme for this year's campaign was "Share Your Blessings," and AHS's corporate services employees were able to contribute by donating via cash, check, or payroll deduction. In addition to donations made by individual employees, the campaign was bolstered by the organization's dollar-for-dollar

matching of contributions, up to \$100 per donation.

"The need in the community is so great, and has been amplified even more with the impact of Hurricane Irma across the state. Even as some of them continue to recover themselves, I am so thankful for our employees who generously contributed to this year's campaign," said Terry Shaw, president/CEO for Adventist Health System. "We truly believe that communities are healthier and better because of our presence, and this campaign is just one example of how our mission of 'Extending the Healing Ministry of Christ' is helping people live in abundance and wholeness."

Among its many impact areas, the United Way funds programs that give children access to medical or dental care, provide lunches to the hungry, and provide safe, sustainable housing for families.

"Without the support of partners like

Adventist Health System, the work Heart of Florida United Way is doing in the community simply would not be possible. Last year, we helped over 650,000 people. This year, we want to help even more, and the need feels even greater as central Florida continues to recover from a brutal hurricane season," said Jeff Hayward, president/CEO for Heart of Florida United Way.

The annual United Way fundraiser is conducted as part of AHS's community involvement program, which gives employees the opportunity to participate in a wide range of service and volunteer initiatives that can be performed during work hours. These difference-making opportunities include contributing to food and blood drives, providing enrichment for local school children, and participating in park and highway cleanups. 📍

BY MARIO ROBERTS

# Florida Hospital Awards More than \$1.5 Million in Community Projects to Meet Needs of Underserved

Florida Hospital has awarded more than \$1.5 million to five community projects that improve the health of the underserved, and address societal issues in central Florida.

“We are proud to support this year’s grant recipients, who are dedicated to improving lives in central Florida,” said Daryl Tol, president/CEO for Florida Hospital and the Central Florida Division — Adventist Health System. “And while their efforts are strengthening the well-being of our communities, we are also positively impacting the health care industry by reducing preventable medical costs.”

Florida Hospital’s Community Health Impact Council, commonly known as CHIC, announced this year’s recipient projects:

- **Chronic Disease Self-Management Program:** CHIC grants funding for this community-based workshop in which people with different chronic health problems learn how to manage their health and maintain active and fulfilling lives. (\$200,000)
- **Community Paramedicine:** Working alongside Seminole County’s Health Department, this program aims to improve the quality and access to care of patients by arranging for paramedics to follow up with them for 30 days after they are discharged from a hospital. (\$190,000)
- **Health Access & Physician Partnership Initiative:** This program provides low-income Osceola County residents access to a diagnostic system by offering affordable rates and free services to patients as they travel through the health care continuum for further testing and treatment. It offers a holistic approach in a county where the doctor-patient ratio is two



The Community Health Impact Council has awarded more than \$15 million to local projects.

times the national average. Osceola Council on Aging launched this initiative in October 2011 with a grant from Florida Hospital, and CHIC continues to offer our support this year. (\$500,000)

- **Mt. Sinai Seventh-day Adventist Church Community Outreach:** CHIC grants extend funding to this food cooperative which, through a centralized distribution center, brings fresh produce to communities. This co-op delivers 75,000 pounds of food per week to 14 other organizations. (\$590,898)
- **Community Health Centers:** This program assists, monitors, and ensures continuity of care across all service levels, to medically complex and high-risk patients who are living with chronic conditions. This program overcomes the barriers to care

by serving the uninsured, underinsured, and underserved. (\$106,940)

Aligning with a national trend, the community paramedicine program will ensure patients discharged from the hospital have a safe environment to return to, with the knowledge and tools to care for themselves, or with the help of a caregiver. “The Florida Hospital CHIC grant will support a valuable service of connecting patients to health care in the community through a home-based community paramedicine model,” said Donna J. Walsh, health officer for the Florida Department of Health in Seminole County. “Through care provided by qualified community paramedics, this model will reduce the number of emergency room visits and hospitalizations.”

BY FLORIDA HOSPITAL MEDIA RELATIONS

# Carolina Conducts “Come to the Altar” Prayer Conference

All have all heard the phrase “Jesus is calling,” but the question is this: Are you willing to come? Often the steps required to come to the altar can be a bit challenging, if not impossible, in your mind.

“I remember as if it were yesterday, the thumping of my heart and the lump in my throat as I rose from my seat, and made my way toward the pastor waiting at the end of what seemed like a very long aisle, says Cynthia Mercer, Carolina Conference director of prayer and women’s ministries. “Undoubtedly, those were the best steps I ever took when I made the commitment in my heart 34 years ago to follow Jesus.”

As preparations were made for the Carolina Conference prayer weekend held at the Morganton Church in western North Carolina on December 1-2, 2017, the theme “Come to the Altar” kept coming to mind, along with the question of what it really means to respond to Jesus’ powerful tug on the heart. What do people do when they have tried all other possible methods to take care of their problems and have exhausted all their resources? They come to the altar and give all burdens and cares of this world to Jesus, Who has the answer for every challenge faced.

The Morganton Pathfinders and Adventurers were in full uniform to greet the attendees on Friday evening, December 1, and Leslie Louis, Carolina Conference president, was present to give a warm welcome and encouragement to continue on as faithful prayer warriors for the Carolinas. Ron



Ron C. Smith, D.Min., Ph.D., president of the Southern Union, presents his message entitled “Adam.”

PHOTO BY: COURTNEY HEROD

C. Smith, D.Min., Ph.D., Southern Union president, presented a soul-searching message titled, “The Challenge of Facing Yourself.”

Sabbath morning, Smith urged attendees to recognize who they are in Jesus’ eyes, and concluded with a powerful altar call to receive the majestic love of Jesus. David Long, director of Sabbath School, prayer, prison, stewardship, and personal ministries for the Southern Union, spoke Sabbath morning and afternoon, reminding attendees of the strength available through the Holy Spirit to lay their giants at the altar.

The weekend was filled with praise and renewed commitments to saturate hearts and minds with the love Jesus so freely offers. Worship leaders Chris and Antoinette Travers and Mark Patterson from the Lighthouse Fellowship Church in Huntersville, N.C., and a local pianist, Hilda Parker, lifted the attendees’ hearts with their inspiring music throughout the weekend.

The words of the weekend’s theme song, O Come to the Altar, resonate with many: “Are you hurting and broken within? Overwhelmed by the weight of your sin? Jesus is calling .... O come to the altar, the Father’s arms are open wide.” This amazing promise offers peace, forgiveness, and restoration for all who are willing to come to the altar. ●



Antoinette and Chris Travers and Mark Patterson were special musical guests from the Huntersville Lighthouse Church in Huntersville, N.C. They also led the attendees in praise and worship.

PHOTO BY: COURTNEY HEROD

BY CYNTHIA MERCER

# Carolina Holds Church Planting/ Church Revitalization Training



PHOTO BY: CONTRIBUTOR

speaker and gave three presentations on how to better engage with the community. With 21 years of full-time church planting, he is well acquainted with the unique challenges church planters face, and his insights were much appreciated.

Thankfully, the weather in Charlotte wasn't overly hot for September, as Conference employees discovered that morning that the air conditioning unit servicing the conference room where the training was held wasn't working. As Brad Cauley, Conference church planting director, welcomed the nearly 70 attendees, he told them, "The AC broke just in time for our meeting today, so we must be doing something right!" Despite the warmth, all were blessed and encouraged in their mission of reaching souls for Christ. 🙏

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BY JOALYCE WAUGH

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Church planters, pastors, and other leaders from across the Carolinas gathered at the Carolina Conference headquarters on Sunday, September 17, 2017, for Church Planting/Church Revitalization Training. In the past, this event has been known as Lay Leader/

Pastor-coach Training, but this year marked the first time key leaders were invited from churches that have experienced a decline in attendance.

Steve Leddy, the most experienced full-time church planter in the North American Division, was the featured

# Carolina Conducts Literature Evangelist Training

The Carolina Conference literature evangelists met at the University City Church on October 8, 2017, to learn and improve their door-to-door approaches. Lance Morrison, Carolina Conference publishing director, was assisted by one of Carolina's full-time literature evangelists (LE), Tad Stauffer. Stauffer has been the number one LE in the Southern Union for the last two years in sales and contacts. Stauffer demonstrated two approaches for both health and children books.

This training event was leading up to the South Carolina State Fair in Spartanburg, S.C., where the Carolina LEs would have

a booth for the purpose of sharing literature. One method of attracting families to their booth will be to provide balloon animals for the children. As they create the animals, they can converse with the families. At this training event, the LEs practiced twisting the balloons into animals and objects to help prepare for the upcoming week and weekend.

If you are interested in becoming a full- or part-time literature evangelist, contact your local conference. 🙏

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BY COURTNEY HEROD

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PHOTO BY: COURTNEY HEROD

Lance Morrison and Tad Stauffer demonstrate how a canvas could be done.

# Richard Edward Bradley Served His Lord With Exemplary Service



PHOTO BY: CONNIE BRADLEY

Richard Edward Bradley is pictured in front of devastation from Hurricanes Irma and Maria in St. Croix, Virgin Islands.

**R**ichard (Rich) Edward Bradley, 64, passed away suddenly on October 15, 2017, while working for FEMA to help victims of Hurricanes Irma and Maria in St. Croix, Virgin Islands.

In 1982 he attended an evangelistic meeting held at the Marathon, Fla., Church by Louis Torres, pastor, and was baptized by Eugene Torres, pastor. Bradley got involved with youth and became the Pathfinder director after moving to central Florida and attending Windermere Church.

He assisted youth ministries with clean-up from Hurricane Andrew in Miami, Fla., and he was honored by Florida Pathfinders for outstanding service during the February 1998 tornadoes. He also assisted the Adventist Community Services Disaster Response team.

Bradley became area Pathfinder coordinator for central Florida, where he planned and assisted with many local and state camporees. While attending the 2004 Inter-

national Pathfinder Camporee in Oshkosh, Wis., he was called to the Florida Emergency Operations Center in Tallahassee, Fla., to assist with the disaster from Hurricane Charlie. He also managed donated goods for Hurricanes Frances, Jean, and Ivan.

In January 2005 he was transferred to the FEMA joint field office in Orlando, Fla., and from there, he was hired by FEMA as a volunteer liaison coordinator. He received awards of appreciation from state and federal levels for many disasters in which he responded.

