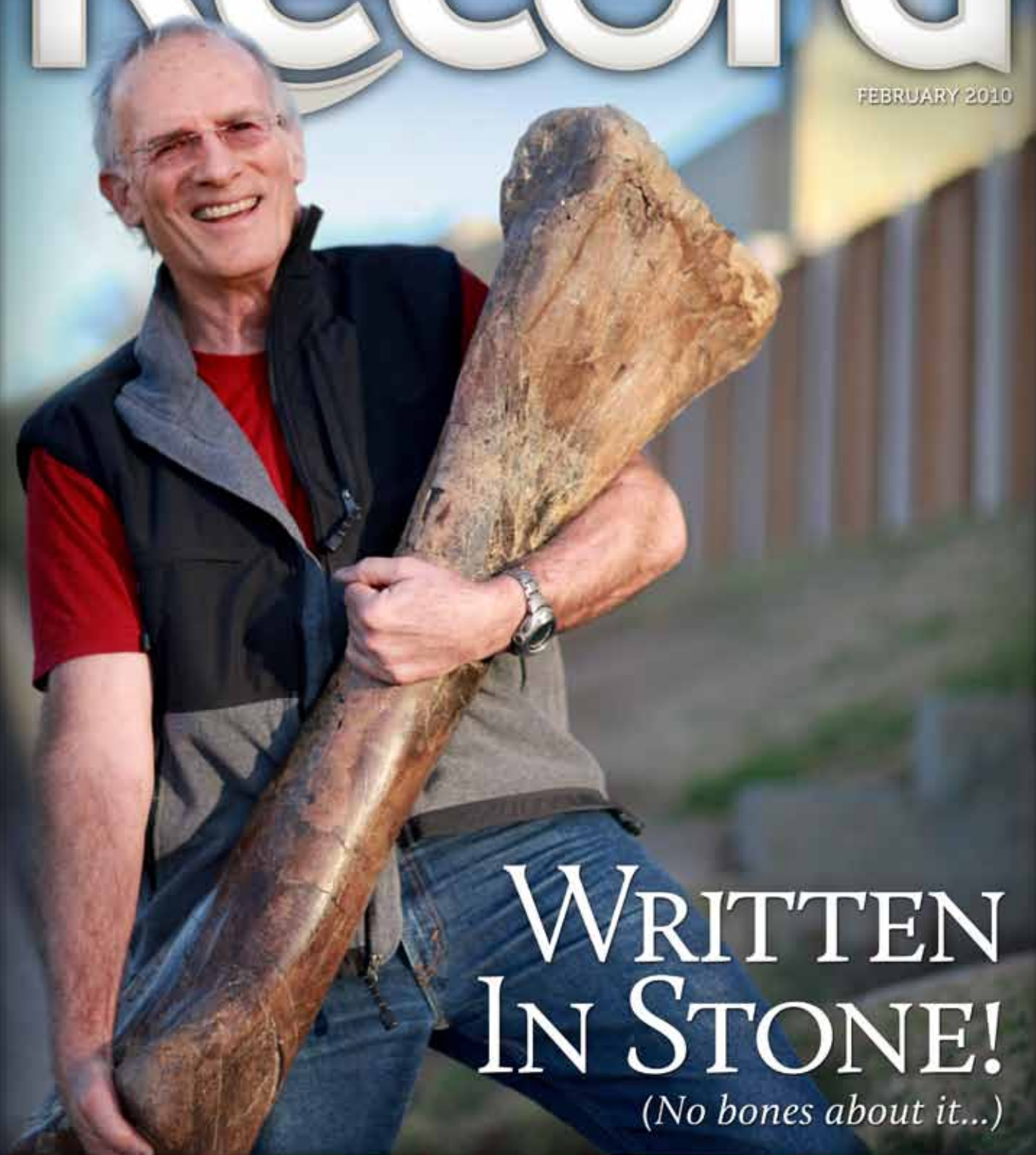


SOUTHWESTERN UNION

Record

FEBRUARY 2010



WRITTEN IN STONE!

(No bones about it...)

REAFFIRMING GOD AS OUR CREATOR



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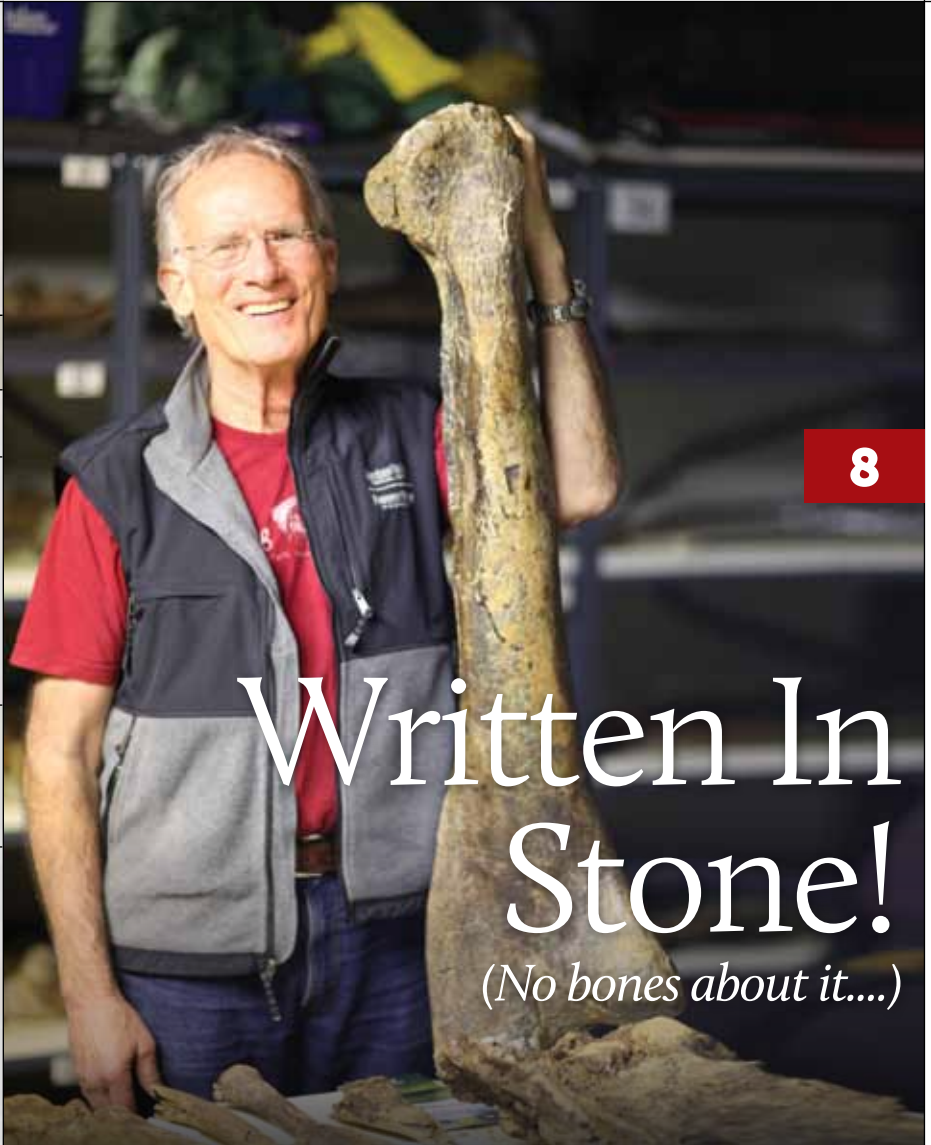
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On the Cover

Art Chadwick, research professor at the Southwestern Adventist University Biology Department, leads a team of explorers each summer in the excavation of thousands of dinosaur bones buried on a cattle ranch in Wyoming. Though unanswered questions remain, the evidence overwhelmingly affirms the Bible as a valid source of information and instills confidence in a loving God who created us and the world in six literal days.

President's Perspective»

BY MAX TREVIÑO » SOUTHWESTERN UNION CONFERENCE PRESIDENT



This Is My Father's World

A handwritten signature in cursive that reads "Max S. Treviño".

There's a wonderful old custom, still followed in some Adventist congregations. Every week the whole congregation repeats together the fourth commandment. It's a weekly affirmation that we are worshipping the maker of heaven and earth, "the sea and all that in them is." It's a reminder that we are not the result of an accident.

The fourth commandment is echoed at the very end of the Bible. The first angel of Revelation 14 tells us to "Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come." The angel adds that the Judge we worship is also the one who "made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water." That's almost word for word from Exodus 20.

Readers of Revelation are not surprised, of course, to find the enemy attacking God's authority. But it is surprising to see how determined some people are to deny that there is a maker of heaven and earth, to ignore all indications that our universe is the product of intelligent design. In the process, some scientists go well beyond the scientific evidence.

For example, a prominent biologist has declared: "Man is the result of a purposeless and natural process that did not have him in mind." It's a startling statement—and based on his assumptions, rather than his specialized knowledge.

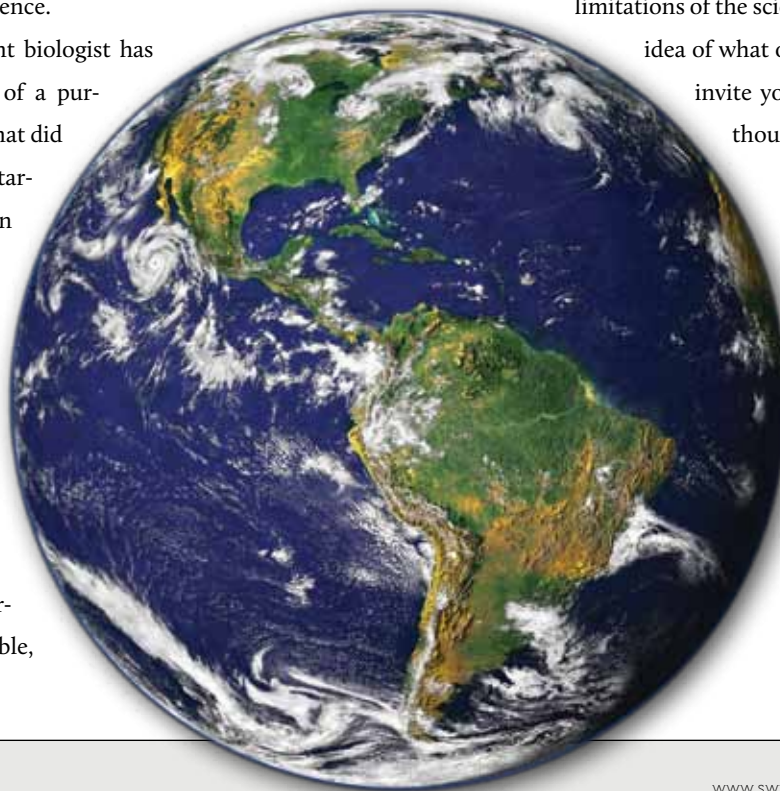
The National Association of Biology Teachers showed similar arrogance recently. Straying from real science into philosophy or militant atheism, they defined evolution as an "unsupervised, impersonal, unpredictable, and natural process."

These attacks remind me of how important church schools are. In secular schools, the faith of a Christian student is under relentless pressure. In Seventh-day Adventist schools, on the other hand, teachers respect both their students' faith and their questions.

I am particularly pleased with what's happening at Southwestern Adventist University. Students have the opportunity to study real science, ranging from biology to astronomy, with teachers who ask tough questions. At the same time these godly teachers present a more complete picture than their secular counterparts. They are not afraid to challenge Darwinism or note the limitations of the scientific method. For a good

idea of what our university stands for, I invite you to read Dr. Chadwick's thoughtful article on page 8.

Adventist education remains an essential partner in our evangelistic task of giving glory to the One who "made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water."



Max Treviño is president of the Southwestern Union.



CREATION Health

BY LYNELL LAMOUNTAIN

CREATION Health: Live Life to the Fullest with CHOICE

You are fearfully and wonderfully made, the Bible says. One reason is because God created you with a free will and the power to make choices. He wants you to have a say over your life and destiny. He created you with the freedom to shape your life and become the kind of person you dream of being.

Free will puts you in the driver's seat. This is God's gift to you.

There are a number of fascinating research studies indicating that people who feel they have a sense of personal control are happier, healthier, and live longer.

The benefits of exercising choice and control are illustrated by a study with elderly people in a certain nursing home. Researchers

divided the nursing home by floors. On the first floor, the residents were given more control over their lives by being allowed extra choices. One day the director gave a speech and said to them, "I'd like you to know more about all the things that you can do for yourself here at Shady Grove. There are omelets and scrambled eggs for breakfast, but you have to choose which one you want the night before. There are movies on Wednesday and Thursday nights, but you must sign up in advance before going. Here are some plants, too. Choose one and take it to your room, but you have to water and care for it yourself."

The director then told the residents on the second floor: "I want you to know about what we can do for you here at Shady Grove. There are omelets or scrambled eggs for breakfast. We make omelets on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, and scrambled eggs on the other days. Movies are shown on Wednesday and Thursday nights. On Thursday nights, residents from the left quarter go, and on Wednesday nights, residents from the right quarter go. Here are some plants for your rooms. The nurse will choose one for you and take care of it."

Residents on both floors had the same things—but only those on the first floor had choice and control, while those on the second floor had neither.

Researchers found that those who had choice and control as opposed to those in the "no-control" group, thrived in almost every way. They found that fewer of this group had died 18 months later than in the control group of those who had no choice. These amazing results strongly indicate that choice and control can increase happiness and longevity.

The power of choice is hard-wired into our brains, and resides in the frontal lobe. This area of the brain makes up 3.5 percent in cats, 7 percent in dogs, 17 percent in chimps, and between 33–38 percent in humans. The frontal lobe is where our judgment, reasoning, social norms, and long-term planning take place, all which contribute to making healthy, life-giving choices. Human reasoning and planning capabilities are more powerful and complex in humans than in any other species. It is within our power to strengthen and grow this power. This can be done through a diet consisting of complex carbohydrates, regular physical activity, and exercising the brain with such activities as memorizing scripture, figuring out crossword puzzles, or learning a new skill (several ways are covered in the CREATION Health seminar).

