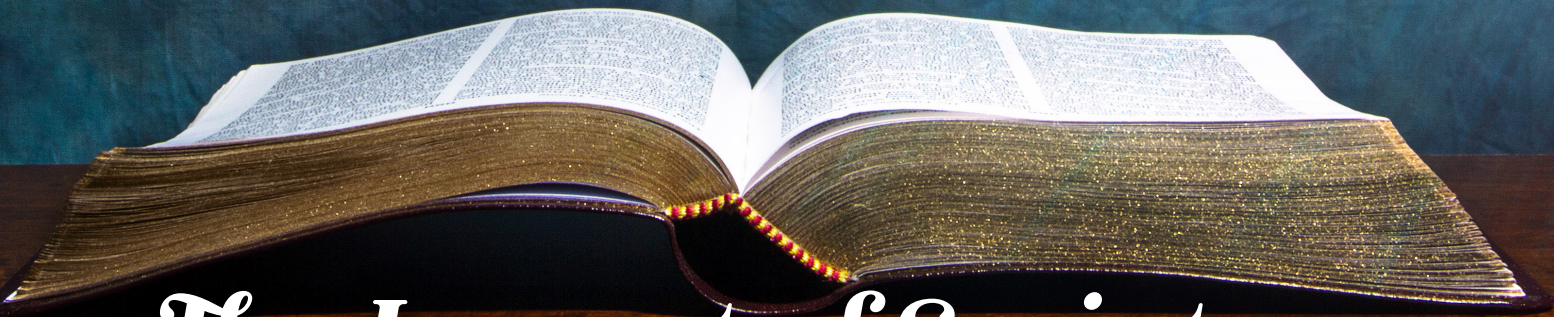


Record

January | February 2018

- 4** Reformers Still:
Martin Luther and Me
- 7** Taking a Stand
Against Abuse
- 10** Scripture in Schools,
Lessons for Life
- 11** Revitalizing Your
Bible Study Experience
- 12** Converted at Sea:
The Joseph Bates Story



The Impact of Scripture
Learning and Living the Word of God

Learning and Living the Word of God

The Impact of Scripture

Record

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Our Mission:

The Mission of the Southwestern Union is to Equip and Inspire the Southwestern Union Territory with the Distinctive Adventist Message of Hope and Wholeness.

- Features: { 7 Stop the Hurt: Summit on Abuse
8 What Scripture Means to Me
12 Conversion at Sea
- Columns: { 3 On the Record: The Impact of Scripture
4 Inspiring: Martin Luther and Me
10 Education: Lessons for Life
11 Equipping: Unpacking the Word
14 Little Readers: The Green Paint Mystery
- News: { 15 Southwestern Happenings
16 Southwestern Union
18 Southwestern Adventist University
20 Arkansas-Louisiana Conference
25 Oklahoma Conference
30 Southwest Region Conference
35 Texas Conference
40 Texico Conference
- Back Pages: { 45 Classified Ads
48 Milestones
48 Obituaries

Editor's Note

The Christian experience revolves around knowing Christ personally. There are many ways in which Christ reveals His character to us. One of them is through intentionally and humbly putting aside preconceived notions, praying that God will reveal His truths, and opening His Word—the Bible.

Learning about the character of God shows us a loving, all powerful God; listening to and applying the counsel of the scriptures brings a peace and sustenance to our lives as nothing else does. In this issue of the *Record*, we look at how our relationship with God is enhanced through our experience with the Bible. Join us.



Jessica L. Lozano

The Impact of Scripture

Learning and Living the Word of God



Larry Moore | President

How often have you faced an issue with no easy or obvious solution? I suppose we have all had that happen at some point. We pray and ask for God's guidance. We seek a clear answer that will help us move forward in resolving the problem. But sometimes we struggle to understand as the problem appears to grow bigger. Maybe you are facing an insurmountable problem right now and could use a word from God.

In my own life, I have certainly had this experience. I can remember one specific time when I was facing a very troubling issue. I took the time and intentionally searched the Bible for some answers. God is so good. He gave a clear and concise answer and that has become my favorite "go to" text. I have also given this text to many people facing a variety of situations.

Isaiah 41:10 says, "So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."

That text assures me of God's presence in my life and that He will help me through life's challenges. I can't tell you how much this scripture means to me personally. It is a promise, so claim it often. I pray that you will be blessed as you hear God speak to you.

Reading and studying God's Word assures me that the scriptures are joy-giving. Psalm 94:19 says, "When anxiety was great within me, your consolation brought me joy." God's divine principles set a right path through the maze of life and cause our hearts to rejoice.

One of my favorite psalms is Psalm 19. It reminds me that God's Word can convert the soul and allow the Spirit of God to transform it. It makes a person wise and it brings joy to the anxious heart.

As the enemy attempts to separate us from God, it is imperative that we heed the counsel of the Apostle Paul to "put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes (the stresses and uncertainties of life that are the root of our anxieties), we will be able to stand our ground against all that may perplex us," (Psalm 19:13). A vital part of that armor that Paul speaks of is, "the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God," (Psalm 19:17). There is no greater joy than living in conformity to God's Word. When doing the things that God created you to do in His Word, your life will begin to overflow with unprecedented joy. Develop the habit of a deeper study of God's Word and experience the joy it brings to you.



Buford Griffith, Jr.
Executive Secretary

To me the Bible is a roadmap for my life. God's Word is so many things to me. It provides daily lessons into the character of God. There is so much of God's character that I don't understand, but as I read the Bible, His character is revealed to me. His grace, mercy, love, and correction become clearer. The Bible teaches me how to live and share His love; it also helps me prioritize my life.

My favorite books are the gospels in the New Testament. I'm inspired when I read of Jesus' love and power, but also the way He treated people that He encountered on a daily basis. When I'm studying the Bible, the important thing I try to keep in mind is not only understanding the story, but how I can apply what I'm reading to my life. God has used His scriptures to help me solve a problem in my life on countless occasions. I have also found that my personal Bible study can be a blessing to others as well. Throughout the day in conversations with others, I've often found myself in a position to share an applicable note about the exact lesson or topic that I've been studying with someone working through their own issue. Take time today to read God's word: Psalm 34:8, "Taste and see that the Lord is good."



John Page | Treasurer

Martin Luther and Me

Applying Reformation Principles

By Michael Sokupa, Associate Director of the Ellen G. White Estate at the General Conference

In looking at the Reformation and the lives of the Reformers, we emphasize the biblical and theological elements, and often fall short of applying the principles of Reformation to our lives. I see in Martin Luther's experience much that is in common with my own spiritual heritage. Like him I have had to fight fear and tradition as God led us, by Scripture, into the meaning of true freedom. Luther's life experience casts light on mine.

Luther's Early Journey

In the early 1500s Luther started on his path toward a law career by enrolling at the university in Erfurt.¹ In 1505, while returning to university from home, Luther was caught in a thunderstorm. A bolt of lightning led him to cry out in desperation, "Help me, St. Anne, and I'll become a monk!"² Luther kept his vow and entered a monastery within a month.

At the age of 27 Luther traveled to Rome to represent the Augustinian monastery at Erfurt. As he dutifully went through the motions, doubts began to fill his critical mind. He began to question the church's teachings about relics and merits. He returned to the monastery more troubled than before. His supervisor, Johann von Staupitz, both encouraged him and reprimanded him for his attitude.

Staupitz encouraged Luther to focus on the love of God and stop worrying. Luther had built up a negative attitude toward God that drove him to fear and hate God. Luther recalled his true feelings when he received the encouragement from Staupitz: "Love God? I hate Him!"

In 1513, while preparing for a series of lectures, Luther read Psalm 22:1: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" This verse brought Luther to a turning point in his life. Applying it appropriately to Christ, he realized that even Jesus had feelings of separation that Luther sometimes felt. This gave Luther some comfort.

Martin Luther grew up in a Roman Catholic home, shaped by both Scripture and tradition.

Two years later, as he was preparing for lectures on the book of Romans, Luther read Romans 1:17: "The just shall live by faith" (KJV).³ This text became pivotal for his spiritual journey. Its discovery gave Luther an assurance that his salvation did not depend on merits, that he did not need to fear God. He embraced the idea that only by faith are we made righteous.

Luther Breaks out

On October 31, 1517, Luther wrote 95 statements against the practice of selling indulgences and nailed them to the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, a conventional way of inviting an academic debate on a topic. This coincided with the rapid deployment of Gutenberg's movable printing press. Luther's theses were printed, and copies were distributed throughout Saxony. Even the pope got a copy. The pope's reaction to Luther's statements set in motion an inquiry. Luther feared for his life, for many Reformers had lost their lives when they were charged as heretics.⁴

In October 1518 a group of princes and nobles (known as the Imperial Diet) met in Augsburg to discuss several agenda items including the Turks and Luther. Luther attended the meeting. The papal representative, Cardinal Cajetan, was not interested in engaging Luther in debate. His main aim was to persuade Luther to recant.⁵ A century earlier Jan Hus had been burned at the stake for refusing to recant. He had demanded to be shown from the Scriptures what his errors were. Luther took the same position, knowing the history and the consequences that might follow.

Luther narrowly escaped because of his connection to Frederick the Wise, whom the pope did not want to displease.⁶

Luther continued writing. He produced treatises entitled Address to the Christian Nobility of the German Nation, On the Babylonian Captivity of the Church, and Freedom of a Christian. This fueled the pope's fury, and in 1520 Luther received an ultimatum (in a document called a papal bull) from the Pope to recant his position within 60 days or be excommunicated from the church. Luther publicly burned the papal bull. He was excommunicated on January 3, 1521.

Luther was summoned to the Imperial Diet of Worms under Emperor Charles V on January 22, 1521. Given an opportunity to renounce or affirm his position, he responded: "Unless I am convicted by Scripture and plain reason, I do not accept the authority of the popes and councils, for they have contradicted each other. My conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and will not recant anything, for to go against conscience is neither right nor safe."⁷

He is said to have spoken the following words that continue to ring in traditional circles: "Here I stand. I can do no other. God help me. Amen."⁸



My Father Breaks out

My dad grew up an Anglican, in a family where his father was the eldest within the extended family. When his father passed away, my father inherited the leadership role. Whenever there was a family gathering, he was the one who spoke to the ancestors on behalf of the family.

In the mid-1960s, around the time of the Rivona Trial in South Africa in which Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners were sentenced to life imprisonment for treason against the apartheid government, there was turmoil in the country.

At the height of that political turmoil, my dad came to know about the Seventh-day Adventist faith. He embraced this newfound faith and was soon faced with critical decisions. He could no longer sacrifice to the ancestors and remain true to biblical teachings. He also learned that a number of tribal customs had elements that were contrary to biblical principles.

Dad traveled to the village where most of his family lived, and informed them he would no longer participate in family feasts directed to their ancestors. His brothers warned him that the anger of the ancestors would turn against him and his children. They ostracized him from the family circle, so they would not share in the bad luck brought by the ancestors.

I grew up not knowing my uncles, because when they came together for family feasts we could not take part. Most of the family activities we could attend, such as funerals and weddings, were held on Sabbath. This opened an even wider gap between us and our extended family.

My Own Journey

When I became a young man, I was expected to go through the Xhosa rite of passage. Instead of sending me to the traditional circumcision school with the boys of the community, my dad collaborated with five other Adventist families; we were about six boys altogether. Bhomas (temporary structures) were set up in the bush near our township home, and we became an Adventist community among the traditional bhomas. We had an Adventist ikhankatha (a dean of the school), who taught us about manhood in an Adventist context.

Since this ritual was done in the Adventist context, all elements contrary to Scripture, such as serving of liquor and special meats dedicated to ancestors, were removed. The pastor was given an opportunity during the welcome celebration (umgidi) to preach the Word to the community that was there to grace the occasion. This was an opportunity for the community to understand what we believe. There was no way to be accepted as a man in the community without going through this ritual.

