

SOUTHWESTERN UNION

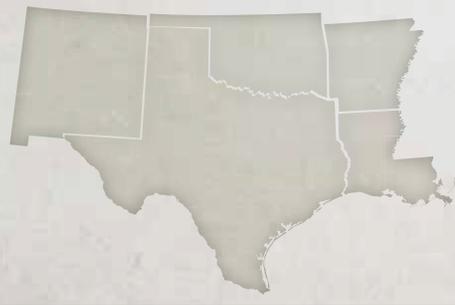
Record



DECEMBER 2010

A Season of Joy!

LOOKING BACK AT A YEAR OF EVANGELISM



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On the Cover

Pastor Brandon Westgate, Arkansas-Louisiana Conference youth director baptizes Ozarak Adventist Academy freshman, Rosey Ebere during the Teach Us 2 Pray Teen Prayer Conference. Rosey is just one of more than 3,000 baptisms to occur in the Southwestern Union this year. [Cover photo by Conna Bond]

President's Perspective»

BY MAX TREVIÑO » SOUTHWESTERN UNION CONFERENCE PRESIDENT



Revival and Reformation

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

The year 2010 has been a banner year. In spite of the fact that our nation has faced financial difficulties, the faithfulness of our members in returning tithes and offerings has been amazing. Though there hasn't been significant financial growth over the past year, we have maintained modest increases without slipping backwards, and I'm thankful, both to you and to the Lord, for this blessing.

Similarly, the Lord has blessed the evangelistic efforts of our many pastors and lay members who have a passion for sharing Christ. As you know, the Southwestern Union recently passed the 100,000-member milestone, and as I write, we are already to the 102,000-member mark. This is amazing to me, but not surprising. The Lord has promised to bless us when we are about His business.

Recently, I attended both the GC Annual Council and the NAD Year-end Meetings at our world church headquarters in Silver Spring, Md. I am encouraged by the tone set by our new leadership. Both Ted Wilson, the newly-elected General Conference president, and Dan Jackson, the new president of the North American Division, have a passion for revival and reformation. They both realize that the mission of our church is only as strong as the mission of its individual leaders, pastors, teachers, and laypeople.

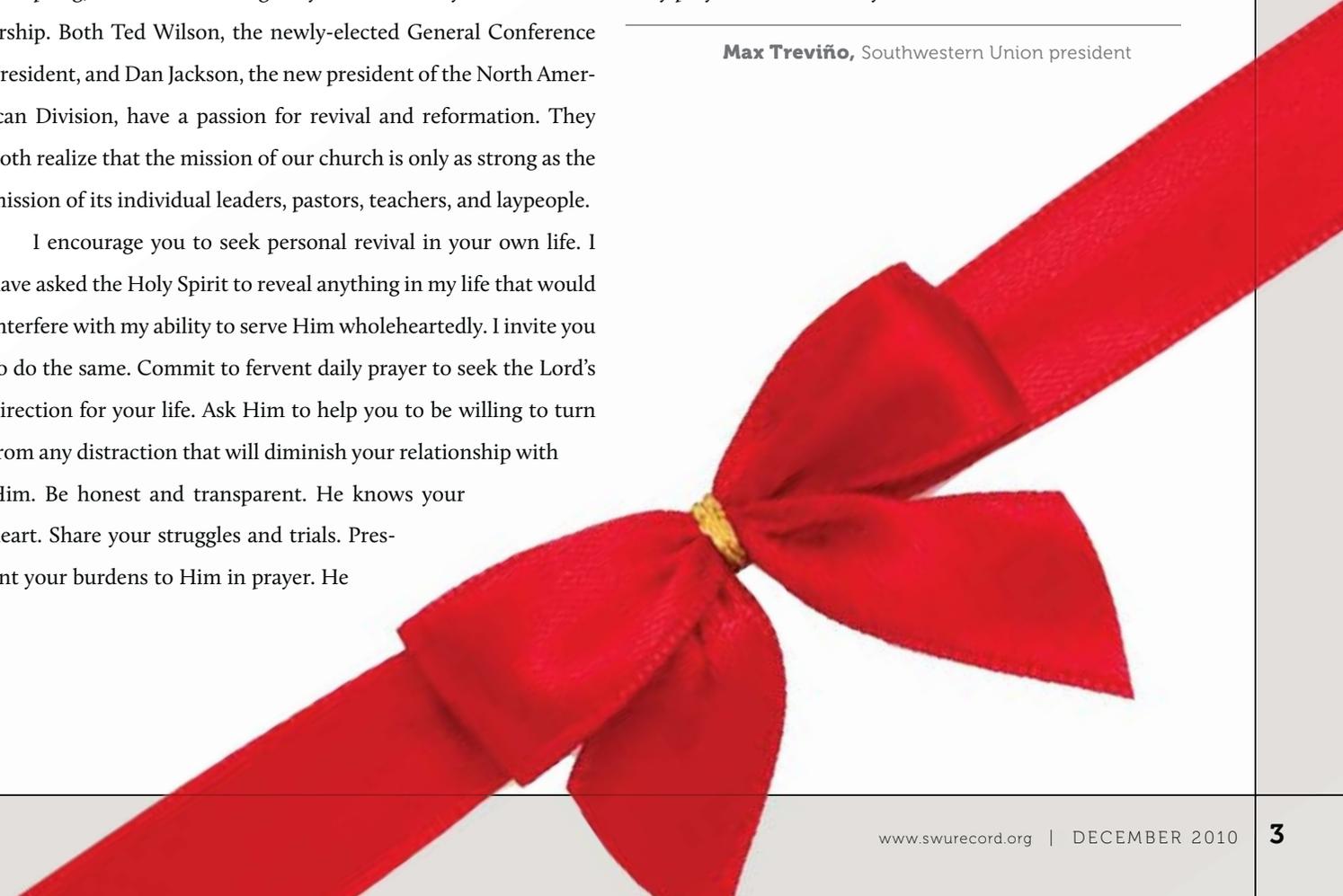
I encourage you to seek personal revival in your own life. I have asked the Holy Spirit to reveal anything in my life that would interfere with my ability to serve Him wholeheartedly. I invite you to do the same. Commit to fervent daily prayer to seek the Lord's direction for your life. Ask Him to help you to be willing to turn from any distraction that will diminish your relationship with Him. Be honest and transparent. He knows your heart. Share your struggles and trials. Present your burdens to Him in prayer. He

will draw near to you and bring you victory.

All across the world, Seventh-day Adventists have been encouraged to spend daily time in prayer at either 7 a.m. or 7 p.m. I want to invite you to join the global army of prayer warriors who will gather morning and evening to seek personal revival and reformation.

As we enter this season of joy, celebrating Christ's gift to us, won't you commit to giving back the gift of your heart through daily prayer and Bible study? Revival is sure to follow!

Max Treviño, Southwestern Union president





CREATION Health

BY LYNELL LAMOUNTAIN

Christmas at the Moon

Apollo 8 was the first manned spaceflight to leave Earth's orbit, and her three-man crew was the first to voyage back to the Earth from another celestial body, the Moon. Apollo 8 entered lunar orbit on Christmas Eve, December 24, 1968. That evening the astronauts showed pictures of the moon during a live television broadcast. Command Module pilot and navigator Jim Lovell said, "The vast loneliness is awe-inspiring and it makes you realize just what you have back there on Earth."

The crew ended the program by taking turns reading verses from Genesis, chapter one. Lunar Module Pilot William Anders started by saying, "For all the people on Earth, the crew of Apollo 8 has a message we would like to send you." Then he continued by reading, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, 'Let there be light' and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness."

Next, Lovell continued, "And God called the light day, and the darkness he called night. And the evening and the morning were the first day. And God said, 'Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.' And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so. And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day."

Then, Commander Frank Borman read, "And God said, 'Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear,' and it was so. And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters he called Seas: and God saw that it was good." Borman finished by saying, "And from the crew of Apollo 8, we close with good night, good luck, a Merry Christmas, and God bless all of you—all of you on the good Earth."

It was the most watched show in television history as three humble astronauts streamed images to televisions around the world of what Earth looked like from 240,000 miles away, and led

an entire planet in remembering its magnificent beginning. I'm so glad the story doesn't end there. Just imagine life on Earth if the Creator had never come back. Our lives would be as barren and bleak as the Moon described by Commander Borman as "a vast, lonely, forbidding expanse of nothing."

The Bible says in John 1:14, "The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth, (NIV). One of my colleagues, in commenting on this text, said, "You don't become what you don't love." It was because of Christ's love for us that He became one of us. But He didn't just become one of us; He came from our Heavenly Father, full of grace and truth. By grace we were created and by grace we have been recreated. Salvation's thread ties our past to our future—a future that is eternal, overflows with loving relationships, and is an inviting expanse of absolutely everything our hearts could ever hope or dream.

A little boy's daddy was a soldier and away at war. During the long years of separation he often gazed at a picture of his daddy on the table. One day his mother overheard him saying, "If only my father could step out of that picture and be real." Jesus stepped out of the starry sky and became real. Why? Because He realized just what He had back here on Earth: you. Christ became one of us so you could become one with Him . . . and experience a new beginning.

That's CREATION Health!

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



Shades of Grace

BY MIKE TUCKER » SPEAKER/DIRECTOR, FAITH FOR TODAY



Only The Messiah

We have been engaged in a study of the seven churches of Revelation. However, since it is the Christmas season, we will suspend that study for one month and focus on the birth of Jesus. During the dark days of World War II, a young, half-starved, pregnant, Jewish woman who was desperate to not be discovered by the Nazis crawled into an open grave on a cold night and gave birth to her son. She died soon after with her baby still clutched in her arms. The next morning the caretaker found the dead mother and her baby, still clinging to life, in the open grave. Astonished, the caretaker rescued the child and said, “This must be the Messiah, for only the Messiah would choose to be born in a grave.” Of course the child was not the Messiah and sadly he died later that same day, but the words of the caretaker still stand true.

Only the Messiah would choose to be born in a grave, or even in a stable. Only the Messiah would choose to be born to poor parents who weren’t even officially married, in a backwater town remarkable only because it was David’s hometown. And only the Messiah would choose to be born to a virgin. And yet, not only is this exactly what happened, it had all been predicted centuries earlier. “Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel” (Isaiah 7:14, NKJV).

Again in Isaiah 9, the prophecy was made: “For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end, Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, To order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this” (Isaiah 9:6, 7, NKJV).

The prophet Micah foretold the place of Jesus’ birth, the City of David. “But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Though you are little among the thousands of Judah, Yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting” (Micah 5:2, NKJV). Only the Messiah could choose to predict his own birth and only the Messiah could love fallen man enough to choose to be born in order that he might die to reconcile us to the Father.

Although we know Jesus was not born on December 25, I find

no reasonable argument that would prevent us from celebrating the birth of Jesus on this or any other day. His birth was part of a plan set in motion from the dawn of time, a plan to counteract the forces of Hell, reverse the curse of sin, reconcile fallen man to the Father, and provide a means of salvation for all who will receive Him. Only the Messiah would be audacious enough to make such an unlikely plan and only the Messiah could love us so strongly that He would actually follow through with the plan.

Today as so many religious movements make empty promises of health, healing, and wholeness, the Christian world counters with the celebration of the birth of a child. That birth brings hope to every inhabitant of the planet regardless of race, gender, or age. Only the Messiah would choose to bring hope through the birth of a baby. That birth speaks hope to every heart broken by loss and rejection, every soul that is burdened by guilt and shame, every body that is assailed by disease and deformity, every empty life that struggles with addictions and failure, and to every sinner who has tried and failed. Only the Messiah brings hope to all.

It is my prayer that this Christmas season you will enjoy your friends and family. But my greater prayer is that you and every sin-sick soul on earth will discover the healing, love, and salvation that come from an encounter with the Babe of Bethlehem. Only the Messiah can make that prayer come true.

Mike Tucker is the 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 DAN SERNS

Back to the Early Church

“Pastor, what’s your secret? Why is the Adventist Church growing faster in Peru than almost anywhere else in the world? And how are you able to keep 86 percent of the new members from falling away?”

Pastor Melchor Ferrerya, then president of the Peru Union of Seventh-day Adventists, had just spoken for a Maranatha convention and I had a few minutes to glean his wisdom.

“I only have time to tell you two things, but these are the secrets. First, evangelism, or soul winning, is not a department of the church. It is the LIFE of the church. Without it a church is dead. And second, small groups are not a program of the church. They are the LIFESTYLE of the church members.”

In 2009 and 2010, when I had the chance to visit Peru, I learned more.

 **Every Member in a Group.** All 600,000 Adventists in Peru are part of a small group that meets an hour or two a week. Even those who don’t attend regularly are placed in a small group that will pray for them and stay in contact with them.

 **Small Group Leaders** are selected each year by the local church leaders, including many who volunteer.

 **Practical Materials Provided.** Each year the Peru unions produce a set of 52 simple weekly Bible study and discussion lessons that can be used by small group leaders throughout

the year. Each quarter has a theme, such as “Dealing with Difficulties” (weekly studies on stress, depression, grief, etc.), “Strengthening Your Marriage” (God’s ideal, resolving conflict, finances, raising children, roles, etc.), “Second Coming of Christ” (signs of His return, Satan’s counterfeit coming, resurrection of the dead, transformation of the righteous, etc.), and “Miracles of the Bible” (Birth of Isaac, axe head that floated, feeding of the 5,000, etc.). In addition, church elders and pastors are provided with mentoring materials to help the small group leaders become successful in their mission.

 **Pre-Adventists Invited.** Each small group sets a goal of trying to bring 1-3 families to Jesus and into the Adventist movement during the year. They list people and pray together for them. Most Pre-Adventists visit an Adventist home and group five to ten times before they ever set foot in an Adventist church.

 **Bringing in New Members.** Throughout the year there are two or three times when the congregation has a week of reaping meetings for all the groups. Many of the interests are baptized during these weeks. The week concludes with a huge celebration rally on Sabbath afternoon for all the congregations in the entire city.

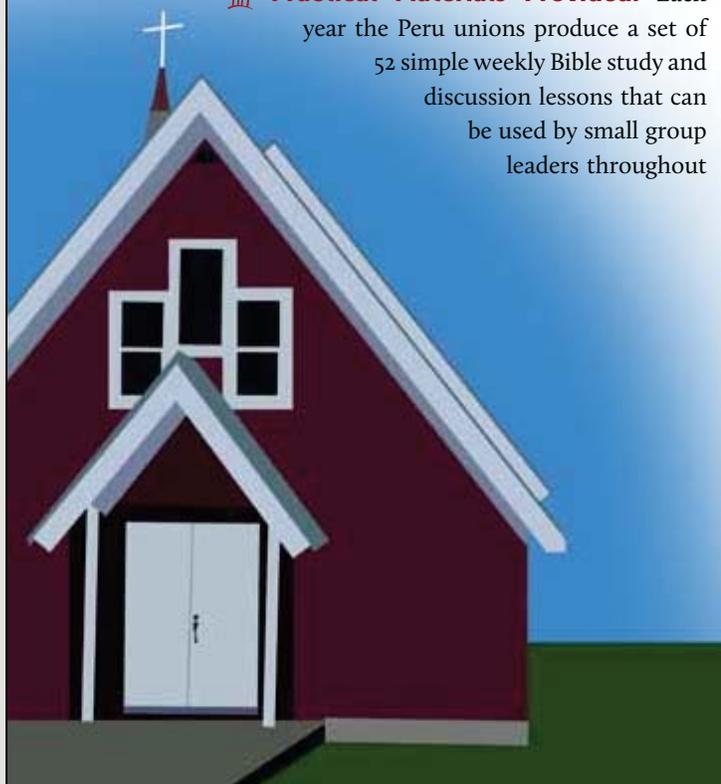
 **High Retention of New Members.** Newly-baptized members continue to be a part of the small group that brought them to Jesus and His movement, so there is little danger of losing them.

