

SOUTHWESTERN UNION

# Record

JANUARY 2013



PREPARING FOR HIS SECOND COMING



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### On the Cover

As Seventh-day Adventists, we believe with certainty that Jesus is coming soon. Looking around this world, we can clearly see Bible prophecies being fulfilled. As we anticipate, with joy and hope, the glorious return of Jesus to this earth, let's do all that we can to be ready and to help others prepare, as well. This issue of the *Record* is dedicated to helping us do just that.

# Point of View»

BY LARRY MOORE » SOUTHWESTERN UNION CONFERENCE PRESIDENT



## How Soon is Soon?

**How long have you believed that Jesus is coming soon?** Maybe a better question would be, do you still believe that Jesus will come soon? Or have you had to ratchet down your expectation? I'll have to admit that when I became an Adventist I would never have dreamed that we would still be here in 2013. I was baptized in 1960, and I can still remember the soul-winning slogan of the Texas Conference, "Everyone Win One in '61." As a boy I thought, we can do it! There were about a million Adventists in the world then, and if we all shared our faith, that would give us two million (way beyond the 144,000 required, I thought).

All this tells me that everything looks different from God's perspective. God unabashedly plays the numbers game. He wants all to respond to His love for this broken planet. The Adventist church now has around 18 million, not counting those who have died with the hope of the resurrection.

How soon is soon with a heavenly Father who doesn't wear a wrist watch? With Him, a day is like a year and a year is like a day. If He measures time by millions of years, then our puny 80 or 100 years will always be short, and anything in the future will be soon. I don't know if you catch my point or not. The timing really doesn't

make that much difference if we simply allow God to be God. According to Scripture, Jesus came in the fullness of time at His First Advent. The important thing is not the time, but the event.

Could it be that the important thing at the Second Advent will once again be the event rather than the time? Only Jesus knows the day and hour of His return. Let's trust Him with that detail, and live each day in joyful expectation of His soon return.

*Larry Moore*





# CREATION Health

BY LYNELL LAMOUNTAIN » SENIOR MANAGER OF MISSION DEVELOPMENT, FLORIDA HOSPITAL

## Get Unstuck and Get Living in 2013

**Pastor Tony Evans tells a funny story** about his discomfort with riding elevators in high-rise buildings. The idea of being “trapped” inside a small box several hundred feet in the air is a disturbing thought. Stepping into the windowless world of cables, pulleys, and emergency brakes plays tricks on his mind. And when those doors slide shut, he always wonders, “*What if this thing gets...stuck?*”

One day, as fate would have it, his elevator got stuck way up between some higher floors. Although he could feel the solid floor beneath his feet, his mind pictured the several hundred feet of empty space awaiting him just inches below his toes; a gallows without the hangman’s rope.

At least he was not alone. Several other people were on the elevator, too, and were more frightened than he, some even frantic.

They pounded their fists against the doors and shouted, hoping someone would come to their rescue. But their desperate cries slipped away unheard into the cavernous expanse. They were helplessly marooned, abandoned, and alone.

Taming his imagination, Evans quietly walked between the other riders to the front of the car where he opened a little door on the wall and pulled out a telephone. Immediately he was connected with someone on the outside with whom he calmly shared their plight; help was on the way.

Evans shares the lesson that there are times when everyone gets stuck in frightening situations.

Some will panic. Others will cry out in dismay. But for those of us who trust in God, prayer connects immediately to a loving Father who hears and reassures us that help is on the way.

### Are You Stuck?

What about you? Do you feel stuck? Can you say with absolute certainty that you are living life to the fullest as Jesus promised in John 10:10? If not, it is time to get unstuck and start living the wonderful life that God is offering to you right now. Here are three steps to get you started:

#### 1. Choose To Get Unstuck—Choose To Live.

We have the power of choice. God created us with the ability to be free and to live life to the fullest. But we must make the choice. The Bible says we can do all things through Christ. The only thing that can limit or hold us back is ourselves.

#### 2. Choose To Connect.

We serve an almighty God with whom nothing is impossible. He is our Refuge and strength—an ever-present help in times of trouble. Choosing to connect with Him daily, and abiding in Him, brings peace, power, and hope.

#### 3. Choose To Live With Vision.

Last month in this column, we talked about the power of vision—of sharing the gift of eternal life with others. And as important as that is, it is just as important for us to have a vision for our own lives. How often do we put more thought into our annual vacation than we do into the direction and quality of our lives? In order to live life to the fullest, we must focus on where we want to go and not on where we have been or the unhappy circumstances that are holding us back.

It is likely that we will face challenges, disappointments, heartbreaks, and setbacks in 2013. But we will decide whether to get stuck or get back on course. We must always remember that irrespective of whatever happens to us, we are only one choice away from creating a brighter future and living life a better life today.

*That’s CREATION Health!*

Lynell LaMountain writes from Florida Hospital in Orlando, Florida.

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

## Walking By Faith

**HE KNOWS WHAT HE'S DOING.**

**I SIT HERE IN THE OFFICE OF MY BOSS, GLEN ROBINSON**, a professor at Southwestern Adventist University, which is now my office, as well. I feel responsible. Professors are in the next room having a meeting. I faintly hear their voices talking about communication—my major. I am not sure exactly how to describe the awe I feel at this amazing opportunity God has dropped in my lap.

My name is Emily Nolasco; I am a freshman at Southwestern Adventist University. I am actually from Keene, Texas, where the university is located. I've lived here all of my 18 years, and have grown up in the Adventist Church. I grew up on memory verses and Bible stories for every situation. It was great when I was a child, but all my life, it has felt like I've been preparing for something. Now I know that it was for here and now. Parents and teachers tell you the journey is going to be difficult, but as a little child, you can't envision it or even begin to comprehend what they mean. Everything was so simple when we were children. The concept of faith is so much easier to swallow as a little kid. It makes sense. I get why God tells us to become like little children.

College has opened up so many new doors for me. I wasn't supposed to come here. Really, I bet you couldn't find anyone more against staying here at this university than I was. I was dead set on going to another Adventist university. This summer, my friends here kept hassling me about going to Southwestern, as did my mother. My reason for not wanting to come to Southwestern was simple: I was ready to explore different places. What God wanted for me was not on my agenda; I didn't even stop to ask if my plan was His.

For some unknown reason, a week before freshman orientation started, I filled out all the paperwork and was expected to

show up for registration. I did, and I found myself enrolled at Southwestern. Now I'm wrapping up my first semester of college. Finals are looming next week, and I can't believe all that has happened. God is good—all the time.

I really needed a steady job. I got one and the awesome thing is, it's pretty much a paid internship. I work with my advisor, Dr. Glen Robinson. I'm a communication major with an emphasis in journalism. I come to work, and I write for Southwestern's online newspaper, *The South-*

*westerner*, as well as anything else he asks me to do. How many 18-year-old freshmen get to start their journalism careers this early on? I get to learn things I wouldn't learn in class. I get to do what I'm starting to love more and more every day, and I get paid for it! None of this would be happening for me if it wasn't for that unexpected decision I made a week before this semester started.

I love Southwestern. My teachers are awesome and they take time out of their day not only to teach me things I need for

my future, but they also take the time to get to know me. God has my back even when I don't think I'm leaning on Him. My advice to youth: Walk by faith and let God lead you where He may. He knows what He's doing.



Emily Nolasco is a freshman journalism major at Southwestern Adventist University in Keene, Texas.

**Emily Nolasco** is a freshman at Southwestern Adventist University in Keene, Texas.



# Pass it On...

A Monthly Focus on Evangelism in the Southwest

BY ANN-MARIE SCOTT

## I Love to Share the Word of God

Studying and sharing the Word of God is something I love to do. So when I came across FAST several years ago, I was very thrilled, as it helps with just such areas. What is FAST? Well, FAST is a Scripture memory system developed by Dan and Vi Vis, whose mission is to bring God's people back to the Bible. This ministry focuses on mobilizing believers for ministry through Bible-based training. My first introduction to FAST was when I joined a small study group led out by Vi Vis, which went through the beginner training program called the Survival Kit. The Survival Kit is a five-week study that teaches how to memorize Scripture effectively, and apply it practically to your life, and how to pass it on consistently to others. This was where I first started to purposefully memorize Scripture verses, and to share this newfound joy with others. Since then, I've been sharing with so many others along the way.

Going through the FAST program has made such a deep impact on my Christian journey that I want others to have an experience similar to mine, so I try to share with just about anyone who will listen. Driven by this goal, I started a small study group in my home, similar to the one through which I was first introduced to this program. We meet once a week, usually on a Friday night for one hour, and we've been doing this for quite some time now. We first started off with the Survival Kit course, which teaches the basic tools on how to survive as a Christian, along with the highly effective ten "Keys to Scripture Memory." This program uses an outline with weekly objectives, a verse pack with blank cards, and we generally review our weekly verses in our group. Members of the group have commented on how being in a group provides that extra accountability, which really helps us to stay on track and make progress in hiding God's Word in our hearts.

Another course our group has done so far is the second in the Discipleship Kit called Basic Training. This course covers such topics as how to study the Bible, how to set up a prayer journal, how to manage your time, personal witnessing, and other core principles for strengthening one's commitment to

Christ. What I really appreciate about the Basic Training course is the practical tools it provides for discipleship. One person in the group, Sheri, shares this about the program: "Memorizing scripture in a systematic way not only made it easier, but consistently meditating on those verses drew me closer to the Lord. The fellowship aspect of meeting regularly with others and sharing our experiences from our Bible study was beneficial in many ways. We had precious times together that were very strengthening and encouraging."

My goal is to start more small groups like this in my church in Decatur, Arkansas, and I've been working on trying to train others, so that members can be leaders of other small groups, and continue in this fashion, until everyone who wants to can join this great program. Others can start their own group at their church, as well, by getting the Discipleship Pack from [www.fast.st](http://www.fast.st). I appreciate the step-by-step instructions that come with this program, and I believe that anyone who has a desire to do this will find adequate training instructions in this course.

All that Jesus did and said was with one goal in view, which was to rivet truth in the minds of His hearers that they might attain everlasting life, and this FAST Program provides practical tools to facilitate just such an experience.



Ann-Marie Scott, second from left, loves sharing and memorizing Scripture with her friends at church.



## Nunca Fue Mi Intención Ser Pastor

Crecí en un hogar adventista donde aprendí de la Biblia a través de mis padres, mis abuelitos y la iglesia. Me bauticé a los 11 años de edad en Brownsville, Texas. Mi familia creció en la Iglesia Adventista del Séptimo Día, con mi abuelito Pedro Rascón, quien fue pastor en México por 53 años. Él era nuestro consejero y líder espiritual. Estudié dibujo y diseño gráfico porque planeaba ser arquitecto. Por siete años trabajé para una compañía de ingenieros civiles. Nunca tuve ningún problema con la observancia del sábado en mi trabajo. Mi supervisor era muy amable al permitirme trabajar tiempo extra de lunes a jueves o los domingos.

Siempre hubo alguna oportunidad para testificar en mi trabajo, pero cuando mis compañeros de trabajo me hacían preguntas relacionadas con la profecía o eventos de los últimos días yo no podía dar una respuesta acertada. Esto me sorprendió a mi mismo. Cada miembro de la Iglesia Adventista del Séptimo Día debería saber responder con fundamento bíblico a preguntas proféticas y acerca del tiempo del fin.

Yo pensé que sabía dar una respuesta, pero cuando llegaba el momento de defender mis creencias religiosas, no podía. Me decepcioné de mi mismo y me sentí como un hipócrita por mi ignorancia. Tan pronto como puede hablé con mi pastor para involucrarme en algún estudio bíblico y tomar un seminario de Daniel y Apocalipsis.

Después mi esposa y yo empezamos a tomar un seminario profético. Al mismo tiempo decidí leer el libro *El Conflicto de los Siglos*, por Elena G. de White, por primera vez en mi vida. Me sentí como un tonto al saber que tenía esta valiosa verdad y la desperdiciaba al no leerla. Después de esta experiencia comencé a compartir con otros a través de grupos pequeños, estudios bíblicos y el colportaje. Para entonces ya sentía un deseo ardiente de compartir las buenas nuevas y seguir a Cristo Jesús más de cerca.

Ya comenzaba a considerar se-

riamente dejar mi carrera de ingeniería civil para dedicarme tiempo completo al ministerio pastoral. No sabía los planes que Dios tenía para mí, yo sólo sabía que quería compartir el evangelio con todo el mundo. Me comencé a dar cuenta lo cerca está la venida de Jesús, siempre lo había escuchado, pero ahora era una convicción personal, con todo, la profecía se ha estado cumpliendo, sigo convencido que Jesús vuelve pronto.