While others were trying to get out of devastated St. Croix in the aftermath of hurricanes Irma and Maria, Bradley was going to the island. He worked with Governor Mapp's staff to finalize efforts to open a warehousing space for donated goods from all over the world.

"Mr. Bradley was a very dedicated public servant who cared deeply about his work," said Governor Mapp. "He contin-

ued to share his passion helping disaster survivors recover throughout his years of service."

"Rich never wanted credit for what he did," said William Vogel, FEMA coordinating officer for the Virgin Islands. "He worked tirelessly to help those in need."

Bradley also connected with ADRA and the conference office on the island. On his last Sabbath, he gave a testimony of the God he served and loved at the local Adventist church.

He is survived by his wife of 18 years, Connie; one son, Nathan of Clermont, Fla.; two stepdaughters, Amber (David) Mead-Dye of Miami, and Heather Mead of Gotha, Fla.; and two sisters, Arlene (Matt) Fisher of San Antonio, Tex., and Susan (Ronnie Power) Bradley of Elm Grove, La.

A celebration of life conducted by Erskin Bell, Ph.D., at Forest Lake Church in Apopka, Fla., may be viewed at [vimeo.com/241254534](https://vimeo.com/241254534). 📺

# Youth Day Held at Silver Springs Shores Church

**D**awn Forde-Murphy, a talented young woman, returned to her roots for Youth Day at Silver Springs Shores Church in Ocala, Fla. Her sermon topic was “Look Who Is Coming for Dinner.”

A table was spread with white linen cloth, and prepared dishes were placed on the table in preparation for a feast. Participants, covered with black robes from head to toe, were called by name and took seats prepared for them.

Names were chosen for each guest: Lust, Low Self-esteem, Music/Video, Corrupt Entertainment, and Toxic Relationships. The speaker elaborated on poor effects and ungodly qualities present in people’s lives if their focus is on these items, sharing that if one is not fully connected to Christ’s righteousness, he or she will become addicted to Satan’s allurements.



**Dawn Forde-Murphy, Youth Day speaker at Silver Springs Shores Church**

She stressed that all minds should be centered on glorious things above: “Let this mind be in you which is also in Christ Jesus,” Phillipians 2:5; and, that Satan knows his time is ending, so he uses disguised counterfeits to blind eyes from seeing the beautiful things God has prepared for His children.

At the end of the sermon, a man in a long white robe walked softly down the aisle. He called a little child to his side, prayed, went to the table, and pulled away the deceptive robes of Satan. He then chased away the enemies under Satan’s disguise.

Silver Springs Shores’ young people were encouraged to stand up for truth, and bear the cross of Jesus until He comes to receive His faithful children. A special prayer was offered on their behalf. ①

BY NORMA HENRY

# Vladimir Castillo Ordained at Clearwater-Largo Spanish Church

**V**ladimir Castillo was ordained to the Gospel ministry on August 26, 2017, at Clearwater-Largo Spanish Church in Largo, Fla., where he serves as pastor.

He was born in Cuba on September 9, 1976. He began his journey serving the Lord at the age of 16 when he first heard an Adventist pastor preach the Gospel of salvation.

For several years, Castillo served the Church in Cuba. Later, he moved to the United States with his wife, Arabel, and his son, José. Their daughter, Mariangel, was born in the United States.

His academic studies began at the Adventist Theological Seminary in Cuba, and recently he received a master’s in theology and pastoral ministry from Andrews Uni-

versity in Berrien Springs, Mich.

In Florida he worked as a pastor in the cities of Miami; Tallahassee; and his current district of Clearwater-Largo Spanish Church in Largo, Palmetto-Tampa Spanish Church in Tampa, and Pinellas Spanish Church in St. Petersburg.

Castillo is a preacher of the grace of Christ, and an energetic and enthusiastic missionary. His priorities in ministry are to have each child, youth, and adult have a personal relationship with Jesus, to have a constant discipleship program, and to help plant new congregations.

His life is an example of service and sacrifice for all who know him. His greatest desire is to meet Jesus face to face, and to live with Him throughout eternity. ①



**Vladimir, Arabel, José Gabriel, and Mariangel Castillo**

# Elisa Rahming is new CFO of Florida Conference After Retirement of Duane Rollins



PHOTO BY: LEE BENNETT

Duane Rollins, retiring CFO of Florida Conference, and Elisa Rahming, new CFO of Florida Conference

Elisa Rahming was voted chief financial officer (CFO) on December 5, 2017, by the Executive Committee of Florida Conference. As she begins her new responsibilities on January 1, Rahming’s goal is “to maintain and improve upon the level of excellent service and firm financial foundation throughout Florida Conference and its various institutions.”

Rahming is a certified public accountant (CPA) who has served as under-treasurer since July 20, 2010. She began working for the Conference in May 2007 as an assistant treasurer, followed by a stint as associate treasurer. Prior to denomination employment, she had six years of accounting experience in the private sector in Atlanta, Ga.

A native of Nassau, Bahamas, Rahming is a product of Christian education. She received her B.A. in business administration with a concentration in accounting from Southern Adventist University in Collegedale, Tenn. She has a master of busi-

ness administration (MBA) degree from Georgia State University in Atlanta, Ga.

Rahming has a passion for what she refers to as a “mix of ministry and numbers.” She enjoys “encouraging people with their relationship with God and others, encouraging dreams, and sharing biblically-based financial principles.” Mission trips, especially evangelistic, are meaningful to her. She has taken trips to Brazil and Peru in South America, Malawi in Africa, and Guam.

Duane Rollins is retiring as chief financial officer (CFO) of Florida Conference after a life-long career of service spanning several continents in positions from pastor, departmental director, and treasurer in three conferences in the United States, to treasurer of the Guam Micronesia Mission and Southern Asia Pacific Division in the Philippines.

Rollins came to the Florida Conference in 2008. Those who worked closely with him have described him as possessing “credibility, authenticity, and unmatched integrity.”

During his tenure, he helped stabilize financial foundations for the Conference and institutions; changed financial reporting to enable effective global overview of all entity finances, with the assistance of Conference & Association Investment and Finance Committee; took part in planning the new lodges at Camp Kulaqua; and witnessed creation of a well-structured endowment program that has nearly doubled in endowments, while deposits/investments have increased approximately 40 percent.

He leaves a legacy of practices put in place, and lessons learned about financial management to create and maintain strong financial foundations in all entities of the Conference, with the hope they be valued and enlarged.

Rollins’ Christian approach to handling financial affairs of the Conference has been much appreciated. He and his wife, Marilyn, are wished God’s blessing as they move to Indiana to be near family. ●

# Southern Teams Up to Feed Destitute Children



Alumni Lydia Rose (left) and Krystal DesChamps, '06, scoop rice, soy, veggies, and a blend of vitamins and minerals into individually labeled meal packs.



Volunteers of all ages helped; Jax and Scarlett Kirstein served alongside their father, Brennon Kirstein, '94, who is Southern's chaplain.

During the annual Alumni Homecoming Weekend at Southern Adventist University, students, employees, alumni, and community members came together to make a dent in global hunger. In partnership with the Christian nonprofit Feed My Starving Children, 457 volunteers packed more than 101,000 nutritious, ready-to-cook meals that will feed 276 children around the world for a year.

"Service is at the heart of everything we do here at Southern," said David Smith, Ph.D., president of Southern Adventist University in Collegedale, Tenn. "During Homecoming Weekend it was great to work side by side with young people, employees from our campus, returning alumni, and groups from area churches. I think everyone benefited as we joined together, sharing in service, and developing a stronger bond."

Feed My Starving Children is a donations-based nonprofit that sends food to struggling communities around the world, including areas recently devastated by hurricanes. During the meal-packing event, volunteers worked in teams to package

nutrient-dense individual servings that included a blend of soy, enriched rice, and dried vegetables.

"Our volunteers packed a lot of food," said Lucas Patterson, who coordinated the event at Southern. "More than one box per person is Feed My Starving Children's goal for these events, which we exceeded thanks to our enthusiastic volunteers. This was a wonderful way to have a global impact without even leaving campus."

Many of those enthusiastic volunteers were Southern students.

"This was a great opportunity," said Mackenzie Richardson, senior nursing major. "We were able to make a huge impact on not just one person, but I think we gave hope to hundreds of children!"

Senior elementary education major Katie Lawrence said she got to interact with people on campus in a way she hadn't before the event.

"We got to team up with people that we normally wouldn't get to work with," Lawrence said. "Even coming together as part of the Education Club, I got to work with my professors in a way that I had

never seen them before. It was really great to experience that community, not only growing together as a whole group, but in small groups as well."

Many of the alumni who signed up for the event, like Carlton Vollberg, '92, were glad to be able to work alongside current students.

"I think it teaches young people the value of life and helping others through service," Vollberg said.

Tara Bugg, the event supervisor from Feed My Starving Children, is excited to be part of an organization that is serving God around the world.

"To think of the potential that some of these little kids have," Bugg said. "Maybe God has a plan for them to be president, or an Olympic athlete, or to radically change the world in some way, but they can't do that because their parents can't feed them, and so they don't see adulthood. It just breaks my heart. I'm very passionate about partnering with an organization whose true goal is to change the world." ❏

BY TIERRA HAYES

# Elders' Consortium Designed for Elders, by Elders

Elders representing about 40 Atlanta-area congregations met on the evening of October 14, 2017, filling the sanctuary of the Georgia United Korean Church, for the launch of the Georgia-Cumberland Conference Adventist Elders' Consortium (GCAEC).

"It was a wonderful event. More than 120 pastors and elders from 39 different churches were in attendance. The primary invitees were elders in the metro Atlanta area, or central region churches. "However, we had elders come from as far as Ellijay and LaGrange," said Mickey Evans, one of the GCAEC founding members.

Ed Wright, Conference president, congratulated the leadership team and affirmed the elders for their "commitment to better serving God and His church ... and seeking to enhance their ministry and bear eternal fruit."

Keynote speaker Ivan Williams, ministerial director of the North American Division, estimated that there are more than 30,000 local elders in the Division, and surmised that they may very well be the sleeping giant within the Adventist Church that the devil does not want to see come together.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the elders retreated to the fellowship hall to break bread and network in anticipation of more opportunities to get together.