This rite of passage gave me status to get to the next level, marriage. When I got married, I again had to avoid any elements contrary to biblical principles during the traditional wedding ceremony. Certain elements, such as the introduction of the bride to the family, include ancestor worship. These elements are deleted, and a focus is placed on living family members. The whole process, from dowry negotiations to the wedding, was filled with elements that Seventh-day Adventists have identified over decades and categorized as acceptable or unacceptable to biblical principles.

My experiences as an Adventist growing up in South Africa within a Xhosa context helped me understand the dynamics of maintaining my identity, and still remaining true to Scripture. Because my father took a firm stand against elements in the Xhosa culture that militated against biblical principles, I was able to grow up accepted by my peers, my community, and our extended family without compromising my Christian principles.

From Luther's generation forward there has sounded a call to sola scriptura, a Reformation principle that can be applied to any culture. Many Xhosa South Africans have taken their stand with Luther, conforming cultural practice to biblical principle. But some still defer to a culture in which decision-makers are extended family members.

For single parents who are female and have no Adventist males in the family, these issues can present huge challenges. Many women, in striving to be true to biblical principles, have appointed Adventist men with the same clan name to handle family affairs that relate to rites of passage and dowry negotiations.

Current Trends

In some parts of South Africa Seventh-day Adventist men have organized initiation schools over winter and summer holidays. This brings Seventh-day Adventist young people together to preserve their culture and avoid compromising situations. These initiatives are not part of the official church structure. There is, however, a need to have biblical-theological discussions on these elements of tradition, how they relate to biblical principles, and have these documented so that future generations may have a reference point on decisions taken.


For Seventh-day Adventists the Bible not only addresses culture but also modifies it. Lay members expose an interesting approach as they attempt to win the community's confidence while modifying the traditions.

For example, long before there were any Africans, Abraham was circumcised. This reference usually arrests the attention

of African traditionalists, because the earlier the custom, the more respectable it is. But more work needs to be done to make sure that the Bible is handled appropriately when such passages are quoted with reference to current practices.

Reformers Still

Martin Luther and I grew up in contrasting religious conditions, but both he and I, and you my reader, come to observe irreconcilable differences between Scripture and prevailing tradition. It is our privilege to follow Luther's example of being true to principle: "The greatest want of the world is the want of [people] . . . who will not be bought or sold, . . . who in their inmost souls are true and honest, . . . who do not fear to call sin by its right name, . . . whose conscience is as true to duty as the needle to the pole, [people] who will stand for the right though the heavens fall"⁹

Let's stand with Luther today, for God. 

1. Roland H. Bainton, *Here I Stand* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1950), pp. 21-34.
2. See *ibid.*, p. 21.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 65.
4. Luther's Works, vol. 31.
5. Charlotte Methuen, "Luther's Life," in *The Oxford Handbook of Martin Luther's Theology*, ed. Robert Kolb et al. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), p. 12.
6. Martin Brecht, *Martin Luther* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), vol. 1, pp. 464-470.
7. Methuen, p. 15.
8. See Bainton, pp. 181-186.
9. Ellen G. White, *Education* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1903), p. 57.

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Scripture Says

Stop The Hurt: Summit on Abuse



“Those who love violence, He hates with a passion,” says Psalm 11:5. The quintessential scripture pertaining to our treatment of others is found in Jesus’ parable of the sheep and the goats in Matthew 25:31-26. While we sometimes see this as merely providing benevolent assistance to those in need, this can also mean putting an end to the physical, sexual, and mental abuse that perpetuates in our society. The philosophy of “live and let live” is simply not an option.

“We must stop abuse. Although we don’t like to admit it, it happens regularly even within our own churches and families,” says Buford Griffith II, Southwestern Union Executive Secretary and Family Ministries Director. For that reason, the Family, Women’s, and Children’s Ministries Departments of the Southwestern Union recently hosted its first “Stop the Hurt: Summit on Abuse,” bringing together leaders from across the North American Division to study and discuss this important topic.

The summit educated, informed, and increased awareness regarding the abuse that occurs in our communities and churches. Ministry leaders were equipped with resources and referral information for anyone impacted by abuse of any kind in every state in the Southwestern Union. The topics discussed included examples of abuse in the Bible, addictions, abuse of intimate partners, child abuse, the response of the faith community to abuse, and debunking scriptural support for abusive relationships. If you or someone you know is in need of counseling, consider contacting an Christian counselor near you. The following is a sampling of Adventist counselors. Please contact the Southwestern Union Conference Family Ministries department with your information if you are a licensed counselor or if you are in need of a referral. For information and resources visit SouthwesternAdventist.org/Families or call 817.295.0476. 

Adventist Counselors:

Kristina Hicks, LPC
Burns-Lilly Associates
1011 Granbury St.
Cleburne, TX 76033
817.645.3328

Cheryl Foster, MSSW, LCSW, LPC
BrightStar Counseling
and Evaluation Center
3901 Airport Freeway Suite 230
Bedford, Texas 76021
682.305.7810

Michal Anne Whitcomb, M.A., LPC
The Marriage & Family Group PLLC
5646 Milton St. Suite 440
Dallas, Texas 75206
214.613.1656

Barbara Moore, M.S., LPC
Moore Restored, Inc.
4200 Perimeter Center Drive, Suite 245
Oklahoma City, OK 73112
405.506.7447

Kris Bryant, M.A., LPC
Counseling & Life Coaching
5100 N. Brookline Ave., Suite 330
Oklahoma City, OK 73112
405.234.5522

Cornerstones

What Scripture Means to Me

Each person traverses their own spiritual journey. Whether by life-changing conversion, seeds of faith planted in a Christian home, or somewhere in between—we each have a deeply personal experience with the God of the universe. Along this journey, Christian counsel, religious material, and an abundance of other resources help deepen our relationship with and grow our faith in Christ. Promptings by the Holy Spirit, along with the Word of God, however are the cornerstones that build our faith foundation.

As we explore the impact of Scripture on our lives, we asked some of our Communication Leaders from each of the conferences in the Southwestern Union to share a bit about their experience. Think of your own experiences and you learn about theirs.

Be still and know that I am God.

Psalm 46:10

In this Psalm I discovered that God was inviting me to know Him in a special way. I was used to the rhythm of this world—going to and fro fulfilling my enterprises, entertained by technology that I could never reach, and busy with personal affairs that didn't let me rest. However, it was necessary to enter that stillness and rest in order to know God the way that He desired.

To be still meant to want to know the great "I Am" and disconnect from everything that blocked my way to Him. It involved removing my eyes from temporal things to contemplate Him fully, replacing my mundane headphones for divine hearing aids to hear Him clearly, and changing my position to one of quietude and rest. When I became still, I recognized that my power to do things was small and futile compared to God's and that without Him I was nothing. My faith was activated and God began to reveal Himself in unexpected and amazing ways.

To be still is not an event that we program once a week or on a weekend away in the mountains. It is a continuous attitude to know God in every moment of our lives. It is simplifying our way of living and setting ourselves apart from the world's restlessness to live the peace that we receive when we know God. I invite you to be still and know the God who is everything for you.

Leslie Soupet

Southwest Region Conference Communication Administrative Assistant

Jesus wept.

John 11:35

Sabbath traditions in my house as a child included listening to Your Story Hour on the radio after lunch and asking Bible trivia questions. The goal was to be the first to answer the questions. What is the longest chapter in the Bible? Psalm 119. Who wore a coat of many colors? Joseph. What is the shortest verse in the Bible? "Jesus wept," John 11:35. I was shocked when I learned

that text. Jesus actually cried? I could not believe it. Jesus was an authority figure to me at that point so I could not imagine him crying. But, that verse resonated with me. It started a connection. Jesus was no longer distant or far away. He was someone I could relate to because I knew what it felt like to cry.

During my freshman year in high school, my relationship with Jesus totally changed. A fellow classmate taught me Jesus wanted to be my best friend. That was powerful. Since then, Jesus and I have been through a lot and His words in the Bible have brought tremendous comfort and joy.

Tamara Michalenko Terry

Texas Conference Communication Associate Director

He has shown you, O mortal, what is good.
And what does the Lord require of you? To
act justly and to love mercy and to walk
humbly with your God.

Micah 6:8

When I was little I learned a neat song that has impacted my life for 70 years! "There's something quite peculiar about this world of ours, sometimes we live in sunshine bright, sometimes we live in showers. But if you would keep happy, when things are looking sad. Just lift the corners of your mouth and make believe your glad. So, smile, smile, smile; and keep right on a smiling." I once heard a story about a missionary walking through a dark jungle singing songs while the angels kept away the tigers and leopards. Singing songs have kept evil away in my life several times.

Along with these songs, the following verses have also served as my guide. Micah 6:8 says, "He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God." These words have helped me continue in my walk with the Lord, when it seemed hard to do, or when someone tried to tell me that I wasn't doing it right.

When I was discouraged and tired and the way seemed long, I remembered the words of David in Psalm 19, “the law of the Lord is perfect, refreshing the soul....They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the honeycomb.” The Lord is Good! God’s Word is Life!

Sylvia Downs, Arkansas-Louisiana Conference Communication Secretary

“Meaningless! Meaningless!” says the Teacher. “Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless.”

Ecclesiastes 1:1-2

Not exactly a verse you might expect to be part of the same doctrine that helps guide billions of Christians around the world. Ecclesiastes can be an off-putting book for the unfamiliar. In fact, asking a group of people what they associate with the infamous book might give you an answer like, “It’s depressing.” Such was my perspective before actually diving into it a few years ago.

Once I actually sat down with the real Ecclesiastes (and not the version others had purported it to be), I found that it contained an incredibly profound message that, to this day, helps focus my spiritual life. Yes, the author of Ecclesiastes *does* say everything is meaningless. He even launches into a long diatribe about why he thinks that way. And yet, his conclusion is perfect. Everything on earth is meaningless *apart from God*. Family and friends, work, education, hobbies—these are all still important! But, putting God at the center of our lives is our first and greatest purpose. Everything else is meaningless without Him.

Jason Busch, Texas Conference Communication Director

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

2 Timothy 3:16-17

Bookstores, libraries, and the digital world are filled with books promising to give us all the answers we need to live a successful and happy life. The problem with most books is that the options, plans, and answers provided in their pages are not of God. The true keys of a successful and joyful life are found in God’s Word. Most of us have several copies scattered throughout our homes and daily we carry it tucked inside our cell phones and tablets. But do we open it enough and search for truth? Most of us have a favorite verse. But do

we remember that all Scripture is inspired by God and apply it to our lives? Paul’s writing in 2 Timothy 3:16-17, share that the Bible is a book of many purposes. He admonishes Timothy to continue in his childhood habit of studying and learning the scriptures “which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Jesus Christ.” He writes, “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

The Bible is filled with verses for each of us that we will connect with in the different seasons of our lives. There are so many verses that resonate with me and draw me closer to my Creator and Savior, that it’s difficult to choose a favorite. God has filled each season of my life with the perfect verses for each of these particular times. Instead of some random, self-help book, I, choose THE book—The Bible. I can think of no better source of inspiration, guidance, and comfort than our Creator and His Holy Scriptures!

You may be searching for understanding, motivation, encouragement, reassurance, or peace. In order to resist the ungodly pattern of life in today’s world, we must study the Word. Search its pages for the special verse or verses that God has planned for you at this particular time and season of your life. God promises that through the study of His Word you will be made complete and thoroughly equipped for every good work.

James Bokovoy, Oklahoma Conference Communication Director

When I am afraid, I will put my trust in you.
Psalms 56:3

As part of his homework, my son has to memorize a scripture text every week. Recently, he came to me excited because the verse he had to memorize that particular week was easy to remember. Gleefully he exclaimed, “When I am afraid, I will put my trust in you! Psalms 56:3.” As he happily ran away, those words resonated in my head and I remembered that, as a child, that was my favorite memory verse. I, too, had grown up reciting many verses, but this one was special to me because it reminded me that the only thing I had to do when I was afraid was to go to God.

As a child, I was often afraid of the dark. At night I would recite the verse, clutch my hands together, and I knew that the God who created the universe was going to take care of me. And He did. He has taken care of me ever since, especially during the dark moments in my life. I am endlessly grateful for the promises God left us in His word. They are powerful and can transcend age and all understanding, and can grant us peace when we need it most.