Choice is the first step toward improving your well-being. Before you can achieve positive changes in any area of your life, you must choose to do so. God chose to give you sovereignty over your own life. This doesn't mean we exclude Him. But it does mean that we take responsibility for our own mind, body, and life. When we choose to make God the center of our lives, He furnishes us with the power and wisdom to make the best choices possible that empower us to live life to the fullest.

Kenneth Patton writes, "By the choices and acts of our lives, we create the person that we are." How important, then, is it to remember these beautiful words from the apostle Paul, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Phil. 4:13, NKJV).

That's CREATION Health!

Lynell LaMountain writes from Florida Hospital in Orlando, Florida. For information about hosting a CREATION Health program at your church, visit www.CREATIONhealth.tv or call 407.303.7711.

- C** Choice
- R** Rest
- E** Environment
- A** Activity
- T** Trust
- I** Interpersonal RELATIONSHIPS
- O** Outlook
- N** Nutrition

Shades of Grace

BY MIKE TUCKER » SPEAKER/DIRECTOR, FAITH FOR TODAY



Don't Miss the Grace!—Part 2

Last month we began a study of Hebrews 12:15 (NIV), which says, “See to it that no one misses the grace of God.” In that study we realized that in order to be faithful to the Apostle’s command, we must first receive the gospel for ourselves. We are to have a firsthand experience with the grace of God as we luxuriate in the richness of God’s forgiveness for our sins and in the opulence of assured salvation.

This fantastic personal experience with grace changes how we view ourselves. We no longer feel the need to “beat ourselves up” over past mistakes. Christ has taken that beating for us. We are now to see ourselves as God sees us. Incredibly, when God looks at a forgiven sinner, He no longer sees the sin. Instead, God sees only the perfection of His Son, Jesus Christ. Grace enables us to see ourselves as God sees us, which of course, is the only true reality.

Once this transformation has been made, grace will affect how we see and treat others. Having been freely forgiven and accepted, we are now able to freely forgive and accept others. We see others, not as a collection of failures and imperfections, but as objects of the love of our Heavenly Father. By the grace of God, we begin to view others as God views them.

Our new eyes should begin their work at home. Grace enables us to see our spouse, children, and extended family as God sees them.

Without the lenses of grace we tend to be critical of others while focusing on their flaws. With the eyes of grace we are able to see family members as the people Christ envisions them becoming. These new eyes change our attitudes and behaviors.

One of the best examples I have seen of this change happened when Tom and Eva came to me for marriage counseling. Tom’s harsh, demanding attitude toward his wife had drained Eva’s heart of the love she had once felt for her husband.

I worked with this couple for a few weeks but we made little progress. Tom was still demanding, critical, and harsh. Tom’s criticism had so wounded Eva that their marriage was now on life support.

At our next session I gave Tom a book on the grace of God and told him that I wouldn’t see them again until after he had finished reading the book. Tom said, “This isn’t what we need. We need a book on marriage.”

I said, “Tom, in my judgment, this is exactly what you need. Call me when you’ve finished the book.”

Tom left in a huff, but two weeks later he called and informed me that they were ready for their next session. At that session Eva and I received a shock. Tom confessed his critical spirit toward Eva and asked her to forgive him. He declared that he was a changed man.

During the next few weeks, Tom’s treatment of his wife gave evidence that he had indeed changed. The marriage made rapid progress for a while, but then Eva expressed reservations.

“The Tom I’ve lived with these last few weeks is the man I’ve always wanted to be married to. But I’m worried,” Eva confessed, “that the old Tom will come back. How can I know that the old Tom won’t come back and ruin our marriage?”

I turned to Tom and asked, “What can you say to place Eva’s mind at ease that the new you is the



permanent you?”

Tom’s eyes filled with tears, his emotions making it impossible for him to answer right away.

“You’ve had a conversion experience!” I exclaimed.

Tom finally found his voice. “Yes, I’ve experienced the grace of God. I don’t ever want to go back to the man I was. I’ll never be the same again!”

When you accept God’s grace for your life, it changes how you treat others. In obedience to the Apostle your new purpose in life is to ensure that your family will not miss the grace of God.

“See to it that no one misses the grace of God!” Don’t miss the grace for yourself. Make certain your family doesn’t miss it either!

Mike Tucker is speaker/director for *Faith For Today* television. He writes from his home in Arlington, Tex.



Pass it On...

A Monthly Focus on Evangelism in the Southwest

BY MARK BOND » EDITOR OF THE RECORD

A Modern-day Jonah

Pastor **Kircio Mota** has recently been chosen to serve as the Hispanic coordinator for the Southwest Region Conference. If you've met Pastor Mota, you know that he is passionate about preaching the end-time message. What you may not know is the story behind how he became a preacher.

As a young boy growing up in the Dominican Republic, Kircio felt a calling to be a pastor, but he didn't heed that call. He instead chose to get a degree as an accountant. He began working for a firm on Wall Street in New York City. But at the age of thirty, after four-and-a-half years as an accountant, he experienced a debilitating stroke. He spent 16 days in a coma. When he awoke, he was blind, and unable to walk. After three months he regained his vision, and for six months he was bound to a wheelchair. He had to relearn how to walk, drive, and do simple tasks.

But the recovery process left him with sensitivity to bright light, and he was relegated to using a walker to get around. He was on many medications and had problems with his stomach as a result.

Three years later, on December 30, 1991, he found himself back in the Dominican Republic by the bedside of his dying grandmother. She told him that she had experienced a dream. In the dream she had been shown that she would not die until her grandson was with her, and that he was to preach the second coming of Christ. She shared this message with Kircio, and then died in his arms!

This message obviously made a significant impact on him. But although he participated in many evangelistic efforts in the Miami area over the next six years, he was still resisting the call to full-time ministry!

In 1997, the threat of another blood clot left him worried for

his life. He was still dealing with the medical issues, poor eyesight, and over 16 medications. He asked his mother to call the pastor to come and anoint him. After two weeks of lying on his side worried that the blood clot might cause another stroke, he got down on his knees. He prayed from 11 p.m. until 2 o'clock the next afternoon. He prayed, "Lord, either let me die here on my knees, or restore me to serve you!"

The answer came back to him, "Get up and preach!"

Kircio got up off his knees. He threw away his medications, his walker, and his glasses, and he's been preaching ever since!

Since then, he's received a master's degree in pastoral ministry from Andrews University.

He is currently living in Houston, where his churches continue to grow by the grace of God. He has preached in many countries in South America with amazing results. His two sons are both ministers, and his daughter, Michelle, who recently graduated from Southwestern Adventist University, is preparing to earn a Master's degree in youth ministry at Andrews. His wife, Loida, is a constant companion in ministry, and is thankful for the way the Lord has led their family.



Pastor Kircio Mota stands with his family after he received a master's degree in pastoral ministry from the Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University.

His goal is to reach across conference lines to find ways to work together—with Hispanics, African-Americans, English-speaking people, and others, uniting to finish the work.

"I can sympathize with Jonah," says Pastor Mota. "He spent his time and energy running from God's call, and finally changed his mind in the belly of the whale! I'm thankful that the Lord brought me through my Jonah experience, so that I can say, 'Where you lead me, I will follow!'"

Mark Bond is editor of the *Record*.



El Jonás de Nuestros Días

Recientemente, el Pastor **Kircio Mota** fue elegido para servir como Coordinador Hispano de la Conferencia Regional del Suroeste. Si conoce al Pastor Mota, usted sabe cuán apasionado es en la predicación del mensaje del tiempo del fin. Lo que tal vez usted no sepa es la historia detrás de cómo se hizo predicador.

Durante su infancia, creciendo en la República Dominicana, Kircio sintió el llamado a ser pastor, pero no le prestó atención a aquel llamado. En vez, decidió titularse como contable. Luego comenzó a trabajar en una firma en Wall Street en la Ciudad de Nueva York. Pero a la edad de treinta años, después de cuatro años y medio como contable, experimentó un debilitante derrame cerebral. Estuvo 16 días en coma. Cuando despertó, estaba ciego, e incapaz de caminar. Después de tres meses recobró la vista, y durante seis meses estuvo confinado a una silla de ruedas. Tuvo que aprender de nuevo a caminar, conducir, y a hacer tareas simples.

Pero el proceso de recuperación lo dejó con sensibilidad a luces brillantes, y quedó sujeto al uso de un andador para poder moverse. Él tomaba muchos medicamentos y por lo tanto tenía problemas con su estómago.

Tres años más tarde, el 30 de diciembre de 1991, Kircio se encontró de vuelta en la República Dominicana al lado de su agonizante abuela. Ella le dijo que había tenido un sueño. En el sueño se le mostró que ella no moriría hasta que su nieto estuviera junto a ella, y que él debía predicar acerca de la segunda venida de Cristo. ¡Ella compartió este mensaje con Kircio, y luego murió en sus brazos!

Este mensaje, obviamente, hizo un impacto significativo en él. ¡Pero aunque participó en muchos esfuerzos evangelísticos en el área de Miami durante los siguientes seis años, todavía resistía el llamado al ministerio de tiempo completo!

En 1997, la amenaza de otro coágulo de sangre lo dejó preocupado por su salud. Todavía tenía problemas médicos como falta de visión, y tomaba más de 16 medicamentos. Él le pidió a su madre que llamara al pastor para que lo ungiera. Después de estar



Pastor Kircio Mota en Andrews después de que él recibió su Maestría en ministerio pastoral del Seminario Teológico Adventista.

en cama por dos semanas preocupado de que el coágulo de sangre podría causarle otro derrame, se arrodilló y oró desde las 11 de la noche hasta las 2 de la tarde del día siguiente. Oró, “¡Señor, oh me dejas morir aquí de rodillas, o me restauras para servirte!”

La respuesta vino, “¡levántate y predica!”

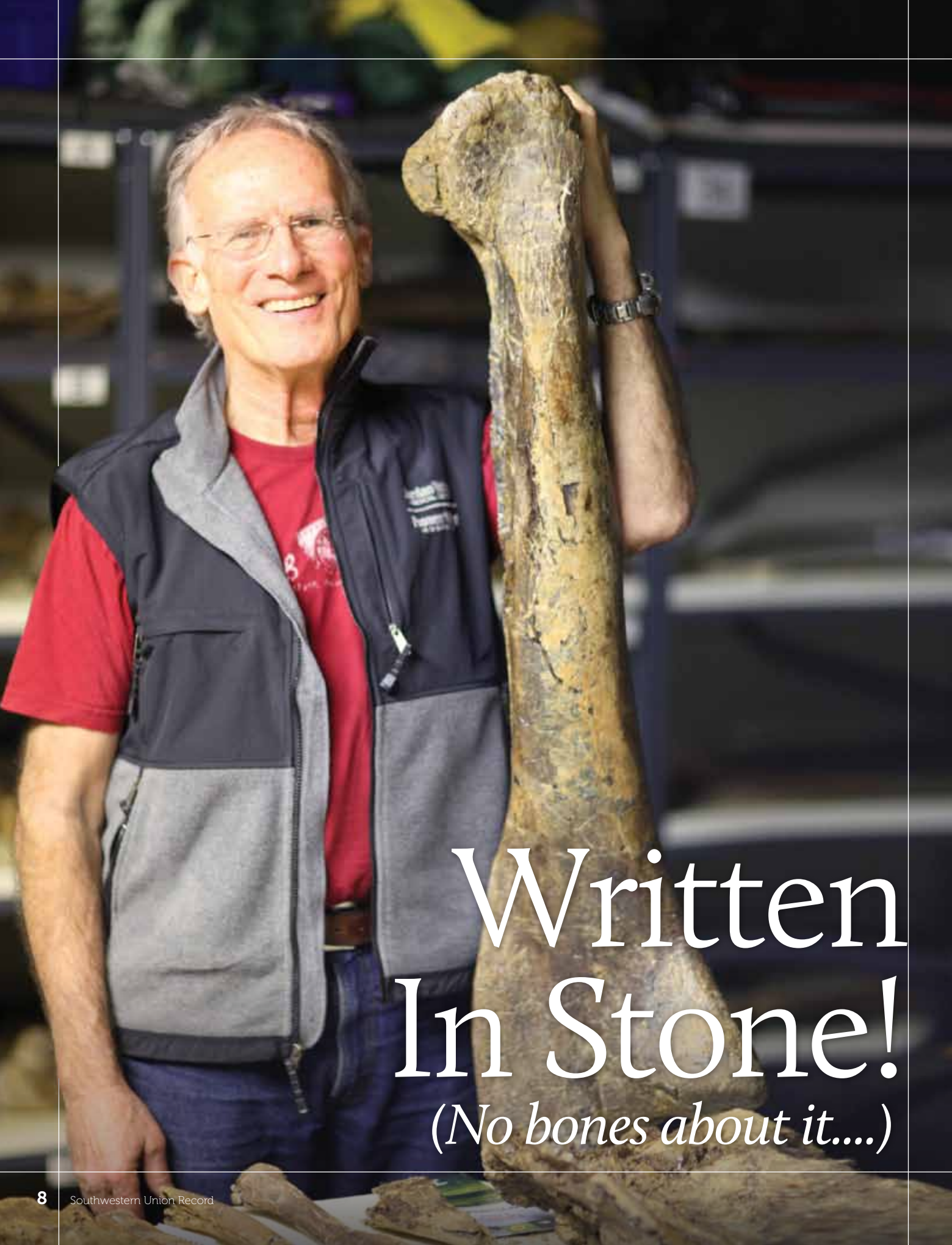
Kircio se levantó de sus rodillas. ¡Tiró sus medicamentos, su andador, y sus lentes, y desde ese momento ha estado predicando!

Desde entonces, ha recibido su Maestría en el Ministerio Pastoral de la Universidad de Andrews. Actualmente, vive en Houston donde sus iglesias siguen creciendo por la gracia de Dios. Él ha predicado en muchos países de Sudamérica con resultados asombrosos. Sus dos hijos son ministros, y su hija Michelle, quien recientemente se graduó de la Universidad Adventista del Suroeste, se dispone a tomar una Maestría en el Ministerio Juvenil de la Universidad de Andrews. Su esposa, Loida, es una compañera constante en el ministerio, y se siente agradecida por la forma en que el Señor ha dirigido a su familia.