This is a ministry designed by elders for elders. There is an organizational structure that includes the Conference's ministerial regional directors as ex-officio members of the executive board, but it will be driven by elders. The success of GCAEC will primarily be on the elders. Their vision is "Faithful, Reliable, and Empowered" elders in every congregation.

GCAEC began in 2015 when four Atlanta church leaders, Mickey Evans, Paul Beswick, Virgilio Morales, and Neil



PHOTO SUBMITTED BY: MICKEY EVANS

Those leading the launch of the newly formed Georgia-Cumberland Conference Elders' Consortium met to prepare: Young Suh (left), Ivan Williams, Neil Reid, Wendy Neives-Reid, Ed Wright, Virgilio Morales, Steve Keiser, Mickey Evans, Rubin Lenzer, and Nestor Lizardo-Gomez.

Reid, met in Duluth to pray and explore ways to provide support, training, certification, and continuing education for elders. Assisted by Gina Evans, Evans' wife, who works as a researcher for the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, the team developed an assessment instrument to survey a cross-cultural mix of pastors and elders to identify their wants, needs, and challenges. After processing the data, the team, with the addition of Steve Keiser, approached the administration of the Conference with their findings, and obtained endorsement for the establishment of an organization dedicated to the nurturing of elders. During the next two years, the team developed the consortium, its vision, mission, by-laws, certification criteria, and continuing education expectations.

In the days, months, and years ahead, GCAEC plans to host trainings, retreats, and evangelistic and social events throughout the Conference to fulfill its mission, "To network, resource, and provide training for elders to help them better support pastors, oversee ministries, and enthuse and inspire church members."

If Christians were to act in concert, moving forward as one, under the direction of one Power, for the accomplishment of one purpose, they would move the world," 9T 221.

Learn more on their website: [www.sdaec.net](http://www.sdaec.net).

BY MICKEY EVANS

# God Can Use Your Consistent Christian Life

*Marcus Swearingen Bates shares a testimony from his family.*

I remember the conversation like it was yesterday. “I think your father has committed the unpardonable sin.” Mom’s voice conveyed a level of seriousness to where I knew she wasn’t joking: “He just seems so indifferent to Christianity and hardened against spiritual influences, that I doubt he’ll ever come around.” I had to agree with her about Dad’s indifference toward Christianity. “Well,” I remember saying, “we shouldn’t preach to him or lecture him. Let’s keep praying for him, and try to be a consistent example in the way we live our faith. Only God truly knows when someone has moved beyond the possibility of salvation.” Mom agreed, and we decided to leave Dad in God’s hands.

My father, Terry Swearingen, had often expressed a deep cynicism regarding Christian faith in our discussions. His personal experience with Christians had given him the impression that most are hypocrites who don’t consistently live what they profess. Dad has also had difficulty reconciling a God of love with suffering in our world, a concern that stems from the fact that, as a decorated combat veteran who served in the First Cavalry Division in Vietnam, he had personally experienced the horror of war. Even so, God was still working in Dad’s life. He attended church occasionally with my mother, Barbara Swearingen, through the years, and even went to several evangelistic campaigns along the way. Mom and I have been Adventist believers for more than 20 years, so Dad has also had several years to ponder the teachings of Adventism.

A few months ago, Dad faced some serious health problems and landed in the hospital for several weeks. He made a stunning and unexpected announcement to Mom one day when she came to visit him: “Barbara, I want to give my life to God and join the Adventist Church.” When



**Marcus Swearingen Bates (left), Sarah Swearingen Bates, Jonathan Swearingen Bates, Abigail Swearingen Bates, Samantha Swearingen Bates, Barbara Swearingen, and Terry Swearingen**

Mom shared this news with me later that evening, I was absolutely flabbergasted! I was doubtful that Dad would ever become a Christian. Yet, I was gently reminded that, “the Lord’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save,” Isaiah 59:1.

The blessing of Dad’s decision to follow Christ didn’t stop there either. I spoke to Dad on the phone a few days later, and he asked me if I would baptize him! I gratefully agreed, and we immediately made plans on a baptismal date. He and Mom made the eight-hour trek to Knoxville from their home in Florida, and on Sabbath, November 11, 2017, Dad publicly affirmed his baptismal vows in front of Knoxville First Church, and was immersed in baptism as a believer in Jesus Christ. Our supportive church family also happily voted him in as a full-fledged member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

As I reflect on Dad’s decision, I have thought about the conversation he and I had the night before his baptism. I was curious about something: “Dad, what finally convinced you to become a Seventh-day Adventist Christian?” The gist of his response was, “Well, my health isn’t the best, and I want to be right with God, because I don’t know how long I’ll be around. Also, one of the last things that Grammie said to

me before she died is that she hoped that I would find God. And, of course, there’s your mother also. She has been a faithful Christian wife to me through the years.”

His response got me thinking. I thought about Grammie, Dad’s mom. She had been a faithful Christian for her entire life. No doubt she prayed that Dad would find God right up until her death in 2012. I know she’ll be excited to see her son present with the faithful when Christ returns! I also thought about Mom, and how she has been a consistent Christian influence in our lives through the years. She is one of the main reasons why I am a Christian today, and I believe her consistent influence has also been a significant factor in Dad’s decision to follow Christ.

Looking back with 20/20 spiritual vision, Dad’s health challenges seemed to be a catalyst in his decision to follow Christ. Yet, I can’t help but think that the foundation for his conversion had been steadily formed through the consistent Christian influence of Grammie and Mom. Their faithful example through the years has poured a continual flow of grace into Dad’s life, and has pointed him to a merciful and loving Savior. Through their steady influence and the untiring work of the Holy Spirit, Dad finally came to realize that, even in the midst of his questions about life, God could forgive him for his sins and love him just the way he is. I’m so thankful that Dad has finally found peace with God and the assurance of salvation in Christ Jesus.

Dad’s testimony has reminded me that God can use a variety of factors and circumstances to reach people, the most important of which is the power of a consistent Christian example. We should never forget this principle. We should also never underestimate God’s ability to reach people, especially those whom we might think are the most unlikely Kingdom candidates! ●

BY MARCUS SWEARINGEN BATES

# Pastors Prepare for 2019 Year of Evangelism



David Livermore, Gulf States president, welcomes pastors to the evangelism training.



Andre Weston, pastor of the Ft. Walton Beach and New Life churches in Florida, focuses on the training and how he will implement it in his district.



Richie Halversen, director of church planting for Gulf States, trains pastors in the practical components of evangelism.

Twenty pastors from the eastern part of the Gulf States Conference met at the Conference office on Wednesday, November 29, 2017. In preparation for the Southern Union’s emphasis of 2019 as the Year of Evangelism, Gulf States is designating 2018 as a year to prepare for the future united effort. In 2018, each pastor in the Conference will be presenting a series of meetings in their district. The Conference is making this effort now because, as Ellen White says, “It is in the water, not on the land, that we learn to swim,” *Gospel Workers*, page 495. In taking this year to work with their local

churches, putting into practice the necessary effort to prepare for an evangelistic reaping event, they will be better prepared to make a unified effort with the entire Union in 2019.

Richie Halversen, pastor and director of church planting for Gulf States, trained the pastors on leading out in their local evangelistic efforts. Halversen began by sharing a devotional from Luke 5, “A Great Catch,” where the disciples were disappointed with their fruitless labors on the fishing waters, when Jesus appears and calls them back into the boat to labor on. “Are you tired of laboring for souls with-

out obtaining a catch?” Halversen asked. “Don’t stop fishing, follow God’s guidance, He will supply the catch.”

Halversen provided basic training on the fundamentals and theology of evangelism, along with what needs to happen practically, before, during, and after the event. Each pastor was presented a printed resource binder along with a USB flash drive loaded with presentation materials. The seminar was repeated the following day in Jackson, Miss., for the rest of the Gulf States pastors. ●

BY SHANE HOCHSTETLER

# Autumn Renewal Retreat Draws Women from Across the Conference



The women enjoyed worshipping together.

The annual Autumn Renewal Women's Retreat was held for the first time in more than 10 years at Camp Alamisco in Dadeville, Ala., October 27-29, 2017. "This is a time when we can let go of the world's troubles and just get away, be with our best Friend, Jesus, and also enjoy Christian fellowship with other women," explains April Hobbs, Conference women's ministries director.

The special speaker for the weekend was Gail McKenzie, who serves as women's ministries director and prayer coordinator for the Kentucky-Tennessee Conference. McKenzie's messages were uplifting, and spoke to the hearts of the attendees. One attendee echoed the thoughts of many as she exclaimed, "Gail was one of the best speakers we've had!"

On Sabbath afternoon the women were blessed by a concert given by Heather Severance from the Birmingham, Ala., First Church.

Teri Spracklen, with the Ridge Worship Team, provided the music and led the song service throughout the weekend.

Names were drawn and gifts were given before the main meetings each day. During this time special recognition was given to the youngest and the oldest in attendance. Eighteen-year-old Shelby Spracklen was the youngest, and 90-year-old Joyce Knight was the oldest. Knight has been a supporter of women's ministries since its inception in Gulf States, and served on one of the first women's ministries councils.

A prayer room was provided for the

attendees. Cynthia Bush, prayer room organizer, says, "The prayer room served as a source of renewal and encouragement. There were eight interactive prayer stations designed to deliberately engage our sisters in Christ in a five-step approach to prayer."

Many of the women were pleased to be back home at Camp Alamisco. They enjoyed the peaceful lakeside setting, and they appreciated the helpful service given by Todd Ward, camp ranger, and the delicious food prepared by Shelly Ward and her staff. Everyone was excited about the renovations planned for Camp Alamisco's facilities. ●

BY REBECCA GRICE

# Ridgetop Students Enjoy “Classroom Without Walls”



Students learn in the “classroom without walls” at Ridgetop Adventist Elementary School in Ridgetop, Tenn.

What kind of turtle is this? Why are the things on the ground like sticks, leaves, and grass turning black? Why do spiders make webs on the ground? Will this leaf float if it has holes in it? These are typical questions asked by students in the Forest Kindergarten program at Ridgetop Adventist Elementary School (RAES) in Ridgetop, Tenn. This is the first year Shannon Armantrout, pre-K-K teacher, has put into practice the theories of Forest Kindergarten. Forest Kindergarten is based on the German model of total nature immersion and authentic play. There is no predetermined curriculum. Each day’s lesson plan is determined from what nature presents and from the children’s interest. The teacher, who is the mentor, allows students to spend time outdoors in nature, where branches and dirt replace whiteboards and desks. God is the teacher in this For-

est Kindergarten program. Here valuable lessons about caring for nature and each other are learned in an authentic way.