Debbie Marquez, Texico Conference Communication Director

Lessons For Life

Starting School with Jesus

By Melisandra Zubik, Burlison Seventh-day Adventist School Kindergarten Teacher



As a teacher, one of the advantages of teaching in an Adventist school is that we get to teach from the Bible! It is important to teach children at a young age to learn scripture in order for them to seek refuge in Christ and apply the lessons learned to their lives. The Bible says in Proverbs 22:6, “Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.”

I begin every morning with my Kindergarten class learning about different character traits. Each week, we begin by reading and dissecting different stories about good character traits and how we can implement them into our daily lives. I read them the stories that help encourage them to exhibit good attributes throughout our day. We discuss the importance of displaying good behavior like Jesus so lovingly showed us from His Word. After the story, I pray that each child can display the character trait discussed for that day. Over the first couple of days I read them the story, then we discuss it and spend some time doing ac-

tivities to help emphasize the good traits that they have been learning.

In order to truly teach the traits of Christ, I believe it is important to go back to the source! The children memorize a Bible verse each week to go along with the letter of the alphabet we are studying. We recite it every day, and the children also take it home for extra practice. They then get an opportunity at the end of each week to recite the verse back to me and earn a sticker for their sticker charts.

I love the quote, “Children are great imitators, so give them something great to imitate.”

I often hear my students repeating the character traits they have learned throughout the day. For example, when we studied the lesson “I Have Choices, Choices Have Consequences,” I overheard a student tell another that it was their choice and choices have consequences.


During clean-up time, I heard another student say, “Mrs. Zubik, I’m being

responsible and putting away the toys, just like in our story!”

It is always rewarding to be able to see the lessons put into action. In one of our character trait lessons we learned, “I am Resourceful.” When asking them what “resourceful” meant they were not able to respond with an accurate meaning. Coincidentally, the story breaks it down to their learning level, allowing them to grasp the concept easily.

During center time, a student was playing with Lincoln Logs and didn’t have enough to build a roof for the structure they were building. At first, they were a little frustrated, but then said, “I know!” They walked over to the box of Kleenex and grabbed a few and used it for the roof. They then excitedly came to me and told me that they were being resourceful.

“Children are great imitators, so give them something great to imitate.”

As many teachers have experienced, it is always a blessing to know that what we teach doesn’t just go in one ear and out the other. Being able to have my students come and share something that may seem minor to some is in actuality a major piece to a bigger puzzle. My job is special because I am teaching an age in which they are soaking up every ounce of information, love, and affirmation that we can give. We are laying down the foundation of these students’ futures, not only academically but also inspiring their spiritual growth. Some days may seem harder than others, but, as I have taught my children year in and year out, all growth comes through the reflection of Jesus Christ our Lord. 

Unpacking the Word

Revitalizing Your Bible Study Experience

By Kristina Pascual, Managing Editor and Southwestern Union Associate Communication Director

Some, especially during the early days of our faith walk, pick up the Bible and are enthralled by the stories, lessons, and inspiration on each page. Others, however, find that Bible study can sometimes seem tedious when you are familiar with the passage or story. It can be difficult if the verses don't feel relevant to your life today or if the style of writing is complex. Frankly, acknowledging that words written over two millennia ago are applicable to our daily struggles and modern problems is a challenge in and of itself.

Yet we know that the Holy Scriptures were written in order to guide and equip the servants of God into doing every good work (2 Timothy 3:17). The Word of God is alive and active (Hebrews 4:12). Through the Holy Spirit, God uses scripture to breathe peace and respite to our troubled souls. He reminds of His incredible love for us and the price He paid to restore us to Him for eternity. The verses allow us to examine ourselves and recognize the sin and selfishness in our lives, so that we can repent and grow in our faith. If you find your personal exploration of scripture a bit stagnant or unmoving, check out the tips below. Even if you have a robust Bible study method, the following ideas may add more value to your personal time in the Word.



1 Personalize Passages. Replace the pronouns in the verses with your name so that the scripture reads as if the author is speaking directly to you. In addition, you can change the pronouns to match your gender, make the plural identifiers singular, or use your name in place of nouns such as love, sheep, world, etc. Reflect on the meaning of the verses when you are in the midst of them.

*(Your Name) is patient, (Your Name) is kind. She does not envy, she does not boast, she is not proud.
1 Corinthians 13:4*

2 Rewrite and Repurpose. The structure of the sentences, particularly in Proverbs, can seem a bit confusing. Rewrite the verses in a way that make sense and are personal to you. Turn analogies into direct statements.

Being quarrelsome makes my spouse miserable and want to avoid me. I would react that way as well. When I'm quarrelsome, I push people away. How can I work on this? What needs to happen to my attitude in order to find resolution rather than behaving in a way that makes my spouse want to live on the corner of the roof? Proverbs 25:24

3 Incorporate Art. Whether you are creative or just looking to enliven your Bible study time, consider making a tangible representation of scripture. Write lyrics or compose a song inspired by the text. Illustrate or paint an image of the verse, or just the words. These make great gifts or decor for your home! Additionally, there are coloring books for adults with verses and Bible study prompts that are helpful for channeling your creative energy.

4 Pray the Verses. Take the verses you are studying and turn them into a prayer. Use specific words or phrases and write out a prayer incorporating aspects of the verses. As a bonus, search the Psalms that are already prayers. Pray the prayer a few times that day or week and see if you gain more insight into the words.

Lord, through your sacrifice I have inherited eternal life. No matter what happens to my body on this earth, I will be resurrected to you. I believe in Jesus with my whole heart and yearn to know more about you as I reconcile the reality of mortality in my life and the lives of my loved ones. John 11:25.

Sea Change

Conversion in a Ship's Cabin



Joseph Bates, a founding father of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, thrived on adventure. Twenty-one years as a sailor molded him into a strong-willed, passionate, and brave man. When convicted to follow Christ due to personal Bible study, he became an unstoppable force and inspiring leader for the early church.

Growing up in the whaling town of New Bedford, Massachusetts, stories of adventure at sea filled Joseph Bates' young mind. His stoutly Christian father disapproved. The image of a swearing sailor, spitting tobacco with a mug of gin in hand, appalled him. In hopes that a voyage might cure his son of dreams at sea, he allowed Bates to take a short journey to Boston. Rather than "cure" him, that journey ignited a sense of adventure in Bates.

Just before Bates' 15th birthday, his father permitted him to sign on as cab-

in boy aboard the *Fanny*. The journey from Massachusetts to Europe promised danger and discomfort... just what Bates longed for.

Although not a professed Christian, Joseph Bates often called out to God in the face of death, a common occurrence at sea. In the spring of 1809, the pounding sea flung his ship into an iceberg off Newfoundland. Shipmates fell to their knees in prayer, crying for mercy. Bates prepared to die. Only a last minute "act of providence" saved both ship and crew. Even so, Bates did not pursue a personal relationship with Christ until many years later.

Death was not the only danger at sea. Privateers captured Bates and threatened to cut off his fingers if he did not obey their demands. Earlier, the ship owner had attempted to bribe Bates and the crew not to speak about shrouded business dealings. A combination of

moral backbone and the threat of losing fingers compelled Bates to honesty and he journeyed free. He would not be so lucky later on.

On the evening of April 27, 1810, a press-gang entered a boarding house in Liverpool, England. At sword-point, they "recruited" Bates and several other Americans to join the Royal Navy. A constant need for recruits during England's war against Napoleon led England to forcibly compel over 6,000 Americans into the British Navy. This practice eventually contributed in starting the War of 1812 between the United States and England. Filthy living conditions, poor rations, and customary floggings colored life at sea. Bates remained forcibly in service for five years, including time spent as a prisoner of war.

Bates exemplified a strong will to stand up for beliefs, despite difficulties.

When England urged 200 Americans in Bates' squadron to fight for them against the French, only six men, including Bates, refused. He refused to fight for the enemy as a prisoner of war, inspiring progressively more and more men to follow his lead.

The Treaty of Ghent ended the War of 1812 on December 24, 1814. Before release, Bates witnessed the Dartmoor massacre, in which guards killed or wounded more than 60 Americans for protesting continued imprisonment after the end of the war. He finally arrived home on April 27, 1815. Bates felt Christian inclinations during his time at sea, but the life of a sailor distracted him. Morality remained more important than religion to Bates, inspiring him to stand firm for his rights.

Despite prolonged absences from home, Bates desired a family. He married the daughter of a sailor, Prudence Nye, on February 15, 1818. They had five children. A converted Christian, Prudence hoped for Bates to open his heart to Christ. She encouraged personal Bible study. Observing a pack of novels and romances that Bates collected to read at sea, Prudence secretly packed a pocket New Testament into his luggage. He poured over the pages, leaving his sensational novels untouched. Personal Bible study dominated all of his free time. Upon return home in 1827, Bates decided to be baptized.

He began to focus energies on Christian endeavors. As a sea captain, Bates faithfully delivered sermons to his crew each Sunday. Now, rather than romances and novels, Bates packed a Bible and Christian literature out to sea. He read about the Sabbath, trinitarianism, revivalism, and more. As a member of the Christian Connection Church, Bates set the Bible as his standard. He became a leader in the church, as well as one of the champions of health reform, abstaining from all alcohol, tobacco, and caffeine, and becoming a vegetarian.

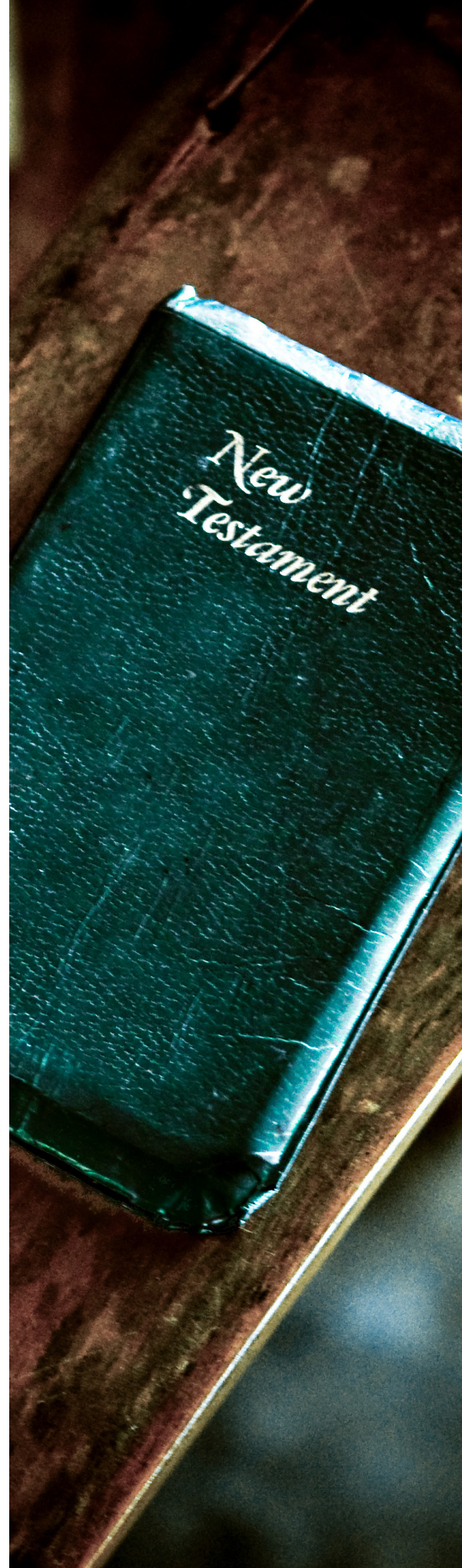
One effect of conversion was to draw Bates closer to family. So, after 21 years, Bates retired with a small fortune from life as a sailor. In 1839 he accepted the teachings of William Miller that Jesus would soon return. Never one to sit on the sidelines, Bates became an activist for the Millerite movement. Some of Bates' jobs included working as a circulation agent for *Signs of the Times*, preaching about the second coming, and writing Biblical tracts for publication. His work converted many people to follow the Millerite movement, including James and Ellen White.