La meta de Kircio es alcanzar más allá de los límites de la conferencia y encontrar la manera en que todos podamos trabajar juntos — hispanos, afroamericanos, americanos, y otros que se quieran unir para terminar la obra.

“Puedo comprender a Jonás,” dice el Pastor Mota. “¡Él pasó su tiempo y energía huyendo al llamado de Dios, y finalmente cambió de opinión estando en el vientre de la ballena! ¡Estoy agradecido de que el Señor me permitió pasar por mi experiencia de Jonás, de modo que yo puedo decir, ‘dónde Tu me guíes, iré!’”

Mark Bond es editor del *Record*.



Written In Stone!

(No bones about it...)

Where did we come from, and how did we get here? These questions aren't scientific inquiries in the purest sense. But that doesn't mean they can't be answered with a significant degree of certainty.

As an Episcopalian altar boy, I repeated the following creed every Sunday: "I believe in God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth..." But it wasn't until I became an Adventist Christian that I truly understood the significance of recognizing God as Creator of heaven and earth.

Later, as a junior science major, it became particularly evident to me that the creation account is an inextricable part of the Great Controversy. A fellow student had shared with me his personal experience with Christ, and together we studied the Bible with an Adventist physician. I was thrilled and amazed to discover a church that adhered so closely to the biblical account of creation.

Because I took a keen interest in philosophical issues relating to creation and evolution, the head of the biology department encouraged me to become a science professor and researcher rather than a physician. Changing course was traumatic for me, as I'd already been accepted into medical school. But I followed his counsel after much agonizing prayer, and never looked back.

I completed my Ph.D. in molecular biology, thinking that field would give me the best handle on questions of origin. But I soon recognized that geology and paleontology more vigorously addressed those issues. So I returned for post-doctorate training and have been doing geology ever since.

I've tried to do for my students at Southwestern Adventist University what that professor did for me years ago—to show them that science and faith can be integrated, and that science should not be isolated from the central affirmations of our faith. I try to demonstrate this in both concrete and philosophical ways.

I've worked with colleagues at Southwestern and Southern Adventist University on a special research project for the past 12 years. Our goal is to explain what happened to 25,000 dino-

sours, averaging 30–40 feet long, whose bones are buried on a cattle ranch in eastern Wyoming. Each summer, our team excavates approximately 1,000 bones and returns them to Southwestern to be cleaned, labeled, and curated into our collection.

Since 2002, middle school students from a Christian school in Dallas have joined us every summer. In the process, they've learned not only about dinosaurs, but also about Seventh-day Adventists. The school's leaders say they're thrilled to work with a group of open-minded scientists doing genuine research who are willing to consider all the evidence, and who are prepared to challenge head-



▲ Quarry workers hoist a giant femur (thigh bone) from an undetermined dinosaur.

◀ Co-director Dr. Art Chadwick makes adjustments to the high-resolution GPS equipment.

on the theory of Darwinian evolution. They've also listened eagerly to our evidence for a worldwide catastrophic flood.

Through it all, I've become convinced that now is *not* the time to back off or keep quiet about these issues. Seventh-day Adventist schools have the opportunity to provide science education that captures people's attention, and to be leaders at the forefront of both education and research. Perhaps our greatest and most important challenge is to show why belief in a literal six-day creation account is so important.

This past year, I searched the Bible from cover to cover for references on

the topic of creation. I was amazed to find that, in many of the 24 books that address creation, God's creatorship is the dominant theme. (Visit <http://origins.swau.edu/misc/bible.pdf> to download a PDF listing the biblical references.)

Creation is Linked to Salvation

The creation account is also tied to the biblical concept of salvation. The prophet Isaiah wrote, "Thus says the Lord who created you O Jacob, and He who formed you O Israel: Fear not, for I have redeemed you. I have called you by your name; you are mine" (Isa. 43:1). The idea that God made man through the process of evolution, with death and sin as its primary mechanisms, places the responsibility for sin on God, obviating the need for Jesus' sacrifice as sin's remedy. Redemption makes no sense apart from a sinless Creator.



Co-director Dr. Art Chadwick removes overburden from the bone layer in preparation for excavation.

Not only is the creation account inextricably tied to the concepts of worship and salvation, but it also has bearing on God's character and trustworthiness. According to the Bible, God wrote the creation account with His own finger in tables of stone: "For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth and on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed" (Ex. 31:17, 18).

The only interpretation that does God's integrity any justice is the straightforward one. Belief in creation by a sinless, trustworthy Creator is the very foundation of our faith. In essence, the doctrine of creation is about as "fundamental" as it gets.

Remarkably, *Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation*—the original work promoting evolution before Darwin came on the scene—was published anonymously in mid-October 1844 by Robert Chambers, a British bookseller. Chambers addressed questions of origin

within a naturalistic, godless framework. The book was an instant success, selling over 20,000 copies in seven editions during its first ten years of publication, making it perhaps the bestselling book of the nineteenth century. It was widely distributed and read by major poets, statesmen, scientists, and philosophers on both sides of the Atlantic—at the very time when the Seventh-day Adventist movement was taking root and preparing to uphold the Word of God and assert His Creatorship.

Science Affirms God's Word

I've been blessed and privileged to work for several years with a handful of Christians—most of them Seventh-day Adventists—doing scientific research that will potentially increase confidence in and understanding of God's Word. I spent last May with Dr. Leonard Brand, chair of the Division of Natural Sciences at Loma Linda University, camped in the deserts of Utah. We're using quantitative tools to examine the geologic column for information about time and process. So far our research reveals what we've long suspected: that long-age models lack credibility, despite their wide acceptance. We've discovered a surprising range of rocks that show signs of having formed over a very short period of time.

In July, I camped high above the Arctic Circle where the sun circled the sky overhead 24 hours a day, the temperature stayed at zero degrees centigrade around the clock, and magnetic compasses pointed everywhere but north. Working closely with Dr. Lee Spencer from Southern Adventist University, I collected fossil plant specimens from the permafrost. Although such specimens are widely considered to be 17 million years old, the cones we recovered from spruce and other plant species appear modern in every way. We will continue to examine them for signs that may confirm the plants' younger age.

Perhaps the strongest arguments against evolution are in the field of molecular biology. Evolutionists haven't explained very well how

living organisms at the molecular level spontaneously came into existence, or why there is so much complexity in modern organisms when they first appear in the fossil record. A creationist has no trouble explaining such phenomena.

The most compelling evidence for me is the fact that Scripture is so thoroughly intertwined with the account of creation. If you take away creation, you also eliminate the basis for God's authority, the Second Coming, and the whole story of salvation. It's a complete package that itself qualifies as data.

In reality, everyone comes to the scientific table with presuppositions. Anyone who admits that is stronger for it. Many are deluded into thinking that the "evidence" dictates their conclusions. Scientists who recognize their own presuppositions are able to jump ahead more quickly to meaningful scientific discussion on origins issues.

Carefully Consider the Evidence

Data are simply observations interpreted within a specific context. They don't interpret themselves. This is especially true in the areas of earth history, geology, and paleontology. Scientists in those areas use a lot of inference, storytelling, and subjective explanation to create a cohesive account of what happened in the distant past. They're fraught with challenges from the very start when they say they *know* what happened *thousands* of years ago, much less millions. They loosely interpret the evidence to say that the earth is very old, while ignoring a very important piece of evidence—the eyewitness account of earth's history contained in the Bible. That account provides an alternative framework within which to interpret the data, which is what we're seeking to do in Wyoming and Utah.

“The most compelling evidence for me is the fact that Scripture is so thoroughly intertwined with the account of creation. If you take away creation, you also eliminate the basis for God's authority, the second coming, and the whole story of salvation. It's a complete package that itself qualifies as data.”

These projects are enough to occupy our attention for a lifetime. Have my colleagues and I proved the biblical model of origins and the flood? No—but that has never been our goal. Any honest scientist will tell you that science is not about proving things, but about testing ideas with observable experiments and evidence. At some point, we must rely upon the validity of information we get from others—including the biblical account of creation.

We can easily interpret the data we've collected in a manner consistent with the biblical model of earth's history. This encourages us to believe there are still many more answers to be found. Never do we say a scientific hypothesis or theory has achieved the level of scientific fact. We gather evidence and information, interpreting it and comparing it to the original hypothesis to determine its strength or weakness. And when we study scientific questions with the idea that the Bible is a valid source of understanding, we also discover explanations consistent with the biblical account.

This should cheer our hearts and encourage us to maintain confidence in our Creator, and to worship Him with loving, committed hearts. The same God Who spoke the universe into existence calls us to be His courageous witnesses to a doubting world.

Arthur Chadwick, Ph.D., is a research professor of the biology department at Southwestern Adventist University in Keene, Tex.

Ten Things We Would Have to Reevaluate as a Church TO ACCOMMODATE BOTH EVOLUTION AND CREATION:

The idea that perhaps God used millions of years of evolutionary processes to form the world has been suggested by some in an effort to reconcile the apparent conflicts of popular scientific thought with the biblical account of Genesis.

In a recent message delivered to young people at the GYC (Generation of Youth for Christ) meetings in Louisville, Kentucky, the presenter asserted that there would have to be a dramatic reevaluation of at least ten foundational principles in order for evolution and creation to coexist:

The Nature of the Bible. We would have to reevaluate how we understand Scripture. Can it be trusted?

The Nature of God. In a theistic-evolutionary model, God used death and parasitic processes to shape His “perfect” Eden couple.

The Nature of Mankind. Are we really made in the image of God, or the product of evolutionary processes from our simian brothers?

The Nature of the Law and especially the Sabbath. Is the Sabbath in fact a memorial of creation as God wrote with His finger?

The Nature of Sin and Death. Paul says, “The wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6:23). Death is the *result* of sin. But in an evolutionary model, death happened over millions of years *before* man ever sinned. If death predated sin, the biblical account appears inaccurate.

The Nature of Salvation. In what meaningful sense did Christ's death on the cross rescue us from sin and death, if death is a part of God's cosmic, creative scheme?

The Words and Works of Jesus. Jesus repeatedly affirmed the Genesis creation account and the authenticity of Moses' writings.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church and its Mission. What are we doing here, as a church, if the Sabbath has no root in the creation account?

The Nature of Ellen White's Prophetic Ministry. She repeatedly and unambiguously states that the Lord created the earth in six literal days.

The Nature of Adventism's Unique End-time Perspective. The three angels' messages of Revelation call us to “worship our Creator.”

We Are One Blood

BY ADU WORKU

“He giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; and hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth.”

(Acts 17:25, 26)

As a young boy growing up in the hills and meadows of Northwest Ethiopia, I spent time as a shepherd herding goats, and as a farmer plowing fields. We grew what we ate, and if we didn't work, we didn't eat.

At age fifteen, I had a devastating accident that left me blind and disfigured in my left eye. I walked to the nearest hospital with a group of merchants and it took us two days to get there. That hospital happened to be a Seventh-day Adventist mission hospital in the middle of nowhere.

My family and I were not Adventists at the time, but many of my mother's relatives were. So I knew a little bit about Adventists. When I went to that mission compound, I found three things, a church, a school, and a hospital.

While I was in that mission compound receiving treatment, I closely observed the school and the students there. I knew instinctively that education is inherently useful. I noticed seven- and eight-year-olds reading and writing. And here I was at fifteen years of age unable to even sign my name. I was an illiterate peasant, and I knew it.

During my miraculous time at the hospital I became acquainted with a generous missionary family who eventually sponsored me to attend Adventist schools right through Avondale College in Australia.

In our schools, we teach that we are all God's children. If we accept God as our father, we cannot pick and choose who our brothers and sisters are. You are my brother and sister and I am your

brother, no matter who we are or where we come from. We don't always live up to this lofty ideal, but it is our ideal. That is why missionaries cross the ocean and help people on the other side of the world. I am a living example of such brotherly and sisterly love. God tells us to love not only people who are like us but also those who are unlike us.

Let me share an interesting experience with you from my time at Avondale. It happened while I was selling books from door to door during vacation. One day, I knocked at a door and a lady came out with a little boy close behind her. When that little boy saw me, he was frightened. He grabbed his mother's arm and held on tight for dear life. Apparently, he had never seen a black person before and he was scared of the unknown. He was also curious, because he stared at me and kept staring at me. I was going through my sales pitch with his mother when the little boy interrupted us with apparent urgency, so I stopped and gave him a chance to talk.

A Teachable Moment

What happened next was unexpected and very awkward. The little guy gripped his mother's arm with one hand and pointed his little index finger at me with the other and asked this inconvenient question: "Mama, what is *that*?" In case you missed it, I was the "that"!

You can imagine how embarrassed and speechless the mother was. At first, I thought the whole thing was amusing. Then, I considered it a teachable moment. I dropped my sales pitch immedi-

ately and sat on the porch as relaxed and naturally as possible. And I began telling that little boy a story.

I told that little boy about who I was, where I came from, and what I was doing. And he began to relax and eventually let go of his mother's hand. We all sat on the porch and his view of me shifted from fear to curiosity. He wanted to touch my afro and my skin, and I let him do so. He wanted to know that I was in fact made of flesh and blood.

Then, he asked his second question. This one was directed at me. He asked, "Have you been in the sun all your life to be so dark?" I enthusiastically answered, yes, and proceeded to tell him that I came from a country located near the equator where the sun comes up at six o'clock in the morning and sets at six o'clock in the evening.

The boy was really into it now, and he asked me the most difficult question to answer. He said, "Were you white like us before you turned dark?"

Now, I could have said to that boy, "Wait a minute. Not so fast little guy! Who looked like whom once upon a time?" I could have told him a story like this: "Once upon a time, long, long ago, your ancestors and mine lived in the tropics where there is plenty of sunshine every day. And everybody was well tanned. But then, your ancestors decided to move to colder and less sunny regions of the world. And slowly but surely, they lost their tan. And they have been trying hard to get it back ever since!" I could have said that, couldn't I, biologists? Science tells us that human beings are biologically tropical creatures.

That is not what I told that little boy. He was afraid of me and

then curious about me, because I was different from him and his kind. He had concluded that he and his kind were the norm, and I didn't fit the norm. He was asking, *how come you are different? How come you don't look like us?* That was his question.

God Loves Variety

So, I told him that God has created great varieties in nature as in culture and color. I referred to flowers, trees, birds, animals, and people to make the point. I told him that there are people who look like him, people who look like me, and more.