 **Yearly Reconfiguration of Groups.** Each year the small groups are reconfigured, new leaders and groups are added as needed, goals are set again, and relationships begin to form.

What I witnessed in Peru looked a lot like the early church. “So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved” (Acts 2:46, 47).

I believe the closer we get to the end of time, the more God’s final church will look like the early church. Maybe it’s time for us to adapt the Peru model to our own churches as soon as possible.

Dan Serns is the senior pastor of the Richardson church.





Cada Decisión Por Cristo Es Un Milagro

Cuando la gente toma decisiones en favor de la verdad de Dios, y cuando sucede el proceso de la conversión, sólo se pueden explicar como un milagro. En cada campaña evangelística que conduzco, al ver personas decidirse por Cristo, reconozco que no tuve nada que ver con ese proceso. Yo sólo presenté la verdad de Dios y la conversión de ellos fue la obra del Espíritu Santo, al ellos abrir el corazón a Dios y a su verdad con sinceridad.

En 1 Corintios 3:6 el apóstol Pablo dijo, “Yo planté, Apolos regó; pero el crecimiento lo ha dado Dios.”

Esto me trae a memoria una linda experiencia que viví durante un viaje misionero en este año.

En Marzo de 2010, el pastor Duane Mckey, director de evangelismo de la Unión del Suroeste, organizó un viaje misionero al puerto de Veracruz, México. Para este proyecto se unieron estudiantes de la academia VGA de Weslaco, Texas, un grupo de conquistadores de Keene, Texas, otro grupo de laicos de Houston y algunos pastores del sur de Texas. Aparte de algunos proyectos de construcción, se organizaron 35 campañas evangelísticas.

Fui asignado a la iglesia Central de Veracruz. Allí encontré una iglesia vibrante y activa en la obra misionera. Desde que abrimos la campaña, noche tras noche la iglesia estuvo abarrotada con miembros de iglesia y una gran cantidad de visitas, de las cuales al terminar la campaña evangelística, más de 50 personas fueron bautizadas.

Entre ellos están la hermana Magdalena y el hermano José, líderes de una iglesia Evangélica en el puerto de Veracruz. José tenía un hermano Adventista, miembro de la iglesia Central. Él invitó a José a asistir a la campaña evangelística, y siendo que los temas serían sobre el libro de Apocalipsis, decidí asistir e invitar a Magdalena a venir con él.

Desde la primera noche, yo pude sentir que El Espíritu Santo estaba obrando en sus vidas. Al conversar con ellos, descubrí que el hermano de José le había dado libros como El Camino a Cristo, El Deseado de Todas las Gentes, El Conflicto de los Siglos y otros más. Y José había compartido estos libros con Magdalena.

Ya había en ellos inquietudes sobre temas bíblicos como los diez mandamientos, el sábado, el estado de los muertos, entre otros. Los temas proféticos que presenté solidificaron lo que ellos ya habían leído en los libros del Espíritu de Profecía.

Un par de domingos antes que comenzara la campaña evangelística, en la clase de escuela Dominical, les correspondía estudiar el tema sobre el Día del Señor. Y por supuesto el estudio hablaba sobre el domingo como Día del Señor. Siendo Magdalena maestra de clase de la escuela Dominical, fue a su pastor y le dijo, “Pastor, yo no puedo enseñar algo que no es bíblico.” El pastor le dio todo tipo de razones del porque guardar el domingo. Ella le

respondió, “todo lo que me ha dicho es razonamiento humano, pero no tiene base bíblica.”

La campaña evangelística comenzó un miércoles de noche y para el sábado de mañana, allí estaban Magdalena y José en la iglesia. Ella me dijo, “que gozo es guardar el primer sábado en mi experiencia cristiana.”

Cuando hice el primer llamado al bautismo, allí estaban Magdalena, José y otras personas, que ellos ha-

bían invitado a asistir a la campaña, respondiendo al llamado, indicando que querían unirse a la iglesia Remanente.

El siguiente sábado tuve el gozo de bautizarlos en el Rio Toro, donde tuvimos una gran convocación donde más de 500 almas fueron bautizadas.

¿Fui yo responsable por esos milagros de conversión? En 1 corintios 3:6 el apóstol Pablo dijo, “Yo planté, Apolos regó; pero el crecimiento lo ha dado Dios.”



▲ Pastor Eddie Canales bautizando a Magdalena en el Rio Toro.

THE FLAME OF EVANGELISM BURNS BRIGHTLY

Pat Humphrey, associate editor of the *Record*, interviews
Duane McKey, Southwestern Union vice president for evangelism.

Pat Humphrey (Record): *What is your assessment of evangelism in the Southwest? What's happening in our corner of the world? How are we doing?*

Duane McKey (DM): Evangelism in the Southwest is going very well. Of course, we can't say it's going well enough, otherwise the work would be finished and Jesus would come. We need to engage more of our church members. We are reaching a lot of people for Jesus and it's exciting to see that this is the fastest-growing area in the North American Division. We're very thrilled for that and we thank the Lord.

Record: *How can we engage more of our church members in evangelism?*

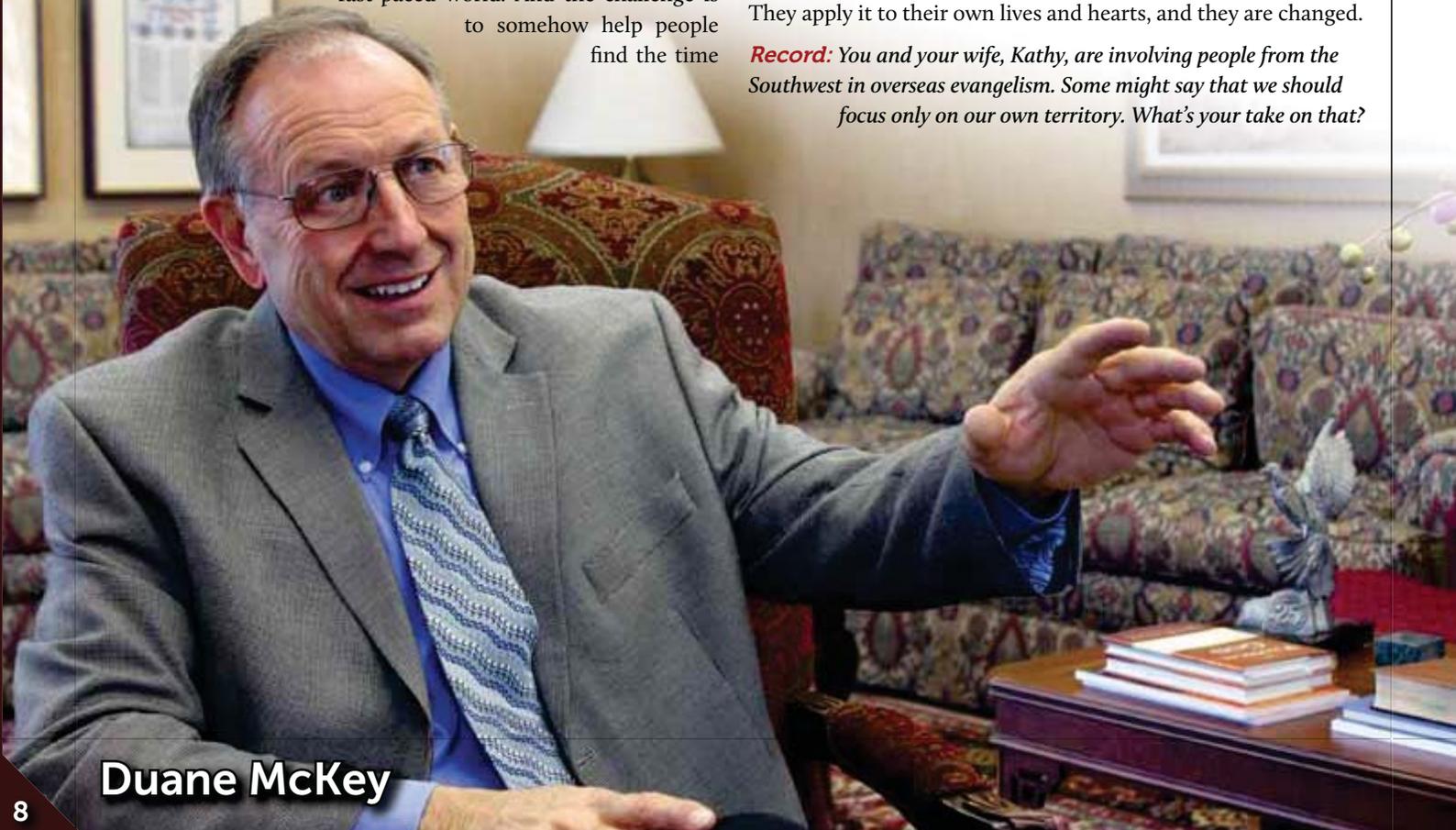
DM: That's probably the biggest challenge that the church faces, I think; because the accuser of the brethren is very active in keeping our people occupied in all kinds of things. It's a fast-paced world. And the challenge is to somehow help people find the time

they need to tell others about Jesus. Many of us are so busy that we don't know who our neighbors are down the block. Before we preach we need to share. We need to be the kind, loving Christian people that God has envisioned for His people to be. That will attract, I believe, hundreds more, probably a thousand-fold more than the number we are attracting now.

Record: *What about children, youth, and young adults? In what ways are members of the younger generation getting involved in evangelism? What kinds of results are you seeing?*

DM: We have some wonderful materials we are using, and resources that anyone can effectively utilize for evangelism. We have a number of our youth who are preaching and others are actually holding their own meetings. The thrilling thing is that when our young people preach, whether they are college age, or academy age, or younger, they start believing more deeply in what they are preaching and it becomes a life-changing experience for them. They apply it to their own lives and hearts, and they are changed.

Record: *You and your wife, Kathy, are involving people from the Southwest in overseas evangelism. Some might say that we should focus only on our own territory. What's your take on that?*



Duane McKey



DM: Well, the Lord can't come, He won't come, until the work is finished right here in our own Southwestern Union. But, there are two reasons why I'm excited about the international work. Jesus tells us to preach and teach and baptize everywhere. The Three Angels' Message is to go to every tribe, nation, kindred, tongue, and people. Also, I have seen so many times that when people reach out to other lands they are doubly blessed back at home. I've seen so many times that when we take people to an area where the work is growing, and they preach a whole series of meetings and people respond, they come back with a new perspective and passion. They have seen the fires burning, they have touched the fire, they have felt the heat from the coals, they bring those coals back, and start the fire burning at home.

Record: *I can remember a time when evangelism was something that only "professional" evangelists did. That seems to be changing today with the large numbers of lay people getting involved. What impact do you think this has had on our church as a whole and on the lay people who are preaching and doing evangelism?*

DM: Doing evangelism has a tremendous impact on the lives of lay people, and I think that's the idea behind ShareHim. People can share the gospel through a series of prepared sermons and it touches their own lives and they get excited. It's like the story of a dentist friend of mine.

I finally got him to take a group of students

from Loma Linda University on a ShareHim trip. And they all preached. I saw him later and he said to me, "Duane, I did it!" "Did what?" I asked him. "I preached!" he said. "Really?" I responded. And he said, "You know what? It all makes sense." "Ron, what do you mean?" I asked him. "This stuff that we all believe, when you put it all together, it all makes sense," he said. I thought that was thrilling. For the first time in his life, he saw the whole Adventist message together and it all made sense.

What I'm thrilled about, too, is the fact that we've done these meetings overseas, and a reflex from that is that we're looking at it happening right in our own territory. On February 4, 2011 we start Houston for Christ. There will be at least 120 individuals preaching at meetings taking place at the same time. This has never been done before in North America and not often in any international setting, where you have one city with multiple meetings around the city. We're thrilled. It's beyond belief what could happen there. About 70 to 80 meetings will be held in churches, some will be in homes, libraries, bank buildings, and apartment complex meeting rooms. About 40 of the meetings will be lay led. Some outside evangelists are also coming in. Elder Dan Jackson, our division president, Leighton Holley, our conference president in Texas, Elder



Billy Wright, our Southwest Region Conference president, and a number of us here in the Southwestern Union office, and others will be preaching. We are so excited to have all this involvement right here in our territory.

If you're interested, contact my administrative assistant, Suzanna Facundo, or me, or my wife, Kathy. We'll be happy to sign you up and take you to Houston, the Philippines, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, or Africa.

Record: *What would you say to a lay person who is fearful or feels they don't have what it takes to get out there and do evangelism? What advice would you give someone who feels that way?*

DM: I love it when people say that. You know, my wife, Kathy, thought that. She would pray for me for years and years [as I preached] and then she made the commitment to preach too. Afterward she said, "Why on earth did I say I would do it?" She was scared to death. But she finally decided it wasn't about her, it was about the Lord. And God blessed her, and in her first meeting she had 197 baptisms and 5,000 people came out. It was thrilling.

The youngest person I've seen preach is 11 years old and the oldest is 91. We had a blind lady preaching, and another who was in a wheelchair, so there are no excuses. You know, Pat, the exciting thing is that when we use our own talents that God has given us, we don't really need a lot of help from Him. We can do it because He gave us those gifts. But when we step out of our comfort zone and get over our head in deep water, that's when we really need God's help and that's when we see the blessings from God and say, "Thank you, Jesus." I know a guy who read his sermons, he was scared to death, his wife had signed him up, and he didn't want to go. He was in his 70s, he went to Kenya and preached a series of meetings, and it just changed his life. He said that by the last night there were 20,000 people who came out to hear him preach. He would go and knock on doors during the day and pray with people. He was not a good preacher, but more than 1,500 people were baptized.

Record: *If someone says, "I just don't want to preach, but I want to help," what else could they do to get involved?*

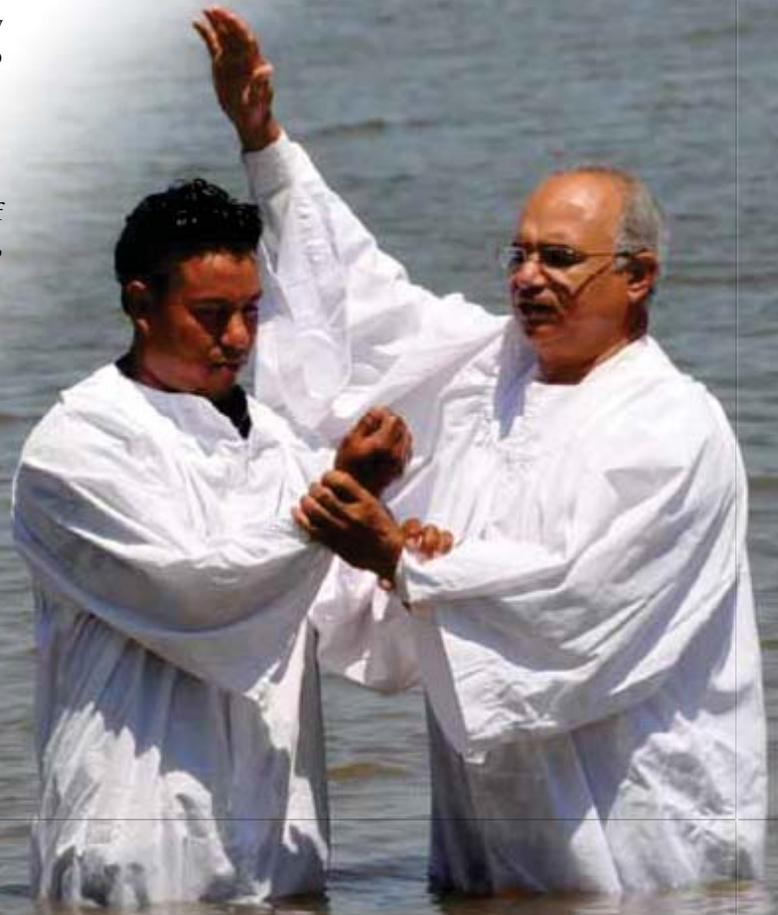
DM: You can help financially. It costs about \$500 to take care of the meeting expenses at the church overseas. More importantly, you can help by prayer. Prayer is the most important thing [and secondly] financial help. Also, we have other projects. For example, the Oklahoma Conference is taking a group of people to Bulawayo, Zimbabwe and building 40 churches in January. We have a lot of people who do those types of ministries and that is wonderful. Then in October 2011 we'll be going back to Zimbabwe and holding 50 meetings and another 20 in Livingstone, Zambia. We'll have 70 meetings at the same time.