In preparation for the Second Coming, expected first in 1843, Bates sold his home, paid all debts, and used the remainder of his money to sponsor the preaching of the advent message. The world did not end in 1843, neither in October 1844, leaving Bates and all early Adventists bitterly disappointed.

Bates returned to intense personal Bible study and reading of Christian literature. The next year, during Bates' greatest uncertainty and confusion, he studied and accepted the seventh-day Sabbath. This buoyed his faith and eventually led to greater clarification about the Second Coming. Trusting the truth of the Bible, Bates took heart and refocused his energies on evangelism.

Molded by a life at sea and accustomed to hard conditions, Bates eagerly dedicated everything to evangelism. His tireless work and personal study led to the formation of the Seventh-day Adventist church. The certainty of Bates' conviction inspired many others to personal Bible study and conversion. It all started with a pocket New Testament in the cabin of a ship.

Makala James is a writer and journalism graduate from Southwestern Adventist University. She lives in Granbury, Texas, with her husband, Denny.



The Green Paint Mystery

Understanding Honesty and Forgiveness

Steve was a typical little five-year-old boy. He was adventuresome, curious, a little daring, but also helpful and wanting to please. His parents had just moved from California to Arizona to look for work. The family had very little and could not afford to rent a house, but a friend let them stay in a garage that he had converted into a small apartment. Just one room served as a living room, kitchen, and bedroom with a tiny bathroom in the back. So Steve and his older brother found themselves in a brand new environment with much to explore and learn.

The friend who provided the garage-apartment to Steve's family worked in landscaping. He owned several lawn mowers and other gardening equipment and stored them in an open shop in the back of the garage-apartment.

One afternoon, Steve was looking for something to do and found himself exploring the shop behind his garage-apartment. No one was around so little Steve took advantage of the moment. Under a counter was the most interesting and tempting item. It was a gallon can of green paint, and very conveniently beside it was a paintbrush!

The temptation was now very real. The bare wood plank walls of the shop looked like they really needed a coat of green paint. So Steve went to work spreading paint on the shop wall. There was paint here, a little paint over there, and drops of paint everywhere, but Steve was having the time of his life! When he finally decided he had painted enough, he set the paintbrush down on the open can of paint and walked away.

It was at that moment that Steve realized the very appalling and awful thing he had done. Would anyone notice? How could anyone not notice green paint spattered on the shop wall? Surely no one would know who did it and surely no one would suspect him.

Everything was just fine until there was a knock on the door that evening. It was the owner of the lawnmower shop! Steve heard the man tell his dad about the green paint spread over the wall of his shop. After what seemed like an eternity, the man left. Somehow his father knew who the culprit was!

In Numbers 32:23, the Bible says, "Be sure your sin will find you out." We may do something when no one is watching and think no one will ever know. But just like my father knew I was the guilty one, so our Heavenly Father sees all and knows all that we do. We cannot hide anything from Him.

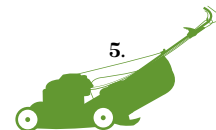
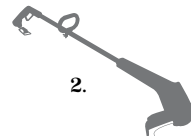
But our Heavenly Father loves us so much that He sent His Son as a sacrifice for our sins. John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life." The Bible also tells us in 1 John 1:9 that "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." So when you know you need to ask for forgiveness, be honest and pray to your Heavenly Father. He is waiting to forgive you and love you, and teach you how to do better next time.

By Stephen Orian, Arkansas-Louisiana Conference President

"Whoever conceals their sins does not prosper,
but the one who confesses and renounces them finds mercy." - Proverbs 28:13

Steve explored the shop in the backyard and found many equipment.

Do you know the names of the landscaping equipment below?



Answers: 1. Shears 2. Weed Trimmer 3. Tractor 4. Tractor 5. Lawn Mower



January Events:

19-20

Texas Conference: SEEDS Church Planting Conference, North Dallas Adventist Academy, Richardson, Texas, SEEDSTexas.org, 817.790.2255

19-21

Arkansas-Louisiana Conference: Baton Rouge Free Clinic, North Baton Rouge, La., 318.631.6240

19-21

Texas Conference: Women's Retreat, Hyatt Regency Riverwalk, San Antonio, Texas, TexasAdventist.org, 817.790.2255

20

Texas Conference: Evangelism Training and Child Evangelism Training, Houston Spanish Spring Branch Seventh-day Adventist Church, Houston, Texas, TexasAdventist.org, 817.790.2255

24-27

Southwestern Adventist University: Annual Basketball Tournament, 800.433.2240

26-28

Arkansas-Louisiana Conference: Spanish Men's Ministry Symposium, Camp Yorktown Bay, Mt. Pine, Ark., 318.631.6240

27

Texas Conference: Evangelism Training and Child Evangelism Training, Keene Spanish Seventh-day Adventist Church, Keene, Texas, TexasAdventist.org, 817.790.2255

27

Texas Conference: Adventist Community Services Area Meeting, Houston United African Seventh-day Adventist Church; Houston, Texas, TexasAdventist.org, 817.641.7679



February Events:

2-4

Arkansas-Louisiana Conference: Spanish Couples Retreat, Camp Yorktown Bay, Mt. Pine, Ark. 318.631.6240

3

Texas Conference: Evangelism Training and Child Evangelism Training, Tyler Seventh-day Adventist Church; Tyler, Texas, TexasAdventist.org, 817.790.2255

10

Texas Conference: Evangelism Training and Child Evangelism Training, San Antonio Scenic Hills Seventh-day Adventist Church, San Antonio, Texas, TexasAdventist.org, 817.790.2255

7-11

Southwestern Adventist University: Annual Music Festival, 25th Anniversary of *A Night at the Meyerson* (Feb. 11), 800.433.2240

17

Texas Conference: Evangelism Training and Child Evangelism Training, Pflugerville Spanish Seventh-day Adventist Church, Round Rock, Texas, TexasAdventist.org, 817.790.2255

24

Texas Conference: Evangelism Training and Child Evangelism Training, North Dallas Adventist Academy; Richardson, Texas, TexasEvangelism.org, 817.790.2255

25-26

Southwestern Adventist University: University Experience, swau.edu, 800.433.2240



For more events and information, visit SouthwesternAdventist.org.

Watts Retire

Long-time ACS Directors Honored for Service

Burleson, Texas » On November 29, 2017, the Southwestern Union hosted a celebration in gratitude for the service of two individuals who have spent much of their lives dedicated to loving and sharing Jesus through caring for people in disaster situations. In October 2017, Joe and Sherry Watts retired from their roles as Adventist Community Services Directors for the Texas Conference and Southwestern Union, after having served the Adventist Church for 47 years. The event was attended by North American Division Executive Director for ACS, Sung Kwon, and NAD Disaster Response Director Derrick Lea, along with ACS leadership of the Texas, Southwest Region, Oklahoma, and Texico Conferences, officers of the Southwestern Union, and dozens of ACS volunteers. A special message was played from the Arkansas-Louisiana Conference ACS leadership.

Although they have retired, they will be keeping their hands in ministry by transitioning to work for Adventist World Radio in the Texas Conference territory.

“It has been our privilege and joy to serve the Lord in ministry for 47 years in various areas of ministry and responsibility. We look forward to the opportunity of sharing with churches in the Texas Conference about the wonderful work of Adventist World Radio. Let’s work

together to finish our work on earth so we can go home to Heaven,” says Joe.

Joe and Sherry both attended Empire Adventist Academy in Kansas before attending and graduating from Union College in Lincoln, Neb., in 1970; he with a bachelor’s degree in religion and a Greek minor, and she with a bachelor’s in home economics and a minor in religion. Joe became a ministerial intern in the Kansas Conference, and was then sponsored to attend seminary at Andrews University, where Sherry worked as a secretary for the Dean of the Seminary.

In 1973, Joe graduated with a Master of Divinity. He served as a pastor in the Kansas Conference until 1979, when they transitioned to the Colorado Conference. In 1981 they moved to the Rocky Mountain Conference, and in 1986, they returned to Empire Adventist Academy. Joe pastored the church and taught Bible, while Sherry managed the academy’s sewing industry.

In 1988, Joe was called to the Arkansas-Louisiana Conference as its Youth Director. Sherry became the Youth Department secretary. Adventist Community Services was later added to their responsibilities, and they played a major role in assisting in the aftermath of Hurricane Andrew in 1992.

In 1994, Joe became the Associate Pastor of the Fort Worth First Sev-

enth-day Adventist Church, joining the Texas Conference. In 1996, he took on the role of Adventist Community Services Director for the Texas Conference and the Southwestern Union. In 1999, Sherry joined him as the Assistant Director for ACS. In 2005, Joe was asked to take on role of the ACS Director for the North American Division, which he did until 2014. The Watts continued to serve the Texas Conference and Southwestern Union’s ACS departments.

Marshall and Julie Gonzalez were called to serve in the roles of ACS directors for the Texas Conference and Southwestern Union following the Watts’ retirement in October. “I’m grateful for the leadership that Joe and Sherry brought to Adventist Community Services. We’ve learned a lot from them and we know we have big shoes to fill.”

In their retirement, the Watts will continue to live in Keene, Texas, where they will enjoy spending time with family, including their five granddaughters.

By Jessica Lozano
Editor and Communication Director

Below: Sung Kwon (left), North American Division Executive Director for Adventist Community Service speaking at the Southwestern Union’s retirement celebration for Joe and Sherry Watts (right).



Union Personnel Updates

Ribeiro and Bayless Retire, Foster Joins Staff



Burleson, Texas » The Southwestern Union's office personnel has undergone a number of transitions recently. Carlos Ribeiro, Associate Treasurer, and Marcella Bayless, Administrative Secretary for Education, two long-time members of the Southwestern Union's office family, retired as of December 31, 2017, and Lauren Foster accepted the position of Certification Registrar/Administrative Secretary for Education. Foster began on December 4, 2017.

Carlos Ribeiro served the denomination for nearly 44 years, beginning at Sao Paulo Adventist Academy in Sao Paulo Brazil, where he served as an accountant and teacher. He then transitioned to the Sao Paulo Conference as undertreasurer and human resources personnel, then again to the South American Division as an accountant and IT personnel. In 1988, Ribeiro moved to Texas and began working for Seminars Unlimited as accountant and treasurer before becoming the Texas Conference's undertreasurer. He joined the Southwestern Union in 2005 as Associate Treasurer, where he has managed the Union's revolving fund and church remittances. In his retirement, Ribeiro will reside with his wife, Sonia, in Keene, Texas, for now. He plans to travel and take up gardening.

"Carlos has always been a steadfast and thoughtful member of our office. We have appreciated his commitment

to serving the Lord, which was evident through his work. We pray that he will enjoy a blessed retirement," says John Page, Southwestern Union Treasurer.

Marcella Bayless has worked as the Southwestern Union's Administrative Secretary for Education for the past 18 years, having previously worked at Harris Methodist-Fort Worth Hospital, Texas Health Huguley, and Texas Refinery Corp. Bayless says, "It has been a joy and pleasure to be able to work with our wonderful Union and conference administrators, administrative assistants, and teachers these past 18-plus years while working in the Office of Education." Bayless has been retained to work as a part-time receptionist for the Union. In her retirement, Bayless will reside in Keene, Texas, with her husband, Ansel.

"Marcella has been a joy to work with throughout the years. While she will be missed in the office, we know she'll be blessed and will enjoy spending time with her family," says Mike Furr, Associate Director of Education.

Lauren Foster has joined the Office of Education as Certification Registrar/Administrative Secretary. From Arlington, Texas, Foster is an Oakwood University alum with a bachelor's degree in communication/public relations. She also recently completed a Master of Public Health in Health Education degree from Loma Linda University.

"I'm excited to join the Southwestern Union staff because it is a privilege to be around encouraging, likeminded people who have a passion for God and His ministry. I'm also grateful because I am able to help others and the staff through the Office of Education," says Foster.