Scientists also tell us that there is only one human race, not many. We take that a step further and assert that we are all God's children from one blood (Acts 17:26), and therefore we are all brothers and sisters.

I have translated more than 100 children's songs from English to Ethiopian, and I have three favorites. The first is, "Jesus Loves Me." The second one is, "This Little Light of Mine." And the final one is "Jesus Loves the Little Children of the World." These personal and inclusive songs are not just for children. Their message is valuable for all time and for people of all ages.



Editor's note: Adu Worku recently received an honorary doctorate degree from Southwestern Adventist University. He delivered the commencement address, excerpted here, during the December 2009 graduation ceremony at Southwestern.



"Mama, what is *that*?"



Questions That Demand Answers ...

The three significant philosophical questions asked by people down through the centuries have been 1) Where did we come from? 2) Why are we here? and 3) Where are we going? How one answers the first question will largely determine how the other two questions are answered. In other words, your understanding of your origins will greatly influence your reason for existence and what you might expect for your future.

The theory of evolution provides one basis of approach for the first question. The evolution theory states that "life formed spontaneously from non-living inorganic matter and, through chance and random good mutations, life gradually evolved from a 'simple' cell into the remarkable diversity of plant and animal life, as well as humanity" (*Creation: Remarkable Evidence of God's Design*, p. 174). If I accept this theory regarding my origins, I have no need or basis to believe in a Supreme Being. I have no basis to believe in evil, and therefore I will reject the concept of sin. If there is no such thing as sin, I have no need of a Savior. My future will simply be the out-workings of my best efforts governed by my own ethics. In other words, I create my own future, but that future is limited to my lifespan.

The biblical account of a personal God, who by design brought into existence the earth and everything on it, including me, calls upon me to recognize that I am not my own man. I am accountable to my Creator. His purpose in my creation gives me reason for my existence. Right and wrong come into sharp focus along with a concept of sin and my need of a Savior. His plan for my future is grander than I could ever design.

For me, there is ample evidence from nature as well as science that my origins are from my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. He is the God of creation. Theories of origins are just that—theories. They hold no water for me. They leave too many unanswered

questions. Good questions. Questions that demand answers.

Stephen Orian, president

Puppy Helps Raise Funds For Maranatha One-Day Church

SHREVEPORT FIRST » I sat in a comfortable church pew and listened as Dick Duerksen interviewed a couple who had returned from a Maranatha mission trip. Their stories and DVD moved me to tears as I watched God's people sitting under trees in the rain after walking for many miles to attend church. How could I enjoy my life of ease—with running water, an automobile, air-conditioning, and a wonderful church home—while my brothers and sisters were so destitute? Surely I must do something!

I approached the church board to ask about collecting money from the children's Sabbath School to build a One-day Church for the mission field—but I

wanted to do more. My friend, Joyce, and I discussed what we could do. I was getting a new puppy to be trained as a therapy dog and we decided we would have a "Puppy Shower." We put an announcement on the bulletin board and made creative invitations to give out. Our invitation read: "You are Invited to a Puppy Shower for Rudy Louis Steadman, born September 13, weighing 3 oz., and 4 in. long. We are registered at Petco. There will be donations accepted for a Maranatha One Day Church." Our shower was a success! We received more than \$100 dollars toward the Maranatha church project and are still receiving more.

B.J. Steadman and Joyce Brown

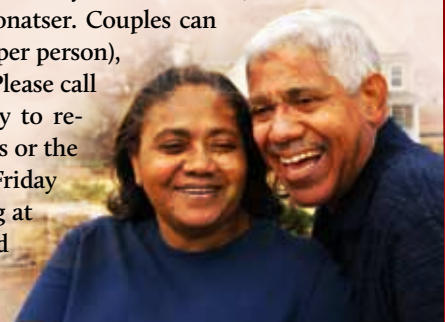


From left: Joyce Brown and B.J. Steadman with their "missionary" puppies.



Forever Friends Marriage Enrichment Weekend

CAMP YORKTOWN BAY » On February 26–28, 2010, Camp Yorktown Bay will host a couple's weekend for young and not-so-young couples. "Forever Friends" is the theme that will be presented by Dennis Shafter, David Farmer, and Jerry and Donna Conatser. Couples can enjoy this weekend retreat for \$60 (\$30 per person), which includes five meals and a room. Please call Berrille Schnell at Camp Yorktown Bay to reserve your place in either the new cabins or the motel. The evening program begins on Friday at 7:00 p.m. with registration beginning at 6:00 p.m. Sabbath only attendance and participation will cost \$30 per couple.



12-year-old Presents Revelation Seminar

PINE BLUFF » We sent flyers throughout the Pine Bluff, Ark., area inviting people to come meet Jesus at a Revelation of Hope Bible Prophecy Seminar during September

two weeks than she had during her entire life! At the end of the seminar, five people made decisions for baptism or to accept Jesus by profession of faith, and three more continue to come to church and are interested in joining.

We praise God that Marquan allowed the Lord to use him for His honor and glory in such a powerful way! If you would like a copy of Marquan's messages on DVD, contact Pastor Travis Walker at 501.303.8398.

Travis Walker, pastor

Tracy were Niki White, Linda Lake, Sarah Otts, Vivian Matlock, Wanda Matlock, Emily and Kristen Robbins, and many others. Tracy and her helpers spent endless hours decorating church rooms with the Crocodile Dock theme. An outside door was set up, covered, and designed for helpers to operate the puppets without being seen. The children truly enjoyed VBS.

D. Autumn Frase

Like the Leaves of Autumn

TEXARKANA » Meetings with lay-evangelist William Little began in Texarkana at the end of July and continued through the month of August, but work in the area had been ongoing with Andy Huong, Abigail Dragomir, and Jared and William Little serving as Bible workers. William and Jared grew up in Waldo, Ark., and attended the Magnolia church. Then, when their family moved to Texarkana, William and Jared

Children Visit Crocodile Dock During VBS

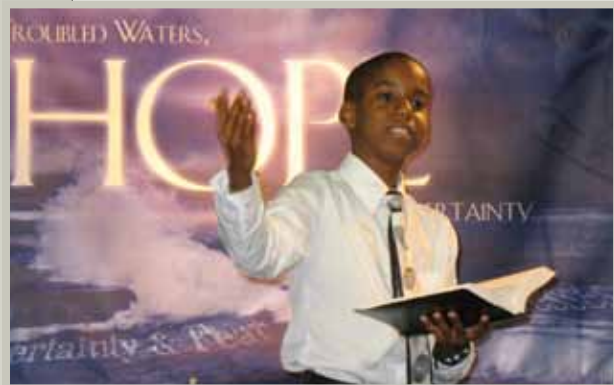
MALVERN » How does a small church create a Vacation Bible School experience that children will remember for a long time? The Malvern church did it with talented volunteers and team effort. In fact, this year some of the children who were attendees only a few years ago helped as they were able.

Tracy Tariton, who grew up in the Malvern church, has led the VBS program for quite a few years. Assisting



▲ Pastor Reggie Phillips reads the baptismal vows to Bobbie Jo Palmer and Holt Johnson.

attended the Texarkana Adventist School. After graduating, the boys attended Ouachita Hills Academy and College in Amity, Ark. They became close friends with Andy Huong and Abigail Dragomir, and the four young people decided to come serve Texarkana as Bible workers.



Top: Marquan preaches a message of hope to an audience of 250. Above: Five new members, pictured with Pastor Travis Walker and Marquan Buchanan, joined the Pine Bluff church as a result of the seminar.

2009. Hundreds of people flocked to an empty storefront in the old Pines Mall to hear 12-year-old Marquan Buchanan preach the Three Angels' Messages. Marquan has been preaching since he was eight years old. During the four weeks, Marquan preached 21 topics to an audience of more than 250 people.

While there is no doubt that many came out of curiosity to see a 12-year-old preach, many continued to come night after night as their hearts were touched by the messages. One lady, who was in her mid-thirties, said that she had learned more about the Bible in



Children at the Malvern church's "Crocodile Dock" Vacation Bible School act out the song, "This Little Light of Mine," as Niki White leads.

For several months they visited and gave Bible studies while they dreamed and planned for an evangelistic series. Literature was passed out, contacts were made, and William began preaching to a crowd in the Texarkana Adventist School gym. At the conclusion of the meetings, the Texarkana church welcomed Buster White and Linda Capps into their fellowship.

Then in September 2009, after Sharon and Rodger Patterson married, they were baptized. By the end of November, Pastor Reggie Phillips baptized Holt Johnson and Bobbie Jo Palmer. It was a blessed summer for these young people and the Texarkana church. William Little has since accepted a pastoral position in the Kentucky-Tennessee Conference, but he is a "hometown boy" and plans to return often.

The Texarkana church has been blessed by the response and passion of Buster White, who has found a way to pass on the Good News of God's love with a literature ministry. Since Buster joined the church, he has passed out over 14,000 pieces of literature at rest areas, truck stops, grocery stores, prisons, and almost anywhere there are people. He believes that we really should spread the gospel like the leaves of autumn.

Loretta Johnson

Faith World Teen Prayer Conference

OZARK ADVENTIST ACADEMY » On the weekend of October 30–November 1, 2009 Ozark Adventist Academy hosted the Faith World Teen Prayer Conference. Teens from all over the Southwestern Union and beyond converged on the OAA campus for a Halloween weekend full of spiritual activities—of a heavenly type. Pastor Ivor Myers presented the keynote address with a focus on encouraging teens to live a committed Adventist Christian lifestyle, and enrich their personal encounters with a real and accessible God. He identified some of the



modern methods Satan is using to draw youth and young adults away from God and His mission.

In addition to Ivor Myers' stirring messages, attendees experienced interactive break-out sessions to strengthen their faith and commitment in a more personal way. The teens also participated in team-building activities designed to promote positive fellowship and teach spiritual truths via hands-on object lessons. Much time was dedicated to prayer in a prayer room set up especially for the event. Throughout the weekend earnest prayers were offered on behalf of the prayer conference and for the spiritual impact it would have on the teens who attended.

The auditorium held an over-capacity crowd on the night of the first meeting, requiring a change in venue to the Gentry Seventh-day Adventist Church's larger accommodations. Everyone seemed happy to be attending, even if they had to stand in the back due to lack of available seating.

When asked for their thoughts on the events of the weekend, students had plenty to say. Andrew Brenas observed that the "campus was really alive and there was a lot of stuff to do." Carleel Crowley thought that it was really neat to get to meet a lot of different people from different places and said that, "The pastor said catchy things I could remember and really made us want

to pay attention." Cassie Bolan pointed out that "Ivor Myers made me think and put ideas together I wouldn't have thought of." At the close of the final meeting, the question was asked if those in attendance would like to have another prayer conference next year. The response was a unanimous cheer. Ozark looks forward to nurturing the seeds sown during the Faith World Teen Prayer Conference. May God continue to bless the students, faculty, and supporters of OAA as they carry forward the unique mission of Adventist education.

Kevin Burton, spiritual vice-president



▲ **Top:** Prayer conference speaker, Pastor Ivor Myers, encouraged teens to live a committed Adventist Christian lifestyle.

◀ **Left:** The OAA choir sings during the Faith World Teen Prayer Conference.



Made In His Image

My wife and I greatly enjoy genealogical research. It has been exciting to trace my Russian ancestry back to Germany. As we continue to learn more and more about my ancestors, one thing we know we will not find is some transitional life form or some missing link. We know this because of the Scripture's express statement: "Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness'" (Gen. 1:26, NKJV).

Consider the complexity of human life. How could all of the organs and systems in our bodies evolve? All that exists in our world evidences a designer. Our bodies with their incredibly complex and interrelated systems, evidence a designer.

The apostle Paul affirms the existence of a designer: "For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse" (Rom. 1:20, NKJV). Please consider carefully Paul's statement. He is saying that God is so clearly seen in His creation that we are without excuse if we choose to reject Him.

Generally, those who choose to reject God as the Master Designer, do so because God has no place in their belief system. Others make an allowance for God to start life, but that is the end of God's involvement with His creation.

There are at least two major problems with these ideas. First, they presuppose the survival of the fittest. However, the Scriptures describe not our upward progress, but rather, our downward progress and thus, our need of a Savior. Second, these ideas require faith. Frankly, I do not have enough faith to believe in

the veracity of these ideas.

By means of God's gift of faith, I accept His account of the origins of life. The biblical record is clear. Man was created by Jesus' own hands (see Gen. 2:7). The rest of creation was created by Jesus' command (see Ps. 33:6, 9; Gen. 1).

How affirming it is to know that we are created by God's hands in His image rather than being the result of some kind of cosmic evolutionary accident!

Vialo Weis, director of trust services and religious liberty

Evangelism a Way of Life at Southern Hills

OKLAHOMA CITY » At the OKC Southern Hills church, every year is a "Year of Evangelism." Accordingly, God has blessed us these past four years with many baptisms. In 2009 three major evangelistic efforts were held, one by the pastor and the other two by guest evangelists.

One key to our success is mailing brochures to the exact same zip codes for every meeting. Evidently the mailings work, because visitors continue to come to every meeting. Some of the visitors have expressed

their thanks for the multiple mailings, saying that although they had missed a prior meeting, they recognized the brochure and decided to attend a later meeting. Had we not done repeated mailings, these folks might not have attended.

It is always interesting to hear people's stories about why they chose to attend the seminars. One family shared that the father had experienced a severe heart problem and while in the hospital awaiting surgery, he prayed that he would "know God better and search for His truth." When released from the hospital, this father began not just reading his Bible, but studying it as never before, and then he found the Sabbath. He began a search for Sabbathkeeping churches, but with each one that he discovered, something was missing. Then he found Southern Hills. The entire family was recently baptized and we praise God for sending them to our church and for God's continued blessings on our evangelism efforts.

The year 2010 is another "Year of Evangelism," and in spite of a tighter economy, two major meetings are planned.

Gilbert Green, pastor



▲ Pastor Gilbert Green baptizing Rebecca Bevan at the Southern Hills church in Oklahoma City.

◀ Pastor Gilbert Green talks with the baptismal candidates following the evangelistic meetings conducted by Lyle Albrecht at the Southern Hills church.