En junio del 2006 mi esposa y yo decidimos mudarnos a Keene, Texas donde yo empezaría mis estudios de teología. En mayo de 2010 gradué de la Universidad Adventista del Suroeste (SWAU) con una Licenciatura en Teología. Por dos años trabajé como obrero bíblico en diferentes iglesias. A pesar de que tuve varias entrevistas de trabajo en diferentes iglesias y conferencias, fue hasta junio del 2012 que recibí el llamado para pastorear la Iglesia Adventista Primera en Cleburne, Texas. Mi esposa y yo recibimos y aceptamos el llamado con alegría. Nunca hubiera pensado que seguiría las pisadas de mi abuelito. Nunca fue mi intención ser pastor, pero cuando uno pone su vida en las manos de Dios, El nos dirige y sostiene. Aún sigo buscando la voluntad y dirección de Dios. Alabado sea Dios porque nos permite ser parte de este gran movimiento de los últimos días. Te invito a estudiar las enseñanzas de Jesús y rendir tu vida y voluntad a Él.

Dios te bendiga.

Harly Charles, pastor



▲ Harly con sus abuelitos Rascón.

◀ Harly Charles

# THE CERTAINTY OF THE SECOND COMING

G. Edward Reid

**I**s Jesus really coming back soon? We have been preaching this for many years. How can we be sure that our belief is not just a fantasy? Adventists have held that the Second Coming of Jesus is the “Blessed Hope”—the focus of our faith. We believe that all the works of God on man’s behalf since his fall have been to restore man to the place he held before sin. But how can our faith endure more waiting? Is there an encouraging word?

## The Certainty of the Second Coming

In the years between 1844 and 1863, many men and women of faith—from many different denominational backgrounds—went back to the Bible for a better understanding of its teachings on salvation and the prophetic outline of history. God blessed their study with amazing insights. One of these insights was what we refer to as the Great Controversy—the big picture of the struggle between sin and righteousness. As they began to study the Bible’s prophecies more carefully, they discovered that the annual round of feasts and ceremonies that were part of the sanctuary services were actually a model or illustration of the work of God in the plan of salvation, and that mankind was indeed living in the time of the end. The certainty of the Second Coming of Jesus became very clear from both the Old and New Testaments.

Adventists came to understand that, just as John the Baptist came to herald the first coming of Jesus, God’s end-time church was to herald His approaching Second Coming. Today, we recognize that the great prophetic timeline has run its course and the signs that Jesus gave us that would alert us to His coming are being fulfilled just as He said they would.

So how can we be certain regarding the Second Coming of Jesus? Here is some solid evidence. When Jesus was on earth the first time, He said to his closest disciples, “I will come again and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there you may be also” (John 14:3). Those are the words of Jesus Himself. He has already paid for us with His life and we can be certain that He will come back for us. At the time of His ascension, Jesus commissioned two angels to comfort His disciples. The angels told them, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven” (Acts 1:11). These heavenly beings echoed the words of Jesus to confirm His testimony.

Paul was comforted in his many afflictions with his confidence in the Second Coming of Jesus, and he wanted to comfort his friends with that hope, as well. “The Lord Himself will descend

from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words” (1 Thessalonians 4:16-18).

The disciple and apostle, John, who wrote one of the gospels and three epistles that bear his name, was given the awesome responsibility of writing the capstone of the sacred scriptures, the Revelation of Jesus Christ. John begins this amazing apocalyptic book by saying, “He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him” (Revelation 1:7). And he concludes the book by quoting Jesus as saying, “Surely I am coming quickly.” And John responds, “Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!” (Revelation 22:20).

Our evidence for the certainty of the Second Coming is the testimonies of Jesus, the angels, and the apostles Paul and John. Much more evidence could be given, but who could top these witnesses? We can therefore be certain that Jesus is coming back. The logical question then remains: “When?”

## The Signs of the Second Coming

The Bible outlines two types of evidence that we can study to answer the “when” question about the Second Coming. The first is the great prophetic timeline. And the second are the signs Jesus told us to look for. Most Adventists are willing to stipulate that the great prophetic timeline is running out—that we are now living in the time of the end and the pre-advent judgment. Only a few of the predicted events are yet to take place and the signs of the end are in great abundance. That makes the signs the most important factor that we face today.

Just before the crucifixion weekend, Jesus had an extensive private conversation with His disciples. This conversation is recorded in Matthew, chapters 24 and 25. The conversation begins with the disciples asking about the destruction of Jerusalem and the Second Coming. They asked, “Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and the end of the age?” (Matthew 24:3). Jesus answered these important questions for them, and us, by listing many extraordinary events that would be evidence that His coming is near. He talked of false christs and false prophets; wars and rumors of wars; famines; pestilence; earthquakes; tribulation; hatred; martyrdom; the gospel going to all the world; and signs in the sun, moon, and stars. Then Jesus says, “When you see all these things, know that it is near—at the doors!” (Matthew 24:33).



Paul and James explicitly state that the love for and use of money will be signs of the last days. Paul says that, “In the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves [selfish], lovers of money [greedy]” (2 Timothy 2:1, 2). James says that the rich in their greed will become richer and the poor will become poorer (See James 5:1-5). The examples of this are numerous in which greedy bankers run their financial institutions into the ground yet they leave with “golden parachutes” and their clients, by the thousands, lose their homes to foreclosure.

As mentioned above, Jesus told us to watch for signs in the natural world—earthquakes, etc. We now live in an age of “super storms” like the recent Hurricane Sandy. Another sobering statistic is that in 2011 there were 556 people killed by tornados in the United States. The average number of deaths by tornados per year before 2011 was 50. Who can forget the pictures of Tuscaloosa, Alabama, and Joplin, Missouri? And a very unusual phenomenon occurs after each tornado. When the news media interviews a local leader such as the sheriff or mayor following the disaster the response is almost always the same: “It was really bad. It’s a miracle more people weren’t killed.” God, in His mercy, allows the events to happen to get our attention, but protects many people from death!

When we study the signs that Jesus and the Bible writers give us we see their fulfillment in abundance. It is high time that we recognize the signs for what they are and increase our efforts to warn the world of what is to come.

## Preparation for the Second Coming

When we study the Second Coming in the New Testament, we quickly observe that the emphasis is on *being* ready. Much information is given on what it means to be ready and how we should prepare for that great event. Jesus stated, “Therefore...be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect” (Matthew 24:44). We can’t allow ourselves to be “too busy” to be bothered with our spiritual preparation. Many people don’t stop to realize that the invitation to “be ready” does not have many options. In fact, heaven has only one alternative: hell—eternal loss.

Jesus frequently spoke in parables to teach important lessons regarding His kingdom. At least three of His stories tell of a great supper planned for the culmination of the Great Controversy. These stories outline what it means to be ready for the Second Coming. It is no mystery, these simple stories lay it all out. For your reference, they are the story of the great supper (Luke 14:1, 12-24 and *Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 219); the story of the wedding garment (Matthew 22:1-14 and *Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 307); and the story of the wedding feast (Matthew 25:1-13 and *Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 405). From these three stories we can learn at least four points that are relevant to this study:

1. Everyone is invited—everyone! But some become so engrossed in the things of this world that they finally refuse the invitation to the supper and say, “Have me excused.”
2. There is a preparation to be made. The guests must have on the wedding garment. It is a free gift, but you must have one. It is the transforming power of God provided by His indwelling Spirit that brings forth obedience to God’s law.
3. The waiting time is longer than expected. We might get weary, but we will be ready if we have been filled with and transformed by the Holy Spirit.
4. The time to make preparation is now—not when the cry goes out, “He’s here!”

The Bible states clearly in both the Old and New Testaments that many who are looking for the coming of Christ will not be ready, and will be lost as a consequence (See Amos 5:18-20 and Matthew 7:21-23). The reference from Matthew 7 concludes by Jesus saying “I never knew you, depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.” Getting to know Jesus is obviously the bottom-line on preparation.

Here are some practical steps that can be taken to get to know Jesus as your Savior. **One:** Spend time every day reading God’s Word. Let Him speak to you. **Two:** Set aside time every day for prayer. Bring God your praises and your needs. Answered prayers strengthen our faith. **Three:** Be financially faithful with God. Put Him first as He asks us according to Proverbs 3:9. Understanding and practicing the Biblical principles of money management will give you

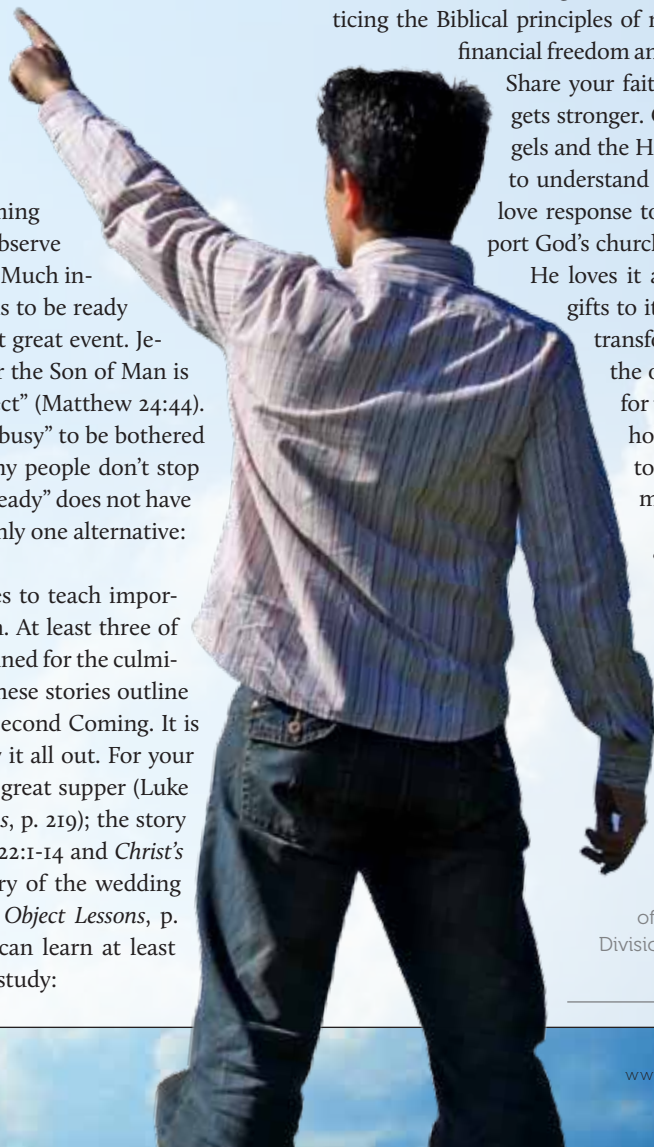
financial freedom and develop your trust in God. **Four:**

Share your faith. When we exercise our faith, it gets stronger. God has promised to send the angels and the Holy Spirit to go with us. **Five:** Seek to understand the will of God and follow it as a love response to His grace toward you. **Six:** Support God’s church, “warts and all”. It is His church.

He loves it and gave Himself for it and gave gifts to it. **Seven:** Pray for the Holy Spirit’s transforming power in your life. This is the oil for our lamps. The Spirit fits us for translation so that we can live with holy beings in heaven and equips us to do the work of ministry in fulfillment of the Great Commission.

The Second Coming is still the “Blessed Hope.” And it is nearer than when we first believed! Our maximum wait time is our own lifetime. The signs foretold by Jesus and the Bible writers are being fulfilled. We can anticipate with joy that this grand event is near at hand—even at the door.

**G. Edward Reid** is a retired director of stewardship for the North American Division and author of a series of books on the Second Coming.



# IT'S TIME TO GET READY!

## Meanwhile, what are we to do?

James Stevens, Texico Conference president

When Rita and I first became a part of the church, we were excited about what we were learning in prayer meetings, vesper services, Sabbath School, and worship services. There was a sense of excitement about the advancement of the Gospel and the signs that pointed to Christ's return.

Not only were we studying the Word in church, we also took nearly every correspondence Bible study offered by the church.

What a blessing it has been to be a part of a people preparing for the coming of Jesus.

In our various church meetings, I heard people pray fervently for the advance of the Gospel message. They almost always asked God to hold back the winds of strife so that the Gospel could reach more of the world.

I now attend literally hundreds of religious meetings each year, and people still pray fervently. The prayer has changed

slightly, however.

They are now praying for Jesus to come soon! This is the greatest change that I have seen within Adventism. We are tired of this world and want our Savior to come and rescue us.

What should we be doing in the meantime to get ready to meet our Lord? I would suggest three things: love God, love your family, and share your faith.