Record: *I've heard it said that our best days are ahead with regard to evangelism. What's your response to that and why?*

DM: We've had some wonderful days in the past, but I don't think we've seen anything compared to what God is going to do when the Holy Spirit is poured out, when His people are ready to share the Good News of Christ's soon return. It is a wonderful time to be alive, but we're looking forward with great anticipation to the time when this work will be finished and Jesus will come and we'll get off this old ball of mud and go home.

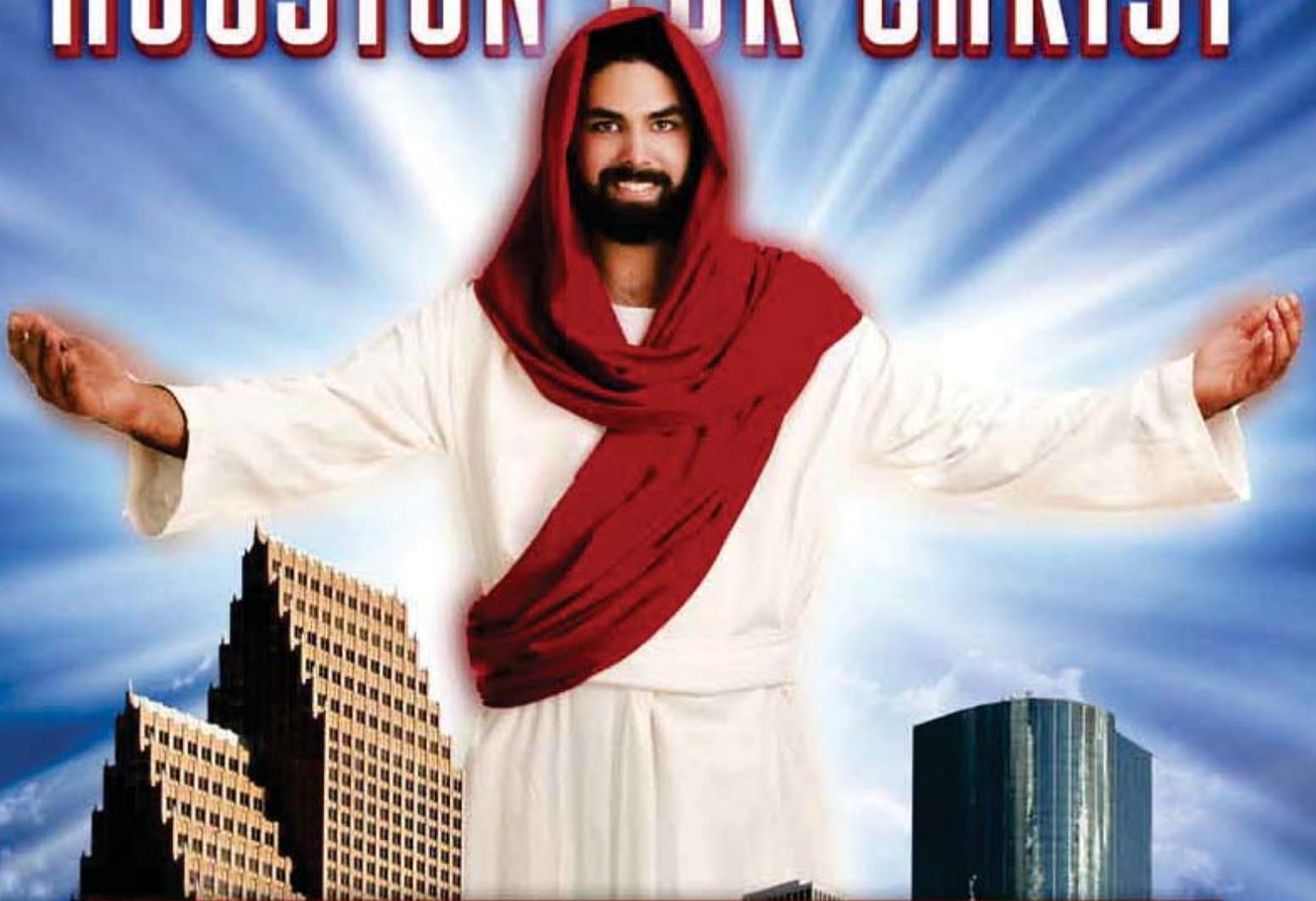
Record: *When we look at the massive numbers of people still needing to be reached with the gospel, the thought of finishing the work seems to be a daunting task. How are we ever going to finish the work that God has given us to do?*

DM: You know, every man, woman, and child in the world is a member of God's family, they're all His children, and to reach them is God's responsibility. He hasn't told us to count and see how impossible it is. Didn't the disciples, when Jesus fed the 5,000, ask, "How are we going to feed all these people?" He was a statistical pessimist. He began to add up the five loaves and two fishes and he said, "It's impossible!" We have among us many statistical pessimists who look at the daunting work and say, "We can't do it; we can't do it." God didn't say count, He said, "Do it. Go, just pass the bread. Don't tell me how you can't do it or how it won't work." He said, "Go and preach and teach. Don't argue with me. Pass the bread."



STARTING FEBRUARY 4, 2011

HOUSTON FOR CHRIST



**The largest live evangelistic event ever conducted!
More than 100 locations starting simultaneously.**

Featuring Dan Jackson, NAD president; Alex Bryant, NAD secretary;
Ernest Castillo, NAD vice-president; Ramon Chow, ASI secretary-treasurer;
Billy Wright, Southwest Region president; Leighton Holley, Texas Conference president,
and hundreds of pastors and lay preachers from around the Houston area!

Please pray for this monumental city-wide evangelistic effort!

Visit www.HoustonForChrist.org for more information.

WHEN WE PRAY BIG

Arkansas-Louisiana Teen Prayer Conference Yields Revival and Baptisms

By any stretch of the imagination, bringing 400 teens together for a weekend retreat with no plans for programming should be a recipe for disaster, right?

Well, something happened at Ozark Adventist Academy on the final weekend of October, but it wasn't disaster. If you weren't at the Teach Us 2 Pray Ozark Teen Prayer Conference held October 27-30, it's impossible through simple words to convey the depth and magnitude of what happened during those four days in north-west Arkansas. But know this: lives were changed, and the story is still being written.

Last year's teen prayer conference was the first in recent history to be held on the Ozark Adventist Academy campus. That conference featured Ivor Myers sharing how he moved from being a rap music artist to becoming a Seventh-day Adventist pastor with a powerful message about prayer and the enticing dangers of the entertainment industry. Many were moved, and lives were changed during that weekend. The event was deemed a success, and almost immediately, plans for the second annual event were laid.

The challenge was how to continue the momentum and even take it up a notch. Speakers' names circulated around the table before a radical idea was introduced: "What if we don't invite a speaker? What if we just allow the youth to lead—under the guidance of the Holy Spirit?" There was more than a bit of skepticism, but after fervent prayer, the leadership team agreed.

As a result, Marion Parson, the prayer ministries coordinator for the Arkansas-Louisiana Conference who heads this event, invited Gary Burns from the Lake Union headquarters to open the weekend by training a core group of teens to lead out for the event. These student leaders would facilitate small group prayer and Bible study with the larger group that would arrive on Friday.

On the first day of training, 70 student volunteers from five academies, including Ozark, Ouachita Hills, Oklahoma, Chisholm Trail, and Midland academies, gathered together at a Baptist youth camp a few miles from the Ozark campus.

When the would-be leaders were told there was no schedule for the weekend, other than meal times, there was an audible gasp

▼ Songs of praise raise heavenward in between the baptisms.



Conna Bond

in the room. One student was overheard whispering to another, "What a copout. They just didn't want to plan anything!"

Soon, they were instructed to break into small groups to study the story of Zacchaeus from the book of Luke, and something started to happen. They were told to pray, asking the Holy Spirit to direct their thoughts, and then to immerse themselves in the story—imagining every detail of what the Bible presented and applying the story to their own lives.

When they returned to the meeting hall, there was a different tone in the room. After a few quiet songs, the microphone was placed on the floor and the stage was left empty. After a few moments of awkward silence, a student slowly walked forward and picked up the mic.

He said, "I don't even know why I'm here. In fact, the only reason I signed up for this was to get a couple days of excused absences from class." Hushed, knowing laughter trickled across the room, and then the silence of anticipation returned. He continued, "Now I'm getting a sense of why God wanted me here. I just want to apologize to you all for being two-faced—one way in front of my teachers and another way in front of my friends. I want this weekend to make a difference in my life."

There was approval and applause from his peers, and a friend rushed up and put his arm around the speaker and prayed a beautiful prayer of intercession for his friend.

Almost immediately, a line of young people formed, each waiting to share. The program went on for hours as student after student gave honest, transparent assessments of where they were spiritually and revealed the struggles they were facing. Some shared songs, prayers, or poems they had written. Some confessed sins or made resolutions to overcome harmful habits and addictions in their lives. Each asked for prayer. Time after time, clusters of friends would gather around the ones who had petitioned, encircling them with supportive arms and fervent prayer. To say that the Holy Spirit was present would

be a gross understatement.

It was a beautiful prelude for what was to come.

On Thursday afternoon, the student leaders were sent door-to-door in the community to pray with anyone who had needs. They were reluctant to move out of their comfort zones, but with a lot of encouragement the entire group headed out. Three hours later they returned, energized and excited to share testimonies about how God had used them to reach people in the surrounding neighborhoods.

That evening, however, the 70 student leaders were faced with the realization that more than 300 more students would descend on the Ozark campus the following day, and they were in charge of the program. They had to work through fears and differences of opinion about how things should be handled. A wave of panic washed over them, but they had been challenged to "Pray BIG!" so they did!

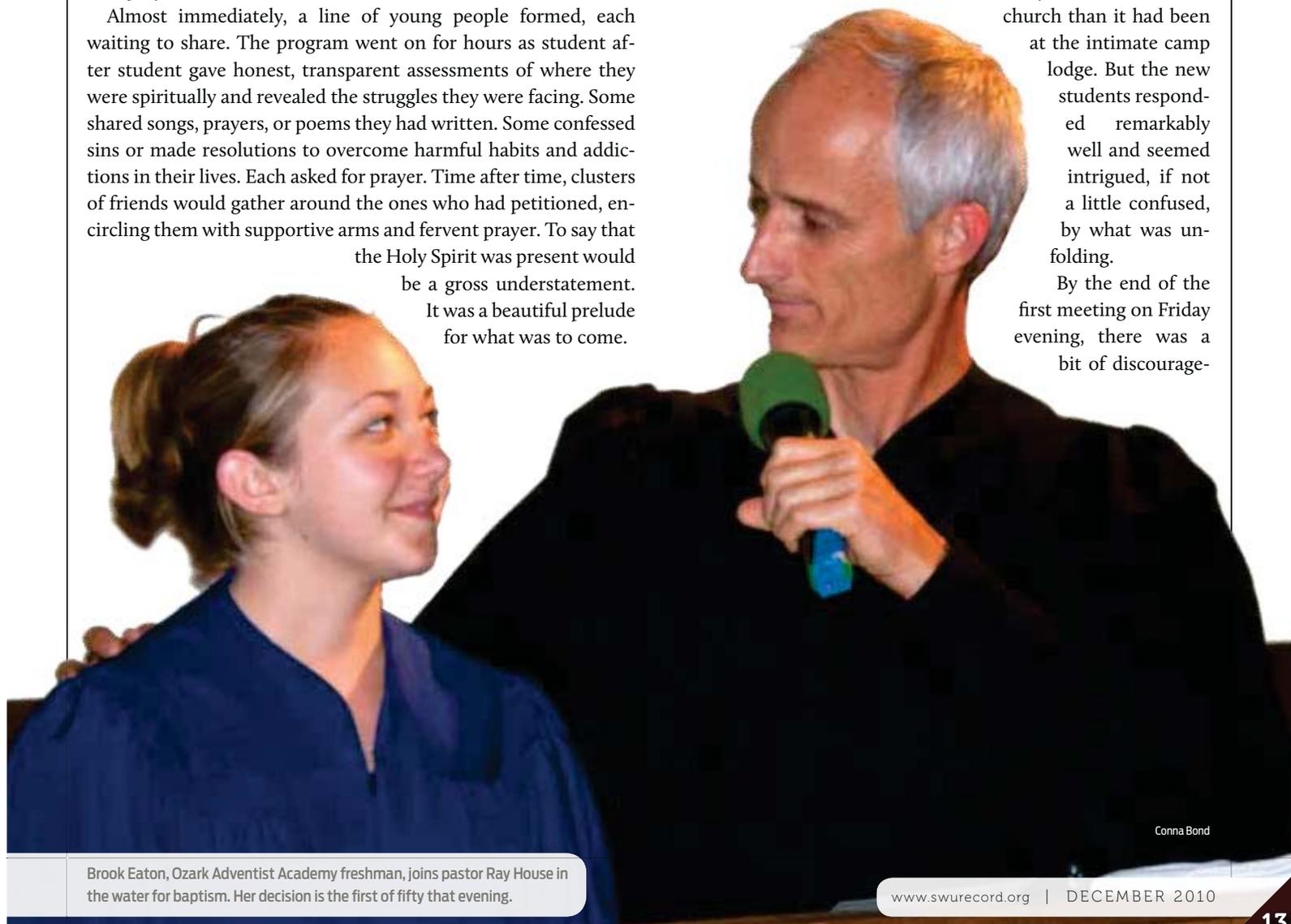
They decided to model to the larger group the same concepts that had worked so well for them. They committed to praying in advance for each session and chose to continue to set the mood and attitude for each meeting with prayerful praise music led by simple piano and guitar.

On Friday afternoon, the rest of the students arrived on campus, registered, and received their T-shirts and lodging assignments. That evening, it was a challenge to transfer the excitement and spiritual tone to the larger group of nearly 400. The dynamic

was very different in the church than it had been

at the intimate camp lodge. But the new students responded remarkably well and seemed intrigued, if not a little confused, by what was unfolding.

By the end of the first meeting on Friday evening, there was a bit of discouragement.



Conna Bond

Brook Eaton, Ozark Adventist Academy freshman, joins pastor Ray House in the water for baptism. Her decision is the first of fifty that evening.



Conna Bond

▲ Simple hymns and praise songs set the stage for personal revival during the prayer conference.

ment among the student leaders, but they again found themselves on their knees asking God for direction.