In addition to these transitions, Helvis Moody has taken on the role of Prayer Ministries Coordinator, along with his duties as Young Adult/Youth Ministries Director.

Bo Just, Undertreasurer, recently completed his certification in planned giving and trust services and was voted by the Southwestern Union executive committee to become the Trust Services Director. With the retirement of Joe and Sherry Watts as Adventist Community Services for the Texas Conference and Southwestern Union, Marshall and Julie Gonzalez have taken on the ACS leadership as of September 2017. Marshall was formerly a pastor for the Texas Conference.

By *Jessica Lozano*
Editor and Communication Director

Above: Carlos Ribeiro (left), former Associate Treasurer and Marcella Bayless (middle), former Administrative Secretary for the Office of Education, have retired from the Southwestern Union. Lauren Foster (right) joined the Union team as Certification Registrar/Administrative Secretary for the Office of Education.

Pushing the Limits

Adapted Physical Education Course Helps Community

Keene, Texas » Teaching a blind student to play softball or teaching a child in a wheelchair to compete in track may seem impossible, but thanks to a new adapted physical education class, the impossible is taking place at Southwestern Adventist University (SWAU). Community members with physical or mental differences are invited to Southwestern as participants. SWAU students, supervised by Paulino Santos, Ed.D., Chair of the Kinesiology Department, help participants improve motor skills and play sports.

“My goal is to work more with the community and show them what can be done with adapted physical education,” said Santos, a professor at Southwestern since 2015. He previously worked at the State University of Puerto Rico.

Exercise science students begin by testing a participant's motor skills. They

record the strengths and weaknesses of participants in order to make an appropriate plan of action. Recent graduate Nancy Licea worked with a seventh-grader named Adriel. He was born with a spinal impairment and has spent his life in a wheelchair. Although it was not easy at first, Licea began to see improvements in Adriel. “Adriel became more confident,” said Licea. “I watched him become more persistent with his work.”

Adriel decided to sign up for track and field at his school. When it came time to compete, Adriel placed in the top seven of the entire state in his category. He also decided to be baptized. The SWAU students from the class all attended the baptism and the track meet.

The class assists individuals dealing with a variety of situations, including those dealing with blindness and autism.

They learn how to swim and play softball. The softball beeps loudly, so that a blind person will hear it and know when to swing. Each of the softball bases has a distinct noise for the player to recognize and follow.

“This is something that everyone should at try,” said Licea. “It’s amazing how you can make a difference in people’s lives.”

The course will again be offered at SWAU during the Spring of 2018.

By Makala Coleman

Top left: Paulino Santos, Ed.D., Chair of the Kinesiology Department, with Licea and Adriel.

Bottom: Nancy Licea with fellow student, Herman Aguilar, graduating in May 2017.



Praise Him

Being Thankful Isn't Seasonal



Keene, Texas » Having just come through the holiday season, I'm feeling especially thankful. I love this time of year when our nation pauses and contemplates how grateful we are for God's many blessings. With the Christmas season we were reminded to consider God's greatest gift to humanity in His son, Jesus.

I have been so blessed in my life that sometimes I forget about those who have traveled a much different road. This contrast was vividly evident as I accompanied Dr. Bill Kilgore, one of our religion faculty members, and about a dozen students to the Fort Worth Presbyterian Night Shelter recently. As we neared the shelter, more and more homeless people were standing along the streets. We slowed and allowed several of them with bundles of their total possessions to cross the street in front of us. We pulled into the parking area, signed in, and began working with the kitchen staff to prepare and serve the evening meal. I talked with a gentleman who had experienced jail time for manufacturing methamphetamine; he has now been clean for five years and does not want anything to do with drugs anymore. He was so thankful for the shelter that was giving him a chance to get back on his feet. Many of the people who came through line were very grateful for our students who served and provided them food. I was moved by their thanksgiving spirit even though

they had very few earthly possessions. I praise God for the Presbyterian Night Shelter and the wonderful ministry they do on a daily basis. As Christians, we are called to be like Jesus, to be helpful to those who are in need.

On campus this year, we have had many wonderful people inspire our students about being selfless and giving back to their communities. Jennifer Woods shared the Harvest House's vision to help families break the cycle of hopelessness by providing resources that assist in restoring their dignity and independence. Tammy King described The Johnson County Children's Advocacy Center and its mission to provide each child who has suffered abuse with justice, hope and health. Lisa Schwarz from Crazy8 Ministries spoke of their purpose to come alongside families in their broken circumstances, offering them a second chance at life by providing for them body, soul and spirit. Mary Easton shared her testimony of volunteering this past year with the Johnson County Hunger Coalition in its formative stages. Gloria Jones introduced us to the work of Operation Blessing of Johnson County to keep its pantry shelves stocked for those needing food and basic living items. Pam Masters motivated our students with stories of her more than 20 years of volunteering.

It has been our privilege to partner on special projects with some of these



organizations recently, and our hope is to provide future connections with these and other charities. These and other like organizations need our volunteer time and money to help fulfill their mission of service to those in need.

As I experienced at the Presbyterian Night Shelter, regardless of the difficulty of our journeys, we can always have a thankful spirit and be grateful to God for His blessings. I love the words to the doxology in many Christian hymnals:

"Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, you heav'nly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost."

Even though the Christmas season has passed, I pray you will continue to find a quiet moment to pause and give thanks for God's many blessings.

By Ken Shaw, Ph.D.

Southwestern Adventist University President

Above left: Shaw, faculty, students, and community members lending a hand in preparation for Hurricane Harvey.

Above right: Ken Shaw, Ph.D., Southwestern Adventist University President; Bill Kilgore, D.Min., Religion Professor; and students serving food at a local homeless shelter.

Renewed

A Rediscovering of the Word of God



As we begin a new year, let it be with a resolve for daily Scripture reading. Let there be a rediscovery of the Word of God. I'm reminded of the Old Testament story of Josiah, King of Judah. In the 18th year of his reign, Josiah initiated the work of refurbishing Solomon's Temple. His grandfather, Manasseh, had desecrated the temple by erecting in it shrines to the worship of the sun, moon, and stars. The temple had become a place of gross idolatry and immorality. So Josiah was intent on cleaning the temple and reinstating the proper worship of the God of Heaven.

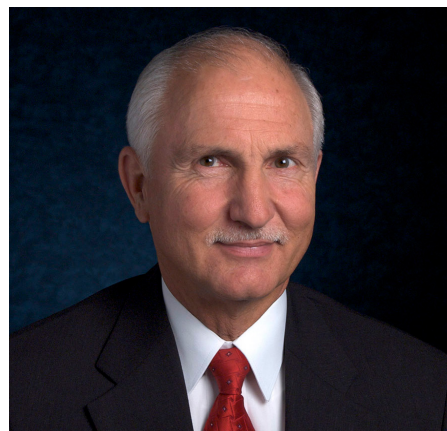
As a part of the restoration process that was now underway, Josiah sent Shaphan, a clerk in his court, to make certain that all of the funds that had been collected for the temple restoration project were being properly handled. In his visit to the temple, Shaphan is greeted by Hilkiyah, the High Priest, who with a mixture of joy and apprehension declares, "I have found the Book of the Law in the house of the Lord!" If at that moment, Hilkiyah had been addressing a group of teenagers, I can just hear them all saying, "daaah!" Wouldn't you expect to have the "Book of the Law" in the Temple? Wouldn't you expect to have the Scriptures in your church?

The sad part about this story is not that the temple was without a copy of the Scriptures, but that the Scriptures had been lost sight of, and through careless neglect, people were deprived of its instruction and transforming power.

Today, we have Bibles in our homes, our offices, our churches. But if we are not taking the time daily, to open them, to read from them, to study them, to meditate on the word, to prayerfully consider the "thus saith the Lord," we are in no better condition than Judah was in the days of Josiah. *We* will be deprived of its instruction and transforming power.

Let this new year be a time for revival and a rediscovery of the Word of God. It is time for us to have a renewed personal experience in the reading and study of God's Word. It is time for us to rediscover the message, the power of the message, and to rediscover Jesus, who is what the message is all about.

By Stephen Orian, President



Pathfinders and Adventurers

Bentonville and Shreveport Leaders Tapped for Council

Bentonville, Ark. » The Pathfinder and Adventurer ministry in the Arkansas-Louisiana Conference is governed by the Pathfinder and Adventurer Council (PAC). Membership is made up of the conference Pathfinder director, coordinators from the four areas of the conference, and representatives from each area. At the fall council it was unanimously voted to add four new positions to the council. These positions will be for one teenage leader from each of the four areas. These membership positions are one-year terms and are application based.

The decision to add these teen positions was founded on the idea of taking action to train up our youth in leadership positions in the Pathfinder and Adventurer ministry now and in the future. The first two teens elected to hold these positions are Jordan Walkup

and Callie Grant. Two more positions from the other areas will be filled within the coming months.

Walkup is currently a leader in the Bentonville Beavers Pathfinder Club where he has been a member since 2009. He is the son of Philip and Francis Walkup. Walkup and his family are members of the Decatur Seventh-day Adventist Church where he serves as a deacon and is very active in the Sabbath morning service. Walkup is studying to become a diesel mechanic at Crowder College in Missouri and maintains a high GPA.

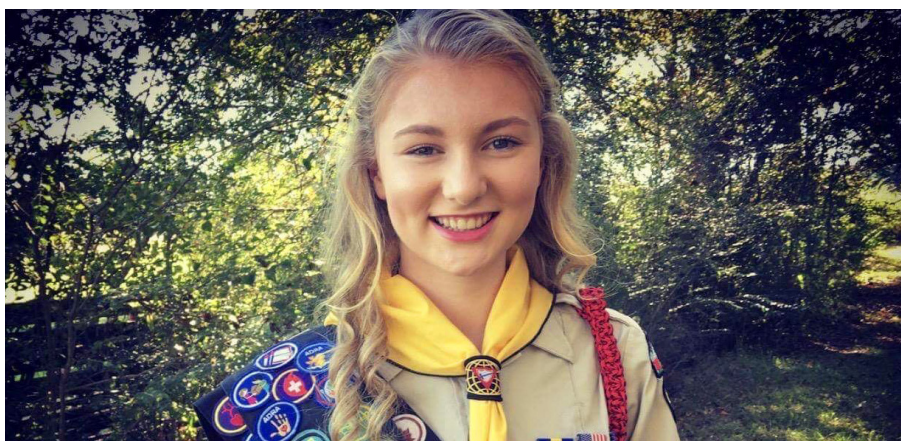
Grant is currently a teen leader in the Shreveport Tornados Pathfinder club where she has been a member since 2012. She is the daughter of Angela and James Grant and granddaughter of Bill and Jamy Grant. Her grandfather, Bill, has been involved in Pathfinder ministry for

25 years and is a member of the Arkansas Louisiana Conference Pathfinder Hall of Fame. Callie is a fifth-generation member of the Marthaville Seventh-day Adventist Church where she serves as a Jr. Deaconess and a youth representative for the church board. Grant currently attends the University View Academy of Louisiana and plans to attend Ozark Adventist Academy for her junior and senior year of high school. In the future, she hopes to pursue her interests in youth ministry, photography, and archaeology at Southern Adventist University in Tennessee.

Please pray for our youth as they learn and grow in their leadership potential.

By Audra L. Kohltfarber

Callie Grant (left) and Jordan Walkup (right) are new members of the Arkansas-Louisiana Pathfinder and Adventurer Council.



leadership

An Arkie's Faith

Mena Elder Touches Community Through Religion Column

Mena, Ark. » For the past two years Richie Lawry (right), a local elder of the Mena Seventh-day Adventist Church, has written a column for the Religious section of *The Mena Star*. In 2015, the *Star's* new editor, Sarah Wilson (left), contacted Lawry to request use of photos from his blog. At the beginning of the next year, Wilson asked if Lawry would be willing to commit to writing a weekly spiritual column. Lawry agreed, and the column, *An Arkie's Faith*, premiered in January 2016.