**First, love God.** We love Him because He first loved us. When we think of what God has done for us

in sending Jesus to die for our sins, guaranteeing us immortality, we cannot help but love Him. But as in any relationship, love must be nurtured. Studying God's Word daily is a must if one wants to grow a faithful, loving relationship with God. I do it daily, not because it's my job, but because I am Jesus' disciple and my soul is enriched by my study time. Study builds my faith in God's love for me and for all humanity. God's Word brings peace to my soul—something I need every day. When we love God, we will pray. Prayer is not just an act, it is an attitude. I talk to God all day long because He is everything to me. He loves me, and I love Him. That's what being a disciple is all about. Nothing will do more to prepare you for the coming of Jesus than prayer.

**Second, love your family.** The Bible teaches us that the Ten Commandments are predicated on our love for God and for our fellow human beings. Therefore, we must love the ones

closest to us, our families.

The most powerful witness is how people treat those closest to them. How you treat your spouse, children, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, brothers, sisters, and so on is a powerful witness that Jesus is in your life. We must make time to nurture family relationships. If all of us could simply lead our immediate and extended families to know Jesus and His soon coming, we would finish the Gospel commission on this earth and Jesus would come. This is an area where we can all do better. A true Christian will do all they can to nurture their own faith and the faith

# LOVE GOD, LOVE YOUR FAMILY, SHARE YOUR FAITH



will deliver His people as He rescued them from Egypt in the time of Moses. Times may get tough, but God is on our side and He will give us what we need to go through the challenging times ahead. He is looking forward to delivering His people from all the troubles of this earth and getting us into His trouble-free kingdom.

What is the biggest change that I've seen in the church? We now are praying for Je-

of their families. A consistent, positive, Christ-like character revealed in the family is the most compelling witness anyone can have that Jesus is in the heart.

**Third, share your faith.** If you believe that Jesus is coming soon, there is no way you can be silent about it. It permeates every aspect of your life. We just don't have the label Seventh-day Adventist; we *are* Seventh-day Adventists. Every decision we make, all of our business dealings, and each of our daily encounters exude the love of Jesus to a world that needs Him. We as members will encourage faith in everyone we meet, we will uplift and uphold the ministers that God has called and ordained to lead in the carrying forth of the Gospel commission. We will be faithful in tithe and offerings. We will live in a way that there can be no doubt that our Lord's grace permeates every aspect of our lives. This world and all it holds is secondary to one great hope, the Second Coming of Jesus.

Some people worry or are fearful about last-day events, but God



sus' soon return. I join all of you who utter that prayer. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

# THE ISSACHAR FACTOR: WHAT IT MEANS TO BE PREPARED

Dwight K. Nelson

**“Of Issachar; those who had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do, two hundred chiefs, and all their kindred under their command” (1 Chronicles 12:32, NRSV).**

*As we count down to the hope of “crossing over”—an entire generation of the chosen watching, working, and for the return of Jesus—don’t you wish we could predict the future as well as this little device predicts the weather? It’s a cheerful little ribbon of yarn woven in all the colors of the rainbow. The instructions that come with it are simple: 1. Hang outside the window. 2. Check each morning. 3. If it’s wet, it’s raining. 4. If it’s stiff, it’s freezing. 5. If it’s white, it’s snowing. 6. If it’s moving, it’s windy. 7. If it’s faded, it’s sunny. And, 8, if it’s gone, it’s ripped off. What an ingenious device! Works every time.*

Don’t you wish forecasting the future were that simple? Once upon a time there was an ancient tribe who had the uncanny ability to do just that. David had just vanquished his enemies. King Saul was dead. In today’s text the tribes of Israel were aligning themselves with their new young monarch. And in the middle of their listing came the small tribe of Issachar with a unique identification marker:

They understood the times and knew what Israel ought to do.

What if that were the identification marker of the chosen today? Didn’t Jesus all but command us to embrace this “Issachar factor”? In Luke 12:54-56 and Matthew 16:1-3, He exclaimed: “Look at you! You can read the signs in the skies ‘red sky at night, sailor’s delight; red sky in the morning, sailors, take warning’ [He really did refer to that pithy meteorological proverb]-but you can’t discern the signs of the times!” That is, why don’t you become like the little tribe of Issachar and understand the times to know what the chosen ought to be doing? For example, what should the chosen understand about the endemic fear that throttles our society? We’re afraid of everything: pandemics, terrorism, economic collapse, ecological meltdown, migrants, our neighbors—we fear even fear itself. But didn’t Jesus predict a global pandemic of fear just before He returns? “People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world” (Luke 21:26, NRSV). Should the chosen be afraid? Hardly! People who are afraid wring their hands and hang their heads. But not My followers, Jesus declared! The pandemic of fear must be met by the posture of hope: “Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near” (verse 28, NRSV).

In Matthew 24 (called “the little Apocalypse” because of its focus on end-time events), Jesus describes a wide-ranging list of seven global trends that will peak together just before He returns. Utilizing the Issachar factor today means that we must keep a watchful eye on all seven of these trends: 1. religious deception; 2. military conflicts;

3. political upheaval; 4. natural disasters; 5. legal breakdown; 6. social collapse; and, 7. spiritual revival. Like Issachar, we must understand the times to know what we must do.

Some think what we must do is convince God to accelerate all seven trends right now, so that society will collapse, the world will plunge into chaos, and the end will have to come. How wrong they are! “The work which the church has failed to do in a time of peace and prosperity she will have to do in a terrible crisis under most discouraging, forbidding circumstances” (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 463). Which is why Jesus’ appeal in our text today is so urgent. “Work, for the night is coming” sings that old gospel hymn. But notice Jesus’ very good news:

“We must do the work,” that is, together with Him. It’s a CO-mission. Parents can get their work done much faster without their little children’s help. But it’s the “we” part that binds their hearts together—you and Jesus.

Would you like the unusual ability to understand the times and know what ought to be done? Here are seven simple ways the gift of discernment can be yours, too.

**1. Pray for discernment.** Read again our text for today. Jesus specifically promised that the Holy Spirit “will tell you what is yet to come.” Begin asking Him now.

**2. Study the Word.** There’s no point in trying to understand the times without pondering what God has already spoken about these times. Revisit old prophecies, examine new passages, immerse yourself in Holy Scripture. It’s the one Book the chosen must master. “The entrance of Your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple” (Psalms 119:130).

**3. Believe the prophets.** The tribe of Issachar already had a track record. Long before David, the leaders of Issachar knew the importance of aligning themselves with the divine gift of prophecy: “And [in that day of battle] the princes of Issachar were with Deborah” (Judges 5:15). And she was a prophet. In the day of battle it is the better part of wisdom to align yourself with the prophet. “Believe in the Lord your God, and you shall be established; believe His prophets, and you shall prosper” (2 Chronicles. 20:20). A century ago, one like Deborah wrote: “The present is a time of overwhelming interest to all living. Rulers and statesmen, men who occupy positions of trust and authority, thinking men and women of all classes, have their attention fixed upon the events taking place about us. They are watching the strained, restless relations that exist among the nations.

They observe the intensity that is taking possession of every earthly element, and they recognize that something great and decisive is about to take place—that the world is on the verge of a stupendous crisis. Angels are now restraining the winds of strife, that they may not blow until the world shall be warned of its coming doom; but a storm is gathering, ready to burst upon the earth; and when God shall bid His angels loose the winds, there will be such a scene of strife as no pen can picture” (*Education*, p. 179, 180). The Issachar factor—the divinely enabled ability to discern the times and decide the response—is predicated upon a trust in God’s prophets, “which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns” (2 Peter 1:19).

**4. Avoid all date setting.** The only One in the universe who has the date of Jesus’ return circled in bright red in the calendar on His wall is the Father, Jesus told His disciples. Anybody else who comes riding into town with “new light” for a new date (almost) should not be believed. “Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming” (Matthew 24:42). But having established that, don’t forget that God’s endgame is stunningly rapid.

Researcher Chris Martenson warns his Web site readers (www.chrismartenson.com) how quickly events can accelerate. Imagine, he says, that at noon I handcuff you to the highest seat in the bleachers of Fenway Park, stadium home of the Boston Red Sox. Then I place a single drop of water on the pitcher’s mound far below—a drop that magically doubles in size every minute. If Fenway were watertight, how long will you have to flee that stadium to survive? For minutes you would see no appreciable increase in water—one drop becomes two, two drops become four, etc. At 12:44 p.m. there would be just five feet of water in the stadium, still leaving 93 percent of the stadium empty. But if you do not extricate yourself within five minutes, your seat in the highest bleacher will be under water at 12:49 p.m.! For 44 minutes we think we have all the time in the world—but five minutes later, it’s all over! A century ago the same point was made: “Great changes are soon to take place in our world, and the final movements will be rapid ones” (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 11). The point? While no one knows the date, be forewarned that the “exponential function” means that suddenly all the indicators will simultaneously spike—with blinding speed. Watch!

**5. Maintain a healthy caution.** As you seek the Spirit’s discernment to understand the times, avoid dogmatic prognostications and those who insist on them. The Internet flourishes with “prophetic” scenarios. Keep a healthy tentativeness and flexibility in your conclusions, “for you do not know which [idea] will succeed, whether this or that” (Ecclesiastes. 11:6, NIV). Jesus has called you to live and serve with a spirit of trust in your heavenly Father and hope in your soon-coming Savior, mingled with an earnest love for those you’ll meet today.

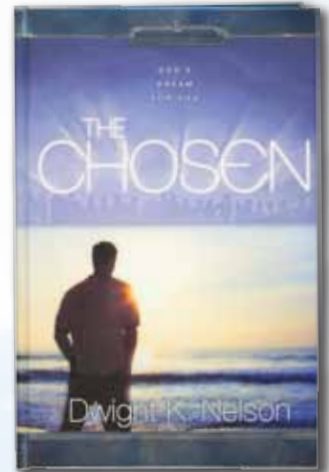
**6. Keep your focus on God.** Remember—He’s the hero in earth’s final chapter, not the chosen. “Look to Me, and be saved, all you ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other” (Isa. 45:22). All trend analyses and “signs of the times” exposes must have as their shared quest the compelling mission to draw the attention of this generation to the Savior. How?

**7. Testify to your hope.** My friend Jon Paulien, who has spent his life reflecting on and studying the book of Revelation, has written

extensively on the Apocalypse. While he maintains a healthy tentativeness even with his own research and conclusions, one point he reiterates: no matter how the endgame is deciphered in Revelation, Christ makes it clear throughout that book that the “everlasting gospel” must go “to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people” (Rev. 14:6) before He will return. You see, the Issachar factor of discerning the times (what will yet come) must lead us to the Issachar factor of determining the response (what must yet be done).

And Jesus is unequivocal: “And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come” (Matthew. 24:14). Think about it: the surest of all “signs of the times” that Jesus is soon to come is the only sign that is left in the hands of His followers—telling the world about Jesus. And what could be a more calming antidote for this generation of fear than the simple truth: He died for me—I can live without guilt (no more drinking or drugging it away); He rose for me—I can live without fear (for what can man do to me that the Son of man cannot undo for me); and He’s coming for me—I can live with hope (not in a president or an economy, but in the only One who will have the last word).

With good news that great, let the children of Issachar go out today and share the hope!



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# Still a Relevant Message



ARKANSAS-LOUISIANA CONFERENCE

“Lift up the trumpet, loud let it ring, Jesus is coming again!” It is a song we have sung, and continue to sing, but I wonder if it continues to carry the same zeal and passion in our hearts as it did yesteryear. We believe Jesus *is* coming. But do we believe he is coming *soon*? It is the belief in the imminence of our Lord’s return that stirs the passion in one’s soul.

If I know a friend is coming to see me in a month, I’m happy about it, but know that I have plenty of time to be in readiness to receive him. On the other hand, if my friend called me to say he was on the edge of town and I would see him in just a few minutes, I would be in a totally different frame of mind. If there were something I

still needed to do, that would become my highest priority. The realization that my friend is almost here would stir me like nothing else could. So, why is it that I don’t relate that way to my Friend, Jesus? Didn’t He tell me that His coming is “even at the door” (Mark 13:29)?

The message of Jesus to His church is very clear: “Behold I come quickly, and My reward is with Me” (Revelation 22:12). The weight and impact of that promise was intended to stir the hearts of people living in every generation. It is a call to readiness and action. That is why Jesus told His disciples, “Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming” (Matthew 24:42). Note carefully that Jesus did not say, “You do not know what *cen-*

*tury, decade, or even what year* your Lord is coming,” but rather, He said, “You do not know what *hour* your Lord is coming.” The point is, one must be ready at every minute of the day. Jesus illustrated it this way when He said in Mark 13:35: “Watch therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming—in the evening, at midnight, at the crowing of the rooster, or in the morning.”

So, yes, do lift up the trumpet, and loud let it ring, Jesus *is* coming again... and He is not just coming *soon*, He is coming *quickly!* It is still a relevant message!