During the Sabbath morning service, students continued to spontaneously share songs, Scripture, and testimonies, preparing the young army for deployment into the Gentry community that afternoon. The same command was given. “Go door-to-door in the community and tell them you are simply there to pray with them for whatever needs they may have.”

The group returned later in the afternoon with a noticeably different attitude. One young person said, “There is something about sharing Christ with others that changes you.”

After supper and a time of recreation and games, the entire group reconvened in the church for more songs, stories, and testimonies. At about 10:00 p.m., when the program was supposed to be winding down, Arkansas-Louisiana youth director Brandon Westgate invited anyone who was carrying a heavy burden to join him at the front of the church in prayer.

More than 200 students came forward to pray. The time of prayer lasted nearly an hour and a half as the mic was passed from person to person. Some shed tears of joy; some simply shared a word of thankfulness as petition after petition was raised to God.

Near the end of the prayer time, Brook Eaton, a 14-year-old Ozark freshman, slipped out to find Pastor Ray House. She informed him that she had never been baptized, and that tonight

was the night. He and an elder reviewed with her the fundamental beliefs of the church and realized that she was indeed ready. Thankfully, there was already water in the tank, despite the fact that no baptism had been planned.

As the last of the group prayers finished and everyone sang an a capella version of “Hear Our Prayer, O Lord,” to everyone’s surprise the curtains raised on the baptismal tank. Pastor House stood there with a big grin on his face and welcomed Brook into the water to the happy cheers of her Ozark family and friends.

As Brook was baptized, seven more students dismissed themselves to the hallway and proclaimed to the elder, “We want to be baptized, too!” Then 10 more, then another 10, and so on, until the church had run out of towels and had to dig up old baptismal robes out of a storage box. A team of pastors worked behind the scenes to pray with and clear each candidate.

Some were baptized for the first time; others recommitted their lives to Christ with a new understanding of what it really meant. Each participant shared why they were in the water with such statements as, “When I was baptized at the age of 9, it was because I wanted to please my parents. This time, it’s because I want to please my Savior!”

One participant commented, “The water was actually kind of dirty by the time I got in, but I’ve never felt so clean!”

At 3 a.m., the 50th and final baptism occurred! Not one of them had been planned.

In hindsight, it might be tempting to think, *This was just an emotional “mountaintop” experience. It won’t last.* But the fire continues to burn, weeks after the event.

According to Pastor House, before the prayer conference, the mid-week prayer meeting at the Ozark Adventist Church was lucky to have 8 to 12 people in attendance. Since the prayer conference, there have been in the neighborhood of 70 attending. The youth are leading out, and when it reaches the 9:30 p.m. study hall deadline, they’re forced to end the service with the suggestion that everyone continue the testimonies next week.

The young people have continued their mission of prayer walking in the community. They go door-to-door several times each week, praying with those in need. A former Adventist in the area has asked them to pray for him to find his way back. Another community member asked for prayer as he tries to break the smoking habit. One person texted his Adventist coworker saying, “You’ll never guess... students from Ozark just showed up at my door to pray with me. Amazing!”

The morning after the prayer conference ended, the phone of the Ozark principal, Mike Dale, started ringing. Schools from other parts of the country were calling to say, “Tell us what happened on your campus this weekend! How can we do the same thing?”

The Year-end Meetings for the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists occurred in Silver Spring, Md., the following weekend. A small delegation of students from the prayer conference was chosen to attend those meetings to share their experiences with church leaders in North America and Canada.

That Saturday night, while the student delegates gathered in the nation’s capitol to pray at the Jefferson Memorial, one of them

observed, “We decided to pray big, but we had no idea that God wanted us to take this to the entire nation in just one week! When we pray big, God answers even bigger!”

As I’ve thought back on what I saw happen with my own eyes that weekend, I’ve come to the conclusion that several factors made the weekend a success.

First, time was designated for prayer and Bible study.

Second, there was small group accountability. Students were able to share in a very real way in a safe environment.

Third, those who participated didn’t keep what they’d experienced to themselves. They went out and shared—with each other, with the community, and with the nation.

Fourth, there was not much programming to get in the way. No speaker. No fancy lighting. No big praise band. No hoopla. No media overload. Nothing but students listening to the Holy Spirit’s direction.

Fifth, the event was prayed for. For an entire year, groups of individuals had been praying for this event and for the students who would attend.

Marion Parson’s birthday happens to fall each year on Halloween. Originally, she had decided to stage the prayer conference that weekend “to take back that day for God.”

As the baptisms drew to a close at 3 a.m. on the morning of October 31st, we sang “Happy Birthday” to Marion. With tears streaming down her cheeks, she exclaimed, “I can’t imagine a better birthday present than 50 baptisms!”

When we pray big, God answers even bigger!

Mark Bond, Record editor



Conna Bond

▲ Marion Parson, (front row, third from left) the prayer ministries coordinator for Arkansas-Louisiana Conference along with several youth leaders join the fifty baptismal candidates for a group photo.

A Real Army of Youth

At the recent teen prayer conference held on the campus of Ozark Adventist Academy and the Gentry church, one of the principles learned by the young people was that genuine prayer is like a three-legged stool. All three legs must be present for the stool to stand. The three "legs" of prayer are praise and worship, a study of Scripture, and acts of service. Truly, for one to grow spiritually, all three disciplines must be experienced in the life of a follower of Jesus. So as the youth experienced worship and praise and the study of the Word all bathed in prayer, in the same way more than 350 young people went out into the community to experience the art of Christian service!

What a privilege it was for me to take a group of young people out into the Gentry community and observe them in action! I was truly proud of them! Their mission was simply to meet people at the door of their home and offer to pray for them and their family; and if there was any special need indicated, to bring that as a special request to the Lord in prayer. If they found a really responsive person, they would leave a copy of *Steps to Christ* with them. The young people took their mission seriously. When we arrived in our assigned territory, they huddled together for final instruction from their youth leader, had a final season of prayer asking for God's blessing and protection, and then went by threes and fours, door to door.

I watched with keen interest as my group of young people went to each of their homes. If no one was home, before leaving the door, they bowed their heads and prayed for that home. If they were refused, they would walk back to the street, and before going to the next house they would pause once again and pray for courage and for people to receive them. Even though few were home and even fewer allowed the young people to pray for them, they were not discouraged.

That Sabbath afternoon I observed what Ellen White had called an "army of youth." These were young people who had been

"rightly trained." What an untapped resource awaiting our trust and enlistment! With their involvement, "how soon the message of a crucified, risen, and soon-coming Saviour might be carried to the whole world!" (Education, p. 271).

Steve Orian, president

Friendship Leads to Baptisms

LAFAYETTE/NEW IBERIA, LA. » Our district had reason to celebrate during the month of August. On August 7 Lafayette celebrated the baptisms of Heather and Jeremiah Fontenot, and the re-baptism of Raphael Perez. The awesome thing is that this is the third month in a row that the baptistery has been filled—Praise God! On August 14, it was New Iberia's turn to celebrate with the baptism of Mark Businelle.

As these new members begin the next phase of their journey, we want to continue to support them. Friendship has been a major part of leading each of these people to be baptized. They studied the Bible with friends, spent time with friends outside of church, and grew in their relationship with God together. These friendships are more than casual—they are in line with the instructions given by Jesus: "By this will all men know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:37).

Elizabeth Fresse

New Member Feels "At Home"

MARTHAVILLE » Off and on during past year on our way to our own place in the country, we observed a couple building their house. Every so often I would ask my husband to stop and get acquainted with our new neighbors who lived only five miles away. One Sabbath afternoon we decided to stop and say hello. A friendly south Louisiana couple came out to greet us with smiles and handshakes. From then on—when we went by on Sabbath afternoons—we would stop and say hello and they began to look for us. Sometimes we talked about world events and how bad the economy is. One day Karl asked if I knew who the antichrist is. I said I did, and we began to study what the Bible says about many things.

What a delightful couple! When we began the Bible studies, Karl enthusiastically accepted everything and was soon asking to be baptized. On May 8 of this year, Karl was baptized at our church. Karl and Jean Hocke continue to attend and support the Marthaville church and on July 17, during summer camp at Camp Yorktown Bay, Karl Hocke, Jr., was baptized. One day I asked Karl how he felt about being a Seventh-day Adventist. He said with a smile, "I have arrived home."

B.J. Steadman



Jean and Karl Hocke and B.J. Steadman (rear) became great friends as a result of B.J.'s efforts to get acquainted with her neighbors. Karl was recently baptized at the Marthaville church, where he and his wife are actively involved, and their son, Karl, Jr., was baptized at camp this past summer.

Teach Us 2 Pray

Praise, Scripture, and Service Driven by Prayer

GENTRY » The Ozark Adventist Academy campus was alive with young people rejoicing in the Lord on Friday evening, October 29, as 70 chosen leaders returned from a two-day training to meet the teens

to various locations around the campus with their young leaders as they read and discussed a Bible passage. They returned with the beginning of a cohesive unit as the young people bonded with their peers in spirit and purpose.

At 5:30 the next morning, a group of young people were already in the church praying for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit to guide in the Sabbath activities.

and vans to carry them to the surrounding towns. They spent the afternoon going from door to door, praying for each home and offering a free book and to pray with anyone willing to accept it. Some books were rejected, but many people accepted the offer.

Following supper and recreation, the evening meeting started around 8:30 p.m. Praise music and testimonies set the tone of the evening, and when one of the young leaders asked for all those who wanted to pour out their hearts to God to come kneel at the front, the whole front of the auditorium was filled with over 200 young people kneeling and praying. The microphone was passed to everyone who wanted to pray. As the evening progressed, the prayers became more fervent and heartfelt. One young woman had asked to be baptized and the baptism took place at the front of the church. Before the meeting ended around 3 a.m., 50 young people had entered the watery grave in baptism.

Sometimes we wonder what to do after a spiritual high to keep the momentum going. By Sunday evening, the prayer conference participants had gone home and

things were back to “normal” on the Ozark Academy campus—except that they weren’t. Some of the students wanted to take advantage of the “trick or treat” time to go “prayer treating” at some of the homes that may have been missed on Sabbath. They knocked at the doors, gave away the free book, and offered to pray with the family living

there. The blessings were so freely given that the whole community and student body have been electrified by the power of the Holy Spirit and by the power of the written Word.

Sylvia Downs



▲ A spirit of revival took place on the campus of Ozark Adventist Academy during the Teach Us 2 Pray prayer conference held on the last weekend of October.

► Pastor Steve Vicaro from the Harrison church baptizes Angel Suarez of Rogers, Ark.



just arriving from across the Southwestern, Mid-America, and Lake Unions. Three hundred forty young people and their sponsors signed up to be a part of the union-wide

Teach Us 2 Pray Teen Prayer Conference at Ozark Adventist Academy. Worship and praise time was orchestrated by the Bond family with other students and young people joining in. Testimonies and prayer were the order of the evening and then the teens were divided into 35 groups, going

During Sabbath School the groups again met in their respective places and studied the Word. The worship service consisted of praise music and testimonies with scripture and prayers. At lunch time the students picked up sack lunches to eat with their groups while waiting for the buses

Evangelistic Meetings Result in Five Baptisms

MAMMOTH SPRING » For about a year the Mammoth Spring church planned for an evangelistic series to run from August



▲ Baptismal group: Ken Thompson, Bridgett Owens, Pastor Bill, Andrew Cochran, Randy Mason, and James Owens.

12-28, 2010. Dennis Shafter was to be the speaker and all the plans were laid. The equipment was ready, the brochures had been sent out, but Satan knows how to cause trouble and at the last moment, Elder Shafter became unavailable to be the evangelist. What to do? After much prayer, our pastor, Bill Neptune, felt that God wanted him to do the meetings, but all the notes and visuals for the meetings were in a PowerPoint presentation. Pastor Bill knew nothing about the computer—now what? Dennis Shafter furnished the computer software and projector. Andrew Cochran, Pastor Bill's grandson, had just ordered a computer for himself, so Elder Shafter described to Andrew over the phone how to do the computer work for the meetings. Even though Dennis Shafter couldn't be there in person, he was there in spirit. He kept in constant contact with Pastor Bill and Andrew. Andrew stood beside Pastor Bill at all the meetings—with Pastor Bill doing the preaching and Andrew operating the computer. When the call was made for decisions for baptism, Andrew made his decision to be baptized!

Every night Bridgett Owens, Debbie Miller, Marietta King, and Rita Neptune sang the appeal song. Bridgett and her husband, James, had been attending church off

and on for some time, and although they were not church members, had faithfully helped keep the church lawn looking nice. During the meetings Bridgett and James made their decision to be baptized.

Randy Mason had been attending church for some time through the invitation of Larry and Taresa Cochran. Randy also made his decision for baptism and Ken Thompson made a decision for rebaptism.

On Friday night, September 10, these five were baptized in Lake Vagabond near Hardy, Ark. Church members were there to give support and encouragement to the new members of the Mammoth Spring church.

Witnessing the Power of Prayer

YELLVILLE » To witness the power of prayer is awesome and to see direct results in answer to prayer is both fulfilling and inspiring. The members of the Yellville church witnessed this power during 2010 in their unified prayer efforts to draw others closer to Christ and to His church.

Jonathan Belew, our pastor, started the year by challenging his congregation to pray daily for people who would be blessed by attending. The church answered the call to recommit their lives to Christ and to let Christ live through them. Each member selected 10 persons to pray for daily. The church also prayed for these groups of people. By praying for others daily, the church members were drawn closer

► Thanks to the power of prayer, the Yellville church has several new members.



to God and were strengthened spiritually. They understood what Ellen White meant when she said that "prayer is the breath of the soul and the secret of spiritual power."

As the church experienced 40 days of prayer and fasting just prior to the series, five more individuals were added to each person's prayer list, and the whole church witnessed the effect of daily prayer for the Holy Spirit in their own lives. They watched in amazement as God brought people to the prophecy meetings from as far away as Alaska and Texas. Members witnessed the power of prayer as visitors accepted Christ or recommitted their lives to Christ. They watched God defeat Satan, as one person who had been prayed for all year became too ill to attend the series. What rejoicing there was when he accepted Christ before the start of the series.

The Yellville church counts the prophecy series as a huge success, having had many members and visitors attend each evening. There were four baptisms, one rebaptism, one profession of faith, and one who accepted Christ before the start of the series. There are six others who have not yet joined, but are attending services regularly and growing in the Word. We are praising God for the salvation of all who attended, but are most thankful for the one who joined, though he could not attend due to illness. God kept him on this earth just long enough for prayer to work in his life. He is now asleep in the Lord until Christ's return. We thank God for answered prayer.

Yellville is classified as a small church according to its size, yet it certainly is not small in the Spirit. The church has witnessed miraculous salvation for individuals and understands that the power of prayer and the Holy Spirit accomplished great things during 2010.

Bobbie Belew



Let's Share God's Love

In her book *The Desire of Ages*, p. 20, Ellen White makes a statement that we should give us cause for much prayer and meditation. She says, "There is nothing, save the selfish heart of man, that lives unto itself." All of the rest of creation, she says, "takes to give." But we, as God's crowning act of creation, have been marred to the point where much of our concern is to hold onto what we have. Now since I am a sinful man with a selfish heart, I can somewhat understand this tendency to want to hoard everything for ourselves.

For some who have few of those things that we consider essential for the support of life, it is easy to see that anything given away is a loss to us and to our survival. If we fear that there will not be enough, we are more likely to cling selfishly to what we have. On the other hand, most of us have worked hard for those possessions that are ours and it doesn't seem quite fair to be asked to surrender them to someone who has not been as diligent and thrifty. I'm not saying that these are good attitudes or that it is acceptable for Christians to think this way; I'm only observing that this is the way we often think.