This outdoor hands-on curriculum encourages imagination, play, and creativity. Two days a week, 11 students put on their boots, grab their water bottles, and head out to the wooded area on the grounds of RAES. Within a few minutes, children are looking for insects and jumping from logs, some into puddles from yesterday’s rain. Boys are dragging logs through the woods to build a fort. In another area, sticks and branches become a dental office where several sit waiting for the dentist to check their teeth.

For two and a half hours, toys are replaced by the imaginative use of sticks, rocks, and leaves. In the forest, students write their letters and numbers with sticks, build a bridge over a mud puddle, or create a seesaw with a big rock and a large beam.

They create shapes and sort colors using sticks, leaves, and rocks — all this without traditional text books and worksheets. These four- and five-year-olds have gained understanding in many concepts and facts about their physical world they otherwise may not have learned for months or years. God has become more real and personal to them as they talk about what they found, built, observed, or learned in their forest.

Ellen White wrote, “The fields and hills — nature’s audience chamber — should be the schoolroom for the little children. Her treasures should be their textbook. The lessons thus imprinted upon their minds will not be soon forgotten,” *Child Guidance*, page 48. Grab your boots and join these students in the forest for some exciting learning! 📌

BY PAM WILLIAMS AND SHANNON ARMANTROUT

# Leach Church Members Hold Annual Agape Luncheon



Leach Church members in Cedar Grove, Tenn., hosted their seventh annual Thanksgiving Agape Banquet in early November 2017.



The fellowship hall was decorated with fall decor, twinkling lights, and candles.

There is a ministry in food. Food provides an added reason for reflection and thanksgiving, especially this time of year. The Leach Church in Cedar Grove, Tenn., hosted its seventh annual Thanksgiving Agape Banquet in early November. The menu was vegetarian, and the fellowship hall was filled to capacity.

Forty-six attendees, composed of community friends and church family, listened to stories of miracles and God's interventions of Thanksgivings past. Even a local television personality and his wife attended the event. Decorated with fall decor, twinkling lights, and candles, the meal culminated in a beautiful communion ser-

vice and video vignette on the meaning of what comprises a true harvest. Each family was given a small gift as they exited the luncheon, so they would not soon forget this special occasion. 🕯

BY JOHN BAKER

# South Atlantic Holds Hispanic Children's Ministries Festival

More than 10 Hispanic churches got together for a Hispanic children's ministries festival on October 28, 2017. During the occasion there were no adult guest speakers or adult singers. Everything was performed by the children and for the children. Young Luis Galvez preached the sermon for the festival.

Two children were baptized, and 22 more responded to an appeal from Efrain Poloche, South Atlantic Hispanic ministries coordi-

nator. Lady Uribe coordinated the program, and John Newlove, pastor, emceed the event. The highlight of the occasion was when the father of the little boy who was baptized decided to go to the pool after Ismael Uribe, pastor, encouraged him to follow his son's steps. Now the whole family are baptized members. 🙏



Young Luis Galvez preached the sermon for the festival.

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BY EFRAIN POLOCHE

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# Pathfinders Hold First Alumni Weekend

The Gethsemane Cougars of Raleigh, N.C., held their first Pathfinders Alumni Weekend this past fall. The purpose was to reunite old friendships as well as recruit veteran Pathfinders to the ministry staff.

On the inaugural weekend trip to West Virginia, Tyrone Fisher, Kenroy McCalla, and Maria Gabriel represented the Gethsemane staff; Kalila Joseph, Brian Baker, Theresa Brown, Tony Santiago, and Evroy Brown represented alumni. The club mascot, Nikki, a Greater Swiss Mountain dog, took the journey as well.

Sabbath activities included sightseeing at the New River Gorge Visitor Center, and a nature hike from the top of the ridge to the river at the bottom, Kaymoor Miners Trail. From the parks observation deck, there was a breathtaking view of the New River Gorge Bridge. It is almost 900 feet from the bridge to the water below, and, reportedly, the third highest bridge in the United States. On the way back up, the



Gethsemane Pathfinders staff and alumni enjoyed their first alumni weekend in West Virginia.

group sang "Jacob's Ladder."

Sunday's activity included a four-hour whitewater rafting trip down the Upper Gauley River, which is said to be the second best river in North America for great rapids. The Upper Gauley has Class 5 rapids, the highest passable level. A lot of waves were conquered, the group bumped

into some rocks, and managed to stay on board as the raft went over a 14-foot drop. Besides having lots of adventures to tell the grandchildren about, an alumni member was recruited to be an instructor during the new season. 🙏

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BY L'TONYA JACKSON

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# Maranatha Members Award City of Atlanta Mayor



Rosia A. Parker, Maranatha Sabbath School superintendent, presents Kasim Reed, mayor of the City of Atlanta, Ga., with the Community Service Award of Excellence.

**M**aranatha Church in Atlanta, Ga., held Community Guest Day on Sabbath, July 22, 2017, and there was excitement in the air. This is the time of year when the Sabbath School Department presents the Community Service Award of Excellence to an individual from the community, as well as a person from the church congregation, for making a difference in the City of Atlanta. This year, after Rosia A. Parker, Sabbath School superintendent, communicated many months with the Office of the Mayor, arrangements were made to recognize

Mayor Kasim Reed in recognition of the impact his leadership has had on Atlanta through the many projects and initiatives he has successfully implemented and supported.

With a divine appointment, the mayor arrived while the children's story was being presented, and he was truly blessed and impressed by the children who prayed. He stated in his remarks that this touched his heart dearly, and it took him back to the day when he spoke for the first time in children's church. He shared, "You have blessed me in a way I had not

expected," and as a result, Reed surprised the Maranatha congregation with a \$10,000 donation to support the Children's Ministries Department, the Back to School program, and other activities for the children.

That day Maranatha set out to be a blessing to Reed, and God in turn used him to be a blessing to Maranatha. The pastor, Sherwin Jack, D.Min., and the members give God the glory! 🙏

BY ROSIA A. PARKER

# Psychiatrists Address Opioid Addiction, Broomes Receives Award

Across the United States, there is a current crisis involving addiction to opiate medications. These substances can bring severe social consequences for individuals and their families, and lead to death through overdose. Since 1972, Meharry Medical College in Nashville, Tenn., has provided treatment services to individuals with various substance use disorders, including opiate use disorders. The Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at Meharry held its eighth annual Lloyd C. Elam Symposium on April 27, 2017, which called attention to the opioid crisis. During that conference, L. Rudy Broomes, M.D., received the Meharry Alcohol and Drug Abuse Founder Award. Broomes is a member of the Berean Church in Atlanta, Ga., and is an ordained elder.

At the symposium Broomes was honored to receive his award from his daughter, Lloyda Broomes Williamson, M.D., who is the current chair of the Department of Psychiatry at Meharry. Broomes, who obtained his M.D. degree from Loma Linda University, Loma Linda, Calif., founded and directed the Meharry Alcohol and Drug Abuse Program. During his employment at Meharry, he served as clinical director and vice chair. Broomes obtained his bachelors' degrees from Oakwood College (now Oakwood University) in Huntsville, Ala.

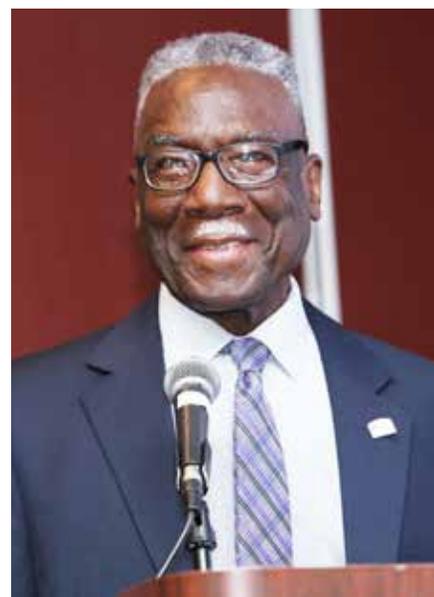
More than 100 individuals were in attendance, including physicians, nurses, social workers, other medical and mental health providers, and community individuals. During his remarks, Broomes had advice for trainees in attendance, "Listen to your patients, swallow your pride, because in their comments may be the answers you are looking for."



Lloyda Broomes Williamson, M.D., presents the Meharry Alcohol and Drug Abuse Founder Award to her father, L. Rudy Broomes, M.D.

Throughout their careers, both Broomes and his daughter have been blessed with multiple opportunities to serve educators at academic institutions, health care centers, churches, and communities to increase awareness about subjects in mental health.

Other local and national speakers at the symposium presented information on a variety of topics, including the complex forces driving physicians to overprescribing of opioid medications. Stephen Loyd, M.D., medical director of Substance Abuse Services for the Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse, gave an address. Keynote speaker, Anna Lembke, M.D., spoke about the prescription drug epidemic in America as a symptom of a faltering health care system. Ingrid



L. Rudy Broomes, M.D.

Cochren discussed specific adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) that are highly correlated with opioid use disorders. Daniel Longergan, M.D., spoke about responsible opioid

prescribing practices. Roy Asta, M.D., addressed the treatment of opioid use disorders in a private practice setting. Clara Elam, wife of the late Lloyd C. Elam, M.D., sixth president of Meharry

Medical College, was also in attendance. The symposium was held on the Meharry campus, and was open to the public. 📍

BY LLOYDA BROOMES WILLIAMSON, M.D.

## Magazine Street Members Dedicated to Summer Service



The members were invited to participate in one of 10 community service activities during the summer. They proudly wear their “Jesus SWAG” (Serve, Worship, and Glorify) T-shirts, a design chosen by the youth of Magazine Street Church.

During any given summer, you can find the members of the Magazine Street Church, Louisville, Ky., hosting at least two activities, Vacation Bible School (VBS) in mid-July and an annual Community Fest in mid-August. However, for the summer of 2017, the members decided to try something different. With the full support of their pastor, Kennedy C. Luckett, and the congregation, the Adventist Youth Ministries (AYM) Department partnered with the youth ministers to dedicate the summer season to service — not just directed toward the young people of the church, but also for the youth and families in the surrounding community.