Health Expo Draws Community Interest

OKMULGEE » We were getting down to the wire. Our upcoming health expo was a week away and we didn't know whether it would happen at all! We had been planning for the event all summer, but had some challenges coordinating a date with Wal-Mart, where the expo was to be held. After finalizing the date and overcoming a few other hurdles finding staff and materials, we encountered another challenge. One of the staff members at Wal-Mart told us that

we needed to be authorized by their pharmacy department in order to conduct the blood pressure screening. "Everything concerning health has to be authorized by the district manager," she said.

Meanwhile, because we weren't certain the event would actually take place, I called and canceled the newspaper and radio advertising. Many prayers were lifted during this time, pleading earnestly with God that the health expo would happen, if it was His

plan. One of our elderly members went to Wal-Mart and "camped" there until we got our answer.

At long last, on Wednesday afternoon, October 14, 2009, we got word that we were authorized to conduct the expo. I took out a new ad in the newspaper and placed a public service announcement on the radio. We lined up volunteers who would help out at every expo station, and LaDell Fisher, our food coordinator, got busy with kitchen detail.

It had rained the entire week prior to the expo, but the day of the event was clear and beautiful, though a bit windy. We had a few challenges with the computers, but nevertheless, we opened the health expo shortly after noon. Approximately 50 people went through the various stations, many of whom expressed an interest in other health programs we might offer. The next month we followed up with a diet and stress seminar and later this month we will offer a depression seminar. We also have plans to send out a condensed version of *The Great Controversy* to every address in Okmulgee. At the Okmulgee church, we aim to stay busy until Jesus comes!

Gloria Treanton



Members of the Okmulgee church offered free blood pressure checks (above left), massages (left), and other health assessments (above) at a health expo held at the local Wal-Mart store last October.

Church Offers *The Great Controversy* to Community Residents

OSWASSO » The Three Angels church family frequently spends Sabbath afternoons together doing various outreach projects in the community. The most recent project was getting copies of the mega book version of *The Great Controversy* packaged and ready to mail out to community residents who requested them.

The requests came in as a result of a late November 2009 mass mailing of 35,000 brochures, which were sent to homes in Owasso, Collinsville, Sperry, Skiatook, Turley, and Oologah. For a long time the church members have had a burden to reach every home in their territory with a copy of *The Great Controversy*, but doing so seemed cost prohibitive. They contacted Seminars Unlimited and were able to work out a cost-effective plan to send an attractive brochure offering a large edition free to every home in our outreach area. We were able to obtain a very favorable price on the books, as well, through Heritage Family Books.

We praise God for the large number of requests that have been received for both



The Three Angels church in Owasso packaged copies of *The Great Controversy* to be sent out to community residents who responded to the mailing of 35,000 brochures offering a free large edition of the book.

The Great Controversy and Bible study course enrollments. This effort is just a part of the consistent participation of church members who desire to lift up the character of Christ and share the three angels' messages. Please remember us in your prayers as we seek to save the lost and represent our Savior to those in our community.

Nelita Martin

Annual Christmas Program Held Despite Bad Weather

BROKEN ARROW » Despite having to cancel and reschedule our annual Christmas program because of bad weather and not being able to practice for a week prior to the event, a delightful musical program with solos and group numbers was held on the Sabbath following Christmas. Narrated by Judy Marquette, the program featured the story of two shepherds who followed the Bethlehem star. Angela Moon did a dramatic reading and Zane Marquette read the scripture.

Most of those who participated in the program regularly bless us with their talents, but many were surprised when Sonny Harmon and Linda Hollifield blessed us with their singing voices. For the first time, we heard Mark McGeehee play a beautiful guitar solo. Our thanks to Barbara Calvert for all her hard work putting this event together.

Judy Marquette



Broken Arrow's annual Christmas program participants (from left, rear): Mark McGeehee, Ryan Davis, Linda Hollifield, Angela Moon, Judy Marquette, Sonny Harmon; (seated): Crystal Phillips, Darren Shaw, Barbara Calvert, Greg Marquette, Janice Davis, Jeff Davis, Kayla Marquette, Sarah Moon.

Does the Bible Affirm Creation or Evolution?



The theme of Creation and the Creator in the Bible is one that stands out like a seam in a garment. It flows effortlessly through the reservoir of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation.

Genesis announces that "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." (Gen. 1:1-2*).

Exodus reiterates that in six literal days "the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy" (Ex. 20:11).

First Chronicles affirms that all the gods of the nations are idols, but that the Lord, the true God, made the heavens (see 1 Chron. 16:26).

Nehemiah attests to the fact that God alone is the Lord and Creator of all things and there is no such "beast" as evolution. He attests by addressing God in the following manner: "You made the heavens, even the highest heavens, and all their starry host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them. You give life to everything" (Neh. 9:6).

Psalms reaffirms that God created all things, that man did not evolve, and that God gave man rulership over all God's creation. Let's tune in to Psalms to read and hear the reaffirmation for ourselves. "When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. You made him ruler over the works of your hands; you put everything under his feet: all flocks and herds, and the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, all that swim the paths of the seas. O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!" (Ps. 8:3-9). Then Psalms negates the man-induced evolutionistic theory that all things evolved over time and what we see today is the end result of that process. Psalms describes how all things came into

existence with the exception of man (Gen. 1:26-28). "By the word of the LORD were the heavens made, their starry host by the breath of his mouth. He gathers the waters of the sea into jars; he puts the deep into storehouses. Let all the earth fear the LORD; let all the people of the world revere him. For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm" (Ps. 33:6-9).

Proverbs shares with us that "by wisdom the LORD laid the earth's foundations, by understanding he set the heavens in place; by his knowledge the deeps were divided, and the clouds let drop the dew" (Prov. 3:19, 20).

Isaiah questions and informs us: "Do you not know? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth." (Isa. 40:28-31).

The theme of God the Creator runs throughout the Old and New Testaments. Space doesn't permit me to share other books of the Bible that speak to this theme, so I'll conclude with the books of Revelation and Psalms. Revelation commands us to "Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water."

Psalms reminds us that in our Christian journey, as pilgrims and strangers traveling to the city built without hands, our "help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth...The LORD will keep you from all harm—he will watch over your life; the LORD will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore" (Ps. 121). Let's worship the Creator God; for in doing so we shall be caught up with Him one day and enjoy His presence and fellow-

ship forever and ever, Amen! Love you!

Bill Wright, president

*All Bible texts used in this article are from the New King James Version.

Bethesda honors a senior member

ALBUQUERQUE, N.MEX., BETHESDA »

Not only has the Bethesda church been around for more than half a century, we are blessed to have a member of our church who is more than 100 years old!

Beatrice Avent celebrated her 104th birthday this year. Under the direction of the pastor, Tony R. Brown, and personal ministries director, Shirley Martin, church members visited the honored centenarian



Beatrice Avent (seated) surrounded by her church family.

in her home for a birthday celebration. We listened as she testified of the goodness of God and told the story of her joining the Adventist Church. She told us, "It pays to serve the Lord."

With a house full of church members—standing room only—we witnessed a living representation of the grace of God. We pray for God's blessings on Beatrice Avent and her family.

Georgia Brown

Bethel Church Hosts Guest Speakers

CORSICANA, TEX. » “Salvation in the Sanctuary” was the topic presented during the Youth Week of Prayer held December

Sabbath of 2009 about how to deal with discouragement. Pastor Draggon presented the message in a unique way as he vividly portrayed from the Word of God Elijah’s experience of handling discouragement. He read that the prophet wanted to die, but the angel told him to do three things: sleep, eat, and drink water. The message made a powerful impact on the congregation, who could all identify with discouragement at some point in life. He concluded his message with a beautiful song about giving it all (discouragement, loneliness, depression) to Jesus.

Lorraine Stiggers



Dwight Eric Haynes (left), Ph.D., from New Orleans, La., with Pastor Norman Stiggers, of the Bethel church in Corsicana, Tex., following the Youth Week of Prayer held in December 2009.

11-22, 2009 at the Bethel church. Dwight Eric Haynes from New Orleans, La., was the guest speaker, who graphically depicted the gospel message as it relates to the sanctuary through slide presentations and dynamic lectures. Most of the youth who attended were not members of the Adventist Church, and had been invited by their friends to join them for the meetings. Some attended every single night. Each night the youth participated by singing, reading scripture, responding to questions, and much more. The young people responded enthusiastically, saying that the seminar helped them realize, as never before, the importance of the sanctuary. Several young people indicated the desire to be saved, have accepted Jesus into their lives, and are planning to be in our next baptism.

Rodney Draggon, pastor of the Mount of Blessings church in Amarillo, Tex., and the Martin Luther King, Jr., church in Lubbock, Tex., spoke to our congregation on the last

A Daughter Returns Home

NEW ORLEANS » Brendalie Francis grew up as a Seventh-day Adventist on the island of Antigua in the West Indies. She used to have worship every morning at 5:00 with her parents.

She attended Sabbath School faithfully. She also served the church as Sabbath School secretary. But after leaving home, Brendalie

ventured off into the world. Then in 1984 she moved from Antigua to Louisiana, and in 1987 she married and began attending church on Sundays with her husband, who is a member of the Baptist Church. While she was away from the Adventist Church, her mother, her brothers, and a few church members kept encouraging her to come back.

In 2005, one week before Hurricane Katrina, God spoke to Brendalie. She heard a voice saying: “Brenda, I want you back in the Adventist message.” Her response was: “Lord, if that is You [speaking to me], take me to New York where my brothers are, so that I can worship with them. The following week, when August 29 brought Hurricane Katrina, she evacuated to New York. Thinking that this was a coincidence, she ignored the impression and continued worshipping on Sundays.

A few years later, in April 2009, she was at work when she started to feel that everything was crashing in on her. She wanted to cry, but could not shed a tear. Then she heard a voice saying, “Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.” She immediately called her daughters and shared her experience with them, and all of them indicated a desire to join the Seventh-day Adventist Church with her. But Brenda needed to talk to her Baptist pastor about her decision. She put it off twice. Then one day while she was lying in bed, the bed began to shake, so she jumped up and went straight **MORE** »



Through a series of events, Brendalie Francis was led back to the Adventist Church. Her younger brother, Pastor Charles Harris, baptized her this past December.

to the church. The pastor, seeing the worry on her face, knew that she was troubled and prayed for her. After the prayer, Brenda told him her story. The pastor was moved and told her that God is putting His people where He wants them to be. He said, "Brenda, I am not going to tell you that Saturday is not the Sabbath." The following Sunday the pastor told her the same thing again, but added, "We worship on Sundays because of the Resurrection."

Convinced that she must take action, Brendalie, along with her daughter, was rebaptized in December 2009 by her younger brother, Pastor Charles Harris, at Westbank United church, where Kenneth Elliott is the pastor. Brenda's favorite text is: "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct thy paths" (Prov. 3:5, 6).

Mathieu Cherenfant

Southwest Region Singles Meet for Enrichment and Ministry

MISSOURI CITY, TEX. » Fueled by the gospel commission in Matthew 28:19,

20, the single adults of Southwest Region Conference recently held their annual enrichment weekend. They chose as their theme "Reach Out and Touch," using Babbie Mason's "Each One, Reach One" as the theme song. The Fondren Southwest Worship Center in Missouri City, Tex., hosted the event. Pastor John Scott of the Toronto, Canada district, served as the facilitator and Sabbath worship speaker.

The frigid cold and snowy weather were no match for the warmth that greeted participants at the Friday-evening registration. This event was similar to previous enrichment weekends with one exception. Outreach projects, such as ministry to the homeless, people with alcohol and drug addictions, senior citizens, and the disabled, have always been a regular activity during singles weekends. However, this outreach would be different, thanks to Marsha McLean, Fondren singles director and Texas state coordinator.

During one of our phone conferences McLean told about a family of four (a mother, and three boys, ages 13, 9, and 2) who desperately needed assistance. According to McLean, the family was recently abandoned by the husband (and father) leaving them in need of clothing, furniture, food, rent, utility payments, and even toys for the boys. State and area coordinators agreed to solicit the help of

their singles to raise money for a gift card and/or cash for the family.

Following our afternoon seminar "Smart Love—Why Do Single Individuals Make Dumb Choices?" we got to meet the recipient of our latest outreach. We gathered in a classroom where some sat while others stood as the Wyatt family introduced themselves. Scott followed with a message of encouragement to the family. Then we began to present our offerings of love. Each state's director and/or area representative made a monetary presentation in the form of a gift card and cash. In addition, one state's representative announced a gift of a washer and dryer, while another presented bunk beds for the children. As well, there were bags of clothing and toys. Fighting back tears while thanking us, the grateful mother, along with her children, embraced as many of us as they physically could. As we said our goodbyes to our new friends, Vera Ragland summed up the experience with Matthew 25:40, "In as much as ye have done it unto the least of these, my brethren, ye have done it unto me." This is what singles' ministry is about," she added. We are thankful for this opportunity to minister.

Evelyn M. Edwards

▼ Pastor John Scott from Toronto, Canada, was the featured speaker during the Southwest Region Singles Enrichment Weekend.





God: Our Creator and Re-creator

In the Holy Scriptures, divine creation and divine redemption are so inseparable, you cannot have one without the other. Only the death of the Creator could atone for the sins of the whole creation. And who but a loving and personal Creator would ever care enough to die to redeem lost humanity in order to restore in them His gracious and loving character? All this so that we can be filled even now with His joy and throughout the ages spend eternity with Him.

It is not by accident that John begins his Gospel with a glorious statement of Jesus' eternal existence as Creator God. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:1, 3, 14, NKJV).

The Apostle Paul confirms this truth. "For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell. . . For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. 1:16-19, 2:9, NKJV).

Not that Jesus appeared by himself. He is one with the Father and the Spirit, "to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ" (Eph. 3:9 NKJV). Only our loving Creator has the desire and the power to completely recreate us, and by the new birth, adopt us into His family fully re-

stored (see Eph. 1:4-6). How our lips and lives should praise the Lord, our Creator, continually every day!

Leighton Holley

Heaven's Gate Opened

LUFKIN » "Heaven's gate opened." I don't think I had ever used that expression before. However, this time it literally happened as I experienced God's blessing being poured out on the Lufkin church as never before.