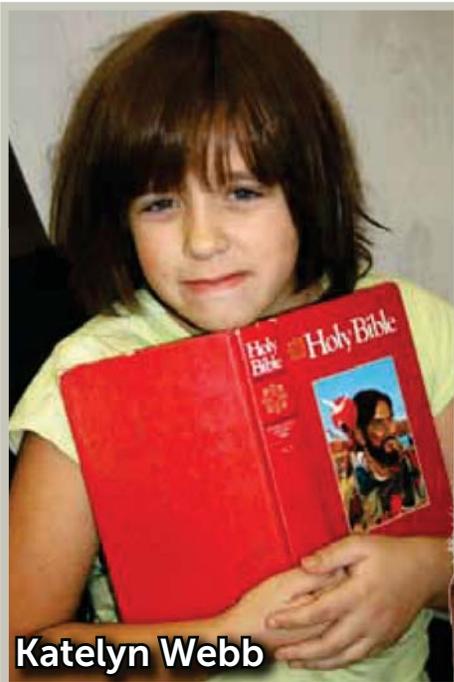
Let's apply these thoughts to another area. As Christians, do we find it difficult to share what we have? If so, it can't be because there is not enough. The most familiar text in the Bible says, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). His love is to be offered to the whole world and there is enough for whoever believes and accepts His gift. In addition, it was not our works

that made these blessings available to us. "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God." When you really think of it, all of His blessings, spiritual and material, are a gift from God and if they are appreciated, they will be shared. Share God's love this Christmas. That's why He gave it to us.

John Moyer, president

I Love My School!

KETCHUM » Hi! My name is Katelyn Webb, and I like my school because we have a nice chapel that we can go to each week to learn about Jesus. I go to Ketchum



Katelyn Webb

Adventist Academy.

In our chapel we get to sing songs about Jesus, my King. In my

church school we get to read the Bible. It is the best book in the world. It lets me learn the stories that Jesus wants me to know.

In my school we try to learn about Jesus all the time. I also love my teacher at this school because she is nice to me. She wants me to do my best. I love how she tells the Bible stories. I know that she loves me and she has taught me that Jesus loves me too.

Katelynn Webb, Grade 2

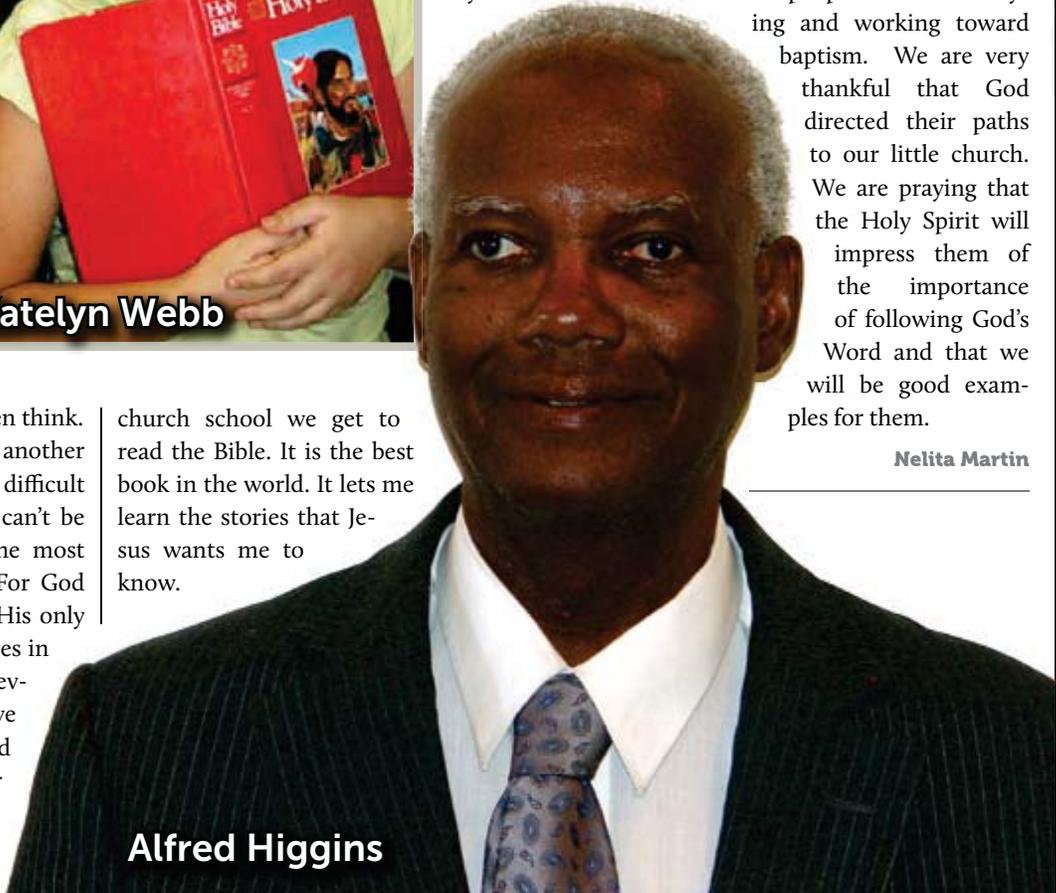
Welcome to Our Newest Member!

OWASSO » From August 27 to October 2, the Three Angels church held a prophecy seminar. Darrin Bartell of Amazing Facts (and a member of our congregation) was our speaker. The meetings were held at the church with a good turnout. This was our first prophecy seminar, but the meetings went well.

Alfred Higgins, a gentleman who had been through a series of Bible studies before the seminar, was baptized on October 2. It is a pleasure having him in our church family. He is willing to do anything he is asked to do and does the job well.

Several people are still studying and working toward baptism. We are very thankful that God directed their paths to our little church. We are praying that the Holy Spirit will impress them of the importance of following God's Word and that we will be good examples for them.

Nelita Martin



Alfred Higgins

Friendship Sabbaths Instill a Culture of Personal Evangelism

TULSA » The First Adventist Church of Tulsa loves having visitors, and this year we had two “Friendship Sabbaths” featuring worship services that were especially planned with visitors in mind. Our most recent Friendship Sabbath was on October 23, and 10 guest families attended. One lady who has visited our church a number of times brought a visitor of her own.

During Friendship Sabbath worship services, visitors are given special recognition and a drawing is held for gifts such as Christian books, music CDs, and baskets of fruit. The theme of our spring Friendship Sabbath was “Jesus, the Bread of Life,” and each guest received a loaf of homemade bread. After the worship service, visitors are invited to stay for a fellowship lunch, where members and guests can become better acquainted.

“A secondary reason for having Friendship Sabbaths is to help in-



▲ Above and bottom center: “Meet and Greet” is a happy time during the worship service.

◀ Pastor Daniel Ortega (R) during “Meet and Greet” time in worship service.

◀ Far left: These ladies were especially happy with the gifts they received during a Friendship Sabbath worship service.



has visitors every Sabbath, and we try to do all we can to help them feel welcome. After guests are warmly greeted, our hosts request that they register with their name,

address, and other information for follow-up. Each one is given a reusable canvas gift bag imprinted with our church name containing a folder with helpful information such as a magazine with the 28 fundamental Adventist beliefs, a church brochure, school brochure,

current church newsletter, Discover Bible School enrollment card, the pastor’s business card, and other items. Also included in the gift bag are books such as *Steps to Christ*, a ballpoint pen and pad with the church’s name, and a CD from Pastor Ortega, which has a welcome message and sermon. During the worship service there is another opportunity to welcome guests when a few minutes are devoted to allowing everyone to greet those around them.

We pray that the Holy Spirit will enable our friendliness and hospitality to help visitors sense God’s love and be moved to join our church family.

Judi Carrico



still in our church family a culture of personal evangelism,” explains Pastor Daniel Ortega. “We encourage our members to be intentional about inviting their friends, neighbors, and coworkers to church. It’s a small, yet important step in opening the door for church growth.”

This may be one reason why our church

125 People Attend Health Fair

SHATTUCK » Our church and the Newman Memorial Hospital held a jointly-sponsored health fair on Friday, Octo-



▲ More than 20 booths operated by health care professionals provided information and medical testing at a recent health fair sponsored jointly by the Shattuck church and Newman Memorial Hospital.

► The Air Evac team landing on the grounds helped to attract visitors to the health fair held recently in Shattuck.

ber 8 from 1-5 p.m. The event was a resounding success, with more than 125 people coming to take advantage of all the various assessments and opportunities to visit with health-care exhibitors. The registration table, manned by Jean Foreman, Della Lawson, Nita Manske, and Carol King, was busy throughout the afternoon.

Tim Abbott led the planning for the health fair. We want to thank Tim and the more than 20 exhibitors who set up booths, administered tests, and distributed information to those who came. We look forward to sponsoring another even bigger and better health fair in 2011.

Phillis Ballew

Operation Christmas Child Blesses Children Around the World

DAVIS » Members of the Arbuckle View church met on October 30 to assemble Christmas boxes for Operation Christmas Child, a project of Samaritan's Purse. These boxes will be sent to children all over the world who

won't get much, if anything, for Christmas this year. This is our small contribution that will be added to the thousands of other boxes that will be sent. The project was spearheaded by Sharla Braun, who motivated the church members to donate items that would go into the boxes. One member even got the Sulphur Wal-Mart involved, and they enthusiastically donated boxes of pencils. The youth of the church packed each box with various items such as washcloths, bars of soap, tooth brushes/toothpaste, pens, toys, etc. They also included a profile of information about themselves, so the recipient would know who sent them their gift. All present gained a great blessing knowing we were helping children somewhere. Our goal of 40 boxes was surpassed with a total of 46 boxes packed. We

pray that these boxes will be a blessing to each child who receives them and we also pray for blessings for your families this holiday season, as well.

Marsha Miller



▼ Members of the Arbuckle View church helped to pack 46 gift boxes that will be sent to children around the world this Christmas.



The Fruit of Giving

As we take a look at giving, we discover there are many ways of giving. One might give away, that is, to make a gift of something; one might give back, such as to return; give of, such as to devote or contribute; give out, such as to distribute or to stop functioning; give over, that is, to hand over or entrust; give up, that is, to surrender or lose hope; or give in, that is, to submit or cease opposition. Then there are idioms of giving such as give a good account of (oneself), give birth to, give ground, give or take, give rise to, give someone a hard time, give someone the eye admiringly or invitingly, give way, and give up the ghost. But the greatest giving, I believe, is giving from the heart to help someone experience the event of a lifetime.

Reflecting on the point of giving from the heart, I am reminded of the many who give generously with a willing spirit to sponsor children and youth in our schools and academies. I am further reminded of the many who sponsor children and youth to summer camps. As a result of these generous acts, many young people are now citizens of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ.

At Lone Star Camp, located in the piney woods of East Texas in Athens, 24 precious

youth experienced a revival in their lives and made a choice to be baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Prior to her baptism, one young person shared that she had come to summer camp for the express purpose of discovering and knowing Jesus for herself. She had heard about Him, but did not know Him. What a spiritual metamorphosis took place in this young person's life! What a joy it was to see the transforming power of the Holy Spirit at work, changing this young person from a defiant youth at times to a respectful one as she listened to the devotions each night from Alfred and Louise Booker. When the appeal was made for campers to accept Jesus as their personal Savior, this young lady was one of those who responded. When the invitation was given to follow Jesus to the watery grave of baptism, she responded again. It was my privilege to witness her baptism and to give her words of encouragement as she initiated her new walk with Jesus.

Because someone gave, we now see the fruits of that giving. Just think, 24 new souls are rejoicing in the joy of our Lord—all because somebody gave.

Friend, as we are now in the season of giving, I want you to focus on the greatest Steward of sponsorship, Jesus Christ, Savior of the world. He has sponsored

steward of sponsorship, why not become one today in partnership with Jesus so that we can realize many more souls in His Kingdom? Love you much.

Bill Wright, president

Car Wash Evangelism

BATON ROUGE » There was no ignoring it, for the colorful sign said it all. And if one missed the youth and adults holding signs, there were the flyers prominently tacked onto neighborhood street posts. It was "Free Car Wash" Sunday, a cooperative effort on the part of the deacons who coordinated the occasion and led out along with Berean's deaconesses and the youth, who, as young as four years old, helped to wash. When asked, "Why a 'free' car wash at a



▲ Deacons and junior deacons provided free car washes for members of the Baton Rouge community on Berean's Free Car Wash day.

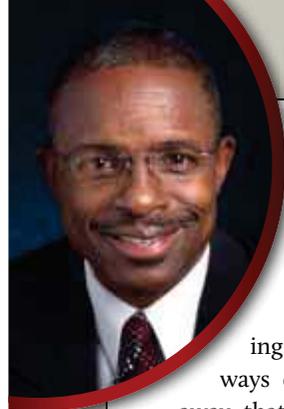
◀ Deacon Jessie Bartley holds a sign and a bottle of water, enticing community members to participate in Berean's Free Car Wash event.

time when the average church's auxiliary certainly could use the monies generated from such a fundraiser?" one of the organizers, Michael Scott, replied, "Yes, we certainly could have used the money, but we wanted this to be an evangelistic tool. After all, who can place a dollar value on a soul?"

And an evangelistic tool it was, as the deaconesses housed comfortably under a tent



our salvation through making a personal choice to die for our sins so that we can experience the greatest gift of all times, and that is the gift of eternal life. If you are not a



shielding them from the hot sun sat ready to register car wash patrons. As patrons exited their vehicles, they were invited over to the registration tent to receive a bottle of cold water, fill out a contact information card, and get a copy of Joe Crews' *The High Cost of the Cross*. "The idea was to create a database so we'll be able to maintain contact with [the car wash patrons]. We were happy to have individuals willingly filling out a card—no coercing needed," says head deaconess Bertha Stewart. "Her veggie chicken sandwiches made it nice also," adds deaconess Marian Wilson, as others chuckle. If the smiles on the faces of patrons as they drove away in their freshly washed cars were any indication, the day was an overwhelming success—in spite of the rain that shut down operations an hour early.

Evelyn Edwards

Heaven Came Down

OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLA. » In Matthew 28:19, 20, Jesus said, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen." These are the Master's words and commands. And, we are doing just that in this area of the Lord's vineyard. The hour is late, and time is far spent, therefore, we must be about our Father's business. The North

Highlands Community and the Midwest City churches will never be the same. On September 11, Gregory L. Stinson, pastor, and his wife, Carletta, were blessed with the privilege of facilitating the baptism of over 25 souls into God's remnant church.

We began our evangelistic pre-work by knocking on doors and distributing tracts in the community on August 16. We passed out over 5,000 handbills and conducted countless Bible studies. Who said that God needs a lot of time to get something done? What He needs is available people who will step out in faith to make a difference in their community. It has been said that the work is too difficult to win souls in Oklahoma. But Pastor Stinson begs to differ, and the results speak to the contrary.

We conducted our annual Gospel Summer Celebration, and over 300 people attended on the opening night of our crusade. The team, which included pastors Stinson and Weegar (of New Orleans) and the Bible workers, fought through much opposition, but God is always faithful to make a way. Thank you, Jesus! The summer crusade team and the North Highlands church have worked diligently, and they continue to give great reports of the growth to strengthen the two churches.