To kick off the summer of service, AYM hosted their first ever outdoor movie night on July 15, 2017, watching

The Prince of Egypt in the parking lot. For VBS, the youth and adults went to several different street corners promoting free snow cones for VBS. Every person who registered that day received a free snow cone provided by a local food truck. This event carried right into VBS, July 17-21. The members hosted a “Back-to-School Extravaganza” on July 29 and 30. This event was put on by the AYM Department, youth ministers, and the young people.

Magazine participated in several service events during the summer. There was free hair braiding, led by Judith Bentley; free haircuts, led by Fred Parker; a clothing/toy drive, led by Kadia Turner; nursing home visits, led by Dawn Parker; feeding the homeless, led by Helene Rowan; neighborhood cleanup and bus

stop blessings, led by Jermaine Bentley, elder; wellness checks, led by Zaria Murrell; and pop-up prayer stations, led by William Robinson, elder.

Guests attended the career fair which consisted of 25 local professionals, some of which were members of the church, while others were guests from the community. There was also a free book giveaway sponsored by the Louisville Metro Police Department. By the end of the day, attendance had reached nearly 175 people. At the school supply station, 70 backpacks and 45 bags of school supplies were given out to community members. 📍

BY TIFFNEY GIPSON

# Couples Retool, Renew at Marriage Retreat



PHOTO BY: CC THOMPSON

Southeastern couples gather and smile for healthy marriages. More than 50 couples went to Daytona Beach to get away, and enrich and grow their marriages.

The Southeastern Conference couples retreat weekend was held October 6-8, 2017, at The Shores Resort and Spa in Daytona Beach, Fla. The theme was “Building Healthy Families.” It was a weekend for romance, relaxation, renewal, and revival.

After a warm welcome from Mark Brown, Ph.D., director of family life ministries for the Southeastern Conference, Dolphy Cross, Ph.D., gave the opening seminar for the evening, “It’s All About Relationship.” The presentation was informative, but also interactive.

In it he spoke about marital intimacy as God’s design, as a powerful emotional, physical, and spiritual force for bonding. While that power is extremely destructive when used the wrong way, it is a valuable resource when lovingly exercised within marriage. Attendees were encouraged to welcome excitement in their marriages, and to not be afraid to “communicate, communicate, communicate.”

The keynote presenters for the weekend were Nevilon and Rosa Meadows, who spoke about the power of intimacy,

honesty, disclosure, and togetherness. The Meadows also spent significant time in personal counseling with several of the couples who attended the retreat. Couples were also given time for relaxation and walks on the beach. One couple commented that though their schedule is very busy, they were so glad that they came. The couples look forward to more times to get together to invest in their marriages. ●

BY BEVERLY CROSS

# Haitian Ministries Plant Three Churches

At the beginning of 2017, Southeastern administration shared an express intent to plant new congregations for and in Haitian communities throughout the Conference territory. With a sizeable financial investment and a collaborative effort from area churches, three major evangelistic efforts were planned for the year.

The first was held in West Palm Beach, Fla., led by Maxime Pape, former Southeastern Sabbath School director. After four weeks of preaching and outreach, the church added 30 new members. In only four months, this new church currently has 75 members in attendance.

In August 2017 the second evangelistic meeting was held in Coral Springs, Fla. Johnson Cesar, D.Min., pastor of the Sinai Plantation, Fla., Church, preached several nights in an 800-seat auditorium, to a standing-room-only crowd. Some people were turned away, but



PHOTO BY: SHEM LOUIS

Nicolas Louis baptizes new convert. Ninety men, women, and young people joined the church through baptism during three city-wide evangelistic campaigns, sponsored by the Haitian Ministries Department. Three new churches were planted in West Palm Beach, Coral Springs, and Jacksonville, Fla.

were encouraged to watch the meetings as they were streamed live on Internet. At the close of the meetings, 39 new members were baptized. Currently, the new Emmanuel Church has 175 members in attendance.

In October 2017 a third effort was conducted in Jacksonville, Fla. Yrvain Jean Philippe, pastor of the First Haitian Church in New York, preached, and the members and leaders of the Jacksonville area churches collaborated to add 21 new members to the church. Those, along with members from the area churches, have come together to form a third new church in Jacksonville. They plan to continue their outreach efforts, and invest in ways that will ensure that they see these new congregations grow.

BY NICOLAS LOUIS

# Kissimmee Church Promotes Health Awareness

For the last 20 years, Mount Zion Church, Kissimmee, Fla., Health Ministries Department has been sharing hope and restoring wholeness through their annual weekend health awareness education event. This year, despite the obstacles, the Lord made it possible for the members to conduct the event at the Kissimmee Lakefront Park on September 24, 2017.

There were some challenges. The first challenge was financial; the members prayed and exercised faith in the Lord, and He delivered in a mighty way. Your Health Pediatrics partnered with the members, and three other business partners made financial contributions. The second challenge was Hurricane Irma. A thought arose to cancel the event, but again, the Lord provided magnificent shelter. On the day of the event, the weather was perfect and sunny. More than 300 people from the community attended, including 13 presenters and 23 vendors.



PHOTO BY: DESMOND HUNT

Community residents gather information from health professionals. Mount Zion Church members as well community health leaders collaborated to promote healthy living.

A presentation from the Warrior Pathfinder Club and Drum Corps led the opening ceremony. Church and local community leaders kicked off the event. The community came together and experienced the various booths and listened to different presenters, including the Kissimmee Police Department. The presenters covered a wide range of health issues, including depression, nutrition, diabetes, grief, and pediatric health.

More than 400 pieces of literature and gift bags were distributed by Pierre Hunt, personal ministries leader.

The members express special thanks to the presenters and the vendors who participated. The participation and comments from the community made it all worthwhile. To God be the glory! 🙏

BY IRENE PATRICK

# Cosecha 2017

Un grave y tal vez no sospechado impedimento para el éxito de la verdad se halla en nuestras iglesias mismas. Cuando se hace un esfuerzo para presentar nuestra fe a los no creyentes, con demasiada frecuencia los miembros de la iglesia quedan indiferentes, como si no fuesen parte interesada en el asunto, y dejan que toda la carga recaiga sobre el predicador... Cuando trabaje donde ya haya algunos creyentes, el predicador debe primero no tanto tratar de convertir a los no creyentes como preparar a los miembros de la iglesia para que presten una cooperación aceptable. Trabaje él por ellos individualmente, esforzándose por inducirlos a buscar una experiencia más profunda para sí mismos, y a trabajar para otros. Cuando estén preparados para cooperar con el predicador por sus oraciones y labores, mayor éxito acompañará sus esfuerzos.” OE 206

El trabajo de evangelismo de la Unión del Sur ha estado basado en este principio durante los últimos años. Las asociaciones se han abocado a una labor incansable de reeducación misionera en las iglesias locales. Dios encomendó esta tarea a su pueblo no porque Él no pueda realizarla, sino porque la experiencia personal de salvación experimenta un marcado crecimiento al trabajar por



Pastor Alejandro Bullón

otros. Este trabajo de siembra por parte de la membrecía ha sido apoyado por el Ministerio Hispano de la Unión. Se organizan festivales de laicos con el propósito de motivar, entrenar y capacitar a miembros y líderes, y en consecuencia incrementar el número de discípulos en cada congregación. Luego se llevan adelante campañas de cosecha anuales con el fin de recoger los resultados del trabajo minucioso de los miembros.

En el año 2017 el programa de siembra y cosecha representó 1,196 bautismos. A esto hay que agregarle los que fueron consecuencia de otros proyectos misioneros.

Las asociaciones Carolina, Georgia Cumberland, Gulf States, South Atlantic, South Central y Southeastern, participaron del proyecto y culminaron en diferentes campañas de cosecha a cargo de los oradores Roger Álvarez, Roger Hernández y Alejandro Bullón.

La Unión del Sur está satisfecha con el rumbo que la obra de evangelización ha tomado en los diferentes campos. Esto no sólo implicó un incremento en el número de nuevos conversos, sino un crecimiento a nivel espiritual en todos los miembros que estuvieron involucrados en la sagrada tarea de ganancia de almas para el Reino.

“Si todos los miembros de la iglesia sintiesen una responsabilidad individual, se lograría mayor progreso en las cosas espirituales. La solemne carga de la responsabilidad que recae sobre ellos los induciría a buscar a menudo a Dios para obtener fuerza y gracia... El esfuerzo personal y abnegado logrará más para la causa de Cristo que lo que pueda hacerse por medio de sermones o credos.” OE 210

MARIEL LOMBARDI, EDITORA

# Un Distrito que Crece

## Conquistando un Nuevo Territorio

Desde el miércoles 30 de agosto hasta el sábado 2 de septiembre la iglesia de Fayetteville en Carolina del Norte puso en marcha un plan agresivo de penetración evangelística en la zona de la ciudad de Shannon, campo fértil en el cual aún no se había iniciado obra. El departamento misionero dirigido por



Vista parcial de la asistencia a la carpa instalada en el patio de Irma Camara

Marilyn Nater luego de una cuidadosa planificación, instaló una carpa en el amplio patio del hogar de Irma Camara, quien gustosamente cedió este espacio a fin de lanzar el plan de conquista de este nuevo territorio.

El orador de este proyecto fue el pastor del distrito Elías Sandoval, quien durante los cuatro días de campaña presentó a Cristo como Señor y Salvador. Se contó con la presencia de visitas quienes noche a noche pudieron ver a través de los mensajes a Jesús como única fuente de verdadera paz en medio de un mundo que agoniza.

El resultado de este trabajo fue el establecimiento de una nueva filial en la ciudad de Shannon. No obstante, la tarea no terminó al completarse la semana de conferencias. Todos los miércoles el equipo misionero continúa reuniéndose con las visitas a fin de estudiar el curso la Fe de Jesús. Sin lugar a dudas, Dios bendecirá este esfuerzo hecho en aras de llevar nuevas almas para su Reino.

### Jesús es la Victoria

La iglesia de Bladenboro en Carolina del Norte, llevó a cabo una bendecida semana de oración que tuvo lugar del 2 al 9 de septiembre. El lema fue “Jesucristo es la Victoria.” David García, quien tuvo a cargo la presentación de los temas, señaló a Cristo como el único sello de victoria y animó a los oyentes a contemplar e imitar la vida del Salvador.