On October 24, 2009 we held our very first International Sabbath. There were about seven nations represented: Bangladesh, Columbia, Jamaica, Kenya, Mexico, Romania, and of course, the United States. Needless to say, all ethnic groups were heavily involved in the Sabbath School and worship service programs. It was a delight to be greeted at the door Swahili style, to enjoy music in different languages, and to hear about unique Sabbath services and the spread of God's Word in other countries.

Our guest speaker was Doug Mitchell from Burseson, Tex., who talked about God's creation and how he continues to recreate us. His personal testimony was very touching. I was so inspired, as all of us were. The church was packed to its full capacity. We had to bring extra chairs from the fellowship hall. People had to park on the street, as the parking lot was full. The children's church was packed. It was just awesome!



▲ Smiles all around as the Lufkin church celebrates their first international Sabbath.

► This past Christmas, the Cleburne Adventist Christian School float won "Best Overall" at the Keene Parade of Lights.

Heaven's gate really opened, but that's not all! Our friends Rog and Cassie Schroeders accepted Jesus through baptism. They are such a wonderful young couple and an asset to the church.

Our service culminated with an international fellowship lunch. We had chapati, rice, curry, oriental stir-fry noodles, Mexican food, Dutch cookies, and other good foods. My favorite was the all-American banana pudding, though!

Nellie Cauley

Cleburne Adventist Christian School Participates in Christmas Parade

CLEBURNE » Congratulations to the students and teachers of Cleburne Adventist Christian School for their float entry in the Keene Parade of Lights held on December 6, 2009. The float's theme was "Heaven's Superstar," which featured an eight- by eight-foot star placed at the back of the float covered with large Christmas lights.

In front of the star students stood dressed as angels circled around the nativity. Cindy Read, CACS principal, helped make the angel costumes and helped the many volunteers cover the float in silver stars, silver metallic paper, garland lights, and much more. The entry won Grand Prize Best Overall. The trophy will be displayed at the school for students, parents, and the church family to enjoy.

Sharan Boelter



The Bionic Preacher

GRANDVIEW » Douglas Mehling was born in Dallas in 1982, grew up in Grand Prairie where he attended school at South Grand Prairie High School, and later moved to Keene, Tex., and attended col-



Douglas Mehling proves that nothing can stop a man with a passion for Christ and a passion for people.

lege at Southwestern Adventist University, graduating in 2007 with a major in theology. Currently he is studying online toward a master's degree through the Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies in the Philippines.

This shows that Douglas is a very hard-working and dedicated student, but what makes his studies particularly impressive is that Douglas was born with Duchene muscular dystrophy (DMD). He has used the assistance of an electric wheelchair since age 11, and now, in order to breathe, uses a portable ventilator that is attached to his wheelchair, as well.

But even this doesn't slow Douglas down that much. He gets around with his set of wheels quite well and preaches from his chair. Douglas is known by the alias "Bionic Preacher" on his blogs.

Douglas is a member of the Grandview church near Keene. He is personal ministries director and he is also the Web site administrator for the church (www.Grandviewsda.com). From his chair, he is also writing his life story.

He has many interests, ranging from theology and biblical studies, to science and

history, listening to instrumental music, and occasionally dabbling in mathematics.

When thinking about Douglas, the one thing that strikes me the most is the inspiration he has been to friends, family, and church members. He faces more difficulties in one day than many of us face in a lifetime.

A simple cold can become a life-threatening event, not to mention all of the other functions of daily living that we all take for granted. Yet, you'll never hear him complain.

Douglas's sermons, while punctuated by pauses to grab another breath of air from the mouthpiece of his ventilator, are well-thought-out and introspective. He inspires, encourages, and leads through example. The Grandview church feels very fortunate to have Douglas as part of our church fam-



ily. He has been a vital part of our church's growth and development. Without people like Douglas, the church would not be "the light" to the local community that it is today.

Jhan Beaupre

Members Share Tasty Recipes on "Vegetarian Cooking Night"

GULFHAVEN » An exciting and well-attended Vegetarian Cooking Night was presented on September 12, 2009, in the church's fellowship hall. Debbie Sasser, director, began the evening program with a short devotional thought to close the Sabbath. She welcomed everyone and then used an article from Amazing Facts to express the comparison of certain fruits and vegetables to the human body and how our bodies would respond positively if we used these in our daily diet. For instance, she cut a carrot in half and asked if we noted how much it looked like our eye. We all know the advantage of juicing and eating carrots



▲ Marquelle Chapman (at the blender) and Lauren Chavez (watching and assisting) cooked up some yummy oatmeal patties.

◀ Ron Boczkowski demonstrates healthy cooking at the Gulfhaven church.

to strengthen our eyes. Another example was the tomato. This reminds us of the heart and blood. Tomatoes have chambers similar to your heart. Debbie went through many more examples, including kidney beans, grapes, avocados, oranges, onions, and walnuts, advocating that by eating these wholesome items, our bodies will be healthier and our immune systems will be stronger.

Jason Sasser closed the Sabbath with prayer and asked for God's blessing on the upcoming program for the evening. Debbie then passed out a book of vegetarian recipes that had been compiled from the collections of various members who had shared copies of their special delights.

The kitchen became the center of attraction as several members, with their aprons on, began to do food demonstrations. The first to make her presentation was Randa Kennon, who demonstrated a vegan dish called "Cashew Cheese Sauce." Very tasty! Ron and Minelly Boczkowski and their son, Adam, had several wonderful dishes that they demonstrated, including veggie pizza, vegetarian

a delight to everyone present. It was a fun night and a wonderful way to fellowship together while learning new ways to prepare delicious and wholesome foods. Another Vegetarian Cooking Night is being planned for the near future.

Jean Hagen

Adventurers Share Uplifting Words At Local Cemetery

LAREDO » For two hours on Sunday, November 29, 2009, 22 members of our Adventurer Club from the Laredo Spanish North church visited the local city cem-



Adventurers in Laredo hand out positive, encouraging literature to visitors at a local cemetery.

etry in full dress uniform. Many Hispanics follow the tradition of "Dia de los muertos," (literally, The Day of the Dead) and visit the cemetery. This is a special occasion on which many come pay their respects to loved ones who have

passed away. The Adventurers talked to people about hope in Jesus Christ, sharing their faith and giving away magazines. The cemetery is located two blocks away from church. Many felt blessed, listening and paying attention to our "Big Kids." We want to thank our leaders for their time, especially with activities in which we can share with others about God. We like to give our kids opportunities to "preach" the gospel. We thank the Lord for this unique opportunity to tell others about our belief in the resurrection. May God continue to bless our club's ministry.

Ervin Ortiz

Hurst Celebrates First Children's Church!

HURST » The first children's church was held on November 21, 2009, with "Thankfulness" as the theme. Twenty children attended this event. The inspiring service included a Thanksgiving play performed by both the primary and junior class. We also watched *Kids of Character* video. We concluded the service by having the children write their blessings on a paper leaf, which they then glued to a five-foot poster tree designed by one of our church members. The children had a wonderful time and are eagerly waiting for the next children's church.

Carolina Saleh



All of these bright smiles made children's church at the Hurst church a success!

"hamburgers," "Hello Dolly Bars," and cucumber juice. Marquelle Champman, from the Smyrna church, demonstrated her delicious oatmeal patties.

Finally, after the table was laden with all the delicious cuisine, we were all invited to taste the special creations, which were



Accentuate the Positive

I remember as a young boy my mother singing a popular song that went something like this:

“You’ve got to accentuate the positive, eliminate the negative, latch on to the affirmative, and don’t mess with Mister In-between.”

That song reflected her attitude toward life. We lived in hard circumstances. We had no indoor plumbing, no central heating, no air-conditioning, limited finances, and a hard life just to survive on the farm, but we were happy. My mother always kept a positive spirit and brought joy out of the simple things in life. She was an example of positive thinking and actions. Never once did I hear my mother say a negative word to anyone or about anyone.

Even though her life was rugged and to a certain degree, deprived, she focused on the positive. Truly successful people and churches do the same. They look for the bright side of life. As one has said, “Losers focus on the battle, victors focus on the triumph.” As Seventh-day Adventists we should focus on the triumph and thus should be among the happiest people in the world. We are looking forward with eager anticipation to Jesus’ coming and our reward in heaven that He secured for us by His sacrificial death on the cross.

When troubles beset us, and they will, we can follow the advice of my favorite quotation from the writings of Ellen White, “Do not tell your troubles to your fellow mortals, but carry everything to God in prayer. Make it a rule never to utter one word of doubt or discouragement. You can do much to brighten the lives of others and strengthen their efforts by words of hope and holy cheer” (*Steps to Christ*, p. 119). Don’t let the devil get you down by circumstances or be his agent to bring others down by using discouraging, harsh, or critical words. Let’s choose this day to do as my mother did: accentuate the positive, eliminate the negative, and brighten the lives of others by words of hope and holy cheer.

Jim Stevens, president

Expectant Couple Donates Baby Shower Gifts to “Bags of Love”

LUBBOCK, TEX. » When church members offered to shower Jacob and Julia Sanchez, members of the Lubbock church, with gifts



for their expected baby girl, Jacob and Julia told them they did not want to cause the church “a fuss.” However, when the couple learned that the shelves for infant items in the Bags of Love ministry were empty, they decided that in lieu of gifts for their baby, the church could bring gifts in honor of their unborn daughter that would be given to infant boys and girls through the Bags of Love ministry.

On Sunday, December 20, the church brought generous gifts of love! Julia opened the gifts and Jacob requested a prayer of blessing. Pastor Earl Robertson offered the

prayer, asking a blessing upon all the infants who would benefit from the gifts and for a special blessing upon the Sanchez family who gave so unselfishly. Then Jacob and Julia presented the gifts to Bags of Love.

“It’s My Very Own” Bags of Love is a ministry that champions the immediate needs of the displaced child. The Lubbock church, under the leadership of Cindy Meason, Judy Ford, and Connie Bradshaw, supplies the child protection agencies in Lubbock and Amarillo with bags filled with gender- and age-specific items prepared for infants and children up to age 16.

When a child is removed from the home by the local child protective service, it is often in the middle of the night. Usually, they can take nothing with them except for the clothes on their back. Our Bags of Love program is designed to help ease the transition for children when they must be removed from their home. We provide them something to call their very own. The contents of the bags are very basic, but special: a kid-sized handmade comforter, a soft, cuddly toy, personal care items (comb, hairbrush, tooth-



At a baby shower held during the Christmas season, Julia Sanchez opens baby gifts to be donated to the Bags of Love ministry in honor of their expected baby girl.

brush, toothpaste, etc.), two toys for young children, and age-appropriate items for older children. The bags are delivered to the local agencies charged with removing children because of abuse or neglect. This ministry helps ease the pain by showing children the love of their community.

Kathy Flyger

Students Visit Congregation Shaareth Israel

LUBBOCK JUNIOR ACADEMY » During Bible classes the teachers noticed that the students seemed unaware of Jewish tradi-

Jerry, Branden, Rabbi Hollander, Jacksen, Candy, Judith, Kaylee, and Dr. Simmons examine the Torah during a field trip to Congregation Shaareth Israel.



tions, religion, and culture. So Miss Zimmermann found a synagogue in the city of Lubbock and arranged for a field trip. There Rabbi Vicki Hollander told us that Jewish communities and places of worship are few and far between here in Western Texas, and this one had been started by a Jewish traveling peddler.

We learned that there are five branches of the Jewish religion. On one end of the spectrum are the very orthodox (strict) and on the other end, the reformed. Each synagogue or temple faces toward the holy city of Jerusalem.

The students were given a prayer book to look at, and learned that Hebrew books are read from front to back and sentences are read and written from right to left. Rabbi Hollander then turned to the back of the platform and slid open the aron (ark) and revealed four beautiful blue

Torahs, each with a special crown of silver pomegranates. The rabbi took off the crown and blue covering and laid it reverently on the bimah (an elevated place to read the Torah). The bimah is to remind the congregation of Mount Sinai where the law was given to Moses.

I asked the students to visualize Jesus reading the Torah or Pentateuch (the five books of Moses). The idea of our Savior

reading from the sacred scroll made some students think about the necessity of reading the Bible daily.

As we were about to leave, we saw what appeared to be a piece of the Torah hanging on the wall surrounded by glass. The rabbi informed us that this was part of a Torah that was saved

during the Holocaust. Later, I explained to the students the meaning of the Holocaust.

We pray that as we continue to study les-

sons in our Bible textbooks, conduct worships, and do service projects, our students will think about the sacredness of the Word and the incredible cost some have paid and are still paying who live the Word of God.

Susan Zimmerman

Church Members Spread Christmas Cheer

BIG SPRING, TEX. » December 26, 2009 was a joyous Christmas Sabbath at the Big Spring church. A group of young people from the Midland church presented a Christmas musical program at Big Spring. Pastor Razon read different passages of scripture and quotations from the writings of Ellen White after each song. A Christmas fellowship dinner was served following the church service, and at 6:00 p.m. that evening, the Big Spring church group visited the shut-in members in their homes, singing Christmas carols and praying for them. After serenading the shut-ins, each was presented with a special gift from the church.

Abner Razon, pastor

▼ Members of the Big Spring church brought cheer to shut-in members when they visited their homes, sang songs for them, and presented each with a special gift.



A Miracle Story

EDGEWOOD, N.MEX. » I live with my son, Bob. Recently he received notice that they were going to foreclose on his property. I prayed about it and then asked him to take me to the bank to see if I could get a loan. When they checked my account at the bank, they told me that Social Security had deposited \$4,774.00 into my account. I thought it was a mistake!

The bank suggested that I call and talk to someone at the Social Security Administration, but I wasn't able to get through to anyone. On the way home, we picked up our mail, and there in the box was a notice saying that I would receive \$4,774.00 on or about October 15, 2009. But they had already deposited the money on the first of the month. It was reimbursement for Medicare insurance premiums that I had already paid. I immediately remembered the text in Isaiah 65:22, which says, "Before they call, I will answer." God is so good!