For the past two years, Lawry has used personal experiences, local events,

and national news as a way to bring out many spiritual truths. Feedback from the local community has been positive. People like the personal nature of *An Arkie's Faith*. Lawry has been asked to continue to write the column through 2018. The columns are available at ArkiesFaith.Blogspot.com.

By Jim Holdeman



Autumn Evangelism

Prophecy Seminars Bring Baptisms in Yellville

Yellville, Ark. » Arkansas-Louisiana Conference Evangelist Tommy Blount, and his wife, Kahne, held a dynamic, four-week prophecy seminar at a multi-purpose facility in Yellville last October. Eight visitors followed the series with good attendance.

One visitor was Mayra Gonzalez, a delightful young woman whose husband had lost his life to cancer. His dying wishes were for his beloved Mayra and their two grown children to come to love and serve Jesus and join the Seventh-day Adventist Church he had attended. The Holy Spirit

had been steadily impressing her, and the prophecy seminar was the final nudge.

A wonderful older couple, Harvey and Gayle Moury, learned about the meetings from flyers. They drove about 30 miles each way to faithfully attend the seminar. After the first few meetings, they invited a younger couple who also attended and took many notes. Three other guests attended: a couple, new to the area, who had a flyer handed to them at a recent fun run; and a gentleman who testified that he was finally getting answers to many of his long-held

Bible questions. The guests were invited to attend the church for a Sabbath morning seminar meeting. All came, and when the meetings were moved from the multi-purpose facility to the church, they all kept attending. Gonzalez was recently baptized and the Mourys joined the church by Profession of Faith.

By Susan Taylor

Mayra Gonzalez and Harvey and Gayle Moury recently joined the Yellville Seventh-day Adventist Church following a prophecy seminar.



Rallying Together

Sabbath Keepers Motorcycle Ministry Witnesses for Christ

Springtown, Ark. » The Northwest Arkansas Chapter of Sabbath Keepers Motorcycle Ministry had a very active year in 2017. The Chapter began in May with their Second Annual Rally at the Siloam Springs and Springtown Seventh-day Adventist Churches. The group was joined by both the Oklahoma and Tulsa chapters of the Sabbath Keepers Motorcycle Ministry.

On the Sabbath afternoon of the Rally, the group rode to Springdale, Arkansas, where they presented a donation of supplies to the Economic Opportunity Agency's Children's House, a facility that helps children from the age of six months to five years who have been removed from an abusive environment.

At the end of May, the Sabbath Keepers hosted a literature booth at the Steel Horse Motorcycle Rally in Fort Smith,

Arkansas. They followed this later in the month with an outreach to the biker community with an evangelistic rally at the Springtown Church.

The keynote speaker was Pastor/Evangelist Myckal Morehouse. Several workshops were presented to allow the attendees to hone their skills in witnessing.

The group started the month of September by hosting a literature booth at the Hot Springs Motorcycle Rally in Hot Springs, Arkansas.

During this three-day event, the group distributed many pieces of literature: *Steps to Jesus*, *The Great Hope*, GLOW tracts and coloring books for the attending children.

On Sabbath morning, members of the Sabbath Keepers Motorcycle Ministry attended Sabbath School and church at the Sharon Seventh-day Adventist Church in

Hot Springs, Arkansas.

Later in the month, we hosted a literature booth at the Bikes, Blues and BBQ Motorcycle Rally held in Fayetteville, Arkansas. This is an annual, four-day event that is attended by more than 400,000 motorcycle enthusiasts.

At the end of the year, the chapter took part in many charity events, toy runs, etc. It is through these contacts that we can witness to others, share the gospel of Jesus and take the time to have prayer with those requesting prayer and to listen to those that just need to talk.

These events are great opportunities to plant seeds about Jesus in the community. We are looking forward to the day that we can meet the results of our seed planting in Heaven.

By Rick Thames



Clarksville Spanish Youth Tenth Annual Church-wide Retreat

Clarksville, Ark. » The Clarksville Spanish Seventh-day Adventist Church's youth held their 10th annual church-wide retreat at Petit Jean State Park in Morrilton, Arkansas in early October, 2017, with more than 60 in attendance. The theme of the retreat was taken from John 16:6, which states: "I am the way

and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." Youth director Lissette Lozano said the youth wanted a theme that would inspire the whole church. Eliasar Dreck, from the Ola Spanish Seventh-day Adventist Group, was the guest speaker, presenting inspiring lessons from God's word

and from nature. Games and lots of fun activities were planned that the whole group enjoyed. The food and snacks were wonderful and filling. We thank God for many blessings and appreciate and thank everyone who assisted.

By Adrian Galan



Ask . Seek . Knock .

JUNE-JULY 2018



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Sticks and Stones

Words Do Make a Difference



“Stick and stones may break my bones but words will never harm me.” This old saying I first heard in elementary school is not at all true. Words do make a difference. They affect us, greatly. Our thoughts are made up of words. Thoughts reflect our feelings. Thoughts and feelings combined make up our character, that is who we are as human beings, as individuals. Solomon wrote in Proverbs 23:7, “As a man thinks in his heart, so is he.” Our thoughts become who we are and how we live our lives. And thoughts are made up of words. Obviously, God knows that, so He became the Word. Jesus was called the “Word” and He became flesh, to communicate His words to us. His words could then shape our thoughts, which would change our lives. Words make a huge difference—they change things. They change us.

I experienced that personally and dramatically as a young adult in my mid 20s. A pastor was talking to a group about the power of God’s word to make a difference. My life had not been going so well and I had come to a seminar seeking to make it better. What I had heard changed the whole trajectory of my life and continues to this day. It was words that did that, but not just anyone’s word. It was words from God that did it. I can still hear the speaker’s voice as he read Jeremiah 23:29: “‘Is not My word like fire,’ declares the Lord, ‘and like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces?’” The speaker described the power of God’s word to change lives, to change hearts and feelings. I needed that. Mine wasn’t doing so well. He used other scriptures about the power of God’s word, many of which you know. I made a decision that moment to begin to test that. I began to read, morning by morning, words from the Bible that did change my thinking and my heart. Jesus, the Word, spoke His words into my mind and heart and they changed my thoughts and feelings. They changed who I was, what I did and where I was headed. I continue to this day to listen to words spoken directly from God to shape my thoughts and life direction.

Some of the next words that I heard from Jesus are very familiar to all of us. They are found in Matthew 6:33, which says, “Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.” I realized that God wants to simplify our lives. If we will make it our first priority to seek His Words and wisdom and His way, our entire life will be cared for, all of our needs met, and it will bring happiness and joy. What an amazing thought. Almost too good to be true, but it is. Today’s world is all about communication. We hear words and messages on email, text, phone, Twitter, Instagram, TV, radio, Internet and movies. They can be good, bad, or neutral. But there is one guaranteed Source of words, from the real Word which can totally change our reality for the good. It is that powerful and true. Why not this year go to the Source and keep feeding on the words that bring life and peace, rest and joy? Words do make a difference.

By James Shires, President



A Collaborative Ministry

Native Ministries of Oklahoma Attend National Convention

Oklahoma City » Domestic violence, suicide, human trafficking—all are issues that impact society and, admittedly, even our church. These sensitive topics were discussed alongside farming issues, youth involvement, language retention, and other matters of Native American importance at the National Congress of American Indians' (NCAI) 74th Annual Convention. The Oklahoma Conference Native Ministries (NM) Department participated in Native Country's most popular and important conference, which was held late last year in Milwaukee, Wisc. Alongside members of congress and other US government officials, the NM Department attended the convention in order to interact with attendees and provide health screenings; to identify issues across tribes that the Native Ministries department can

address in Oklahoma; and to befriend and strengthen friendships with Native leaders. The outgoing NCAI President, Brian Cladoosby (Swinomish tribe), is part of five generations of Seventh-day Adventists. He invested four years with NCAI leadership, meeting with General Conference President Ted Wilson, NAD President Dan Jackson, President Barack Obama, senators, tribal leaders, and indigenous international leaders. Many of these prominent leaders now have insight into Adventist beliefs thanks to President Cladoosby's faithful involvement.

Pastor Jim Landelius (Seminole, Shawnee, and Ada Adventist churches), Oklahoma Conference Native Ministries Director; pastor James Bokovoy (Bristow Adventist Church), Oklahoma Communication Director; and Elder Robert Burnette, Assistant to the Oklahoma Confer-

ence President, met with NCAI leaders to ascertain how the Native Ministries department can effectively reach Native Americans in Oklahoma. Both Bokovoy (Cherokee) and Burnette (Onondaga) are enrolled members of federally recognized tribes and have established relationships with many Oklahoma tribal leaders. There are 47 federally-recognized tribes in Oklahoma, making it an important site for the department to evangelize through friendship, community service, health screenings, and Bible studies. Additionally we hold an annual Native Health and Heritage summer camp at Wewoka Woods Adventist Center. Native Americans have many reasons to be leery of Christian churches because of horrific events that scarred their people for generations. Meeting Native people in their environment, such as NCAI's An-





nual Convention, is beneficial in several ways, most notably because non-Natives are saturated with the Indian culture, and it is the Native Americans' choice to participate in church-sponsored activities, such as the free health screenings and co-sponsored health walk.

There are many similarities between the 10 commandments and the Native spiritual laws that transcend tribes and denominations. Many tribal members are faithful Christians of various denominations and others still hold to their traditional beliefs, but many Native Americans have no faith at all as a result of forced attendance at boarding schools, language extinction, and other egregious racial events, including historical inaccuracies. The consequence of these traumas are jaw-dropping statistics of suicide attempts and suicides; addictions; cultural loss, including their own faith (Native ceremonies vary from tribe to tribe but tend to hold seven sacred teachings of respect and sharing); and health challenges, especially diabetes. Considering their complicated history, connecting spiritually with

Native communities clearly requires more than traditional methods of soul winning. Simply sharing a tract or advertising a seminar about last-day prophecies may not capture concepts that resonate with Native communal religious beliefs.

As a segue to evangelism, the Oklahoma Native Ministries booth featured photos of Seventh-day Adventist Native members in full tribal regalia, and CREATION Health material, courtesy of Florida Hospital. The most recent edition of *American Indian Living*TM magazine (published by the Oklahoma Conference), was in every attendee's welcome packet. The magazine uses CREATION Health topics as its core for each issue. NCAI is a frequent contributor to the magazine, so the relationships between NM directors (at the union and conference levels) and NCAI staff are vital to communicating our faith and commitment to Native social, health, and spiritual issues. One of the most significant onsite activities by the NM department was the health screening area where three Adventist nurses and Sonia

DeRose, M.D., screened participants throughout each day. On Wednesday, a one-mile health walk was sponsored by the Church, along with Nike N7, Gerald L. Ignace Indian Health Center, Red Lake Nation, and Arkray USA, Inc.

David DeRose, M.D., a Seventh-day Adventist internal medicine physician and author, was also present and interviewed Native Americans in their leadership capacities for his weekly radio broadcast, *American Indian Living*TM Radio. The healthy lifestyle show is heard on Native Voice One Radio and features Native leaders, healthcare providers and others who bring research and lifestyle tips that enhance the physical and spiritual health and wellbeing of Native and non-Native listeners in North America. Collaborating with Native leadership, especially those who work with the government, lends credibility to the Adventist message we gently share.

For more information about Native Ministries, contact Pastor Jim Landelius at His_Servant@me.com.

By Caroline A. Fisher

Is Genesis History?

Edmond Church Explores Dinosaurs and Intelligent Design

Edmond » The Edmond Seventh-day Adventist Church family, friends, and members of the community participated in a Biblical and scientific study of human origins led by Dr. Art Chadwick and Pastor TJ Sands during a weekend event October 27-29, 2017. Chadwick is the Research Professor of Biology and Geology at Southwestern Adventist University (SWAU), and Director of the Dinosaur Research Project and the Dinosaur Science Museum, also at SWAU. He brought

his decades of expertise and passion to this event and also shared his personal story of becoming an Adventist Christian and a well-respected scientist within many disciplines. A community screening of the documentary film “Is Genesis History?” which features Dr. Chadwick, took place on Sabbath afternoon followed by a question and answer session and presentation on the molecular evidence for intelligent design. On Sunday, Dr. Chadwick and Pastor Sands invited participants to see

and touch replica dinosaur bones and learn more about the unique museum and research project at SWAU. An excited group of young adults from the Edmond Adventist Church are already making plans to join Dr. Chadwick and SWAU on the next Dino Dig in Wyoming in the summer of 2018.