Steve Oran, president

## Conway Church Offers Health to the Community

CONWAY, ARK. » Friends and members of the Conway church squeezed in for a photo before hiking the Huckleberry trail at Woolly Hollow State Park on Sunday, September 23, as part of the national “Let’s Move Day” celebration. Thirteen people hiked a little over a mile on the trail, other members walked earlier in the day in their own neighborhoods, and several cyclists logged some serious miles as well. The group closed out the activity with a fellowship picnic of fruit and veggie platters, cashew cheese nachos, and other healthful snacks.

“We had fun together,” said Juanita Montelongo, the church’s health ministries leader. “But we need to do a better job at making this a jumping off point to share the health message. This isn’t just a social event—it’s a chance to reach out to people who are sick of feeling sick!”

Montelongo also used the picnic gathering to announce plans for a community garden led by Jay Balch from the collegiate APP (A Peculiar People) class. “We’ll see if

it works”, said Balch. “It could be a big blessing to our own members and to our neighbors—especially as food costs rise.”

A garden plot has been found near the church. The 12 foot by 12 foot plot has been tilled, improved with compost, and will be planted with some quick-growing greens that can be harvested during the cool winter months. Serious planting and promotion of the garden will begin in the spring, and harvested food will be offered to anyone who works the garden, to those who have tight food budgets, and to the church’s neighbors. “We’re always talking about how people would feel if our church just disappeared from the neighborhood. Would we be missed?” comment-



The Conway church has begun a small community garden. From left: Jay Balch, Juanita Montelongo, (front) Ethan David, Karla Montelongo.

ed Amie Register, APP leader. “These are the kinds of projects that make real impact and open the door to real evangelism. In fact, it *is* real evangelism.”

Amie Register

# Umpire Christian School Offers Helicopter Pad

**UMPIRE, ARK. »** In August, the Umpire church started the Umpire Christian School. The school presently has a certified teacher and a teacher's assistant with 11 students in grades one to seven. The school is planning to expand the grades offered, starting next year.

Prior to school starting, the school board showed their commitment to the students

and the community by inviting Justin Kinkade, a flight nurse for Air Evac, to teach a CPR certification class to the teacher, teacher's assistant, nearly 100 percent of the school board members, and some community members.

To further show their commitment to the safety of the students and to service the community, the board voted to build a helicopter landing pad on the school's premises. This provides an option to expedite the critical treatment of any child or community member.

During the school "walk-a-thon" fundraiser in September, Michael Perrin, program director



▲ Students from the Umpire Christian School testing out the helicopter cockpit.

◀ The Umpire Christian School with Air Evac team.

for Air Evac, showed community appreciation and support for the school by landing a helicopter on the new helipad.

**Jonathan Baylon**, school board chairman



# Bonnerdale Church Making "Bags of Love" for Children in Need

**BONNERDALE, ARK. »** A new community project started by the Bonnerdale church is the making of "bags of love." The idea for the "bags of love" came from an organization in Alabama called It's My Very Own, Bags of Love ([www.IMVO.org](http://www.IMVO.org)) who will gladly share their material with any inquirer.

This outreach is open for participation from anyone in the community and church members. One day each week, a group of 12 to 20 people meet together to make quilts and "bags of love" for children who have been displaced from their homes because of drug use, neglect, or abuse by their parents. The parents may have been arrested, leaving the children, alone and scared, for the state to care for. Usually the child can take nothing but the clothes he or she is wearing. A

"bag of love" provides the child something to keep that provides comfort and a sense of security. It is a handmade bag containing a quilt, a stuffed animal, and other age-appropriate items for children ranging in age from newborn to 18 years.

The group is considering expanding the outreach to women who must leave home because of domestic violence. This is a much-needed ministry in the community, and it also meets a significant need for church and community members who

want to be able to help in some way. Some of the participants have commented that they are excited about being involved in outreach to the community, and they enjoy having the opportunity to be creative in making something useful for children. Some find it a good way to make new friends and to share some of the things they have learned over the years.

Group members are diligent about arranging their calendars so they don't miss the meetings. Although the group is scheduled to meet for four hours, most are reluctant to leave before completing the day's project, and many are there for six hours or longer.

The group looks forward to having lunch together and praying for each other's needs. They have a great time working together and getting to know each other better.



Members of the community and the Bonnerdale church making quilts as part of an outreach program for children in need.

**June Bates**

# Southwestern Union Pathfinder Camporee

**LAKE WHITNEY, TEXAS** » It was a gorgeous day with bright and balmy weather as the Pathfinder clubs and their leaders began registering for the Southwestern Union Pathfinder Camporee at Lake Whitney Ranch. From 9 a.m. until midnight, the registration tent was extremely busy as everyone got their paperwork and arm bands, and were settled into their designated spots. The Master Guides were outstanding in helping with directions and security, and the golf carts that were provided made everything possible.



Pine Bluff, Arkansas, Pathfinder director Gary Manly taught nearly 800 Pathfinders to create ice cream in a bag at the Southwestern Union Pathfinder Camporee.



By Friday morning, most of the Pathfinder clubs had arrived and Lake Whitney Ranch looked like a small city had sprung up overnight! Each conference was in its designated area, and each club was neatly arranged around its central cooking area. With all the activities that were planned, it wasn't long before there were groups of Pathfinders everywhere. There were multiple honors that could be earned in addition to the other events, which included a 5K run, drilling and marching events, and many other fun things to do.

The Arkansas-Louisiana Conference's Pine Bluff Pathfinder directors, Gary and Jan Manly, sponsored an event called "Ice Cream in a Bag," and it was like a mad house! As the day grew warmer, the number of participants increased. About 800 kids went through the process. It was great

fun, tasted great, and wasn't all that difficult after all!

The huge blue and white main tent was full of young people for the evening meetings with Jonatan Tejel, General Conference Pathfinder director. The Pathfinders loved the chance to meet other young people like themselves. The adults enjoyed watching the kids have fun, and were grateful for the encouragement of seeing other adults working hard for the young people.

On Friday evening, Sabbath, and Sunday, a "blue northern" dropped the temperature about 20 degrees. Not everyone



was prepared for the drop in temperature, but folks banded together and helped each other out with extra clothing and blankets. The weather forecast kept predicting heavy rain and storms, but God kept His hand over the encampment, and it did not get the rain that fell all around the country.

As cold as it seemed, comments from the young people included, "Let's do this again!" "When is the next one?" and "It was wonderful!"

Sylvia Downs



# Our Only Hope



“What really happens when Jesus comes?”

That’s the question I presented during a recent evangelism series. It sounds simple enough. I shared the five elements to the second coming of Christ, starting with the fact that it is a literal event. We read that Jesus really is coming again because He promised He would in John 14. Then we read in Acts 1 how Jesus ascended into heaven, and that He would return in the same manner. We discovered that the Second Coming would be a loud, audible event, as well as glorious and climactic!

By the end of the presentation, people were excited! Even our church members, who have heard the sermon many times, were thrilled to hear this message of

blessed hope.

Why were they so excited? Why was I so excited? I think it has to do with the fact that we don’t talk about the Second Coming often enough. Talk of the Second Coming shouldn’t be reserved for prophecy seminars and funerals! It should be in our daily conversations with our friends, family, and coworkers. Tell someone that Jesus is coming again!

Paul said it best when he called His glorious coming a “blessed hope” (Titus 2:13). The word “hope” in this context is not the same as the way you and I use it today. Too often, we put our “hope” in things that, at the end of the day, really don’t matter. We often say or think, “I hope I get this promotion,” “I hope the pastor doesn’t speak too long today,” or even worse, “I hope the pas-

tor doesn’t notice I’m not at church today.”

Paul’s hope was different. He *knew* Jesus was coming back. There was no doubt in his mind, and there should be no doubt in ours. Jesus *is* coming back, period.

So the big question is, why don’t we share this hope? How can we let a day go by in which we don’t tell someone? We can’t assume that everyone has this hope in their hearts.

We are Seventh-day Adventists—Sabbathkeeping believers who look forward to the soon return of our Lord and Savior! Be proud of what Jesus promised! Share the hope! At the end of the day, it’s our only hope.

**Stephen Carlile**, senior pastor, Adventist Fellowship, Tulsa

## Ardmore Church Shares Truth

**ARDMORE** » Ardmore members share with God’s children in Oklahoma and beyond, as Jesus leads the way.

“I’m going to share this with my congregation,” said Donald, a Baptist pastor, after attending an evangelistic meeting at the Ardmore church. Night after night, people from the community attended, and Donald made sure he didn’t miss a night. Sunday morning he would preach at his church, and Sunday night he would attend the evangelistic meeting. Donald had been attending the Adventist Church for about a year, but it seemed like things were finally coming together. At the end of the meetings, along with ten others, Donald made a decision to join the Adventist Church.

Andy, a physician’s assistant and a devout Catholic, walked in and sat quietly in the church. The Holy Spirit had revealed to him through his personal Bible studies that Sabbath was in fact Saturday, not Sunday. Providentially, Neil Nedley, M.D., spoke about near-death experiences from a medical perspective in connection with the Bible teaching on the state of the dead. “Thank you for sharing truth with me,” declared Andy as he eagerly signed up for Bible studies.

From Oklahoma to the world—Brock Myer is now in Africa sharing the Sabbath with a congregation of more than 150 people. The local pastor requested an American speaker to come and explain the biblical Sabbath. The pastor said if he can be shown from the Bible that the Sabbath is Saturday, then, he, his whole church, and the village school will keep it.

Neil Nedley, along with Ardmore church members David Daum and Aleksandar and Miriam Popovski, and staff from Nedley’s office, will continue to share the Ardmore spirit in Dallas, Texas, at the third annual Emotional Intelligence Summit and De-

pression Recovery Conference, February 21-24. Participants, who come from all walks of life, will be equipped with theory and practice from some of the best minds in emotional intelligence, depression, and anxiety recovery. The theme is “Positive Psychology,” and the speakers will be presenting on topics to enhance overall health and mental performance so that participants may exclaim like the apostle Paul, “I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God” (Romans 7:25).

**Miriam Popovski**

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# Bristow Pathfinders Continue a Tradition of Helping the Community

**BRISTOW** » The Bristow Stars Pathfinder Club has been working in the service of God for decades, including holding a food drive for at least 40 years. On the weekend of October 27, the Pathfinders, along with the Bristow Bears Adventurer Club, passed out sacks for the annual food collection. The sacks are passed out on Sabbath, and then the food is collected on Sunday. The community expects to see us each year. One man commented that the group missed his house last year. Another woman followed after the group, calling out because she hadn't gotten the sack put on her porch before the group came. She asked where she might take more food later. Yet another man forgot to put the sack on his porch; he came to the church with his food offering.

The church's community service pantry is overflowing now, thanks to the generosity of the small town. But the story doesn't end there. A note was found on one of the sacks. It read, "As a former Bristow Pathfinder, I welcome the opportunity to share this celebration with my children."

**Laura Weber**

The Bristow church's Pathfinder Club collected food from the community over a weekend in the fall.



# Southern Hills Church is Staying Active

**OKLAHOMA CITY** » What a time we have been having at Southern Hills. The summer was full of activities for not only the Pathfinders and Adventurers, but for the adult ministries, as well. Several campouts were held, and, after a few fundraisers, lawn mowing jobs, and odd jobs for neighbors and church members, five of our Pathfinders went on a mission trip of a lifetime to South Korea. It was two weeks of praying, site seeing, singing, fellowship, camping, making new friends, and learning new things. All the fun, pictures, and stories were shared with the

church during a special program the Pathfinders provided one Sabbath evening.

Carla Everett



In addition to other events during the summer, the Southern Hills Pathfinder Club held several campouts.

# Southern Hills Honors Veterans with Flag-folding Ceremony

**OKLAHOMA CITY** » The Southern Hills church recently honored veterans with a flag-folding ceremony. Bethany Wilson announced the Pathfinder Flag Detail Honor Guard for the dramatic and uplifting ceremony to honor both the U.S. flag and the veterans.

Wilson explained that each of the 13 folds of the flag have been ascribed a special symbolic meanings, honors, or tributes. These included: symbols of life; belief in eternal life; honor and remembrance of

the veterans who gave a portion of their lives to attain peace throughout the world; trusting in God's divine guidance; a tribute to the U.S.; that the hearts of citizens are with the country; a tribute to the Armed Forces and to the one who entered into the

valley of the shadow of death so that we may see the light of day; honoring mothers and womanhood; honoring fathers; and finally, glorifying God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. When the flag is completely folded, and the blue field of stars is uppermost, it is to remind us of our country's motto, "In God We Trust."

When the flag was folded, Captain Jer-



The Southern Hills church recently held a flag-folding ceremony to honor veterans.



emiah Cowden, followed by Austin Paddock, marched down the aisle to present Frank Ayers, a veteran, with the flag. Frank, sitting in a wheelchair, did not accept the flag right away. Frank stood. He accepted the flag, then saluted.