Truly, "heaven came down and glory filled our souls." I was especially happy for the Washington family, originally from the Mississippi Delta, who were in my South Central Conference district. The Lord blessed us to baptize the mother, the matriarch of the family; her niece, an Oklahoma resident for 10 years; her two daughters, including Demetrius, who had been living in Oklahoma for only two months; her daughter, Natasha, along with her fiancé; and her grandchildren.

It has not been since the early nineties, when I was an associate evangelist under the late Jerry D. Lee, that so many people were baptized during an evangelistic crusade in Oklahoma City. This crusade truly made history. To God be the glory!

My deepest thanks go to the members of the North Highlands Community church family for their support, and for helping to make this crusade a great success. I hope this is only the beginning of great things for the districts of North Highlands and Midwest City. A special thanks goes to my dear, precious wife, partner, and friend, Carletta, for all of her support in my ministry.

Gregory L. Stinson, pastor



Pastor Gregory Stinson beams with joy as he baptizes one of the 25 people who joined the church following the Gospel Summer Celebration evangelistic effort held jointly by the Highlands Community and Midwest City churches in Oklahoma City this past summer.

A Family Affair

CORSICANA » “It’s a Family Affair” was hosted by the Family Ministries department at the Bethel church on September 18. Family, friends, and community members were invited to participate in this community-wide event. Norman Stiggers, the church’s pastor, along with Richard Sneed, elder; Roy Rowden; Gloria Meankins; Catherine Chambers; and Andre Gray taught the Sabbath School classes that day on the topic “Love and Law.” Jesse Griffin, church elder, presented the personal ministries spotlight. Benita Tyler Scott, cousin of Pastor Stiggers, was our musical guest artist for the day, from Sabbath School through our evening program. She sang several touching songs from her new release, “Jump In.”

The guest speaker for the hour was Barthel Stewart, first elder of the Bethel church in Tulsa, Okla. Her husband, Ronnie Stewart, Sr., who is a deacon, introduced his wife of 32 years. Stewart’s message emphasized the importance of sharing the love of Jesus with everyone you meet so they too can become a part of the family of God.

The theme song for the day was “Family of God.” Alleta LaGrange, Lift Every Voice, and Curtis Sparks rendered special music during divine worship and for the afternoon concert. We were blessed to have various guest singers, musicians, and

speakers from Irving, Fort Worth, Dallas, Mesquite, Corsicana, Palestine, and Jacksonville, Tex., to participate in our afternoon program and concert, along with our family and friends.

A delicious and colorful “oriental style” vegetarian meal was served at our fellowship luncheon and included spring rolls, cabbage, brown rice, salad, lemonade, and homemade desserts.

Space doesn’t permit us to list all the names of the many people who helped to make this “Family Affair” day one that we will long remember. We would like to thank everyone who had a part to play in the success of this event, especially the Lord, who orchestrated every activity from beginning to end. He rained a special blessing on us that day. When praises go up, blessings come down!

Making the event even more meaningful, Cassandra Samuels was baptized a few weeks after she attended “It’s a Family Affair.” She decided that it was time to return

home and re-dedicate her life to the Lord through testimony, song, and baptism. She had become a member of the Bethel church a few years ago and was invited on several occasions to attend church. She came for the family program and was inspired to surrender wholeheartedly to Jesus once again. We are so glad that she made up her mind to indeed be a part of the family of God—no turning back, no turning back.

Lorraine James-Stiggers, family ministries coordinator

Jalyn Jordan Featured in Cancer Ad

BATON ROUGE » Five-year-old Jalyn Jordan (left) was featured in this digital billboard that was strategically placed near



The girl pictured in this billboard posted near Southern University is the granddaughter of Sibyl and Mack Jordan, who are members of the Berean church in Baton Rouge.

Southern University in Scotlandville, La., (a suburb of Baton Rouge). Jalyn is the granddaughter of Berean church members Sibyl and Mack Jordan. Her parents are Erick and Lakeesha Jordan. Standing next to Jalyn is Christopher Ricks, the son of Jevon and Anita Ricks.

The billboard is sponsored by the Louisiana Coalition of African-American Breast Cancer Survivors, founded by Julia Moore. The children featured in the ad have relatives who are breast cancer survivors.

Evelyn Edwards



Norman Stiggers, pastor, and his wife, Lorraine; Barthel Stewart, guest speaker, and her husband, Ronald at “It’s a Family Affair” program at the Bethel church in Corsicana.

The Harvest is Ready

If you have ever headed south toward San Antonio on Interstate 35 from the Southwestern Union Office you know very well that there are acres and acres of fields which, each spring and fall, render an eye-full to commuters as they drive for miles and miles. The passage we find in John, chapter 4, verse 35, comes to mind: "Do you not say: There are still four months, and then comes the harvest? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look to the fields, for they are already white for harvest!"

The harvest has been abundant here in the Texas Conference, as there have been over 2,000 baptisms here in our territory for the past eight-plus years—truly a blessing from above! Nevertheless, lest we fall into the fallacy of believing in growth in numbers alone, we must comprehend that true growth in spiritual terms is reflected through increased integrity, commitment, and maturity. If numerical growth were the only measuring stick of success, then cemeteries are doing pretty well! All things considered, the Lord's grace and guiding have blessed this conference abundantly as we look to the future in anticipation of what He has planned for His people.

As we draw to the close of 2010, we find our people actively engaged in seeking lost souls for the kingdom. God uses mysterious methods to accomplish His purposes. During the early part of the year, three of our members were united in a quite successful business venture. Unfortunately, they had a falling apart, and one of them, by common accord, decided to start his own business. He found himself needing to hire three young men in order to fulfill the contracts that were coming in. The three young men were not Adventists, but were young men of good report and hard workers. As a result, not much more than a couple of months ago, those three young men were baptized into the Seventh-day Adventist Church! All this was the result of a falling apart among church members!

Not long ago, in the Highland Hills church in picturesque south San Antonio, Ruber Leal, the church's pastor, hosted an evangelistic meeting with Jack Dubosque. As it turns out, it was a unique success. We commonly spend thousands of dollars to mail handbills to empty mailboxes. But Ed and Marilyn Spangler, who are experienced Bible workers, trained the church members and formed a powerful evangelistic team. They went to door to door, utilizing the handbills as they were once intended to be used, hand to hand! Over 1,000 handbills were distributed. The results were fabulous—18 baptisms to date. Nearly 80 solid leads remain.

The fields, in and out of the cities, are ripe with the harvest. But where are the workers? I love the little booklet that former General Conference president Robert Pierson produced many years ago called "Every Believer a Minister." That should be our theme as we head into 2011!

Carlos J. Craig, executive secretary

Ministry in a Basket

GRANDVIEW » If someone gave you an empty basket (or box) and then asked you to turn it into a ministry, what would you do with it? Bob and Margie Bullock would tell you to fill it with food and give it to a needy family. The Bullocks started something that has snowballed and just keeps growing.

Years ago when they lived in Kansas, Bob

and Margie would provide food baskets for the needy through their church. After they moved to Texas and became members of the Grandview church, the members would bring food items, and their "ministry in a basket" continued. Then one day church member Bud Bradbury, a semi-retired contractor, asked if they would like to continue their ministry on a grander scale. Bud supplied the materials needed and with some help from church members, the Bullocks now have a food bank, the Grandview Food and Clothing Bank, which now sits near the church.

Previously, they had been giving out about 20-30 baskets a year. Now the Grandview Food Bank has grown from its humble beginnings to 30-plus boxes of 40-45 pounds of food every two weeks, and the number keeps growing. Bud has already drawn up plans to double the food bank's size to keep up with its growth and to meet the community's needs.

The food bank has just celebrated its one-year anniversary in Grandview, where it has become a huge success, not just as a church ministry but by helping to bring the community together in working for a common cause. The local public schools held a food drive and donated more than 2,000 cans of food items. Members of other religious denominations have even donated cash, new shoes, and fresh food items. Even hospital workers from nearby Fort Worth have contributed to the food bank needs.

This "ministry in a basket" has helped to spread compassion and good will throughout the Grandview area and it all began with an empty basket. God has continued to bless the Grandview church in a huge way as it reaches out to serve the community.

Jean Beaupre



◀ The Grandview Food and Clothing Bank, a ministry of the Grandview church, is helping to spread compassion and good will throughout the Grandview area.

God Provides in Cuba

HOUSTON » On July 30 the Houston International church sent a group of 14 people on a 10-day mission trip to Cuba. The 14 were drawn from different countries (USA, Colombia, Kenya, Cameroun, Jamaica, South Africa, Honduras, Cuba and the Dominican Republic), a true representation of our church, which is blessed with members from over 35 nationalities. Our lead pastors were Richard Garcia and Juan Monsalve.

Because Cuba is a communist country and has been on embargo since 1948, U.S. government clearance is required to go there. After being cleared, we then had to apply for religious visas to Cuba. All those engaging in religious activities have to pay a permit fee of \$108 to the Cuban government. We were also assured by our host church and the conference officials that it was permissible to take medical donations into the country as long as they were for nonprofit use.



Despite having their medical supplies and Vacation Bible School material confiscated by customs officials, members of the Houston International church were able to minister to the people of Cuba and celebrate nearly 200 baptisms.

Convinced that we had met all the necessary requirements, we took off from Miami International airport, only to arrive at the airport in Holguin and have all our medical supplies and Vacation Bible School materials confiscated. It had taken us only 45 minutes to fly into Cuba from Miami, but it took us four hours to clear with customs, leaving behind 600 pounds of supplies valued well over \$30,000 in the hands of customs officials.

We had wanted to share the medical supplies with the local hospital, but were not allowed to do so.

With much prayer, we refocused our mission in to daily home visitations, accompanied by lay people from our host Adventist churches, and carried on planned evangelistic meetings at four different sites (Holguin Central church, Cacocum, Pino, and Baquanos) every evening. At first many of the local people were skeptical, but as the days went by, more and more people started to attend the meetings. On the last Sabbath, a total of 198 people were baptized to the honor and glory of God.

The site with the lowest attendance, Baquanos, amazingly had the second highest number of baptisms (30). That site was granted to the church by the government, since no one wanted to live there. The former resident of the site was a murderer, who is now in jail. He has since received the Three Angels' Message and says, though he is in prison, he is now forgiven and free. Yes, the murderers' yard in Baquanos is now a beacon of hope in the area, and there we had our last baptisms and farewell party.

Houston International has been engaged in short-term mission trips internationally during summer breaks since 2006. Those who participate in the trips have not only touched and met the needs of the needy, but have grown their faith in Christ and have come back more encouraged to continue sharing the good news of Christ's soon return.

In 2011 we head to Tanzania, and then Ghana in 2012. Join us, if God impresses you, on our next mission trip as we continue to fulfill the Great Commission of Matthew 28:19, 20.

Stephen M Mbola

Lewisville Adopts “3G Youth Sports Ministry”

LEWISVILLE » Our church has adopted a “3G” vision. Being a 3G church means having a focus on three goals:

- Get** together to worship the Lord.
- Grow** together to disciple each other.
- Go** together to share God’s love with others.



▲ A new sports program at the Lewisville church encourages kids and parents lead a healthier lifestyle while developing personal and teamwork skills.

► Members of the Laredo Filial 3 Angeles Spanish company dress like Paul and the disciples to present lessons during Vacation Bible School.

A few months ago, Greg Peck, one of our church members, came up with the wonderful idea of incorporating the 3G concept into a new 3G Youth Sports Ministry. This is a free weekly program that is held every Tuesday evening from 6:30-7:30 p.m., when kids from 8-15 years old from our church and the community can come and train in various sports.

The purpose of this ministry is to encourage kids and parents to lead a healthier lifestyle and at the same time, to develop personal and teamwork skills. The ultimate goal, however, is to reach out to the community of Lewisville. Just a few weeks after launching the program we could see that God was already blessing this ministry abundantly. We have an average attendance of 30 people and are expecting many more to come.

Edenia Guerra

Vacation Bible School Graduation Draws 100

LAREDO » The Filial 3 Angeles Spanish company in Laredo hosts a weekly program every Thursday at a home-based prayer meeting. Our group decided to host a Vacation Bible School for the benefit of children and new families. But there was one problem--we don’t have a church. The group decided to turn the front yard into a church, and during the last week of July, we opened the front yard to teach the children about Paul. Each day 60 children attended and 25 volunteers dressed



▲ From left: Seth Diaz, Kwame Williams, Steven Lucas, Hasting Adams, Caleb Sharp, Johnson Corp, and Christian Harris (not pictured, Michael Thomas).

as Paul and disciples instructing the children.

Graduation was held at a rented church, with 100 people attending. Please keep the Laredo Filial 3 Angeles group in your prayers as we continue doing something for the Lord.

Ervin Ortiz, pastor

Junior Deacons Serve in Longview

LONGVIEW » The Longview church may not be a mega-church, but we have re-sources. At our church, we have a great number of boys who are willing to make a commitment to God by serving. The junior deacons’ ministry kicked off this year with eight boys ages eight to 15. Our children are our future, and the future is now in Longview.

The idea is to teach the boys that they have great value to our church now by allowing them to be very visible during the church service. By following the example of Jesus, the junior deacons are learning to become servant-leaders. Their ministry is to minister to the church congregation every week. But specifically each month, the junior deacons have been assigned a Sabbath to serve as the “deacons on duty” by collecting the offering and being available to serve in any capacity. Matching shirts make them immediately recognized by members and visitors who may need assistance.

The junior deacons’ prayer, “Lord, May You feed a hungry world through me. Amen,” is their motto and guide for living the life of a servant-leader. Their willingness to be leaders in church is rooted in their desire to better serve their church family. The fruits can be seen immediately in the proud faces of their parents who make sure they attend every Sabbath. But the church family will benefit by having a corps of eager workers trained and ready to serve, beginning in their youth and following through as adults.

Our Lord has taken these boys close to His heart. Please pray for our junior deacons’ ministry and the boys who have made this great commitment to serve Him.

David Diaz

Progress

When I came to the Texico Conference 14 years ago I was asked, "How do you measure success in the conference, the church, or one's spiritual life?" My reply was simple: "Are we making progress?" Progress is an important part of our life with God. Are we growing spiritually? This takes self-assessment, constant work, and adjustment. There is nothing more important than personal spiritual progress. It is the core of a sanctified life after conversion. There will be highs and lows in our walk with Christ, but the question is still, "Are we making progress?"

The same is true in each individual church. Maintaining is not enough; we must constantly be improving and evangelizing. We must be growing. If a church is not growing, it is not fulfilling the commission of our Lord, Jesus. Sure, there are ups and downs in the life of a church, but as you look at the life of your church over the last couple of years, you need to ask, "Are you making progress?"

As I look at our conference over the past 14 years, I ask the same question, "Are we making progress?" Fourteen years ago our membership was just over 5,400 and now we are 11,250-plus.

Our tithe and giving have more than doubled. We have planted many new churches. We have built or majorly remodeled over 67 churches and schools. We have had our ups and downs. We have had critics from within and from without, but Praise God, we are making progress!

Toward the end of her life, as Ellen White looked at what God had done through His faithful people, she said these

words: "The later history of my life would involve the history of many of the enterprises which have arisen among us, and with which my life work has been closely intermingled. For the upbuilding of these institutions, my husband and myself labored with pen and voice. To notice, even briefly, the experiences of these active and busy years, would far exceed the limits of this sketch. Satan's efforts to hinder the work and to destroy the workmen have not ceased; but God has had a care for His servants and for His work.

In reviewing our past history, having traveled over every step of advance to our present standing, I can say, Praise God! As I see what the Lord has wrought, I am filled with astonishment, and with confidence in Christ as leader. We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching, in our past history." *Life Sketches*, p. 196.