This event provided our church a unique and interesting way to reach out and share with our community.

————— *By Kris and Lynette Bryant*



Stepping Up Bible Studies for a City

Wagoner » The Wagoner Seventh-day Adventist Church has been sending Bible Study lessons every quarter for the last three years throughout the City of Wagoner. We send 1,000 cards out, inviting individuals to participate in our Bible correspondence program. These efforts have supplied our church with 10-15 respondents after each mailing through God’s blessing.

Each year, in addition to our Bible Studies, we also make available two sharing books, *The Great Controversy* and *Steps to Christ* to those who fill out the cards. We have received responses from prisoners who are in our county jail,

and also from family members of those incarcerated who request that we visit their family members to offer them Bible studies. The outcome of these contacts has expanded our church’s involvement in Prison Ministries. We are happy to serve with those volunteers who bring the Gospel to those behind bars.

Wagoner is a small church, so utilizing this method of mailing out cards to advertise available books and studies has provided the church with maximum coverage at an affordable investment. If your church has few active members, and your finances are being strained, this method could work for you. We also

found that this method allows maximum participation in a convenient platform, because the members can do this in their own homes. This method successfully allows churches to get literature into every home in their community and to act as a witness 24/7. Please keep our church in your prayers that the Lord will continue to bless this ministry. Our lesson from this effort leads us to an encouragement for you and your church. Go ahead and step out of your comfort zone and introduce a successful solution to your small church witnessing program.

————— *By Jack Harris*

For the Least of These

Oklahoma City Community Service Reaches Out

Oklahoma City » The Southern Hills Adventist Church has an active Community Service Department led by Carla Everett, Jean Horn, and Rebecca Horn. These dedicated ladies serve the community with food, clothing, and literature around the southside area of Oklahoma City. To assist in fundraising they hold an annual fall garage sale, held at the church. Friends, family, and church members donate items to fill up the shelves with saleable items. People that would not visit the church normally are drawn to the garage sale. The

church is located along a busy highway, so advertisement is convenient and free.

Another project that the women are involved with is collecting items for Hardship Backpacks. These are backpacks given to children who have been placed in custody of the Department of Human Services (DHS) due to house fires or abuse. Each backpack includes a blanket, towel, washcloth, toothbrush, toothpaste, comb, brush, shampoo, conditioner, bath wash, and a teddy bear. These necessities provide comfort during a difficult time in these children's

lives and it also serves as something each child can call their own. The women also added a coloring book and crayons for the children to enjoy. DHS is always happy to receive donations to assist in the services they offer to children in these difficult situations. Matthew 25:40 reminds us that, "Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me."

————— *By Carla Everett and Susan Castillo*

Small Town

Big Heart for Evangelism

Duncan » October in Oklahoma is full of color and activity. To enhance all that joy, the Duncan Seventh-day Adventist Church invited the community to attend a Family Fun Day on Sunday, October 17, 2017. The church accomplished some mighty public relations by offering blood pressure checks along with free food and clothing. They also provided entertainment with singers, music, and a bouncy house for the children. The children were entertained thoroughly with their special play area. They also offered a basketball tournament, and the winners

won gift cards. The Duncan community was introduced to some healthy and fun family alternatives on that October day. Invitations to the upcoming Revival and Bible study event in November were also shared with everyone that attended the Family Fun Day.

Pastor Gregory Stinson invited Pastor Emanuel Baek, Oklahoma Conference Evangelist, for that week-long Revival and Bible study. His Bible-based messages covered powerful topics regarding Revelation, prophecy, and the state of the dead. Participants were blessed with

his easy to understand presentations and happy that he stayed each evening to visit and answer their questions. These series of outreach events, just like previous ones this year, saw the Lord bless with several baptisms. Bonnie and Bart Johnson, Peggy Roberts, and Josh Whipple each surrendered their lives to Jesus Christ and joined our church. October and November were banner months, as was the year 2017, for the Lord and the Duncan congregation in this small town in Southwest Oklahoma.

————— *By Susan Castillo*



Fill My Cup

The Blessings of Scripture Through Life's Journey



Growing up in a Seventh-day Adventist home, the value of Christian education was always promoted in our home and in church. Developing a relationship with Christ and a knowledge that He is our Saviour and friend was emphasized at home, at Sabbath School, and throughout the week at our Seventh-day Adventist school. We can all agree that a love for our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is first cultivated in the home by parents, then reinforced in church and school. As a young person, I enjoyed the school's Week of Prayer. This gave some the first opportunity to reflect on how good our God had been to us and decisions were made to commit our lives to Christ. There are reasons why we remember some things early in life, and I remember one Week of Prayer that was conducted by a local pastor, and particularly the theme song for that week, "Fill My Cup, Lord." *Fill my cup Lord, I lift it up Lord, Come and quench this thirsting of soul, Bread of heaven feed me till I want no more. Fill my cup, Fill it up and make me whole.*

When I was growing up, one of my favorite scriptures was Proverbs 22:6, "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." There are no guarantees; however, it is my belief that as much exposure to a loving heavenly Father, who cares for us and wants only the best for us, the better foundation we have in navigating this world. Another favorite text I had growing up was Ecclesiastes 12:1, "Remember your Creator in the days of your youth, before the days of trouble come and the years approach when you will say, 'I find no pleasure in them.'" Again, this scripture lesson reminds us of the need to establish acknowledge our heavenly Father is the source of our strength, wisdom, intellect, ability to earn, capacity to love and to care for others—our everything.

My ultimate passage of scripture that I fall back on when dealing with any situation is Proverbs 3:5-6: "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths."

I have realized that my Lord knows much better than I how to operate in this world. He also knows best why things occur and I must lean toward His guidance as to what direction to follow.

The flow of events these days is fast and furious. There is a temptation in the busyness of life to spend more time attempting to deal with and understand life events without seeking God's counsel and spending quality time studying His word and applying it to our lives. I am sure each of us has a favorite scripture that inspires us or gives us hope and direction. Please allow me to encourage you to never forget that ultimately, our heavenly Father knows best. Having a healthy prayer life and studying His word will fill us and cover us when all others are searching for relief and answers. Don't ever let Him go.

By Philip Palmer, Treasurer/CFO



God's Good Men

Special Guest Challenges Berean Church's Men

Baton Rouge, La. » While “Uncle Sam” is looking for “a few good men,” Berean Seventh-day Adventist Church has already found theirs as evident in its recent men’s ministry program and theme bearing the phrase “A Few Good Men.” The weekend service included our men’s chorus arrayed in their black suits, and black dress shirts accented with red ties. Guest speaker Pastor Robert T. Smith of Teaneck, New Jersey, delighted the congregation by joining the chorus in one of its Sabbath numbers.

“A speaker should be long-suffering, not long-winded,” is how Smith began his message which he titled “Who Are You?” Using John 1:19-28 as his backdrop, his focus highlighted the three factors that made the life of John the Baptist great. The first was “John had the right Spirit in his life—the Holy

Spirit. Many have a spirit, but it’s the wrong one, and results in their jumping up and running down the aisle. Jesus is more interested in how straight we walk when our feet hit the ground.” That factor concluded with the need for Berean Church to be filled with the Holy Ghost.

The second factor was John having the right kind of home training. He reminded us that Jesus spent 30 years training for a three-and-a-half-year ministry. The lesson was that results require time.

Capitalizing on Men’s Ministry Day, Smith emphasized the importance of older men mentoring younger men by providing what the average school fails to do. “Today’s jails are full of men with degrees because education without Christ produces educated fools,” eliciting acquiescent nods from the audience.

Smith’s last factor was John having the right type of message in his life, a life with purpose. “He had no degree, not even a GED, but he had a G-O-D. Unlike many of today’s names, John’s name had meaning. Thus, he identified himself in terms of his function being ‘...the voice of one calling in the wilderness, make straight the way for the Lord.’”

Speaking to Berean, Smith posed the question, “Who are you? Better still, how do you function?” He answered his own question with 1 Peter 2:9 further delineating the words chosen: *generation, royal priesthood, holy nation, and peculiar people*. He closed with “Who are you? Better still, how do you function?”

By Evelyn Edwards



Fearlessly Faithful

Southwest Region Conference Responds to Hurricane Harvey

Dallas, Texas » On August 25, 2017, Hurricane Harvey, one of the most ferocious rainstorms to hit land in the continental United States in recorded history, dumped over 50 inches of rain upon Houston and the coastal region of Texas. It was reported that an estimated 450,000 persons and more than 183,000 homes were affected by the storm.

A Rapid Needs Assessment was conducted 24 hours after the storm by the Southwest Region Conference Emergency Response Team: Durandel Ford, Conference ACS Director; Keith Goodman, pastor of World Harvest Outreach (WHO) Adventist Church; Linda Walker, ACS Representative to the Donation Management Council for the City of Houston and Harris County; and Myrna Sharpe, ACS Director of Fondren Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Steps were taken to convert WHO into a community service center and local distribution center providing emergency supplies to other churches, mosques, and various community organizations.

Houston's Berean Seventh-day Adventist Church became the housing and feeding site for volunteers who poured into the area to assist, while Fondren Adventist Church acted as a distribution center in yet a different area of Houston.

Serving between 300-400 families daily with non-perishable foods, bottled water, clothing, shoes, infant supplies, housewares, bedding and more, WHO continues to provide necessities to keep families functioning while facing very dysfunctional situations.

The holistic nature of this loss has required a holistic approach to the

recovery efforts including assistance with housing, re-employment, relocation, medical assistance and other issues. Through collaborative partnerships, WHO is working to connect their clients to all the resources needed to address every situation.

Faithfully toiling away in the Southwest Houston area, the Fondren Adventist Church expanded its weekly food pantry distribution to include school supplies, personal care items, cleaning supplies, bedding, dishes, cooking utensils, and other necessary items.

Responding to a desperate need, the Berean Adventist Church was transformed into an all-purpose volunteer/distribution center, registering and assigning volunteers to their work stations, and providing water, meals, and lodging for those traveling from afar. On



the distribution center side, the church provided clothing and other goods to non-profit agencies and shelters and served between 250-300 community clientele and others from the George R. Brown Convention Center with new clothes, food, water, toiletries and spiritual counseling.

God used the willing hearts of believers and nonbelievers, Republicans and Democrats, blacks and whites to travel from all over the country sacrificing time and resources to assist in the disaster. A recovery group from New Hampshire, traveling in a truck filled with donations, delivered a hand-signed banner of encouragement; Jack, “The Fishing Fool” and his dog Fubear from Chicago delivered a truck full of toys along with Jack’s coin savings of \$160

in a Planter’s Peanuts can; a couple from Chicago drove a truck and a U-Haul both stuffed with pillows plus \$600 in donations because they couldn’t fit in any more pillows.

The multitude of volunteers, along with groups from schools, churches of various denominations, mosques, temples, colleges and universities, as well as businesses like the local Kroger that donated shopping carts and shopping bags to assist those picking up the donated goods, have provided an endless wave of support in testimony to the reality that our humanity which unites us is far greater than any differences that may separate us.

As we continue to pray for those affected by the storm let us be vigilant in praying for hearts and minds to be

open and receptive to the love of God; that as they see the sacrifices made by the hundreds of volunteers that have come to their aid, they will recognize through them the greatest sacrifice ever made—that of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ who died on the cross so we might all be saved.

By Elizabeth Duncan,
North Central Texas ACS Coordinator

Previous page, top left: Keith Goodman, pastor of the World Harvest Outreach (WHO) Seventh-day Adventist Church, unloads donated items along with many volunteers. The WHO has served and continues to serve hundreds of people each day after Hurricane Harvey.