Carla Everett

# Not Enough



SOUTHWEST REGION CONFERENCE

As we move into a new year, it's customary and almost mandatory that we measure our accomplishments as a church organization. It is imperative that we do this as we set budgets, goals, and initiatives for the year and years to come.

My problem with these comparative methods is that we sing doxologies and often laud what I consider poor or meager accomplishments. The reason that I sense this is because we are disciples of Jesus, and in John 24:12 (NLT) He gives

this message to His followers: "The truth is, anyone who believes in me will do the same works I have done, and even greater works, because I go to be with the Father."

I believe that we, because of the signs taking place in the world, the earth, and society are the generation to usher in the Second Coming of Jesus. We have at our disposal the promise of the Holy Spirit. (Acts 1:7-8). Therefore, I view what we are doing for the finishing of the gospel commission as *not enough*.

A single statement from the Spirit of Prophecy that gives me grave concern

reads, "The Work which the church has failed to do in a time of peace and prosperity she will have to do in a terrible crisis under most discouraging, forbidding circumstances" (*Testimonies to the Church*, vol. 5 p. 463). At every accomplishment, we should thank God for it, but the next thought and word from our lips should be "not enough," until that glorious day when we see our Savior face to face.

Samuel L. Green, president

## Philadelphia Church Receives Community Service Award

**SAPULPA, OKLA. »** The Philadelphia church was awarded The President's Silver Volunteer Service Award for 552 hours of service during 2011. The award was presented at a special luncheon for volunteers by the Corporation for National and Community Service, and was accompanied by a congratulatory letter from President Barack Obama.

The church's community service department has logged thousands of hours at the Tulsa Day Center for the Homeless since it began preparing, delivering, and serving meals at the center in the 1980s. Typical fare each second and fourth Sunday of every month consists of soup, sandwiches, beans, cornbread, cookies, and drinks. In addition, literature and clothing are also distributed. On some holidays, special gifts are made and presented.

Community service leader, L.M. Davison said, "The Pathfinders have been some of our most diligent workers and supporters. Bagging hundreds of sandwiches and cookies can get tedious and



boring, but for Jesus' sake, it's a pleasure and joy. Thank God for our dedicated youth and members."

Ethel Guess

Community service volunteers, from left: Debbie Bowman, Cynthia Johnson, Shauntae Smittick, Lillie Davison (leader), and Breon Williams.

# 500 Young People Attend Youth Congress in Tulsa

**TULSA, OKLA. »** What do you get when you have 500 young people, great preaching, wonderful praise and worship, community service projects, a parade, a rally, and a fun night—all in one weekend? Youth Congress Tulsa 2012! The Southwest Region Conference Youth Ministries converged on Tulsa, Oklahoma, on November 2-3, 2012 for the event, themed “Define the Relationship.” Attendees were truly blessed with activities and workshops for children’s ministry, singles’ ministry, family life, and youth ministry.

Many of the young people participated in service projects for the community. The projects included painting at a local park and preparing food packages at the Tulsa Food Bank. The experience of sharing in God’s love for others was the goal of the organizers and was reached by those who attended.

Tulsa also introduced one of the newest members of the Southwest Region Conference—Helvis Moody, the new youth director. He challenged the youth to live wholly for Jesus during the Sabbath-morning message, which resulted in many young people giving their hearts to Jesus.

That afternoon, one fortunate Tulsa community had the opportunity to experience a Pathfinder Club parade and rally in

a neighborhood park. A message of hope and prayer was given to the residents of the community by Samuel Green, president of the Southwest Region Conference and a native of Oklahoma.

The weekend concluded with swimming, a game night, and an all-you-can-eat pizza party. Many young people that attended Youth Congress were eager to return home to make a difference in their communities.

**Kenn Dixon**, Southwest Region Conference communication director



Kenn Dixon



Kenn Dixon



Kenn Dixon



Kenn Dixon



Kenn Dixon

▲ Young people performed community service during the weekend. One of the service projects was helping prepare items for the Tulsa Food Bank.

**Middle, left:** Praise and worship groups performed for the Sabbath service.

**Top:** Samuel Green, president of the Southwest Region Conference, delivered words of encouragement and prayed for the residents of Tulsa at a community rally.

▲ Friday evening’s concert included many groups from around the conference.

**Middle, right:** Helvis Moody, Southwest Region Conference’s new youth director, challenged the youth during the Sabbath-morning sermon.

# City Temple Uses Halloween as a Time To Witness

**DALLAS, TEXAS** » This past October, City Temple's youth took advantage of Halloween as an opportunity to save souls with an event they called, "Trick or Tract."

The mission was simple: participants gave out candy and tracts to trick-or-treating parents and children in the neighborhood just across the street from the church.

Ten youth in two groups, accompanied by two adult chaperones went out excitedly into the night. They were led by City Temple's Adventist Youth evangelism

leaders Denee McClain and Evan Brown.

They passed out tracts and candy to everyone they could find. The youth greeted the adults and children with a cheerful "Trick or Tract!" and gave generously of the candy and the tracts. They also let them know that they were from the church just around the corner.

All who participated had faith that God would bless the effort they had expended. After all, when God said in Matthew 18:20 that "where two or three are gathered...there am I in the midst," He wasn't talking only about prayer.

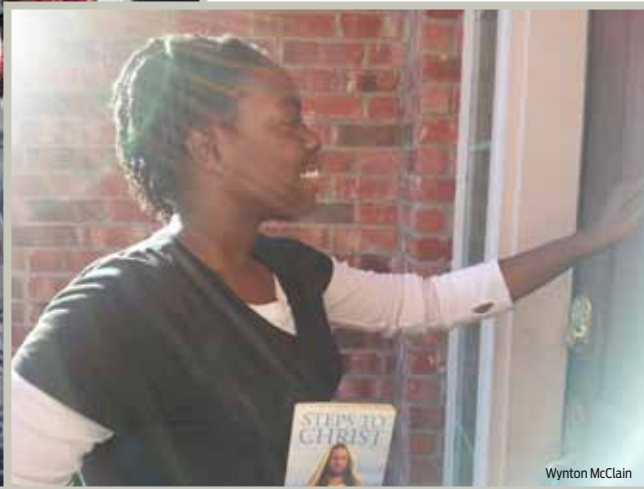
**Denee McClain**

Evan Brown knocking on doors in Dallas, Texas, during "Trick or Tracts" to share Jesus.

Denee McClain in the community sharing tracts and treats.



Clark Brown



Wynton McClain

# Men Without Excuses

**CORSICANA, TEXAS** » The Bethel church's annual men's day program, organized by Norman Stiggers, pastor, and Roy Rowden, Sr., communication director, along with the men of the church, was an inner-city prayer conference entitled "Men Without Excuses."

Prayer is the key to every problem in life. It puts us in touch with divine wisdom, and God knows how to adjust everything perfectly. This was the essence of the message preached by guest speaker Kenneth Wade, of the Agape Fellowship church in Lancaster, Texas. He emphasized the blessings of obeying God and helped the congregation to better understand that "the greatest want of the world is the want of men—men who will not be bought or sold,

men who in their inmost souls are true and honest, men who do not fear to call sin by its right name, men whose conscience is as true to duty as the needle to the pole, men who will stand for the right though the heavens fall" (*Education*, p. 57).

**Lorraine James-Stiggers**



The Corsicana Bethel church held a men's inner-city meeting for its annual men's day program. From left: Norman Stiggers, pastor; Lorenzo Newhouse, Kenneth Wade, Douglass Williams, Cyrus Stiggers, Mark Black, Charles Miller, Roy Rowden, Sr., Kendall Shackelford, and Richard Sneed.



# Are We There Yet?



Awareness in the time of the end is essential to avoid being caught off guard. Notice what Romans 13:11 says, “And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep, for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed!”

*Isaac’s Storm* is an intriguing book written about the hurricane that wiped out Galveston Island in 1900. One of the main plot lines of the book was how everyone was convinced that a hurricane would never strike Galveston, even as one approached! The author vividly describes how the streets began to fill with water, yet people went about their business as usual. Children played in the water, men gathered for breakfast at the local diner, women got together for tea. No one fled from the monster storm that was about to strike because many believed Galveston was invincible! People assured themselves nothing bad would happen. As a result, 6,000 people died.

A recent article in *Time* magazine revealed that 17 percent of Americans believe that the end of the world will occur during their lifetime. The article stated:

“Masses of people became convinced the end was nigh when Rome was sacked in the year 410, when the Black Death wiped out one-third of the population of 14th Century Europe, when the tectonic shudders of the Lisbon earthquake in 1755 caused church bells to ring as far away as England,

and certainly after 1945, when human beings harnessed the power to bring about their total destruction, not an act of God, but an act of mankind.”

Ellen White states that, “The present is a time of overwhelming interest to all living. Rulers, statesmen, men who occupy positions of trust and authority, thinking men and women of all classes, have their attention fixed upon the events taking place about us. They are watching the relations that exist between the nations, they observe the intensity that is taking possession of every earthly element, and they recognize that something great and decisive is about to take place! That the world is on the verge of a stupendous crisis.”

We’re close, but the question is, “Are we there yet?”

Reading the latest headlines seem to imply the end is near, but the Bible says in Matthew 24:6, “See that you are not troubled, for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet!”

When the anxiety is removed from the context of the wait, it is replaced with hope, and the agenda during the wait is quite different!

The Greek word used in the New Testament as “hope” has a much different connotation than the definition we’re familiar with. In the English language, we generally use the word hope in reference to something that might come to pass. For example, when those of us diehard fans refer to the Dallas Cowboys, we certainly

don’t expect to win, but we hope we might win! Although the chances of winning are remote, we still hope! However, when the New Testament uses the word hope, it means something that will absolutely, positively take place. Thus, the blessed hope is an absolute certainty. Not a matter of *if*, but *when*.

You and I are well-versed in the signs that Jesus clearly outlined in Matthew 24. Wars, conflicts between nations, famines, plagues, earthquakes, religious persecution, hatred, conflict among believers, false prophets, false “Christs,” spiritual apathy, and widespread lawlessness. However, Matthew 24:14 outlines when the end will occur, “And this Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end shall come.”

In *Christ’s Object Lessons*, Ellen White says, “Christ is waiting with longing desire for the manifestation of Himself in His Church. When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come, to claim them as His own.”

Acts 1:7 summarizes this point, “It is not for you to know the times or seasons which the Father has set in His own authority!”

It’s neither our place nor prerogative to know, or even seek to know when Christ might return. We are simply called to be ready!

**Carlos J. Craig**, president

## Hico Annual Scholarship

**HICO** » With only 16 members, most of whom are retired, traditional methods of evangelism can be challenging for the Hico church. But the members beamed with joy recently when Deivi Garcia, a senior theology student at Southwestern Adventist University, delivered the Sabbath sermon. The reason? The church caught a glimpse of how God was using a \$1,000 scholarship to prepare Garcia to fill the gospel commission. Under the scholarship program, a student is selected by the theology faculty

at Southwestern. The selection is made in the spring semester for the following school year, and the student is asked to present one church service during the fall semester. At that time the church dedicates the student as a representative of the Hico church family as they embark on a career working in God’s vineyard. Deivi is the second recipient of the Hico annual scholarship.

**Robert McChesney**



Members of the Hico church have sponsored a scholarship for theology students as a way to evangelize.

# Lest We Forget: 135 Years in Cleburne

**CLEBURNE** » “In 1875, only eight years after the City of Cleburne, Texas, got its name, the Rust brothers from Plano, Texas, and evangelist Dudley Canright came to the Cleburne area holding “open air meetings” and circulating copies of *The Adventist Review and Sabbath Herald*. Folks in the Cleburne area, about 1,500 population by then, were very interested in the things of God and wrote to J.F. Bahler in Michigan asking for more books, Bible studies, and possibly a pastor. The response came in the talent and dedication of evangelist Robert M. Kilgore. Elder Kilgore answered the call and began his meetings in a 50 x 70 foot tent. The tent meetings drew about 300 people each night. Elder Kilgore wrote back to the General Conference and stated, ‘... we are much gratified by the interest already shown.’ Apparently he was undaunted by the ‘fragrance’ and noise of the 150 saddle horses and 50 teams hitched around the outside of the tent. But troublesome times did come in the form of terrible wind and rainstorms, almost demolishing the tent twice, and opposition from other denominational pastors” (*Lest We Forget*, p. 1).

The Cleburne church was officially organized in the new Texas Conference on February 2, 1878, and shortly after the new church building was torn to pieces by a tornado. The Lord calls us to, “Do all that we can to stand, and then stand, therefore” (Ephesians 6:13, 14).

Church members first met in the homes of Mr. and Mrs. W. J. Layland, Mrs. Klingbaum and others, then on Sabbath, April 13, 1907, at the Knights of Pythias Hall. At that first meeting, they organized themselves as a church and took communion to dedicate their efforts to God.