Fue grato ver a las visitas disfrutar de los mensajes y responder a los llamados del Espíritu Santo a contemplar a Cristo para obtener esa vida victoriosa. Muchos de ellos decidieron estudiar la Palabra de Dios y el curso la Fe de Jesús, y se gozan en el conocimiento del plan de salvación.

Los miembros de Bladenboro oran para que Dios bendiga su trabajo y pronto puedan ver estas almas rendidas a los pies del Cristo victorioso.

### Entre Jesús y Yo

La campaña evangélica “Entre Jesús y Yo” organizada por la iglesia de Raeford, se desarrolló en la semana del 11 al 18 de noviembre. La directora del departamento misionero Amparo Cruz junto a su

equipo, trabajaron arduamente para que todo estuviera en orden y los asistentes se sintieran bienvenidos al venir a escuchar la Palabra de Dios. El orador de esta cruzada fue el pastor Teodosio Alegría. Sus mensajes fueron de amor y arrepentimiento.

Más de 42 visitas se dieron cita en el santuario y fueron tocadas por el amor del Cordero de Dios que da vida. Con lágrimas en los ojos muchos aceptaron la invitación de poner sus vidas en las manos de Jesús. Experimentaron gozo al descubrir que aún hay esperanza de salvación en un mundo lastimado y carente de amor. El sábado de mañana 6 personas descendieron a las aguas bautismales.

La iglesia está trabajando con aquellos que continúan estudiando para participar del bautismo en la próxima campaña de cosecha.

### A Jesús Entrega Todo

El equipo misionero de la iglesia de St. Pauls en Carolina del Norte, liderado por Braulio Morales, organizó el esfuerzo de evangelismo anual “A Jesús Entrega Todo.” El mismo tuvo lugar entre el 18 y 25 de noviembre.

El orador de esta cruzada fue el pastor José Rivero, quien presentó mensajes poderosos de aliento, amor y esperanza. Más de 29 visitas acudieron al recinto sagrado y fueron tocadas por la gracia y el sublime amor de Jesucristo. Allí entregaron todo en sus manos. A esta decisión se sumaron también los miembros de iglesia presentes.

El sábado de mañana una jovencita decidió ser sepultada simbólicamente en las aguas bautismales a fin de resucitar a una nueva vida en Jesús.

La iglesia de St. Pauls ha establecido un programa misionero de seguimiento, y a la fecha estudian la Biblia con varios de los asistentes a la campaña que desean rendirse a Dios por medio del bautismo. Tienen la certeza de que Él terminará la obra que comenzó. ●



Iglesia de Bladenboro durante una de las reuniones



Pastor Sandoval oficiando la ceremonia bautismal en Raeford



Ceremonia bautismal en St.Pauls

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ELÍAS SANDOVAL, PASTOR DEL DISTRITO

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# Nuevo Paraíso y Jennings Lake, Dos Congregaciones Resultantes del Trabajo Laico

Los grupos Nuevo Paraíso y Jennings Lake, fueron organizados como compañías. Ambos llevaron a cabo ceremonias emotivas que incentivaron a los miembros a trabajar por el crecimiento de sus congregaciones. En ellas recordaron la ayuda de Dios en el pasado dándoles la seguridad de que continuará bendiciendo su trabajo en el futuro. Estas dos compañías son el resultado de un programa de plantación de nuevas congregaciones, y promueve el trabajo de los pastores laicos, quienes funcionan bajo el liderazgo de un pastor distrital que oficia como mentor. De esta forma, el trabajo pastoral se ve potenciado. Estos pastores pueden cubrir mayor cantidad de miembros con visitas y asistencia, y se forma una red de trabajo más efectiva. 📍

WALTER CASTRO, DIRECTOR MINISTERIAL PARA PASTORES LAICOS



Nuevo Paraíso en momentos de la consagración de la compañía

# Bautismo en Dunwoody



Pastor González en el momento de la invocación

La iglesia de Dunwoody en Georgia, se vio bendecida por un bautismo de 12 personas que tuvo lugar el sábado 11 de noviembre. La mayoría de los candidatos son miembros del club de conquistadores de la iglesia. Entre el grupo se vio con alegría que dos muchachitos tuvieron la satisfacción de bautizarse junto a sus padres. Ofició la ceremonia el pastor Orlando González, líder del distrito. 📍

MARIEL LOMBARDI, EDITORA

# Distrito de Mableton Manos a la Obra



Pastor Urdaneta junto a los candidatos de bautismo en el momento de los votos



Vista de la flamante congregación de Ellijah



Una de las actividades del taller de salud

## Semana de Bendiciones

Durante la semana del 23 al 30 de septiembre las iglesias del distrito de Mableton en Georgia, desarrollaron la etapa intensiva de cosecha del proyecto de evangelismo “Hay Esperanza en Jesús”. Cada iglesia llevó a cabo dos conferencias simultáneas con el objeto de adaptar los mensajes a las diferentes edades. La iglesia central ofreció tres en diferentes áreas del edificio. Se organizó una campaña para niños de 3 a 10 años con un equipo de evangelismo infantil, una para jóvenes de 11 a 16 años con el pastor Jaiden Peña como evangelista invitado, y las conferencias para los adultos a cargo del pastor Edgar Alquinta. Esta estrategia permitió que los diferentes grupos de asistentes pudiesen sacar mayor provecho del mensaje de Dios. Como resultado de este trabajo de evangelismo 11 personas unieron sus vidas a Cristo a través del bautismo.

## Crecimiento del Nuevo Grupo de Ellijay

El grupo de Ellijay en Georgia, organizó una semana de reavivamiento espiritual que se llevó a cabo del 8 al 11 de noviembre. El pastor Miguel de León fue quien presentó los mensajes. Un buen número de visitas asistió al evento que trajo un resultado de 7 bautismos. Esta actividad y sus frutos fueron un incentivo para esta congregación, que trabaja con esmero en traer almas a los pies de Jesús.

## Taller de Salud

El 4 de noviembre la iglesia de Canton en Georgia, ofreció un taller de salud y temperancia que estuvo abierto para los miembros de la comunidad. Por la tarde se llevaron a cabo exámenes médicos gratuitos y se ofreció orientación en

relación con la alimentación y las dietas. Un gran número de miembros y visitas se vieron beneficiados con el evento. Todos pudieron participar libremente de cada actividad ya que los niños también tenían un sector con un programa de orientación adaptado para ellos.

“La iglesia de Cristo sobre la tierra fue organizada con propósitos misioneros, y el Señor desea ver a la iglesia entera ideando formas y medios por los cuales los encumbrados y los humildes, los ricos y los pobres, puedan escuchar el mensaje de la verdad”. (SC 92) 📌

RICHARD URDANETA, PASTOR DEL DISTRITO

# Primer Retiro de Matrimonios

El Ministerio Hispano de la asociación organizó un retiro para matrimonios que se llevó a cabo en Panama City, Florida, del 24 al 26 de agosto. El doctor César León y su esposa presentaron temas de interés que tenían como objetivo demostrar las diferentes formas de solucionar conflictos por los que atraviesan las parejas y solidificar la relación. Se concluyó con una ceremonia de renovación de los votos matrimoniales.

La participación tanto de organizadores



Asistentes al retiro

como asistentes fue brillante. El evento fue útil para los matrimonios, y por ende para la familia y la iglesia. 📌

ARMANDO DE LEÓN, DIRECTOR DEL DEPARTAMENTO HISPANO

# F.I.S.H. Federación Infantil South-Atlantic Hispana

**D**iez iglesias del estado de Georgia se unieron para organizar el festival infantil que tuvo lugar el 28 de octubre. En el mismo se disfrutó de mensajes inspiradores, cantos, aprendizaje de manualidades, dramas, y recitación de versículos de memoria. Se contó con la participación del equipo de marionetas de la iglesia Central, que cautivó la atención de los menores y adultos presentes. Los pastores Newlove y Uribe fueron los maestros de ceremonia, y Lady Uribe fue la coordinadora del festival.

En el evento se llevó a cabo una ceremonia de bautismo en la que 3 niños entregaron sus vidas a Jesús. Al finalizar el pastor Poloche hizo un llamado a los demás niños presentes y 22 acudieron al



Vista parcial de la asistencia al festival infantil

mismo, expresando su deseo de bautizarse.

La nota destacable de la ocasión fue Ronaldo, un niño de 7 años que fue bautizado, e invitó a su papá Sergio a asistir a la ceremonia. Sergio fue conmovido al ver a su hijo siguiendo los pasos de Jesús, y cuando el pastor Uribe lo invitó a imitar a su pequeño, decidió hacerlo esa misma noche, en el lugar donde Ronaldo había dado demostración pública de su fe. Su esposa ya había entregado su vida a Cristo, y ahora toda la familia espera el regreso de Jesús con felicidad. 🕊

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EFRAÍN POLOCHE, DIRECTOR DEL DEPARTAMENTO HISPANO

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# Ancianos de Conway Ofician Bautismo



Anciano ordenado oficiando la ceremonia bautismal

**L**a División Norteamericana demostrando su reconocimiento por la labor del anciano de iglesia en el crecimiento de la misma, apoyó la moción de permitir que ellos tengan a su cargo ceremonias bautismales. El 21 de octubre fue el día designado para llevar a cabo estos bautismos. Abraham Acosta pastor de la iglesia de Conway en Carolina del Sur, se unió a esta iniciativa. Nueve almas fueron

bautizadas en ese sábado especial, y quienes oficiaron la ceremonia fueron los ancianos ordenados de la iglesia. Fue un evento inolvidable para todos. Pudo experimentarse emoción, alegría, y la presencia del Espíritu Santo. 🕊

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EFRAÍN POLOCHE

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# Campaña en Gainesville

**C**uatro personas se bautizaron el 14 de octubre como resultado de la campaña llevada a cabo en Gainesville, Georgia. El pastor Poloche tuvo a cargo la ceremonia bautismal. Los mensajes fueron traídos por el conferenciante Peter Solano y más de 15 visitas aparte de los miembros de iglesia, asistieron a todas las reuniones. Laura Ceballos estuvo encargada de la música y elevó himnos de alabanza que pusieron los espíritus de los

asistentes en armonía con los mensajes.