When I look at the progress of the work in our conference, I, like Ellen White, am filled with gratitude and astonishment. I say, Praise God! Christ is leading and we are making progress. May the Lord continue to bless your church, our conference, and your spiritual walk with Him. May He also bless you and yours during this holiday season.

Jim Stevens, president

Daisy Quiñones Receives Nursing Award

The following article about Daisy Quiñones appeared in the monthly newsletter of the Lovelace Health System.

ALBUQUERQUE » "Daisy Quiñones, RN, a nurse at Lovelace Westside Hospital, received the Excellence in Medical/Surgical Nursing Award. Daisy has been a nurse for more than four years. She regularly volunteers to lead new projects at the hospital, including heading up an initiative for a Skin and Wound Care Program. She also implemented an "activity card" for surgical patients at the hospital, which helps involve patients and their families with their plan of care.

"Daisy also helped develop pre-operative classes for patients having total knee and hip replacement surgery. The classes were designed to help patients understand what they could expect after their operations. She also serves as a preceptor with the New Mexico Rural Nurse Residency Program.

"The flexibility to volunteer for so many diverse projects is one reason Daisy said she loves working at Lovelace Westside Hospital.

"It's an exciting place to work and they really support nursing," she said. "It gives you the opportunity to explore new things every time."



▲ Daisy Quiñones, RN, a nurse at Lovelace Westside Hospital, received the Excellence in Medical/Surgical Nursing Award.

Hannah's Testimony

CLOVIS, N.MEX. » As a little girl, as far back as I can remember, I watched my mother place a doily or a woman's cloth handkerchief on her head, light two candles, wave her hands over them three times, and say the Sabbath prayer in Hebrew, as the sun set on a Friday evening. On Saturday, knowing we were not allowed to carry money, travel, or do business, we would walk a few blocks away, out of sight of the Cantor's and Rabbi's apartment building, to catch the train, or when it was closer to payday, a cab. One time I asked her, "How come we have to go so far to catch the cab?" and she told me, "So they won't see us." She was trying her best to teach me the best way she knew how, but years later it became apparent that she had left me with more questions and uncertainty about my faith.

God does work in mysterious ways, and at the age of 12, the passing of my mother left a void in my life. To fill that void God sent me on a journey of searching for belonging, even though I didn't really know Him at the time. I eventually met a group of people who gave Bible studies in their home. There, I learned about Christ and claimed Him as my Savior. I had finally begun to fill that void and felt as if I had finally found a viable answer to those unanswered questions. I knew in my heart there was more. I had always wondered why the Jews had denied Christ as their Savior and was convinced that they had made a big mistake. I wasn't going to make that same mistake. It finally all made sense. All the contradictions became clear.

Learning had now become my mission in life. Eventually, I enrolled in the College of Santa Fe, a Christian school, and embarked on a wonderful journey. I met the man of my dreams and began a family. My husband and his family were devout Catholics and it was important to me to have unity in our religious life for our children's sake.

On the day we were to be married and after a year of catechism classes, I was "baptized," received the first Holy Communion, and confirmed into the Catholic Church. Even though learning had always been my mission in life, now becoming the best Catholic I could be took precedence. Over the past 30 years as a Catholic, I learned to keep the traditions faithfully and with joy. I truly believed that it had brought me through numerous trials and tribulations. I had no reason to change my religion or question the traditions of a great and holy church. Who was I to question anything? I believed God had blessed me and mine. If there was anything that evaded me, I attributed it to my ignorance of the Bible and I believed God would someday clarify these things for me.

Recently, some very good and faithful friends invited me to a prophecy seminar. They told me that I would really appreciate

and enjoy it. I was really looking forward to it, but you know how busy people get and it slipped my mind. An hour before the first meeting I received a reminder call. Having such short notice and the hour being so late, I resigned myself to the fact that it was too late and that I was too tired. But instead of saying what I really felt, I heard the word "sure" coming out of

my mouth. Then I thanked the caller for reminding me.

From the first session until the last, I sat in awe of God, His mercy, and His grace all over again. Many of the things that I had learned before took on a whole new meaning for me. Some things really surprised me and I went home to do some serious pondering. I prayed about these things because it seemed to shake the very foundation on which I had built the last 30 years of my life, my marriage, and my children. It seemed that the only solid ground I had was crumbling apart.

Then suddenly it hit me, "What solid ground?" My marriage was in shambles, my husband rarely went to church (amongst other serious problems), and my son's faith had shattered, in addition to experiencing some serious illnesses which he pulled through. I began to consider making some changes in my life, even if it meant embarking on much resistance from my family. God always knows best and although He doesn't always prevent us from going through these tribulations, He has promised He would be there with us. I am convinced that He is and has always been with me all my life.

On the Sabbath following the seminar, I was baptized into the Seventh-day Adventist Church here in Clovis. My family came to support me, even though they were wary and confused. I do believe God will eventually lead them into the truth in His time. Until then, I am praying that I can

be an instrument in this work and a worthy example of His love. Please keep me in your prayers!

Hannah Chavez



God led Hannah Chavez on a lifelong journey from Judaism to Catholicism to becoming a Seventh-day Adventist.

Pathfinder Campout

EL PASO » The El Paso Flames Pathfinder Club had a successful campout in Ruidoso, N.Mex., September 22-24. Over the course of the weekend, which focused on camping skills, the Pathfinders were able to complete the equivalent of two months worth of classwork that brings them closer to becoming invested in their respective classes. “The kids, as well as the teachers, worked hard!” says Chris Clapp, the club’s director.

This was the largest campout yet for the club, which has seen growth every year since it began back in 2007. With about 50 people attending, the attendance was a far cry from the four who attended the first club campout in February of 2008.

The speaker for the weekend was Andrew Spooner, pastor of the Alamogordo and Ruidoso (New Mexico) churches. Pastor Andrew spoke on peer pressure, using the story of Daniel as an illustration.

The kitchen staff whipped up some amazing food during the campout. The hard-working kitchen director, Prospil Liwanag and her husband, Pastor Rodell Liwanag, along with Dioni and Norma Rivera, created a culinary experience not enjoyed before on an El Paso Flames campout. “The Asian food on Friday night was delicious,” said Albert Juarez.



Pathfinders from the El Paso church completed the equivalent of two months of classwork during a recent campout in Ruidoso, N.Mex. They also had an opportunity to learn camping skills during the weekend.

Adventist History Comes Alive

LUBBOCK » Two milestone dates for Seventh-day Adventists took place this past October. The first was October 1, which was the 150th anniversary of the adoption of our church’s name. On October 22, we remembered The Great Disappointment, when thousands of Millerites/Adventists believed that Jesus would come to take His

children home. Throughout the month of October, Lubbock Junior Academy students were involved in activities revolving around these important events.

We told stories of our pioneers from Pioneer Stories by Arthur W. Spalding. In order to help the students feel as if they were a part of the lives of the early Millerites and Adventist pioneers, they were assigned speaking parts in the story.

Following is an example of an assigned reading. The teacher begins telling the story of Joseph Wolff, who took the Millerite message to the Middle East. The teacher tells how a Mohammedan ruler in Arabia informed Wolff that, “There are

great dangers in going to Abyssinia and you are likely to lose your life and you have no weapons.” Then, the student reads from a card the answer Joseph Wolff spoke: “Yes, I am provided with arms. I have prayer zeal for Christ and confidence in God’s help.” The entire story presentation is interspersed with students reading quotes, giving a description of a scene, or singing lyrics

from an old hymn. This type of interaction helps our students get a sense of actually being with the pioneers and understanding what it’s like to be chosen to carry on the work started by these courageous and dedicated people.



Tory Frantzen reads one of the story quotes during the month of October, when Lubbock Junior Academy students recognized important dates in Adventist history.

Southwestern Awarded Small Business Grant

Southwestern Adventist University has been awarded a \$200,000 grant slated for the creation of an Entrepreneurship and Small Business Resource Center. The university received official notice of the award on October 1 from the United States Small Business Administration, the organization making the grant. Congressman Chet Edwards (D-Tex) worked with Southwestern to obtain the grant. Funds from the grant are part of a five-year program. "This is a great example of government doing something that will make a big difference in higher education," says Gary Temple, vice president for university advancement. "The center will be instrumental in joining higher education and small business in Johnson County."

Southwestern's business program currently has a positive focus on entrepreneurship that will be strengthened by the center. Classes such as "Profiles in Entrepreneurship" allow students to interact with successful business leaders in the DFW area and show the university's commitment to educating students in this area. The center will include multiple online databases, an interactive white board and computers for instruction, as well as videoconferencing capabilities for public performance and group work with remote partners.

The Entrepreneur and Small Business Resource Center has three objectives: to enhance library research materials to support courses for small businesses; to refurbish existing space to accommodate the new center; and to strengthen the university's academic and outreach programs that support local small businesses. Additional printed material about the center will be available as a resource for small businesses. "I'm excited to see how this center will reach out to the community," says Temple. "I hope that Johnson County will continue to see the university as a resource in business." The center is anticipated to be ready for use by early March, 2011.

Student Interns at U.S. Embassy in Suriname

Southwestern student Sarah Osborn spent two months this past summer as an intern at the United States Embassy in the Republic of Suriname. For Osborn, a senior social science/international relations major, it was an experience that was not only exciting and fulfilling, but in line with her professional aspirations. Osborn obtained the internship with the help of Southwestern convocation speaker, John Mark Reynolds, and Southwestern's vice president for academic affairs, Benjamin McArthur.

portunity to see the local political process in action. One project she worked on was contributing to the annual International Religious Freedom Report put together for the U.S. Congress. She interviewed 15 heads of religion in Suriname, including a Catholic bishop, a Rastafarian, two Hindu leaders, two Muslim leaders, a senior Mormon missionary, the leaders of Ba'hai, and the Seventh-day Adventist Church officials in the country. "I questioned each of them about his or her experience with religious intolerance," Osborn says. She discovered that, overall, there appeared to be very little religious intolerance in the country.

Osborn plans to graduate in May 2011, and says her prospects look good. While she's interested in working for the state department, she says she would also love to work for a non-profit organization in an underprivileged country.

SWAU senior social science/international relations major Sarah Osborn enjoyed learning about the Suriname culture while interning for two months at the U.S. Embassy there.



Osborn was speaking about her ambition to be a diplomat for the U.S. State department at a meeting with Reynolds and other honors students, and McArthur offered to contact a former classmate from Andrews University who is the U.S. ambassador to Suriname. Osborn's application was accepted in January, followed by six months of security checks, and the internship started in June.

It was election season while she was in Suriname, and Osborn was excited to have the op-



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[EMPLOYMENT]

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Union College seeks Academic Director for its Master of Physician Assistant Studies Program. Responsibilities include curricular analysis, teaching, and evaluation. Graduate degree, NCCPA certification, and 3 years' clinical experience required. Contact Michael Huckabee, PhD, PA-C, Program Director, paprog@ucollege.edu.

Union College seeks chair/director of BS Nursing program. Responsibilities include strategic planning, curricular assessment, faculty development, and support of college activities. Nebraska state licensure, teaching experience, and doctoral degree or ongoing study required. Contact Charlotte Schober, interim chair, chschober@ucollege.edu.

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Andrews Academy is searching for a Principal. Some of the position's opportunities include; administering the operations of academy, grades 9-12 and establishing a learning environment which is spiritually focused and in concert with SDA beliefs. Required qualifications: Master's degree and denominational and state secondary school credentials. Interested can-

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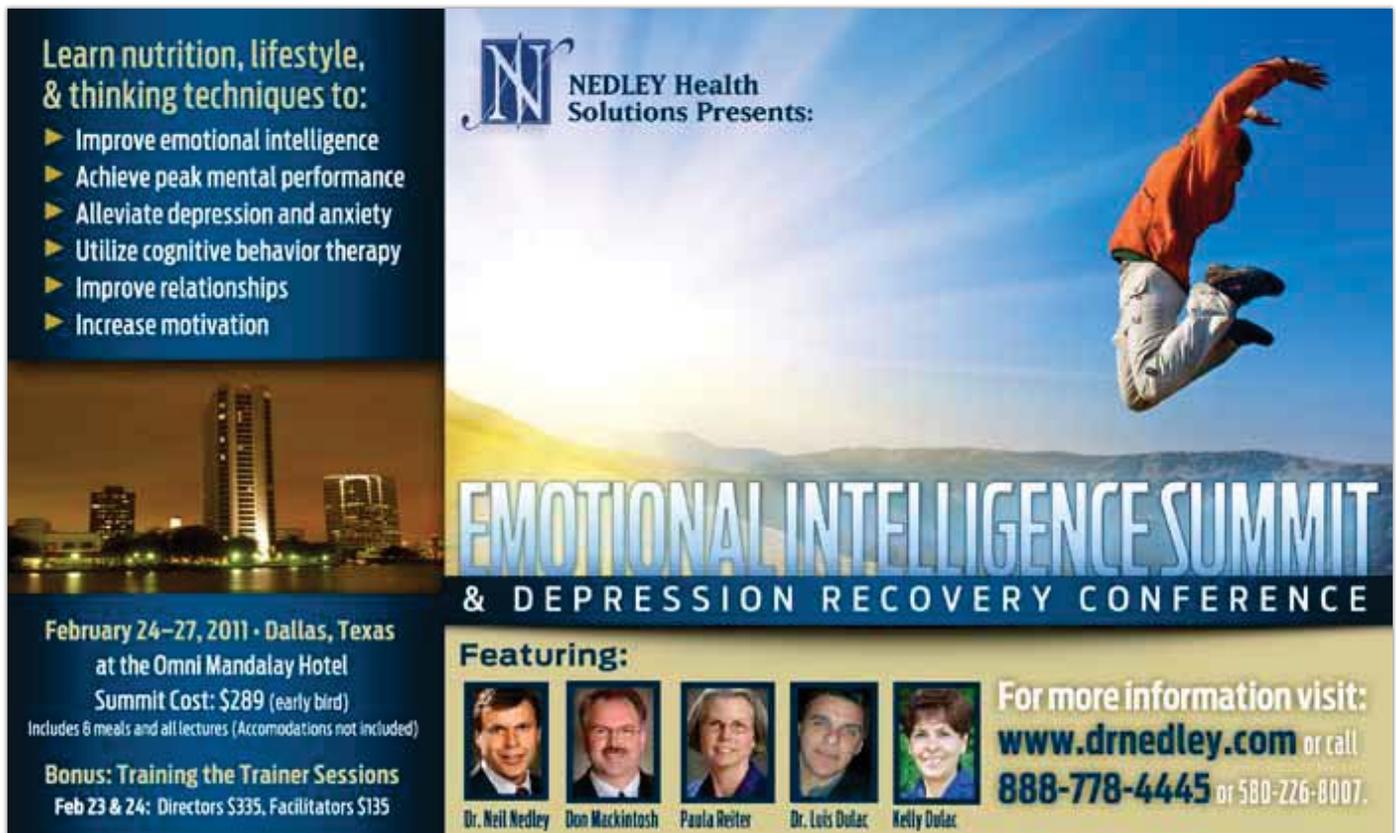
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Announcements

ASI Southwestern Chapter

has a new Facebook page. You don't have to be a member of ASI to join or "Like" the page. We want business owners, entrepreneurs, ministry leaders, and church members to know what is happening with ASI in our union. Just go to Facebook, search for **ASI Southwestern Chapter**, and join us for regular updates! But we do want you to join ASI and reap the full benefits of membership. For more info on becoming a member of the national organization, call Art Humphrey at 817.681.3877.