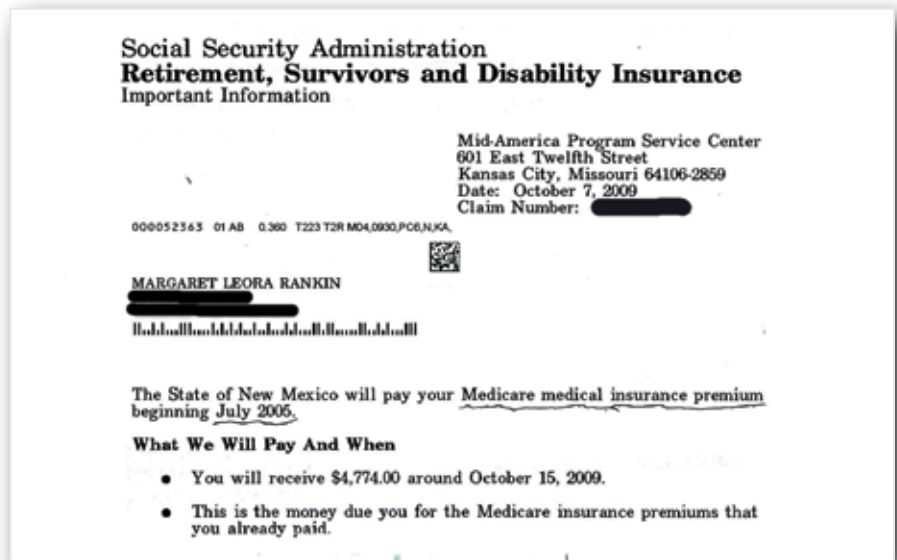
Leora Rankin

First Annual Christmas Program Held at Rio Rancho

RIO RANCHO, N.MEX. » Our music ministry department conducted its first Christmas program in December 2009. The Pathfinders and others delivered special invitations to the homes in the community around the church and all the members were encouraged to bring at least one guest. We had well over 150 attending with at least 30 guests from the community. The program started with a skit presented by the young adult Bible study class, which reminded us that the important part of Christmas is Christ. Under the direction of Ismael Renteria, the church choir presented songs from "A Christmas Carol Gallery." The



The Rio Rancho music ministry department conducted its first Christmas program this past December. The church choir (above) presented songs from "A Christmas Carol Gallery." The children's Sabbath School presented a nativity scene (left), which was very popular.



▲ God worked in a miraculous way when unexpected funds came from the Social Security Administration just in time to save Leora Rankin's son's home from foreclosure.

children were invited to sit around the tree as Karen Biathrow told them a story, after which the children's choir presented a special number.

A woman's quartet, an instrumental piece, and a couple of lovely solos were interspersed between the choir songs. During the final choir song, the children's Sabbath School presented a nativity scene, which was very popular with the attendees. After the program, all were invited to the fellowship hall for a snack, hot

cider, and fellowship. We praise the Lord for the tremendous response! Many stated this was the best Christmas program they had ever attended.

Eric Redic, pastor



Staff Ministering to Students

The week before Christmas break, with preparations for final exams and graduation on students' minds and stress levels high, Bill Kilgore, vice president for spiritual development, extended an invitation to the faculty and staff to help with his weekly dorm visitations.

"We'll be armed with bags of cookies," said Islem Mattay, campus chaplain, as she also invited volunteers to the task. "I know that the visits and prayers mean a lot to our students as they study and prepare for finals."

Benjamin McArthur, vice president for academic affairs, joined with math and physical science professor Paulos Berhane as they visited one floor of Miller Hall, a men's residence. New to campus last fall, McArthur says he'd not yet had a chance to visit the dorm. "I'll do it again. It's a good way to see the students outside of a formal setting, and they seemed to appreciate it," he says.

Kilgore teams up with a theology student for two hours every Monday evening to visit in the dorms. He says that visiting has been an excellent way to get to know students personally and understand their needs.

"After my evening class one week, a student stayed by and said that it had been a rough semester but it had meant so much to him to have our team come by on Monday evenings and pray with him."

Kilgore is encouraged by students' reactions to the visits, and says they will continue, with staff and faculty always welcome to join in.

Christmas Gifts for Students' Kids

More than 100 children of Southwestern students were able to have something extra for Christmas in December, thanks to generous donations and hard work by the community and Southwestern's faculty and staff.

A few of Southwestern's staff members had been considering how the university could provide gifts for the children of stu-

dents for Christmas. With the permission of the administration, Diem Dennis, associate director of admissions and records, and Teresa Macomber, student accounts advisor, began a Christmas campaign for children of students.

Donations of toys or money were given, but as the number of gifts needed increased, more contributions were called for from the faculty and staff and the community. Dennis says she became worried because the amount needed seemed great. So she prayed, she says, and the Lord provided. Bill Kilgore, vice president for spiritual development, walked into her office and told her that the money had come. Someone had anonymously donated enough for the rest of the gifts.

"There were such wonderful and generous donations from the faculty and staff, and also from the community. With what was given, we were able to buy \$10 gift cards for the parents to buy gifts for each child, or they could take a toy," says Dennis.

Macomber helped get the word out about the project. "Knowing that students are using their last bit of money to pay rent and utilities, it's nice to be able to supplement the parents' gifts. When the time came for the students to come and pick up gifts, they were extremely appreciative."

Dennis says she hopes the project will continue annually.



Homecoming

Southwestern Adventist University's 2010 Homecoming will be held April 7-11 with the theme "Home Again, 2010." For more information, contact alumni director Bev Mendenhall at 817.202.6232 or bevm@swau.edu.

“Just Claim It!”—2nd North American Division World Youth Prayer Conference

NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION

SILVER SPRING, MD » The Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America will host its second World Youth Prayer Conference, “Just Claim It” (JCI) on April 7–11, 2010 in Columbus, Ohio. Youth from all

for their leadership,” said Black. “Also, delegates are encouraged to bring non-Adventist relatives and friends. It’s time our youth know that their prayers can literally impact the entire world,” he said.

For more information on the conference, registration, schedule details, or to be a volunteer, please visit www.jci2.org or send an e-mail to info@jci2.org or call 301.680.6420.



over the world will participate in this power-packed experience to claim the power of God in their lives.

“The purpose of this prayer congress is two-fold: first, to encourage a love relationship with Christ; second, to empower them to reclaim their cities through service to others while bringing a message of hope,” said James Black, Sr., director of youth ministries for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America.

This new and unique spiritual experience will draw over 15,000 attendees for a five-day prayer journey. In addition to the 120 hours of organized prayer, organizers have coordinated 15 workshop tracks (180 workshops), a special community mission project called “Just Make-Over,” speaking opportunities for teens called “Youth Preach-Out,” drama presentations focusing on biblical prayer encounters, a Bible floats parade, and a music festival with a special feature of the 300-voice JCI Mass Choir accompanied by a 250-piece orchestra. Translation will be provided for international attendees.

To impact the global community, invitations have been sent to both local community and world government officials. “We want leaders to come so we can pray



SPECIAL OFFERING FOR HAITI

February 6, 2010

Many of the 470 churches that Haiti’s members worship in are now in ruins. This is also true of hospitals and schools. You have seen the devastation. The 335,000 Adventist members in Haiti now need our help. Their economy is destroyed, making it difficult not only to continue ministry, but also to rebuild. We in the North American Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church want to help. That is why we are collecting this special offering on February 6, 2010.

“We must become the helping hands of family members who care,” says Don Schneider, the president of the North American Division. “Our heartfelt prayers and concerns are with the people of Haiti still suffering the effects of this devastating earthquake. Because we know Jesus loves us, we must let them know that His love compels us to help.”

The North American Division is sending \$600,000 to help rebuild the ministry of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Haiti. This is in addition to funds for relief sent through ADRA in January. Union and local conferences are also sending significant amounts of money to help our members in this crisis.

This special offering on February 6, 2010, allows each member here to help Seventh-day Adventists in Haiti rebuild and reach out to their country in this time of tragedy. Help them know that even in disaster, God is with them and so is their church family!



About 30,000 refugees are camping on the grounds of Haitian Adventist University in Port-au-Prince.

Photo credits: Dominican union/LAD

To make an online donation, go to www.nadadventist.org.



To donate on other Sabbaths, write “Haiti Disaster Relief (SDA)” on your tithe envelope. Visit www.nadadventist.org and www.news.adventist.org for updates as response efforts continue.



Did You Know?

»Did you know that if you have a living trust, you should also have a Pour-over will? Assets not in the name of the trust use the Pour-over will to transfer them into the trust through probate. It assures that non-trust assets are protected by the trust document. If you have a trust, be sure that all of your assets are in the name of the trust. Then you will be able to take advantage of the benefits a trust provides.



Giving Forward is active thoughtfulness. It is when a person thinks and acts by making an estate plan or present lifetime gift that will have an eternal impact on the lives of others.

» Hands of Evangelism

Pictured above is Elder Billy Wright, president of the Southwest Region Conference, accepting a distribution check from the estate of Jimme Bazell. The funds are to be used for evangelism in Lufkin, Texas.

The first time I met Jimme Bazell was with Elder James Ford. We were at her home to discuss changes she wanted made to her living trust. I will never forget that visit.

We had talked awhile when she said, "I am so glad you are here. Oh me, my hands are starting to cramp. Pastor," looking in my direction, "will you get me a cup of hot water? It helps." I immediately went to the kitchen for a cup of hot water while James started massaging her right hand to ease the cramping muscle. When I got back I handed her the hot water and she took a sip. "It's not hot enough, James, go get me some hot water," she said, rubbing the muscles in her hands. He went to the kitchen while I started massaging her left hand. This time he brought hot water heated from the stove. "It's too hot," she said. She set the cup down and James took the right hand and I took the left hand, massaging the cramping muscles. Here was a faithful church member that had held most offices in the local church experiencing hand cramps with two pastors holding and massaging her hands.

When I think about that visit, I smile. Jimme Bazell was a special lady. Yes, there were some aches

and pains at her age, but the desire and passion of her soul was evident as she expressed how her estate would be used to preach the three angels messages. She wanted to help the local church grow and get along. Her eyes sparkled with intensity as she talked about the Lord's work in Lufkin. She loved the local church and was determined to leave her estate to advance God's cause. I call it "Giving » Forward."

Jimme was always looking to the future. It was only natural that her legacy was not of bricks or stone but thousands of dollars that will be used for evangelism. Her example and commitment were an inspiration to me and once again I realized that Giving » Forward was building up the kingdom of Christ.

—John Mathews

Q&A

Q: "What can a living trust do?"

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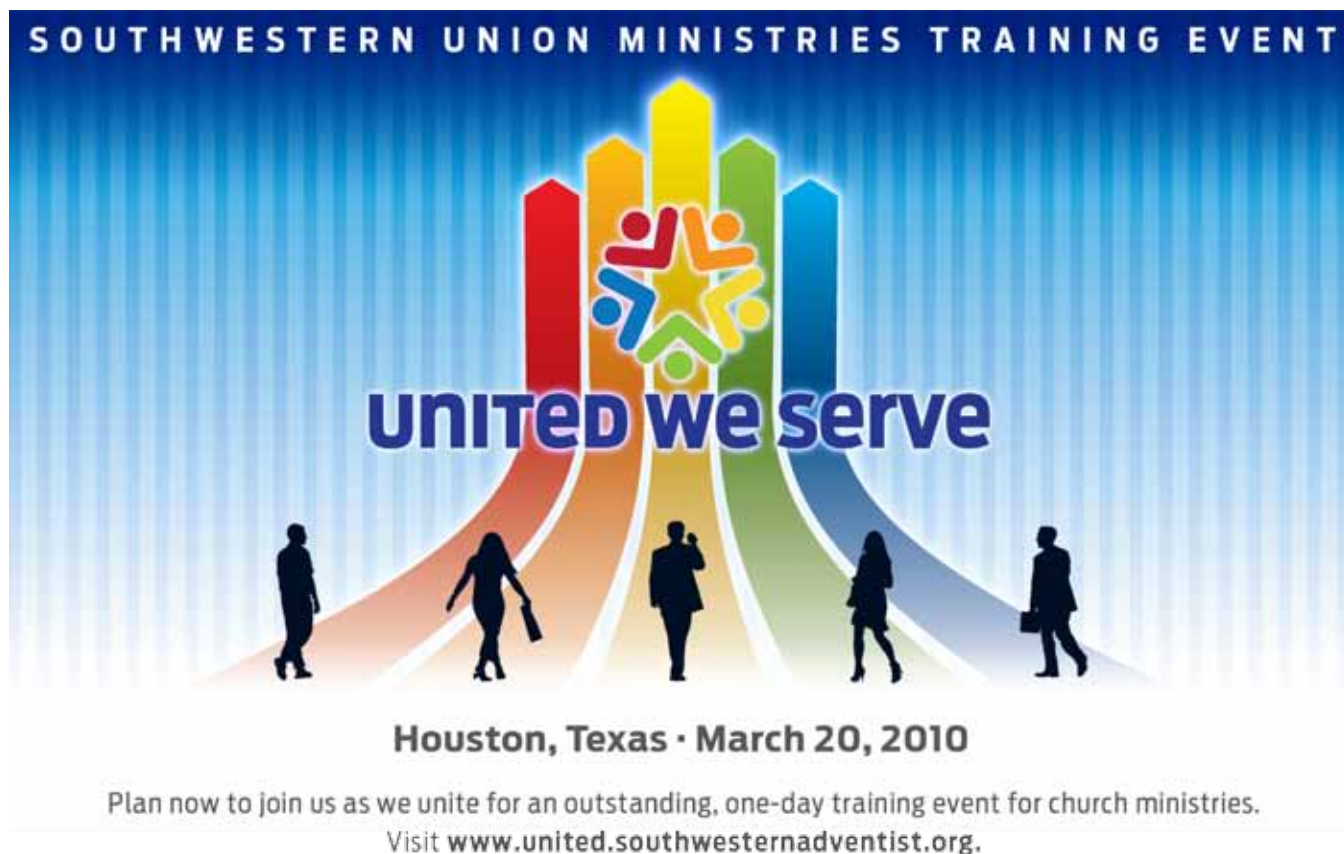
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Announcements

The 2010 Southwestern Union Chapter Meeting of ASI will be held February 11-14 at Ozark Academy in Gentry, Ark. Pastor Steve Wohlberg will be the main speaker. For more information, or to register, please contact Rene Patterson at Ozark Academy

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La Sierra Academy Alumni Weekend, April 23-24, 2010. Activities: Friday golf tournament, vespers, Sabbath services at LSA gym, class reunions, basketball game. Yearbooks available for sale. Visit your campus, renew your friendships! Honor Classes: '40, '50, '60, '70, '80, '85, '90, '95, '00, '05; Contact Alumni Office at 951.351.1445, ext. 244 or e-mail: lsaalumni@sak12.com.