La membresía colaboró gustosa en la organización y el desarrollo del evento. José Cevallos y su esposa Gloria fueron los maestros de ceremonia y coordinaron el transporte de las visitas. El sonido estuvo a cargo de Geovany Cevallos, y Judit Munguia colaboró con las presentaciones de Power Point. Al finalizar la ceremonia, el coro de la iglesia presentó una alabanza musical glorificando a Dios por esta experiencia espiritual. 🕊



Pastores Poloche (izquierda) y Solano (derecha) con los candidatos de bautismo

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EFRAÍN POLOCHE, DIRECTOR DEL DEPARTAMENTO HISPANO

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# Dublin Continúa Creciendo

La compañía de Dublin en Georgia, tiene una membresía de 10 personas bautizadas que trabajan para el crecimiento de la misma. En el mes de octubre organizaron una campaña de evangelismo en la que el pastor Otto del Toro fue el orador. Eulogio Benítez y su esposa fueron los coordinadores de este esfuerzo. Reyna López y Nataly Benítez se encargaron del video y el audio. La doctora Acosta finalizó la semana con un concierto inspirador.



Ceremonia bautismal

Cuando el pastor Poloche hizo el llamado de entrega a Cristo, 9 personas expresaron su deseo de bautizarse en las próximas fechas de bautismo. La congregación mira con felicidad los resultados de su trabajo por las almas y la evidente labor del Espíritu Santo. ①

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EFRAÍN POLOCHE, DIRECTOR DEL DEPARTAMENTO HISPANO

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# Caravana de Cosecha 2017



Vista parcial de la asistencia y los candidatos de bautismo en la iglesia Emanuel en Tampa.

Las iglesias de Emanuel y Génesis, participaron de la caravana de cosecha del pastor Alejandro Bullón. Cuatro personas fueron bautizadas en la iglesia Emanuel, y 5 en Génesis.

Un buen número de asistentes respondieron al llamado de bautismo y se preparan para ello en la actualidad. Los bautismos de la campaña fueron

el resultado del fiel trabajo de siembra de la membresía, y del Espíritu Santo que actúa tanto en ellos poniendo en su corazón amor por las almas, como en los interesados iluminándolos para que comprendan el Mensaje de Salvación. ①

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ROGER ÁLVAREZ, DIRECTOR DEL DEPARTAMENTO HISPANO

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# Evangelismo Local en Boca Ratón y Margate

Al concluir la campaña de Evangelismo en la iglesia de Boca Ratón bajo el liderazgo del pastor Milkos Hidalgo, 14 almas fueron bautizadas. Once fueron fruto del trabajo de la iglesia de Boca Ratón, y 3 de la nueva congregación de Pompano Beach.

En la iglesia de Margate, 5 almas entregaron sus vidas a Cristo luego de la campaña llevada a cabo en

noviembre, con el pastor Roger Álvarez como orador. Dos de ellos lo hicieron por profesión de fe, y 3 por medio del bautismo. La hermandad se regocija al ver que la iglesia crece y más personas esperan el regreso de Jesús. ①



Candidatos de bautismo y profesión de fe con el pastor R. Alvarez (extremo derecho) y Milkos Hidalgo, izquierda pastor oficiante.

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ROGER ÁLVAREZ, DIRECTOR DEL DEPARTAMENTO HISPANO

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### Concerto Concert, January 28

This event showcases gifted young instrumentalists from across the region who auditioned and were chosen to present solos alongside the university's full Symphony Orchestra. Held in the Collegedale Church of Seventh-day Adventists and beginning at 4 p.m., the event is free and open to the public. It will also be broadcast live at [southern.edu/streaming](http://southern.edu/streaming).

### Fisk Jubilee Singers in Concert, February 10

Southern welcomes the Fisk Jubilee Singers for a concert beginning at 6 p.m. in the Collegedale Church of Seventh-day Adventists. This group began touring in 1871, representing the first American university to offer a liberal arts education to students regardless of color.

### Archaeology Lecture, February 12

Agnete Lassen, PhD, associate curator of the Yale Babylonian Collection, will give a talk titled "Seals Hidden and Seals Revealed: Seals in Ancient and Modern Display" at 7 p.m. in Lynn Wood Hall Chapel.

For more information, visit [southern.edu/archaeology](http://southern.edu/archaeology).

## JOIN US ONLINE

Southern's weekly vespers programs, held in the Collegedale Church sanctuary, are broadcast live each Friday evening at 8 p.m.

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If so, we invite pastors and church leaders from all conferences, to join us for inspiration and encouragement in renewing your church’s sense of purpose and mission on Friday, February 23, 2018, 7:00-8:30 p.m. Sabbath, February 24, 2018, 9:30 a.m.-7:00 p.m., at the Spartanburg Seventh-day Adventist Church, Spartanburg, S.C. Lunch and supper will be provided.

**Keynote Speakers:** Daniel R. Jackson, president of the North American Division, and Bill McClendon, pastor of the Ellicott City Seventh-day Adventist Church, Baltimore, MD. **Breakout Seminars:** with Melvin Santos, Stewart Lozensky, and Bill McClendon. **Challenges and Opportunities:** Ron C. Smith, D.Min., Ph.D., president of the Southern Union; Ralph Ringer, Southern Union director of Church Growth/Evangelism Training/Jewish Ministries; and Brad Cauley, Carolina Conference director of Church Growth and Church Planting. There will also be testimonies of those who have turned their churches around or made a positive difference. This will be a good place to network with those involved in regenerating their church.

Come see how God can give you and your church vision, direction, guidance, and empowerment, so that your church can be blessed and filled.

**Register online at [www.carolinasda.org](http://www.carolinasda.org) by January 28, 2018. If you have any questions, please call the Carolina Conference at 704-596-3200, and ask for the Church Growth Department.**



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**ADVENTIST TOURS** - Israel June 3-12, 2018; German Reformation/WWII July 1-11, 2018; British Reformation & Christianity July 11-21, 2018; Bethlehem to Rome (including Revelation's 7 churches) June 2-19, 2019; Ellen White in Europe June 20-30, 2019; Africa Safari & Service July 18-26, 2019. \$1990+/person. *Contact tabghatours@gmail.com or www.Facebook.com/TabghaTours for full info.* [1]

**WISH TO BUY BOOKS, CASSETTE TAPES** by Elder Glen Coon. Also looking for Uncle Arthur's Bedtime Stories. Will pay postage as well. *Please call Cynthia Pickell, 423-255-5838, 656 Brownwood Circle, Ringgold, GA.* Also looking for Sandra Benson Silas from Madison Academy. [1]

**STARTMYOWNBUSINESSSTOOLKIT.COM** - an Adventist founded Christian based video formatted toolkit with over seven hours of twelve successful entrepreneurs helping you to utilize your God given talents and start your own business. Available online for \$498. [1]

## CAROLINA

**Carolina Evangelism Impact** - Jan. 25-28. Crown Reef Beach Resort Hotel, Myrtle Beach, SC. Register at [www.carolinasda.org](http://www.carolinasda.org). Guest speakers: Ty Gibson, Ritchie Halvorsen, Roger Hernandez, Jose Cortez Jr., and Sung Kwon.

**Pathfinder Bible Experience Testing** - Feb. 3. Raleigh and Spartanburg Churches.

**Romance at the Ranch** - Feb. 9-11. NPR.

**Pathfinder Bible Experience Testing**

- Feb. 11. Charlotte University Church.

**Hispanic Romance at the Ranch** - Feb. 16-18. NPR.

**REGENERATE! Church Revitalization Conference** - Feb. 23, 24. Spartanburg Church.

**Generous Living Summit** - Feb. 24. Columbia First Church.

**VBS Workshop** - Feb. 25. Carolina Conference Office.

**MPA Mission Trips** - Feb. 25-March 11.

**Pathfinder Bible Experience Testing** - March 3. Nosoca Pines Ranch.

**Pathfinder Camporee** - March 15-17. Darlington Raceway, Darlington, NC.

**Mt. Pisgah Academy Music Festival** - March 29, 30. MPA.

**Alive Youth Rally** - March 30-April. Spartanburg Church, 1217 John B. White Senior Blvd., Spartanburg, SC 29306.

## FLORIDA

**Complete calendar online** - [floridaconference.com/events](http://floridaconference.com/events)

**A Better Choice / Florida Adventist Book Center** - Altamonte Springs: national toll-free number, 877-55-FLABC (877-553-5222). Miami: 305-805-9900. High Springs: 386-454-7956. Shop online: [floridaconference.com/abc](http://floridaconference.com/abc) or order by e-mail: [FloridaABC@floridaconference.com](mailto:FloridaABC@floridaconference.com)

**Florida Adventist Bookmobile Schedule** - Avoid shipping costs by placing an ABC order to be delivered to a location as scheduled below. Orders must be made by phone or e-mail before 5:30 p.m. on the Thursday before a scheduled Sunday delivery.

Jan. 14. Titusville, Cocoa, Fort Pierce. (Southeastern Conference: Palm Bay.)

Jan. 21. East Pasco in Zephyrhills, Brooksville, Homosassa, Spring Hill, New Port Richey, Clearwater, St. Petersburg.

Jan. 28. Lady Lake, North Lake, Ocala,

Cross City, Perry, Tallahassee.

Feb. 4. Midport, West Palm Beach First, Pompano Beach, Margate, Ambassador in Lauderdale Lakes, Sunrise. (Southeastern Conference: Port Saint Lucie, West Palm Beach Ephesus.)

Feb. 18. Arcadia, Cape Coral, Fort Myers, Lehigh Acres, Naples.

Feb. 25. Palm Coast, Palatka, St. Augustine, Orange Cove, Jacksonville First, Jacksonville Southpoint. (Southeastern Conference: Jacksonville Ephesus.)

March 4. Inverness, Tampa First, Brandon, West Coast Christian Academy in Bradenton, Sarasota, North Port, Port Charlotte.

March 11. Kendall, Miami Temple, Miami Springs, Eden, Maranatha in Miami Gardens.

**Women's Ministries Retreats** - Camp Kulaqua, 23400 NW 212 Ave., High Springs. Theme: God in Me. Cost: depends upon meal/accommodation choice and early-bird discount.

Feb. 2-4. English-language. Guest speaker: Tamyra Horst. Details: [floridaconference.com/events/2018-womens-retreat](http://floridaconference.com/events/2018-womens-retreat)

Feb. 9-11. English-language. Guest speaker: Janet Page. Details: [floridaconference.com/events/2018-womens-retreat-0](http://floridaconference.com/events/2018-womens-retreat-0)

Feb. 16-18. Spanish-language. Guest speaker: Damary Ramirez-Lebreault. Details: [floridaconference.com/events/2018-retiro-de-mujeres](http://floridaconference.com/events/2018-retiro-de-mujeres)

**Men's Ministries Convention: 25th Anniversary** - March 9-11. Camp Kulaqua, 23400 NW 202 Ave., High Springs. Theme: Thy Kingdom Come.