God heard their prayers of dedication to righteousness, and within two years the church membership had grown to 50 people. On March 12, 1911, they met to discuss the need for a new church building. One hundred and sixty dollars were pledged, and the church members wanted no debt. Six months later, on Saturday, September 30, 1911, a “threshold crossing” celebration was held for the new frame construction church on the corner of Sunset and Featherston streets.

By April 1931, the Cleburne church had a Dorcas Society as its organized community outreach program. By 1941 it had created its “Worthy Student Fund.” 1945 saw

December 5, 1969 with a membership of 213 people. Members worked hard and sacrificed much to have a beautiful building. New additions included handmade, stained glass windows by Mr. and Mrs. Layland; an upper balcony built after a lightning strike; a new stage area; a baby grand piano donated by Mr. Jessie Krueger; a new Johannus organ; two beautiful murals commissioned by Mr. Ron Layland in memory of his parents; and with the growing church school, Cleburne Adventist Christian School, a new metal building.

The church members’ obligation to love one another manifested in many programs: CACS education; music; men’s ministries; women’s ministries; singles’ ministries; health programs; prison ministries; religious liberty; Adventurer and Pathfinder clubs; a growing Vacation Bible School every year; and the H.O.P.E. Medical and Dental Clinic.

Dr. Tony Torres, who became the pastor in 2002, opened the H.O.P.E. Clinic with the support of the church. He is a medical doctor as well as a pastor, and had done mission work in other countries for more than 35 years.

Because the number of

people in Johnson County without health insurance or access to affordable health care, the church saw a mission field at home. To date, the clinic has seen more than 20,000 medical and 2,000 dental patients, and is a preceptorship site for Baylor University’s senior dental students.

The church family has grown from a mere handful to more than 500, and under the pastoral leadership of Harly Charles is celebrating its 135th birthday on February 2. All are welcome!

**Dedra Torres**



The current location for the Cleburne Seventh-day Adventist Church.

the church in need of a larger facility. The congregation had grown and weathered the Great Depression, so when the new facility was planned at the same location, all agreed that surely, it should be debt free—“Owe nothing to anyone except for your obligation to love one another” (Romans 13:8).

This concept carried the church through an enlargement of the church building, still another expansion there, and only a few years later, an even larger building at its current location on Meadowview Drive. It was dedicated on



# San Marcos Church Celebrates Adventist Heritage

**SAN MARCOS** » The San Marcos church celebrated Adventist heritage on October 27, 2012, with a play that told the story of the events related to “The Great Disappointment” of 1844, out of which the Adventist movement came. The production, entitled *From the Ashes of Deception*, engaged 23 young people in a 35-minute program.

The project also included handing out *The Great Controversy* to the people of San Marcos. As Ellen White once wrote, “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).

Besides engaging the youth and the other members of the church, the program’s goal was to restore the great hope in Jesus’ second coming, leading the audience to fully understand the great importance of the Adventist Church in the historical and prophetic world scenario.

The idea grew out of the heart of the church’s former youth pastor, Cesar Grassiotto, with the support of the San Marcos Pathfinder Club and staff that helped



The San Marcos church recently celebrated Adventist heritage with a dramatic production based on *The Great Disappointment of 1844*. They also handed out copies of *The Great Controversy* to the San Marcos community.

in casting, rehearsing, producing, and acting.

For those interested in recreating the drama *From the Ashes of Deception* in their local church, please contact Cesar Grassiotto for further information at: [cesargrassiotto@gmail.com](mailto:cesargrassiotto@gmail.com).

**Cesar Grassiotto**

# Waco Church Challenged to Give

**WACO** » Hayden Moody currently serves as the investment secretary for the Waco English church. This carries a challenge, as our congregation is small and can only accommodate a limited number of projects. However, upon accepting the position, he immediately set forth the goal of a mile of pennies to be reached in one year. This would amount to \$844.50, a seemingly large amount to be raised by a small number of Sabbath School members. Timothy Pulley, a student at our church school, became the young face of investment. Each Sabbath, he faithfully carried the offering



container to each member. To the church’s delight, they reached the first mile in six months. They reached the second mile in another six months. Currently, they are working on their third mile. God has blessed the church as they have ventured out in faith to do something for Him that seemed impossible.

**Victoria Pulley**

Timothy Pulley (right) helped the Waco church to reach its Ingathering goal by carrying the offering container to each member and soliciting their contribution.

TEXAS CONFERENCE

## Ready or Not, Here I Come!



TEXICO CONFERENCE

Life has come full circle for me. It doesn't seem like many years ago that my sons were little and they loved to play hide and seek. After counting for an appropriate period of time, I would shout, "Ready or not, here I come!" I would hear squeals of excitement from the parts of the house where each of the boys were hiding. Now, I hear my grandchildren's squeals as I announce my coming. It was exciting then, and it is exciting now. I look at the coming of Jesus in the same way.

We all know there are signs of His coming announced in the Bible, and we see them being fulfilled all around us. Just as I counted down the numbers in hide and

seek, the Bible counts down the signs of His coming. All signs point to Jesus' soon return and the final events can be counted off rapidly, just as I do sometimes with my grandchildren's hide and seek countdown. The faster I count, the more excited they get. Whether I count slowly or quickly, they know I'm coming, and they have to get ready.

In Titus 2:13, Paul writes, "Looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior, Jesus Christ." He later adds, "I've fought the good fight, I've finished my course, I've kept the faith, henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the Righteous Judge, shall give me

at that day, and not to me only, but to all them that love His appearing." (2 Tim. 4:7, 8) Those who are really looking forward to Jesus' coming will be the ones who receive that crown of righteousness.

We see the signs all around us, and soon Jesus will announce His coming to the whole world. Just like grandchildren squeal for joy when I announce I'm coming in the game hide and seek, we will experience joy beyond imagination, when the Lord Jesus comes for us. Let's get ready, for soon we will hear, "Ready or not, here I come!"

**James L. Stevens**, president

## Albuquerque Church Reaches Out Through "Operation Christmas Child"

**ALBUQUERQUE, N. MEX.** » Under the leadership of Bonnie Norton, members and friends of the Albuquerque Central church collected 60 boxes in 2012 for Operation Christmas Child. This was a huge increase from the previous year's, approximately 15! Over the course of a few weeks in October and early November, families found their way to department stores to collect various

fun gifts and toys, including toothbrushes and other healthcare items to fill up a plastic or cardboard shoe box. The only decisions to be made were whether it was for a boy or girl, and what age group.

Along with marking the box appropriately, seven dollars was included in every box to cover the shipping required to get it to the child. It certainly was fun to see

the stuffed boxes piling up, and even more rewarding as Bonnie and crew delivered the boxes to the receiving point. We were happy to represent a church group willing to share of their means and spread around some Christmas joy. The bar is set higher now, as it is hoped we can gather 100 boxes in 2013! Bonnie reports "I am glad Central is participating in this because it is a great way to partner with the Albuquerque Christian community in reaching out to children in need."

If you or your group would like to be involved next year, go to [www.samartanspurse.org](http://www.samartanspurse.org) for details about a collection point near you. Plenty of advertising and other supplies are available, making it easy to engage your group in this fun project.

**Terri Gibson**



Albuquerque Central's 2012 "Operation Christmas Child" donation project had more than 60 boxes donated.

# Churches in Northern New Mexico find joy in serving the community

**NORTHERN N. MEX. »** The Taos church recently visited the Taos Living Center and sang inspirational songs they had prepared and gave out gifts of combs, socks, and quilts. The residents were excited and the church members had a great time visiting with them. The nurses and manager were so pleased with the visit that they invited them to come again.

The Cañon Plaza church also enjoys ministering to the elderly. The members prepared 100 handmade pillows and visited the Hacienda Nursing Home in Española, where they sang and encouraged them with inspirational words. At the end, they made sure that each resident received

a pillow. Everyone there seemed to really enjoy the visit and gift. Inspirational books were also given to some of the nurses and aides. Some of the Cañon Plaza church members saw old friends who were now living at the nursing home. Members Regis and Ines brought a quilt, which they prepared for a nurse who had worked for the same nursing home for 30 years, but then experienced a stroke. They had been classmates in their childhood. The woman was so happy to receive such a fabulous handmade quilt from her longtime friend.

The Tres Piedras church was privileged to serve their community by hosting a Thanksgiving meal in early November.

Approximately 20 visitors from the community enjoyed the traditional meal and an inspirational movie, which was shown afterward. A visitor commented that she loved the movie and was inspired by it.

These were wonderful experiences for the northern New Mexico churches as they felt the joy of service, and were inspired by Matthew 25:36 (NIV), "I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me."

**Jorge Poveda**

▼ The Cañon Plaza church loaded up their homemade pillows to distribute to every resident at a nursing home in Española.

▼ Jorge Poveda, pastor, (far left) joined some of his church members from Taos to minister to the elderly at the Taos Living Center with songs and gifts.

**Bottom:** Approximately 20 visitors from the small Tres Piedras community joined church members in a traditional Thanksgiving meal hosted by the church.



TEXICO CONFERENCE

# Homeless Vets Attend Sabbath Services in Santa Fe

**SANTA FE, N. MEX.** » “God bless you for what you are doing,” was heard over and over again in the large Alumni Hall gymnasium at Santa Fe University. It was mid-October, and the Santa Fe churches were conducting their annual “Stand Down” event for homeless veterans in northern New Mexico.

It was the second year that the four Adventist churches in the city have sponsored the “stand down.” “Stand down” is a term used in the military for a retreat from combat for soldiers needing rest and relaxation and time to recuperate. More than 70 volunteers were on hand with winter clothing, sleeping bags, haircuts, shoe-shines, meals, foot-washing, and prayers for the 143 homeless veterans and 237 homeless non-veterans who came to the event. Several rented vans traveled north to the cities of Taos, Española, and Las Vegas to bring homeless veterans to the site of the two-day event.

Something new was added to the event—a Sabbath program full of spiritual messages and music. A dozen musicians volunteered their talents to enhance the day’s program that included several personal testimonies by Christian veterans, telling how God had worked in their lives. Daniel Villalva, a pastor and former combat marine, gave his own testimony in the day’s sermon. In a moving anointing ceremony, Leonard Cummings, pastor, led local church elders in anointing about 25 people who came forward to claim the blessings of God.

Among the many prayer requests given during the event was one for a volunteer’s relative who had been in a coma for two weeks. Later in the day, Cummings and several church elders decided to visit this person and expected her to still be in a comatose state. To their surprise, she was sitting up and chatting with visitors!

During the church service, when a man in attendance suddenly began convulsing, a group of elders gathered around him in prayer. When they finished their prayer over him, the man got up and walked to the

says Philip Chavez, a veteran who works for the Veteran’s Administration and who organized the event. “Our church members came through with good support.”

Nearly a dozen local agencies also were on hand the first day to give support through counseling and social services. Robert Gardner, a doctor as well as an Adventist veteran from the Rio Rancho church, was on hand with a colorful health display and a health evaluation service.

New Mexico’s governor, Susana Martínez, issued a public proclamation naming that day, October 16, as the official Stand Down Day in northern New Mexico. The citation commended the Veteran’s Administration and the church for conducting this special event for the state’s veterans.

Allen Steele



◀ Two young men from the Marcy Park church, David Saldivar and Saul Tarrango, manned the “Stand Down” barber shop. About 50 of the nearly 400 homeless took advantage of the haircut offer.

▲ Volunteers served over 500 meals during the event.

Top: The color guard at the Stand Down Sabbath program was provided by the Capital City Pathfinder Club. From left: Martin Guzman, Shantae Gallegos, Isabella Warren, Naomi Hernandez, and Roseangela Ortiz.

back of the room!

“It was more than successful, it was very inspirational.”

# Southwestern's Dinosaur Research: Evolutionists Take Notice

Scientists are beginning to notice Southwestern's research in dinosaur paleontology, according to Art Chadwick, research professor of biology and geology.

"We have struggled for many years to get people to listen to what we have to say," says Chadwick. "Now,



also a rich spiritual environment, which is just as important as the science."

The program includes practical experience in excavating dinosaur fossils, an overview of dinosaur life, and general science concepts. It also covers fossil records and classification of dinosaurs.

"I don't know that dinosaur bones make a case for creationism," says Chadwick, "but what they do is reveal that the death

◀ Student Rose Weeks and Art Chadwick, Ph.D., labeling bones.

Far left: Art Chadwick, Ph.D., at the dig site in eastern Wyoming.

◀ A geology student happily putting in his time cleaning bones in the lab.



and destruction of the dinosaurs is consistent with a global flood. It supports the idea that there was a catastrophe, but it doesn't exclude other possibilities and it doesn't prove that a flood took place."