Save the date! Join us at **Sweet Life Café**, where you and your friends will experience three Bible study sessions for women, called Food for the Heart. Step into Sweet Life Café and satisfy your cravings for friends, God, and spiritual growth. It's a retreat you won't want to miss!

March 5-7, 2010 at Inn at the Ozarks-Best Western, Eureka Springs, Ark. For more information, contact Carlene Whatley at 479.790.6642.

Mark your calendars for March 12-14, 2010 as the **LAAA Alumni Association** honors all Lynwood Academy/Elementary alumni and sponsors the first **Lynaires Reunion**. Our theme for 2010 is Reunited: Many Experiences, One Purpose and we will be honoring the classes of 60, 70, 80, 90 2000 and 2010. For more information: alumnilaaa@gmail.com.

Loma Linda University School of Public Health will host the **Healthy People Conference on Lifestyle and Chronic Disease**, March 9-10, 2010.

The program features world-class speakers, networking, and discussion. More information about the conference can be found at [\[peopleconference.org\]\(http://peopleconference.org\) or by contacting Renate Krause at 909.651.5940 or \[rkrause@llu.edu\]\(mailto:rkrause@llu.edu\)](http://www.healthy-</p>
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Symposium on Health Evangelism: The Role of Relationships in the Gospel of Health. Friday, February 19, at 6:45 p.m. and Saturday, February 20, at 8:45 a.m., at the Forest Hill Adventist Church, 7224 Forrest Hill Rd., Fort Worth, Tex. Call 817.806.4584 for more information.

Valley Grande Adventist Academy (VGA) Alumni Weekend: March 26-28, 2010. For info, contact Suzanna Facundo at sfacundo@hotmail.com or 817.295.0476.

Obituaries

BARNES, Ruby L., born March 31, 1919 in Marietta, Tex., and died November 25, 2009. A member of the New Hope, Tex., church for 78 years, she was laid

to rest in the New Hope Cemetery. She was a homemaker who enjoyed baking and also served the church as a Sabbath School teacher. Survivors: three daughters and two sons-in-law, Rosa and David Morgan of Jefferson, Tex., Lutherne Hancock of Marietta, and Jesselton and Will Lambeth of Keene, Tex.; sisters, Florence Otto of Loma Linda, Calif., and Dorothy Morgan of Naples, Tex.; brother, Charles Tidwell of Collegedale, Tenn.; seven grandchildren, seven great-grandchildren, 15 great-great-grandchildren; several nieces and nephews. She was preceded in death by her husband, Jesse Barnes, a sister, and a son-in-law.

BURRIS, Oretha, born Jan 20, 1920 in Galatin, Tex., and died November 22, 2009 in Fort Worth, Tex. She became interested in uniting with the Adventist Church after attending a series with evangelist



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Dick Barron in the Keene area in 1964. She later became a charter member, and was the church treasurer of the Fort Worth Northwest church. She retired after working 33 years for the Housing and Urban Development division of the federal government. She was laid to rest at the Keene Memorial Park. Survivors: son, David and wife, Shirley, of Eules, Tex.; daughter, Marti Burris of Sacramento, Ca.; brothers, William Garner of Elmendorf, Tex., and Ed Garner of Kilgore, Tex.

CRAIN, Charles Donald, Sr., born May 2, 1938 in Jigger, La., and died December 15, 2009 in Slidell, La. A member of the Bogalusa, La., church, he was laid to rest in the Port Hudson National Cemetery. He was the former owner of Don's Gulf Service in Baton Rouge, La. Survivors: wife, Roberta Crowson Crain of Slidell, La.; son and daughter-in-law, Charles and Beverly Crain, Jr., of Cleburne, Tex.; daughter and son-in-law, Carmen and Keith Larkin of Slaughter, La.; brother and sister-in-law, Melvin and Yvonne Crain of Ruston, La.; brother, W.A. Crain of Jigger; five grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

DARNELL, Ruth, born May 19, 1916 in Asheville, N.C., and died November 14, 2009 in Yucca Valley, Calif. She was a member of the Keene, Tex., church. She, along with her husband, Cecil, served in the Carolina and Florida Conference book centers for many years. Survivors: son, Wayne Darnell and wife, Linda, of Yucca Valley, Calif., and two nieces. She was preceded in death by her husband, Cecil Darnell, in 1998.

DYCHE, Mary, born June 11, 1920 in Keene, Tex., and died November 20, 2009 in Keene. An active member of the Keene church, she was laid to rest in the Keene Cemetery. She

graduated from college at the age of 18 with a B.A. degree in English, then continued with graduate studies. She worked at the White Memorial Medical Center in Los Angeles, Calif., for 37 years. She enjoyed bird-watching, reading, and gardening, and volunteered at the Chan Shun Library at Southwestern Adventist University. Survivors: son, James A. Dyche and wife, Marcia Rider Dyche, of Keene; five grandchildren and five great-grandchildren; and other relatives.

LARKIN, James Elvin, born July 28, 1932 in Monticello, Ark., and died April 3, 2009 in Slaughter, La. A member of the Denham Springs church, he was laid to rest in the Port Hudson National Cemetery. He retired as a chief petty officer in the U.S. Navy after 20 years of service, and was a veteran of both the Korean and Vietnam wars. Survivors: wife, Kathy Larkin of Slaughter, La.; son and daughter-in-law, Keith and Carmen Larkin of Slaughter; daughter and son-in-law, Denise and Ronnie Broussard of Prairieville, La.; brother, H.H. "Red" Larkin of Hammond, La.; five grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

PEUGH, Roger Dale, born December 18, 1947 in Fort Smith, Ark., and died December 20, 2009 in Little Rock, Ark. A member of the Beacon Hill church, he was laid to rest in DeQueen, Ark. Roger was a veteran of the Vietnam War, having served in the U.S. Air Force, and was an industrial electrician. He enjoyed music, gardening, and working with his hands. Survivors: wife, Beverly Stewart Peugh of DeQueen; sons, Scott Peugh of Chattanooga, Tenn., Jason Peugh of Tampa, Fla., Lonnie Peugh of Dallas, Tex.; daughters, Linda Thornton of DeQueen, Kristie Mullins of Dallas; mother, Margie Plunkett of Greenwood, Ark.; brother, Larry Peugh of Greenwood; sister, Linda Bowers of

DeQueen; five grandchildren.

SLOAN, Betty Sue, born February 16, 1931 in Memphis, Tenn., and died November 26, 2009 in Loma Linda, Calif. A graduate of Ozark Academy, she was laid to rest in Bryant, Ark. She was known as a strong and lovely Christian lady. Survivors: husband, Marvin Sloan of Loma Linda, Calif.; daughter, Velma S. George of Loma Linda; son, Michael "Mickey" Sloan; sister, Mary Paige of Maumelle, Ark.; three grandchildren.

TEWIS, Irene Celeste Norman, born February 5, 1917 in Roatan, Honduras, and died June 30, 2009 in New Orleans, La. She was a faithful member of the New Orleans First church for approximately 67 years and served as a deaconess and taught in the children's department for many years. Survivors: two children, Dr. Huey D. Tewis and Diane Tewis Clark, seven grandchildren and great-grandchildren. She was preceded in death by her husband, Captain Huey K. Tewis.

TRUBEY, Ardith E.B., born January 31, 1923 in Ironwood, Mich., and died December 15, 2009 in Hot Springs, Ark. A member of the Hot Springs church, she was

laid to rest in Hendersonville, N.C. Ardith taught elementary school for more than 30 years, in both public and church schools, serving in Florida, Colorado, Arkansas, and California. Survivors: son and daughter-in-law, Dan and Linda Trubey of Hendersonville, N.C., son and daughter-in-law, Roger and Jan Trubey of Hot Springs, daughter and son-in-law, Nancy and Bob Thornton of Sacramento, Calif.; eight grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren. She was preceded in death in 2006 by her husband of 63 years, Amos Trubey.



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SABBATH SUNSET CALENDAR

	Feb 5	Feb 12	Feb 19	Feb 26	Mar 5	Mar 12
Abilene, TX	6:14	6:20	6:26	6:32	6:40	6:45
Albuquerque, NM	5:37	5:44	5:51	5:58	6:06	6:12
Amarillo, TX	6:18	6:25	6:32	6:38	6:47	6:53
Brownsville, TX	6:15	6:20	6:25	6:29	6:34	6:38
Dallas, TX	6:02	6:08	6:14	6:20	6:28	6:33
El Paso, TX	5:42	5:49	5:54	6:00	6:07	6:12
Fort Worth/Keene, TX	6:04	6:10	6:17	6:22	6:30	6:35
Gallup, NM	5:45	5:52	5:59	6:05	6:14	6:20
Galveston/Houston, TX	6:01	6:07	6:12	6:17	6:23	6:28
Gentry, AR	5:46	5:54	6:01	6:08	6:17	6:23
Little Rock, AR	5:40	5:47	5:54	6:01	6:08	6:14
Muskogee, OK	5:51	5:58	6:05	6:12	6:20	6:26
New Orleans, LA	5:39	5:45	5:50	5:56	6:02	6:07
Oklahoma City, OK	6:00	6:07	6:14	6:21	6:29	6:35
Roswell, NM	5:32	5:38	5:44	5:50	5:58	6:04
San Antonio, TX	6:14	6:19	6:25	6:30	6:36	6:41
Shreveport, LA	5:50	5:56	6:02	6:08	6:16	6:21
Tulsa, OK	5:53	6:00	6:07	6:14	6:23	6:29

A Voice in the Calm

WHEN WE ARE BORN INTO THIS WORLD, NO MATTER WHERE OR INTO WHAT SITUATIONS, we face challenges and obstacles

that stand between God and us. Being born into a Seventh-day Adventist family did not protect me from the distractions of the world, and it did not give me as many advantages as one might believe.

I was born into the scientific dissection of the scriptures that permeates many churches and Sabbath Schools. As I grew up, the Bible stories I had loved as a child became objects to stretch and distort for “hidden meanings.” I have always struggled with theology. I have debated and argued and fought over religion. I would daily pour over

God’s Word with only the intention of proving others wrong with intricacies of truth. While fighting with others verbally, I was living in sin as surely as if I were attacking with blades rather than words.

I was becoming jaded with God.

God speaks to us through many methods, and He walks with every individual on his or her own path. Some people’s walk with God blossoms in the Sabbath School room as they listen to the words of the teacher. They feel God’s presence when they sit on a pew listening to the pastor’s sermon. I’m thankful that God speaks to us in myriad ways.

My walk has survived and flourished because God found me first; not through theology, but through simplicity and beauty. When I had nearly lost the beauty of God’s love, it found me in the quiet of the sanctuary late at night. I would walk between pews under the hallowed roof, devoid of man, but not of God. And I would witness His splendor in the quiet majesty and strength of sturdy walls, soaring rafters, and glittering stained glass windows. A mighty fortress is our God.

God found me in Illinois as I walked alone on a grassy hill under a clear night sky filled with stars and the spiraling arms of

the Milky Way. The music festival that night was immaterial, and my campsite destination was forgotten. I knelt under that twinkling sky and felt the embrace of the Creator of the universe around me, in the beauty and quiet of the night.

I feel God’s care while walking beneath the swaying emerald trees of spring. I feel God’s strength driving down lonely summer roads with the window down. I see God’s artistry in the glorious colors of autumn. I sense God’s providence standing amidst the crystalline winter snows, while flakes fall from a midnight sky.

God even found me in the stillness of my room, in the small hours of the morning.

I had just spent another night spewing vitriol on the Internet. Turning away from the screen, I was struck by the silence around me. There was no yelling. No arguing. All was calm. God was in the silence, waiting for me to stop screaming at the world and listen to Him.

Tears streaming down my face, I fell to my knees. What had I lost? How many hours of bitterness had I endured, when the simple beauty, the wondrous poetry of God was all around me, waiting to be noticed?

My walk with God has been one of many returns. Though I stray, God reaches out to me—through the art found in nature, the wisdom found in books, and the love found in holding hands. He brings me back with that still small voice; a voice that drifts in the quiet of the night, and rides the winds over the mountains.

Edward Cheever has a degree in Social Sciences from Southwestern Adventist University. He is currently working on a second major in English. He writes from Keene, Tex.





For the Record »

BY MARK BOND » COMMUNICATION DIRECTOR, SOUTHWESTERN UNION

Let There Be Light!

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN DOESN'T START OUT LIKE THE OTHER GOSPELS. There's no baby in Bethlehem, no magi, or manger. It doesn't begin with the origin of Jesus on this earth. It begins with Jesus' role in the origin of the earth itself.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it" (John 1:1-5, NKJV).

What is the significance of that opening line, "In the beginning..."? It's an unmistakable link to the opening line of Genesis. Both accounts revisit that first moment in time when the Creator set all earthly events in motion—not from a distance, but from up close.

And because He is *Creator* of all things, He has *authority* over all things. For many, that raises painful issues. Sadly, John's introduction continues, saying that "the darkness did not comprehend it."

Even today, those who are in the dark fail to comprehend God's creative power and authority.

It's no small thing to be "in the darkness." Peter warns that in the last days there will be scoffers, "walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old" (2 Peter 3:3-5).

Paul, in the first chapter of Romans (verses 20-25, NKJV), echoes Peter's sentiments, "For since the creation of the world, His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, ... so that they are without excuse... they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in

their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools...who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, who worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator."

It matters what we think about God, and what we believe about His role in the creation of our planet. It has bearing on what we believe about His role in our lives. It shouldn't surprise us that Satan uses every available channel to undermine God's authority. The creation versus evolution debate is not just about origins. It calls into question the very goodness and mercy of God.

May we never be found "in the dark" with regard to any of these weighty issues. God's first spoken words in Genesis were, "Let there be light." Let us choose each day to walk in the light of His creative power.

Record

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