Guest speakers: Claudio Consuegra, Shian O'Connor, Ron Smith. Cost: depends upon meal/accommodation choice and early-bird discount.

**Hope for Hurting Hearts Retreat-Teens** - March 29-April. Camp Kulaqua, 23400 NW 202 Ave., High Springs. Educational retreat for teens who've been sexually abused as children. Cost: \$125. Details/registration: [floridaconference.com/events/hopehurting-hearts-retreat-teens](http://floridaconference.com/events/hopehurting-hearts-retreat-teens).

## GEORGIA-CUMBERLAND

**Children's Ministries Convention** - Jan. 12-14. Cohutta Springs Conference Center, Crandall, GA.

**Hispanic Children's Ministries Training (South Georgia Area)** - Jan. 13, 9:00

a.m. to 6:30 p.m. Cost \$35. Registration: [www.registration.gccsda.com](http://www.registration.gccsda.com). Augusta Spanish-American Church, GA.

**Pathfinder TLT Convention** - Jan. 19-21. Cohutta Springs Youth Camp, Crandall, GA.

**Hispanic Children's Ministries Training (Atlanta Georgia Area)** - Jan. 20, 9 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. Cost \$35. Registration: [www.Registration.gccsda.com](http://www.Registration.gccsda.com). Marietta Hispanic Church, GA.

**Master Guide Winter Camp** - Jan. 26-28.

**Young Adult Liaison Training** - Jan. 27, 10 am to 4 pm. A day-long seminar on how to equip your youth and young adults to become engaged in their local church. Lunch provided. Conference Office, Calhoun, GA.

**Hispanic Children's Ministries Training (North Georgia and Tennessee Area)** - Jan. 27, 9 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. Cost \$35. Registration: [www.Registration.gccsda.com](http://www.Registration.gccsda.com). Knoxville, TN.

**The Many Hats of Communication** - Jan. 28. Featured speaker: George Johnson Jr., former NAD communication director, George will share the variety of hats needed to be a communicator. Conference Office, Calhoun, GA.

**Elementary Band/Strings Festival** - Feb. 1-2. Georgia-Cumberland Academy, Calhoun, GA.

**Pathfinder/Adventurer Director's Appreciation Weekend** - Feb. 2-3. Cohutta Springs Conference Center, Crandall, GA.

**Oasis (High School Retreat)** - Feb. 2-4. A Bible conference event for Adventist students (grades 9-12) not attending Adventist schools. Speaker: Cody Paige, intern pastor at Atlanta Belvedere Church. Early bird deadline: Jan. 14, final deadline: Jan. 24. Cohutta Springs Youth Camp, Crandall, GA.

**Pathfinders/Adventurers Directors' Council** - Feb. 4. Cohutta Springs Conference Center, Crandall, GA.

**"If My People Pray" (2 Chronicles 7:14) Prayer Conference** - Feb. 16-18. Featured speaker, Kevin Wilfley, senior pastor of the Kirkland Adventist Church and prayer ministries director for the North Pacific Union Conference. Early bird deadline: Jan. 24; final deadline: Jan. 31. Cohutta Springs Conference Center, Crandall, GA.

**Pathfinders/Teens Event** - Feb. 16-18. Cohutta Springs Youth Camp, Crandall, GA.

## GULF STATES

**Ordination of Pastor Sean Day** - Jan. 27.  
**Education Fair at Bass Memorial**

**Academy** – Jan. 28, 29.  
**Sabbath School Training (Adult and Youth Departments)** – Feb. 2-4. Camp Alamisco. [www.gscsda.org/sstraining](http://www.gscsda.org/sstraining)  
**Teen Invitational: Caving in North Alabama** – Feb. 2-4.  
**SEEDS Church Planting Conference** – Feb. 9, 10. Birmingham First Church.  
**Teen Invitational: Paintball** – Feb. 11. Raymond, MS.  
**Pathfinder Bible Experience (Conference Level)** – Feb. 17. Pensacola, FL.  
**Hispanic Couples' Retreat** – Feb. 23-25. Destin, FL.  
**Mad About Marriage Seminar** – Feb. 23, 24. Panama City, FL.  
**Teen Invitational: Backpacking** – March 2-4. Talladega Forest.  
**Cross Examination Youth Rally** – March 17. Big Cove Christian Academy.

**KENTUCKY-TENNESSEE**

**KYTN Acrofest** – Jan. 25-27. Highland Academy.  
**Evangelism Boot Camp** – Jan. 26-28. Indian Creek Camp.  
**HI-C+ Public Ministries Weekend** – Feb. 2-4. Indian Creek Camp.  
**Highland Academy Board** – Feb. 8. Highland Academy.  
**Couples' Retreat** – Feb. 10. Paradise Ranch.  
**Young Women's Galentine's Day** – Feb. 11. Conference Office.  
**7UP Pathfinder Campout** – Feb. 16-18. Indian Creek Camp.  
**CREATION Health Seminar** – Feb. 21. Conference Office.  
**Children's Ministries Training** – March 2, 3. Madison Academy.  
**Eastern Kentucky Camp Meeting** – March 9, 10. Prestonsburg, KY.  
**KYTN Music Festival** – March 15-17. Highland Academy.

**SOUTHERN ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY**

**Classes Begin** – Jan. 8. Southern offers a variety of degrees, some of which can be earned entirely online. Details: Visit [southern.edu](http://southern.edu) or call 1-800-SOUTHERN.  
**Concerto Concert** – Jan. 28. This event begins at 4 p.m. and showcases gifted young instrumentalists from across the region who auditioned and were chosen to present solos alongside the university's full Symphony Orchestra. Held in the Collegedale Church, the event is free and open to the public. It will also be broadcast live at [southern.edu/streaming](http://southern.edu/streaming).

**Fisk Jubilee Singers in Concert** – Feb. 10. Southern welcomes the Fisk Jubilee Singers for a concert beginning at 6 p.m. in the Collegedale Church. This group began touring in 1871, representing the first American university to offer a liberal arts education to students regardless of color.  
**Archaeology Lecture** – Feb. 12. Agnete Lassen, Ph.D., associate curator of the Yale Babylonian Collection, will give a talk titled "Seals Hidden and Seals Revealed: Seals in Ancient and Modern Display" at 7 p.m. in Lynn Wood Hall Chapel. Details: Visit [southern.edu/archaeology](http://southern.edu/archaeology).

**SOUTHERN UNION**

**SU Academy Prayer Conference** – Jan. 17-20. Camp Kulaqua.  
**SU Summer Camp Job Interviews at SAU Student Center** – Jan. 14-18.  
**NAD Advisories for YPAC Members** – Feb. 23-28. Southern Union Office.  
**ACF Connect Conference at Cohutta Springs Camp** – Feb. 23-25.  
**GC Global Youth Day Sabbath** – March 17.  
**SU PBE Event at Georgia-Cumberland Academy** – March 24. 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**10 DAYS OF PRAYER RETURNS 2018 – Jan. 10-20.** With the theme, "Our High Priest." Congregations worldwide continue to be blessed by this powerful prayer initiative. For more information and to sign up your church, visit [www.tendaysofprayer.org](http://www.tendaysofprayer.org).

**UNION COLLEGE HOMECOMING – April 5-8.** Honor classes: 1948, 1958, 1963, 1968, 1978, 1988, 1993, 1998, and 2008. For more information, contact the alumni office at 401-486-2503, 3800 S. 48th Street, Lincoln, NE 68506, or [alumni@ucollege.edu](mailto:alumni@ucollege.edu).

**LA SIERRA ACADEMY ALUMNI WEEKEND – April 27, 28.** Honor classes: 3s and 8s. Welcome reception, Friday at 7 p.m., LSA Library. Sabbath services: registration at 9 a.m. and Homecoming Service at 10 a.m., LSA Gym. Potluck, campus tours, reunions, and varsity basketball. Please update/email contact information to: [JNelson@lsak12.com](mailto:JNelson@lsak12.com); [www.lsak12.com](http://www.lsak12.com); alumni office: 951 351-1445 x244.

**CELEBRATE YOUR FAVORITE TEACHER.** The cover feature for the July 2018 Southern Tidings will highlight personal tributes to teachers who had a lasting influence on their students. If there is such a teacher who made a difference in your life, please share your story at [www.southernunion.com/teachers](http://www.southernunion.com/teachers). In 250 words, answer the following: Who was your favorite teacher? Why?

	SUNSET					
	JAN 12	JAN 19	JAN 26	FEB 2	FEB 9	FEB 16
ATLANTA, GA	5:49	5:56	6:03	6:09	6:17	6:23
CHARLESTON, SC	5:34	5:40	5:47	5:53	5:59	6:06
CHARLOTTE, NC	5:32	5:39	5:46	5:52	5:59	6:06
COLLEGEDALE, TN	5:50	5:57	6:04	6:11	6:18	6:24
HUNTSVILLE, AL	4:56	5:03	5:10	5:16	5:23	5:30
JACKSON, MS	5:16	5:22	5:29	5:35	5:41	5:47
LOUISVILLE, KY	5:44	5:51	5:59	6:06	6:14	6:22
MEMPHIS, TN	5:09	5:16	5:23	5:29	5:36	5:43
MIAMI, FL	5:49	5:55	6:00	6:05	6:10	6:14
MONTGOMERY, AL	5:00	5:06	5:13	5:19	5:25	5:32
NASHVILLE, TN	4:53	5:00	5:07	5:14	5:22	5:29
ORLANDO, FL	5:49	5:54	6:00	6:05	6:11	6:15
TAMPA, FL	5:54	0:00	0:00	6:11	6:16	6:21
WILMINGTON, NC	5:22	5:29	5:36	5:42	5:49	5:56



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- February 19, 2018
- March 15-16, 2018
- June 21, 2018



\*Includes free meals and lodging for students interested in attending Southern. Student families are encouraged to visit, too.



To arrange your visit, call 1.800.SOUTHERN  
or go to [southern.edu/visit](http://southern.edu/visit).

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