According to Chadwick, dinosaur research is important to the school because it not only gives students the chance to do real science, but to also participate in actual research to be published. Research is published as a result of both student and faculty work. He also says it's important, not only to the school, but to the community.

"Everyone is interested in dinosaurs," says Chadwick. "We have hundreds of kids every year that come to see the bones at Southwestern's museum. There's a lot of interest in dinosaurs. Being able to see the spectacular display that we have here is pretty cool."

"We're getting papers published every year and presenting good data," says Chadwick. "It's a good thing. It wasn't our intent to convert all the evolutionists to believe in creation, but to show them that creationists have valuable science to offer."

**Makala Coleman**, sophomore journalism major

the study of how organisms decay and become fossils.

"We're not concerned with what types of

animals they are," said Chadwick, "but instead we want to know what happened to these animals while they were alive. Also what killed them, what happened to them after they died, how long their bodies were sitting around before they were buried, and after they were buried, what kind of changes took place. It's an attempt to use deductive logic to solve problems."

Much of the research information comes from a summer class called "The Dinosaurs," also known as the Dinodig. The class involves fossil excavation that takes place in eastern Wyoming each summer. It's designed to involve students in real scientific research and also counts as a four credit hour lab science class.

"It's an ongoing science project," says Chadwick. "Students that go have the chance to work with real science. There is

these people know our names. They spend time with us and are not afraid of us anymore. They recognize us because they know we do good work and we're consistent."

Chadwick and his colleagues present a new paper or poster at national scientific meetings each year. This past October, a Southwestern student, Rose Weeks, presented a poster to the Society of Vertebrate Paleontologists in North Carolina.

They are currently working to finish a large-scale academic publication. The authors are Chadwick, Lawrence Turner, professor of math and physical science, and Berney Neufeld, a former faculty member.

Their work is classified as "taphonomy,"

# Southwest ASI Chapter Holds Rally In Oklahoma City

**OKLAHOMA CITY** » The Southwest Chapter of Adventist-laymen's Services and Industries (ASI) held their most recent weekend event in early October 2012 in the Oklahoma City area. Friday evening, the Southwest Chapter ASI leadership led out in the vespers service at Oklahoma Academy, giving the students an opportunity to learn more about the work of ASI and its local and international mission opportunities.

Sabbath morning, Ramon Chow, secretary and treasurer for ASI International, spoke at the International church in Oklahoma City, and the Oklahoma Academy choir presented special music.

Floyd Courtney, president of the Southwest ASI chapter, spoke at the Yukon church. Rus Lorenz, Southwest's vice president for membership; Pat Humphrey, Southwestern Union Conference ASI executive secretary; and Art Humphrey, South-



▲ The Oklahoma Academy Choir held a Sabbath-afternoon concert during the Oklahoma City ASI rally this past October.

Top: The ASI Southwest Chapter officers and friends at the ASI rally held recently at the International church in Oklahoma City.

◀ Church members from around the Oklahoma City area, along with members of the International church, attended the ASI rally held in October.

west's vice president for communication, visited local churches to invite the people to an afternoon rally at the International church.

In the afternoon, the Oklahoma Academy choir gave a half-hour music program, then Chow spoke to a nearly-full church on the history and philosophy of ASI. Paul Karmy, Southwest's vice president for evangelism, witnessed about the television min-

istry in which he is leading out in the Dallas area. Lorenz explained the reasons for joining ASI, and the steps necessary to do so. There were many questions about ASI and the attendees showed great interest.

Attendees were invited to the next major Southwest Chapter ASI event, which will be the annual convention to be held at Gentry, Arkansas. The convention theme will be "It's Time To Finish Our Father's

Business" and will feature speakers Dwight Haynes, whose specialty is the sanctuary message, and well-known youth speaker, Dwayne Lemon. On Friday morning of the convention, Mountain Media Ministries will present seminars on sustainable living. The convention will begin on Thursday evening, February 28, and will close with a prayer breakfast on Sunday morning, March 3.

**Floyd Courtney**, ASI Southwest Chapter president

# Adventist Communicators Converge in Albuquerque

**ALBUQUERQUE, N.MEX. »** The Southwestern Union, Southwest Region Conference, and the Texico Conference hosted the annual convention of the Society of Adventist Communicators (SAC), which took place in Albuquerque, New Mexico, this past October. SAC is the official Adventist organization for “the socialization, continuing education, recognition, and nurture of Seventh-day Adventists whose careers are in fields of communication.”

A valuable part of SAC’s convention is the awards presentation, where individuals, groups, and organizations are awarded for excellence in various categories of communication. The Southwestern Union was well represented at the awards ceremony, with the Texas Conference’s own Kristina Pascual Lockhart, associate director of communication, being awarded the 2012 Young Professional of the Year award for her outstanding work in the Texas Conference. Other awards included Best in Class

for Karen Savignon’s photograph of Melissa DaPaiva, which appeared in the March 2012 issue of the *Record*; an honorable mention for the Texas Conference’s Lake Whitney Ranch Web site; an honorable mention for the cover design of the March 2012 *Record*; and an honorable mention for project design by Madelein Terreros, a graphic designer for the Texas Conference.

“I am honored to have been nominated and recognized with the Young Professional of the Year award,” said Kristina Pascual Lockhart. “It is a humbling experience and I praise God for this opportunity. It’s an affirmation for young professionals to trust in God, not in ourselves, and submit our careers to Him and ‘He will straighten our paths’ (Proverbs 3:5,6).”

2012 marks the first time the SAC convention has been held in the Southwestern Union since the 2004 convention in Dallas. In regard to being a host conference for this year’s convention, Southwest Region

these professional communicators teach and inspire us through their individual craft. Because the work here on earth is not done, it will continue to be our job and mission to share a clear and concise message of the love of Jesus to this world. This is what communicators do.”

Texico Conference communication director Sue Hinkle adds, “The Texico Conference was privileged to host a great group of communicators in the ‘Land of Enchantment’. This was my first time attending the convention, and I realized what a blessing it is to rub shoulders with others in the profession. This event greatly enriched my communication horizon on many different levels as top-notch speakers and musicians shared their talent and knowledge with us. Not only was it a great time of learning, but it also inspired me to do even better at communicating the good news that we are honored to share.”

The annual convention regularly draws upwards of 200 Adventist communicators, mostly from the North American Division, but also includes a handful of international travelers.

**Reggie Johnson**, *Record* designer/assistant editor



Gerry Chudleigh

▲ Southwestern Union communication director Pat Humphrey (right) accepts an award from SAC president Kimberly Luste-Maran (left) on behalf of Karen Savignon for her photograph, which appeared in the March 2012 *Southwestern Union Record*.

► Kristina Pascual Lockhart (center) receives the 2012 Young Professional of the Year award from SAC president Kimberly Luste-Maran (left) and North American Division communication director George Johnson (right) at the Society of Adventist Communicators Convention, held in Albuquerque, New Mexico.



Gerry Chudleigh

# Adventists Respond to Hurricane Sandy

When residents of New York and New Jersey batted down the hatches and stocked up on food and other emergency supplies in preparation for Hurricane Sandy, they had no idea what was ahead. By 8:00 p.m. on October 29, 2012, it was evident that New York, New Jersey, and the Northeast states were in for a devastating blow from the superstorm that had already

Services), met to put plans in place to respond in the aftermath of the storm. Communication was sent out on a regular basis via Facebook, Twitter, e-mail, Web sites, and other means to warn people about the impending storm and how to prepare for it.

Once the storm passed the area, ACS Disaster Recovery teams from the conferences, along with their youth ministries departments and federations, and the AYES Corps, immediately went into action assisting in the hurricane relief efforts. Many of them, victims

themselves, put their needs aside to help their neighbors.

ACS collaborated with the New York State Office of Emergency Management and the Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster, that also work with such organizations as New York Cares and the American Red Cross. Team members from ADRA also provided ACS with counsel on responding following the storm.

As the reality of what had happened began to sink in and the call for assistance went out, social networking sites and other communication methods were used to share information on what the needs were and where and how people could volunteer

NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION



caused damage in the Caribbean and the Southeastern and Mid-Atlantic regions of the United States.

Days before the storm arrived, Adventist Community Services teams from the Greater New York and Northeastern conferences, the Atlantic Union, and the North American Division, and the AYES Corps (Adventist Youth Emergency





to assist in the relief efforts. Volunteers from around the Atlantic Union and across the country went to New York to assist. Included among those who responded were Joe and Sherry Watts, Disaster Response coordinators for the Texas Conference, Southwestern Union, and North American Division. Following an urgent appeal by Donald King, Atlantic Union Conference president, to the North American Division at its year-end meeting in Silver Spring, Maryland, the North American Division and the General Conference responded by making appropriations of \$500,00 and \$200,000, respectively, for storm relief. The Atlantic Union Conference and several other unions also voted to provide financial assistance. A special offering was also taken around the North American Division



on November 10, 2012, to assist the hurricane ravaged areas.

The actions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church family brought scripture alive: “I was hungry and you fed me, I was thirsty and you gave me a drink, I was homeless and you gave me a room, I was shivering and you gave me clothes” (Matthew 25:35,36, The Message). ACS and the many volunteers provided meals, distributed school supplies, personal care packages, clothing, and blankets. They also provided generators and made charging stations available for those who needed cell phones

and other devices charged, and so much more.

The relief efforts will continue for many months to come, and volunteers and donations will be needed as New York and New Jersey continue to move forward from this disaster. It is unlikely you’ll ever hear about some groups of people who are a part of the fabric of the community and who were also there to lend a helping hand. Heaven’s record is the only source that will have the true account of the donations made and the work done by all these groups in the aftermath of the storm. “So let’s not al-

low ourselves to get fatigued doing good. At the right time we will harvest a good crop if we don’t give up, or quit. Right now, therefore, every time we get the chance, let us work for the benefit of all, starting with the people closest to us in the community of faith” (Galatians 6:9, Message).

**Ednor A. P. Davison** is the editor of the *Atlantic Union Gleaner* and assistant to the president for communication in the Atlantic Union Conference.

## Classified Ads

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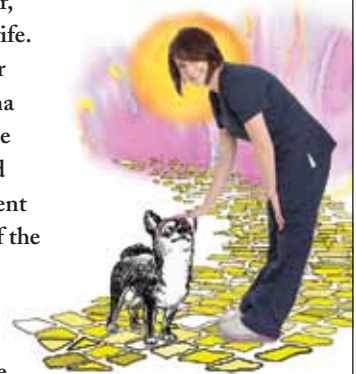
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tion and Vegan Vitamin D this winter fight virus, bacteria, fungus, inflammation, and infection. Sale on Almost Sunshine Vegan Vitamin D, only \$8/bottle. Bon Herbals carries Vegetarian/Vegan nutritional supplements. Order on-line or by phone: [www.bonherbals.com](http://www.bonherbals.com), Bon Herbals, PO Box 1038, Collegedale, TN 37315, 423.238.7467, or [bonnie@bonherbals.com](mailto:bonnie@bonherbals.com).

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## Obituaries

### **FERGUSEN, Louise Powell,**

born December 18, 1921 in Linden, Tex., and died September 26, 2012 in Keene, Tex. Survivors: daughter and son-in-law, Marie and Don Redwine of Keene.

### **FORTNER, Myrtle Ellen,**

born February 19, 1919 in San Antonio, Tex., and died October 11, 2012 in Braselton, Ga. She was a life-time member of the Hereford, Tex., church, where she played the organ for more than 60 years. She was very active in the children's divisions and VBS for most of her life. She and her husband, Bernice D., lived on a large ranch in west Tex., which she continued to run until her 91st birthday. She was preceded in death by her loving husband, B.D. She loved the Lord and looked forward to the soon return of Jesus Christ as her Savior and Lord. Survivors: daughter and son-in-law, Bernita and Dale Tunnell, of Braselton; son and daughter-in-law Don and Joyce Fortner, of Maumelle, Ark.; son and daughter-in-law Gary and Gail Fortner, of Inola, Okla.; brother, Wayne Elliston and wife Joelle, of Amarillo, Tex.; and two sisters, Iva Gene Elliston, of Hereford, and Evelyn Fitzpatrick, of Albuquerque, N. Mex.; 10 grandchildren, 17 great-grandchildren, and six great-great-grandchildren.