La Sierra Academy Alumni Weekend

will be held April 29, 30, May 1, 2011. Honor Classes: 2001, 1996, 1991, 1986, 1981, 1971, 1961, 1951, and 50+ years; Friday morning golf tournament, CrossCreek, Temecula; Friday evening meet-and-greet, LSA campus library; Saturday/Sabbath morning Alumni Homecoming, LSA gym, 9 a.m. check-in; Delta Mu reunion (contact alumni office); Saturday afternoon potluck: **please bring food to share**; Saturday reunions; Saturday evening alumni/varsity basketball, LSA gym; Sunday morning, Ladies Charity Tea.

Valley Grande Adventist Academy Alumni Association

invites all former faculty, staff, and students to our annual Alumni Weekend to be held on April 1-3, 2011. All honor class years end in 6 or 1 (2006, 2001, etc.). For more information, visit our Web site at www.vgaa.org or contact Suzanna Facundo: sfacundo@hotmail.com.

Obituaries

BARHAM, Emma Olene,

born November 6, 1916 in Bonnerdale, Ark., and died June 24, 2010 in Harrah, Okla. A member of the Summit Ridge church in Harrah, Olene worked at several Adventist self-supporting institutions in various roles, including teaching and nursing. She also worked as a Bible worker and teacher for the Arkansas-Louisiana Conference. Survivors: brother, James, of Texas; son, Dr. John Shaw and wife, Mary, of Greeneville, Tenn.; five grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren.

BLOOM, Fred E.,

born September 27, 1913 in Mercer, Mo., and died October 17, 2010 in Hot Springs, Ark. A member of the Hot Springs church, he was laid to rest in Hot Springs. Survivors: daughters and sons-in-law, Betty and Lynn Baerg of Hot Springs and Cleo and Philip Huff of Lodi, Calif.; six grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

BOREN, Dorothy,

born June 14, 1920 in Miller County, Ark., and died September 29, 2010 in Rowlett, Tex. A member of the Texarkana church, she was laid to rest in Texarkana. She was a Salvation Army

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Home League volunteer and a faithful member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Survivors: daughter-in-law, Wendy Laster of Rowlett, Tex.; two grandchildren and seven great-

grandchildren. She was preceded in death by her husbands, George Laster and Bruce Boren; son, Bobby Laster, and daughter, Katherine Laster.

BROADWELL, Janet M.,

born January 23, 1951 in Tuckerman, Ark., and died October 3, 2010, in Hot Springs, Ark. She was a retired missionary who served in Africa and also worked in the Texas, North Carolina, and Arkansas-Louisiana Conferences. Survivors: husband, Harry Broadwell of Hot Springs; daughter and son-in-law, Ruth and Scott Gould, of Ward, Ark.; sister, Loretta Milligan of Searcy, Ark.; brother, Hershall Wadley of Searcy; brother and sister-in-law, Mark and Dawna Wadley of Butlerville, Ark.; four stepchildren; three grandchildren.

GOODNOW, June Ray-

lene, born June 25, 1938 in Karnes City, Tex., and died August 19, 2010 in Harrah, Okla. A member of the Summit Ridge church, June was an artist known worldwide as a sculptor of dolls. Her dolls are in major galleries and private collections throughout the world. When on the verge of retirement she became ill with cancer and began studying her Bible. She ultimately discovered the Bible Sabbath and began attending the Sioux City Adventist Church. She was baptized in October, 2004 and moved to Summit Ridge Retirement Village in November of the same year, where she lived until her death. Survivors: daughter and son-in-law, Robin and Kendall Strand; two sisters, Geneva Hodges and Bobby Jean Ferrell; one

brother, Leonard, all of California; three grandchildren.

LACY, Thomas, born January 5, 1927 in Long Beach, Miss., and died October 15, 2010 in Claremore, Okla.

Tom was baptized May 19, 2007 and was a very active member of the Claremore Seventh-Day Adventist Church. He has no survivors.

MALONE, Margie Max-

ine, born March 4, 1916 in Oklahoma City, Okla., and died July 24, 2010 in Harrah, Okla. She was laid to rest in Oklahoma City. A member of Summit Ridge church in Harrah, Okla., she served in several church offices. Margie retired from denominational employment, having worked for the Central California Conference and the Oklahoma Conference. She

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moved to Summit Ridge Retirement Village in 1979, just as Summit Ridge was being developed, and was very active in the development of the facility. As long as her health permitted she maintained all the flower beds of the village. Survivors: two nieces, Jeanne Strickland of Georgia and Virginia Birth of Mississippi; one cousin, Thelma Routon of Oklahoma City, and several great nieces and nephews.

SHADDUCK, Richard "Dick," died September 24, 2010 in Gentry, Ark. He was

a member of the Gentry church. Dearly beloved Pastor Richard "Dick" Shadduck passed away after his dauntless and courageous struggle following a stroke last year. Survivors: wife, Gail Shadduck of Siloam Springs, Ark.; daughters and sons-in-law, Robin and Hank Adkins of Springdale Ark., and Sheri and Sam Rhea of Kansas; one grandchild.

WILSON, Nyla June, born July 18, 1924 in Marble Hill, Mo., and died on September 30, 2010 in Madison, Tenn.

She was a lifelong member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, most recently at the Boulevard church in Madison, Tenn. In addition to her responsibilities as a loving wife and mother, she was an LVN, successful business owner, and accomplished poet. She was laid to rest at the Middle Tennessee Veterans Memorial Park. Survivors: husband of 64 years, G.C. Wilson; daughter and son-in-law, Donna and Kenet Teichman of Cleburne, Tex.; son and daughter-in-law, Jim and Ellen Wilson of Joshua, Tex.; son and daughter-in-law, Jerry and Grace Wilson of Bishopville, Md.; son, Jeff Wilson of Nashville, Tenn; sister, Marge Martin of Richmond, Va.; brother, Albert Isom and wife, Virginia, of Ashville, N.C.; nine grandchildren, six great-grandchildren, eight great-great grandchildren, and many nephews and nieces.

myfaith

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	Dec 3	Dec 10	Dec 17	Dec 24	Dec 31	Jan 7
Abilene, TX	5:33	5:34	5:35	5:38	5:43	5:48
Albuquerque, NM	4:55	4:55	4:56	5:00	5:04	5:10
Amarillo, TX	5:35	5:35	5:37	5:40	5:44	5:50
Brownsville, TX	5:38	5:40	5:41	5:45	5:49	5:53
Dallas, TX	5:21	5:21	5:23	5:26	5:31	5:35
El Paso, TX	5:02	5:02	5:04	5:07	5:12	5:17
Fort Worth/Keene, TX	5:23	5:23	5:25	5:28	5:33	5:38
Gallup, NM	5:02	5:02	5:04	5:07	5:11	5:17
Galveston/Houston, TX	5:22	5:22	5:25	5:28	5:32	5:37
Gentry, AR	5:03	5:03	5:05	5:08	5:13	5:18
Little Rock, AR	4:58	4:58	5:00	5:03	5:08	5:13
Muskogee, OK	5:08	5:08	5:10	5:13	5:17	6:23
New Orleans, LA	5:00	5:01	5:03	5:06	5:10	5:14
Oklahoma City, OK	5:17	5:17	5:19	5:22	5:26	5:32
Roswell, NM	4:50	4:50	4:52	4:56	5:00	5:05
San Antonio, TX	5:35	5:36	5:38	5:41	5:45	5:50
Shreveport, LA	5:09	5:10	5:11	5:14	5:19	5:24
Tulsa, OK	5:10	5:10	5:11	5:14	5:19	5:24

When the Music Fades

HAVE YOU EVER BEEN TOLD THAT GOD HAS A PLAN FOR YOUR LIFE? I had been told that since early childhood, but had never really grasped the meaning of those words or the truth within them. For the past few years I was perfectly content going to church on Saturday, praising God, and listening to the sermon, and that was all I was willing to do for God. I was living every other day of the week without so much as thinking about Him.

The things I valued, the words I spoke, and especially the music I listened to pulled me farther and farther away from God until I couldn't hear His voice anymore. Most people would probably agree that the media has an enormous influence on youth today. Kids get caught up in what they see on TV or the music they listen to, and they don't even realize what kind of damage it does. Desensitized by the messages presented all around us, we slip away from God into a world of sin without looking back. I didn't care about God, and I tried to justify that by saying "God has never done anything in my life. Why should I have to do anything for Him? Why should I believe He has any plan for me?" But no matter how far I went from God, He never left me and never stopped blessing me.

A few weeks ago, I was impressed by God to be a teen leader at a Teen Prayer Conference at Ozark Adventist Academy. The theme for the weekend was "Teach Us 2 Pray." That weekend I saw nearly 400 kids singing and praising God. I watched as teenagers from varying backgrounds set aside their differences for unity. I witnessed 50 people give their lives to Christ because they felt a kind of love that they could no longer live without. A love that no man could ever describe. I realized that I wanted that same love, too. But to do that, I had to remove what was be-

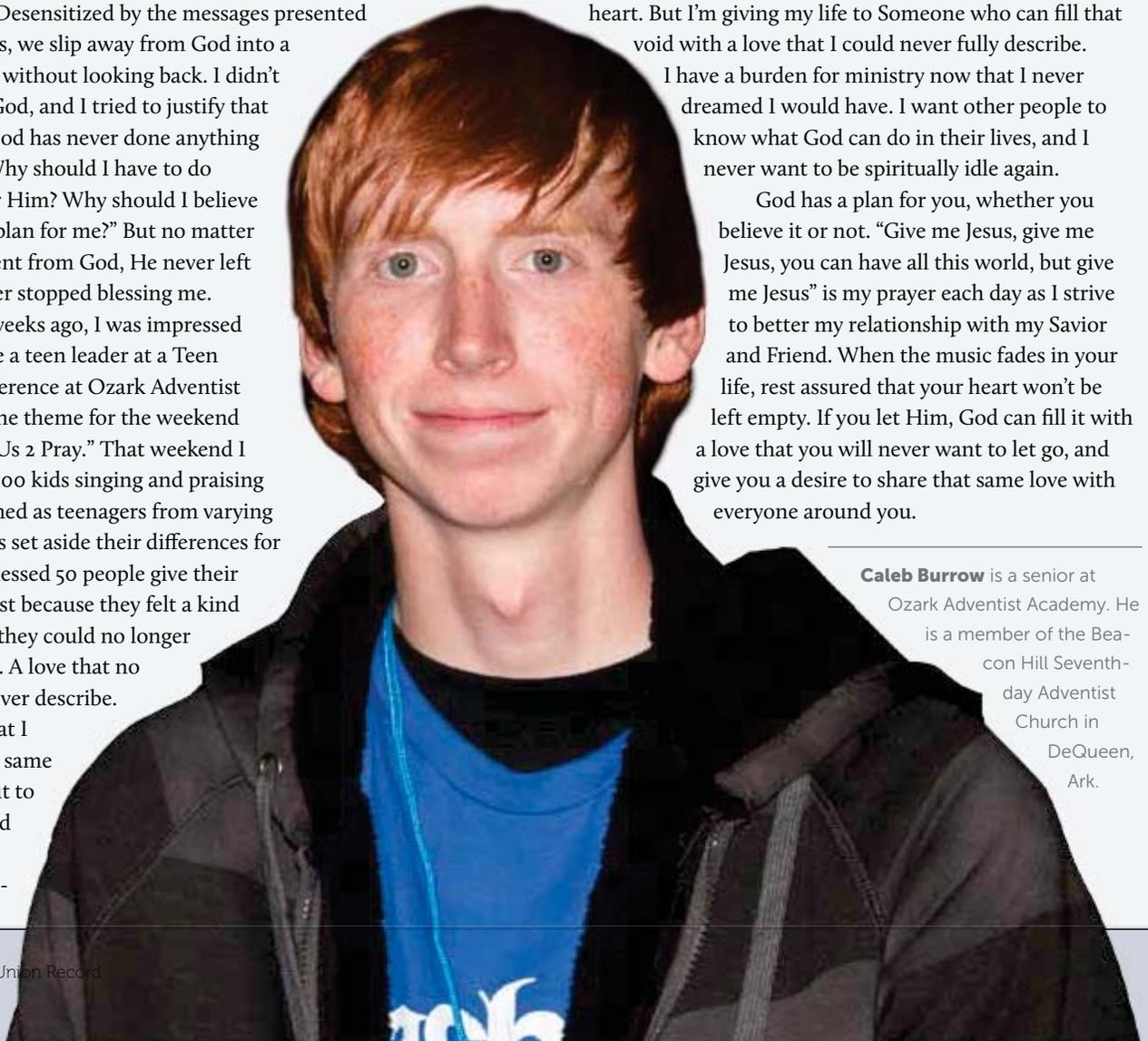
tween me and God. My music had taken control of my character, disposition, and actions. My music was my god; it was the leading influence in my life. But it was time to give it up. Right there on the stage, as I shared my testimony, I erased the contents of my iPod.

When the music fades, I'm left with nothing but an empty heart. But I'm giving my life to Someone who can fill that void with a love that I could never fully describe.

I have a burden for ministry now that I never dreamed I would have. I want other people to know what God can do in their lives, and I never want to be spiritually idle again.

God has a plan for you, whether you believe it or not. "Give me Jesus, give me Jesus, you can have all this world, but give me Jesus" is my prayer each day as I strive to better my relationship with my Savior and Friend. When the music fades in your life, rest assured that your heart won't be left empty. If you let Him, God can fill it with a love that you will never want to let go, and give you a desire to share that same love with everyone around you.

Caleb Burrow is a senior at Ozark Adventist Academy. He is a member of the Beacon Hill Seventh-day Adventist Church in DeQueen, Ark.





For the Record »

BY MARK BOND » COMMUNICATION DIRECTOR, SOUTHWESTERN UNION

Start Something Good

MEET PIERRE ANTHIAN. A dental technician by trade, he moved to Montreal from France where he began volunteering at the Accueil Bonneau, a homeless shelter for men. While there, he realized that out-of-work men who had been cast off by society still had something to give, if they were only challenged and loved.

“I wanted to take exceedingly ordinary people, people who sleep in the street, but with some talent—and everyone has some talent—and turn them into extraordinary people,” Pierre shared with a Montreal newspaper.

And that’s exactly what happened. What this dental-tech-cum-choir director accomplished with a ragamuffin band of social misfits came with a lot of love and personal sacrifice. Pierre cut back to working part-time at the dental clinic and took a substantial reduction in pay in order to start a choir featuring 20 homeless men. Chorale de l’Accueil Bonneau recorded many CDs, including several Christmas albums, and performed as far away as Paris

for many auspicious audiences. The singers gained a sense of self-worth and were literally transformed. They helped manage the money they earned, kept day planners and learned to meet appointments.

Why did Pierre Anthian choose to commit himself to a motley band of vagrants? In his words, “Jesus Christ is my role model. I read the Bible every day, to try to see what he did, and to try to act the same way in the contemporary world. Jesus did not seek out rich people or intellectuals. He sought out the poor, the despondent, the sick, the marginal. Broken people, essentially.”

When asked to share a favorite mo-

ment, Pierre recalls, “One time in the subway a woman came up to me and grabbed my hand while I was singing. She held it for such a long time that I figured she wanted to talk with me. She said, ‘I came to the subway to kill myself. But all these men who come here with all their misery to sing hand in hand—they saved me from killing myself.’”

Pierre understands the gift that Christ gave us by coming to this earth. He understands true evangelism—and the true meaning of Christmas.

We may be called to do something other than start a choir for the homeless. But we can still follow Pierre’s lead and start something good that changes other people’s lives.

Merry Christmas!

Record

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