**GREER, Bernice,** born April 1, 1925 in Hereford, Tex., and died August 26, 2012 in Albuquerque, N. Mex. Bernice served as an administrative assistant to several conference presidents and several local church pastors. She was a very creative individual and worked with children's Sabbath School and VBS for years. She loved to decorate for church socials and ban-

quets and loved the Seventh-day Adventist church. She was full of fun and life, and she will be greatly missed by her family and friends. She was preceded in death by her husband, Milton Greer, who died in August 2008. Survivors: daughters and sons-in-law, Ramona and Randy Willis, of Kan., and Carolyn and Johnny Moto, of Albuquerque; brother and sister-in-law, Wayne and Joelle Elliston, of Amarillo, Tex.; sister and brother-in-law, Evelyn and Eddie Fitzpatrick, of Albuquerque; sister, Imogene Elliston, of Hereford; sister, Myrtle Ellen Fortner, of Happy, Tex.; nephew, Don Fortner, of Little Rock, Ark.; three granddaughters, one grandson, and three great-grandchildren.

### **HAMILTON, George C.,** born

October 16, 1923 in New Salem, Texas, and died October 7, 2012. He was buried at Salem Cemetery, in Rusk, Tex. He was a member of the Rusk church. He had served in the United States Navy during WWII. He and Flossie May Delaney were married March 16, 1946 following his honorable discharge from the military. Survivors: his wife of 66 years, Flossie, of Rusk; brother, Howard, of Woodville; sons, Royce of Rusk, and George and Robert, of Lufkin, Tex.; daughter, Janice Airhart of Rusk; eight grandchildren, 13 great-grandchildren, and two great-great-grandchildren.

### **JOERS, Annetta Mae**

**Peterson,** born September 25, 1915 in Woodburn, Ore., and died August 28, 2012. She was a talented organist, pianist and vocalist and choir director, teaching each of these skills during the years at Auburn Adventist Academy and Ozark Adventist Academy. Her music was always dedicated to the Lord as she



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provided organ, piano and vocal worship in the churches she attended through the years, as well as invitations to camp meetings and various conference events. Her education included Columbia Academy and Walla Walla College, and graduate studies at Northwestern University. Following graduation, she taught at Auburn Academy and met and married Lawrence E.C. Joers, M.D. When she and Lawrence moved to Jay, Okla., she again shared her musical skills in the music department at Ozark Adventist Academy. She loved her students greatly, and many have shared that feeling, keeping in contact with her over the years. Annetta and Lawrence moved to Reed-sport, Ore., in 1978, to retire. There Lawrence passed away in 1999, and after years of urging by her son, she joined them in Clinton, Ark., in 2006. They built her a house right behind theirs, and enjoyed sharing a country homestead life with her for her last precious years. Survivors: son and daughter-in-law, Lawrence (Skip) Joers II and Holly Joers; daughter, Linda

Mae Summerfield; and three grandchildren.

### **JONES, Shirley Mae Bolds,**

born December 13, 1933 in New Orleans, La., and died June 25, 2012 in Baton Rouge, La. She had been a member of the New Orleans Ephesus church for 50 years. Following Hurricane Katrina, she relocated to Baton Rouge where, for the last five years, she was a member of the Berean church and served as a deaconess, a hostess, and a senior citizens' club member. Survivors: sisters, Evelyn Napoleon of Fort Worth, Tex., Francis Hooker and Audrey Cloud, of Baton Rouge, and Wilma Perrilliat, of Algiers, La.; brothers, Wilfred Bolds, Sr., and wife, Eartha, of Algiers, Rudolph Bolds, Sr., and wife, Jessie, of Baton Rouge, and Essie Bolds of New Orleans; two step-daughters, Valeria Jones Caldwell and husband, James, and Vivian Jones Brown and husband, Jimmie, Sr.; four grandchildren; and six great-grandchildren.

**KOI, Zoltan F.,** was born October 6, 1923 in Whitewood,

Saskatchewan, Canada and died August 25, 2012, in Hot Springs, Ark. He was a member of the Hot Springs church. He loved music and played the French horn with the Boston Symphony in Carnegie Hall, the Boston Pops, the San Antonio Symphony, the East Texas Symphony, the Hot Springs Community Band, and also taught French horn to many students. Survivors: loving wife, Norma Koi, of Hot Spring Village, Ark.; five children; five step-sons; four sisters; seven grandchildren; and 14 great-grandchildren.

**LARKIN, Bessie Kathleen "Kathy"**, born April 1, 1932 in Flower Branch, Ga., and died November 4, 2012 in Slaughter, La. She was a member of the Denham Springs church. She was a loving wife, mother, sister, and friend to most everyone she met. She was a very special person, filled with the joy of Jesus; you could see it in her smile. She was a retired nurse and was a faithful member of the church. The things that brought her the most joy in her life were being with family and working with the young people in her church. Survivors: son, G. Keith Larkin, Sr., and wife, Carmen, of Slaughter; daughter, Denise K. Broussard and husband, Ronnie, of Prairieville, La.; five grandchildren; and four great-grandchildren

**MEADE, Margell Robertson**, died October 6, 2012 in Glenwood, Ark. She was a member of the Bonnerdale church. On May 16, 1942, Margell was married to Charles "Charlie" Meade, Sr., who passed away in 2008. She was also preceded in death by her daughter-in-law, Suzanne Meade, and her sister, Sarah Hooten. A devoted homemaker and mother, she began working after

her children were in school for Seventh-day Adventist Publishing in Washington, D.C. until her retirement. She was an active member of the Bonnerdale church. Survivors: sons, Charles Meade, Jr., of Waco, Tex., and Thom Meade, of Redding, Calif.; daughter, Jane Ulloth of Redding.; five grandchildren; two great-grandchildren; and sister, Janey Swain, of Norman, Okla.

**MISENER, Neoma Joan**, born April 18, 1935, in Boulder, Colo., and died October 12, 2012, in Springdale, Ark. She was a member of the Gentry church, and was active in local church activities, serving as Sabbath School superintendent, and as a deaconess for many years. In 2006, Joan and her husband, Charles, traveled to Egypt where they served for three months on a short-term mission trip. Survivors: husband, Charles Misener, of Siloam Springs, Ark.; daughter, Beverly Warduga, of Baltimore, Md.; daughter, Debbie Cartwright, of Siloam Springs; son, Mike Misener, of Siloam Springs; sister, Loretta Chaffee of Bend, Ore.; brother, Raymond Morse, of El Paso, Tex.; five grandchildren; and five great-grandchildren.

**MYLES, Michael Monroe**, born January 6, 1958, in New Orleans, La., and died October 31, 2012 in Baton Rouge, La. He was a member of the Baton Rouge Berean church. Survivors: father, Monroe Myles, Sr.; daughter and son-in-law, Michelle and Louis Allen; four grandchildren; two brothers, Monroe Myles, Jr., and Udall Myles and wife Wanda; two sisters, Denise Green and husband Donnell, and Rosalind Ellis and husband Arthur; and a host of other relatives.

**RICHARD, Jennifer Marie**, born February 6, 1967 in Baton Rouge, La. and died November 14, 2012 in Baton Rouge. She was a member of the Baton Rouge Berean church. Survivors: father and step-mother, Ollizo and Betty Richard; brother, Ron Christopher Richard; sister, Keosha Green; Margo Wilson, "the special cousin, sister, caregiver and devoted friend," that she resided with for 24 years; and many other relatives.

**SHANNON, Douglas Wayne**, born August 12, 1959 in Big Spring, Tex., and died on October 28, 2012 in North Little Rock, Ark. He was a member of the North Little Rock church. Douglas served in the Marine Corp Reserves and retired from HF Scruggs. Survivors: wife, Nancy Shannon, of North Little Rock; mother, Geraldine Green; mother-in-law, Gwen Fisher, of North Little Rock; four daughters, Jessica Shannon, Patricia Shannon, Amber Pye, and Courtney Pye, of North Little Rock; son, Anthony Pye, of North Little Rock, two sisters, Lorie Mavity and Cheryl Oliver; and five grandchildren.

## Announcements

**Donation:** If you are in need of a \$1500 black light set for evangelism, educational, or church use that includes all chalk, paper, and lighting, please contact B. J. Steadman at 318.472.3966 after 7:00 p.m.

**Union College Homecoming April 4-7, 2013.** Alumni, friends, and former faculty are invited to Homecoming, April 4-7, 2013. Honor classes are 1943, 1953, 1958, 1963, 1973, 1983, 1988, 1993, and 2003. Special events for those who studied science and math—remembering the people of Jorgensen Hall. For more information, contact the alumni office at 402.486.2503, or 3800 S. 48th St, Lincoln, NE 68506, or alumni@ucollege.edu.

**Washington Adventist University:** You are invited to attend Washington Adventist University's Alumni Week-end, April 12-14, 2013. Visit [www.wau.edu/alumni](http://www.wau.edu/alumni), or call 301.891.4133 for more information. We look forward to seeing you!

SABBATH SUNSET CALENDAR						
	Jan 4	Jan 11	Jan 18	Jan 25	Feb 1	Feb 8
Abilene, TX	5:46	5:52	5:58	6:04	6:10	6:17
Albuquerque, NM	5:07	5:13	5:20	5:26	5:33	5:40
Amarillo, TX	5:47	5:53	6:00	6:07	6:14	6:21
Brownsville, TX	5:52	5:56	6:02	6:07	6:12	6:17
Dallas, TX	5:33	5:39	5:45	5:52	5:58	6:04
El Paso, TX	5:14	5:20	5:26	5:32	5:38	5:45
Fort Worth/Keene, TX	5:35	5:41	5:47	5:54	6:00	6:07
Gallup, NM	5:14	5:20	5:27	5:34	5:41	5:48
Galveston/Houston, TX	5:35	5:40	5:46	5:52	5:58	6:03
Gentry, AR	5:15	5:22	5:28	5:35	5:42	5:50
Little Rock, AR	5:10	5:16	5:23	5:30	5:36	5:43
Muskogee, OK	5:20	5:26	5:33	5:40	5:47	5:54
New Orleans, LA	5:13	5:19	5:24	5:30	5:36	5:42
Oklahoma City, OK	5:29	5:35	5:42	5:49	5:56	6:03
Roswell, NM	5:03	5:08	5:15	5:22	5:28	5:34
San Antonio, TX	5:48	5:53	5:59	6:05	6:10	6:16
Shreveport, LA	5:22	5:28	5:34	5:40	5:46	5:53
Tulsa, OK	5:22	5:28	5:35	5:42	5:49	5:56



# On the Record »

BY PAT HUMPHREY » COMMUNICATION DIRECTOR, SOUTHWESTERN UNION

## In the Meantime...

**WHEN I WAS A HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT** back in the late 1960s (yes, I'm dating myself), I had not yet been introduced to the Bible doctrines that are so familiar to us as Seventh-day Adventists. I guess you could say that back then I was at the very early stages of becoming a Christian. I had begun to learn a lot about church history as well as a few Bible principles at the Lutheran high school where I attended, but at that time I had no real understanding of important truths, such as the Second Coming of Christ.

I did, however, have an eerie sense (not founded on any biblical truth) that something was wrong with the world and that one day, life as we knew it would come to an end. In my thinking, the year 2000, which was then a long way off, was the fateful time when the world would end. I even remember talking to some of my friends about it and they also shared the same feeling.

How thankful (and relieved) I was when I learned from the Bible that indeed, the world is coming to an end, but not in the way that I had envisioned. My limited concept of things to come lacked the hope of a Savior or a plan for humanity beyond the grave. How wonderful that we have a guide—the Bible—that not only outlines

the history and future of our planet and its inhabitants, but is full of promises that assure us of God's love and His plans for our lives—both here on earth and throughout eternity. Having God's Word as our source of information, we never have to worry about the future and what it will bring, nor do we have to rely on our own misguided thoughts or feelings about future events. We may not know every detail of what's to come, but God has given us enough information so that we can live with joyful anticipation of His coming.

Over the years, though, I've met church members who have very different attitudes toward the Second Coming. Some people seem to live in a state of frenzy about Jesus' return—so much so

that they can barely focus on the present. Others interpret "occupy till I come" as a license to live for the moment—a kind of permission to get as much pleasure from living as time will allow. Still others seem to live in constant fear, dreading the time of trouble and some of the scary events associated with that period. I've also met people who continually worry that they won't make it through the time of trouble, and others who have simply given up hope that they can or will be ready when Jesus comes.

Whether or not you find yourself in any of these categories, I encourage you to cling to the many Bible promises God gives us about Jesus' return. Here is just one: "And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away" (1 Peter 5:4). Meanwhile, we all have some important work to do, sharing the Good News with others that Jesus is coming soon. So, let's get busy! Maranatha!

*Pat Humphrey*

## Record

### EDITORIAL STAFF

- Editor** ..... Pat Humphrey  
phumphrey@swuc.org
- Associate Editor** ..... Jessica Lozano  
jlozano@swuc.org
- Assistant Editor/Designer** ..... Reggie Johnson  
rjohnson@swuc.org
- Advertising Manager** ..... Dianne Jones  
djones@swuc.org
- Circulation Manager** ..... Rocío Rodríguez  
rrodriguez@swuc.org

### SOUTHWESTERN UNION OFFICERS

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