Reaching Our Neighbors

Tulsa Bethel Church is on the Move

Tulsa, Okla. » In spite of the tornado that hit in 2016 and its effects on the church building, Tulsa Bethel Seventh-day Adventist Church is still standing and on the move. The church members are active in reaching out to neighbors by providing clothing, food, and prayers to those in need. Each department at Tulsa Bethel Church is active in outreach. Our Pathfinders are increasing their membership by inviting youth in the community to attend campouts, rap sessions, sporting activities, and to join their club.

Our men’s ministries department is reaching the community through invitations, home visits, off-site socials, and prayer. They are having success with two new souls functioning in the church. Our women’s ministries department conducts annual visits to the children’s hospital with songs, homemade quilts and gift bags.

Our soul-winning classes are ongoing and celebrating success. Our social committee is also involved in outreach. They are providing family-friendly movies

with movie discussions, bi-monthly and delectable fellowship dinners. We have noticed an increase in attendance by those staying and fellowshiping.

The Tulsa Bethel Church has plans for bigger and better activities to help promote the soon return of the Lord. We still trust in His goodness, love, and kindness to fully restore and grow our church.

By Carolyn Phipps



Schedule Overview

Friday, January 26

4:30-6:00 PM Registration

6:30 PM Opening Program

Sabbath, January 27

9:00 AM Worship Service

10:15 AM Breakout Sessions

5:45 PM Plenary

Sunday, January 28

9:00 AM Breakout Sessions

12:00 PM Training Concludes

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Words to Live By

Hiding God's Word in My Heart



As a young man, I struggled a lot with one particular sin. I was a habitual liar. I'll be honest, this isn't easy to admit, but as the expression goes, "confession is good for the soul." The word of God expounds upon that very concept when it says, "For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved," (Romans 10:10). This verse tells me that in spite of all the truth you believe in your heart, if your mouth doesn't correspond declaring truth at all times, what's the point?

Early in our marriage, there came a point when my wife was at her wits' end. She gave me over to the Lord. She interceded on my behalf, pleading with the Lord to change my heart. It was about that time when something impactful transpired in my life and as I was driven back to the Word of God. The divine words I had learned in my childhood were called to memory: "I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you," (Psalm 119:11).

For the first time in my life, the scalpel of God's Word cut deep into my soul convicting me of the great treason that it was for me to carelessly utter words of deceit. With the power of the Holy Spirit, I purposed in my heart to never again embarrass the Lord, my wife, my children, or myself again in that fashion.

I began to desperately store God's Word in my heart. Step by step, the triviality of the materialistic associations that had overgrown my heart were surgically removed by the promptings of the Spirit. I praised God that He had begun a work in me that He was committed to see through to its completion as long as I voluntarily surrendered to Him on a daily basis. My life and bad habit changed.

Don't get me wrong—I am still very much a work in progress. Nonetheless, I believe that those who associate with me today can say that they can depend on me to be a straight shooter with them. There is power in God's Word. The more we allow the Holy Spirit to subtract the earthly and fill its place with the heavenly, the closer our association with Christ becomes.

By Carlos J. Craig, President



Engaging Hearts Mentoring Lives

Alvarado » Alexis Rivera, the new Texas Conference Children's Ministries Director, has great plans for children's programming in Texas. She has launched a new website, TXAdventistKids.org, as well as social media accounts at Facebook.com/TXAdventistKids and Twitter.com/TXAdventistKids, to communicate with children's ministries leaders in churches, and parents wanting ideas to minister to their own children.

The next step is to find volunteers willing to become children's ministries coordinators in the 10 areas of the conference. Her goal is to have at least one English and Spanish coordinator for each area. Eventually, the hope is for these coordinators to work with their area teams to further children's ministries outreach.

"Texas Conference Children's Ministries seeks to engage the hearts and

minds of our children through dynamic, interactive programming," Rivera shared. "We desire to equip our leaders with teaching methods to connect with all types of learners so each child can study the scriptures in relevant and life-changing ways."

At the end of each month, training webinars will be available for participants online. Children's ministries training will focus on four areas in 2018: Evangelism for children and by children (January-March); VBX Vacation Bible School (March-April); Sabbath School class growth and development (May-August) and family worship workshops (September-December).

"We seek to create a strong mentoring network of passionate children's ministries leaders that are involved in unified training, fellowship, and encour-

agement," Rivera added. "We also seek to foster a conference-wide vision of ongoing discipleship between local church leaders and their children."

Rivera has a lifelong passion for children's ministries that started during her years as a program director at summer camp. She has a Bachelor of Arts in theology from Southwestern Adventist University and a Master of Divinity degree from Andrews University. Most recently, she received an Adventist Chaplaincy endorsement through her training at Texas Health Huguley Hospital.

If you or someone you know is interested in helping with children's ministries in the Texas Conference, please contact Alexis Rivera at arivera@txsda.org or by phone at (817) 790-2255, ext. 2214.

By *Tamara Michalenko Terry*
Associate Communication Director



Save the Date

For dates and topics visit
www.txsdakids/training

A School for the Community

San Marcos Adventist Junior Academy

San Marcos » “I am thankful to have a refuge for students where they can grow and learn about God’s love,” says Carrie Suess, San Marcos Adventist Junior Academy (SMAJA) Principal.

SMAJA is a close-knit school community located between San Antonio and Austin. The San Marcos Adventist Church was founded in 1960 and began with 25 charter members who met in a funeral home parlor. Now, the church has almost 300 members who meet in a beautifully renovated sanctuary and it has its own school with 50 students meeting in a new building.

With a mission to prepare each of the students to look Heavenward, the Kindergarten to tenth-grade program has four full-time teachers, a teaching principal, and a front office manager. The culturally diverse student body is composed of children from an additional four area churches and the community.

“With over 78% of our church budget going to the ministry of the school, our church family understands that this is an investment,” Josue Murillo, San Marcos Seventh-day Adventist Church Pastor, shared. “It’s not only an investment in our future, but could change the whole

scenario for our nearby sister churches as we see these children stay close to God and in the church—going onto an Adventist college, and continuing to serve Him wherever He takes them.”

“Not only does SMAJA offer a strong academic program,” said Anthony Stahl, Central Texas Medical Center President and CEO, “but they teach durable, Christian values to our young people who are the future leaders of our community. We are a proud partner of the school and look to the future with great optimism.”

By Kristi Reeves

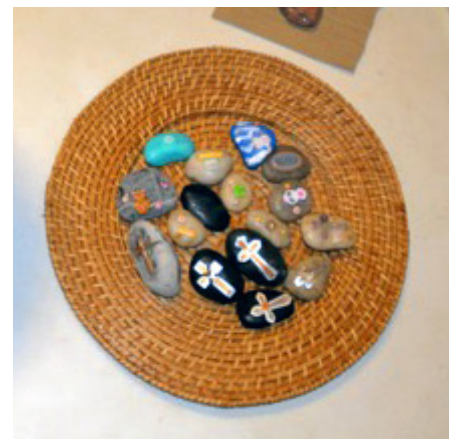


No Stone Unturned

Using Rocks for Ministry

Grandview » Rock painting is fun for children and adults alike. Some cities form rock groups to provide an opportunity for people to share what they have created. Grandview Seventh-day Adventist Church members use rock painting to share their faith. From spiritual words or crosses to Bible texts and stickers, the rocks are designed and placed throughout the community just waiting to put a smile on the face of the finder who can then keep it or re-hide it.

By Jhan Beaupre



The Gift of Blood

Helping Those in Need

Keene » As news reports covered Hurricane Harvey last August, a scheduled blood drive at Chisholm Trail Academy (CTA) became a way for people to help victims many hours away.

“It was such a miracle that something previously scheduled came at a time of need,” said Peggy Furr, CTA registrar and blood drive coordinator. The students were educated on the need and given an opportunity to participate. The community, including Southwestern Adventist University staff and students, were invited to donate.

We were shocked by the number of participants. The Carter BloodCare consultant said, “You guys knocked it out of the park! A sincere heartfelt thank you from all—including our community and patients!”

The blood collected on the CTA campus helped more than 162 people. It reminded me of how God took the small offering of two fish and five loaves to feed thousands. Our gifts may not seem like enough, but when placed in God’s hands, they can be multiplied.

By *Johnathan Coker*



A Generational Legacy

Bowie Church Members Help in Africa

Bowie » Edward Janda started the first Seventh-day Adventist Church in Musungwa, Zimbabwe, in the early 1920s. Named Chigwamba, after a nearby mountain, it became the mother church for many Seventh-day Adventist churches in the region. When Janda’s grandson, Joseph, heard one of the churches was unsafe for worship services, he enlisted the help of his church—Bowie Seventh-day Adventist Church. The church board decided to undertake the whole project with the assistance of Maranatha Volunteers International.

Feeling like “Gideon’s Army,” the small group set out to restore the church and provide necessities to the villagers in the area. Construction and health clinics took place during the day and prophecy seminars and children’s stories were held in the evening. More than 200 locals came during the week, swelling to more than 500 on Sabbath.

During the final Sabbath celebration, the building was full and more than 200 children met under a tree for wonderful singing, Bible stories, and to watch puppet shows about Bible values.

During the afternoon service, 28 people were baptized. Janda’s 92-year-old daughter, Gift Magwizi, was honored with a picture of her father. Bowie church members are very appreciative of the many people and organizations who helped make the completion of this project possible.

Work has continued and the building was completely finished with the Seventh-day Adventist Church logo and name painted on the front. Two local businesses also donated \$10,000 so a well could be drilled on the church property.

By *Jesse Coulson*



A True “Mission” School

Triangle Adventist Christian School

Groves » Triangle Adventist Christian School (TACS) is redefining its vision and re-affirming its purpose to “... teach all nations...” Nestled in the heart of Groves, a quaint southeast Texas town, TACS has a diverse denominational and ethnic student population. One might say that TACS serves a unique purpose, as a true “mission” school.

From our youngest students in the three- and four-year-old program to our eighth graders, we serve 25 precious souls, of whom only two are Adventists.

We are excited when parents join us on Sabbath for musical performances or attend our annual church Fall Festival. It is a great opportunity to get to know each other. Our pre-K program has especially piqued interest in the community as we currently have 12 children on a waiting list!

Each day as the teachers share stories and songs about Jesus, the children are learning who God is, some for the very first time. Parents have commented on the change they see in their children at home. They are sharing what they are

learning at school each day with mom, dad, and other family members.

Fulfilling our school theme, “Let Your Light Shine,” our December Community Service Day allowed our students to brighten the day for others through cleaning, baking and visitation.

I think we are here in Groves “...for such a time as this...” While we await the soon return of our Lord and Savior, we are working to share our light in our community and beyond.

————— *By Annette Bradley-Martes*



A Step Back in Time

Honoring Adventist Heritage in Texas

Clifton » The Norse Seventh-day Adventist Church is the oldest standing Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Texas Conference territory.

For the past 35 years, members have honored this landmark by having a church service each year, followed by a potluck that includes fresh cobbler.

Horses are provided for the adventurous ones who want to enjoy a 30-minute trail ride to the church. Members share their horses and chuck wagons to help visitors enjoy their step back in time.

In October 2017, Texas Conference

President Carlos Craig was the speaker, and local bluegrass musicians presented a concert.

“This tiny church has not had weekly services since the late 1920s but it has been lovingly cared for through the years,” Patty Lockwood shared in her online blog, Morning Ramble.

All are welcome to join the group for the 35th annual church service scheduled for October 13, 2018, with speaker Ron Halvorsen, Jr.

————— *By Yldo Ortiz*



Blessed Assurance

The Power of the Gospel Revealed



During the summer between my junior and senior years in academy I had the life-changing privilege to join approximately 65 other young people for two months of ministry. We were all part of the Carolina Adventist Youth in Action (AYA) Team and we traveled throughout the eastern part of the country as we sang at many churches and also at six camp meetings between North Carolina and Maine. More than four decades later, the experiences of that trip live large in my memory.

One such memory came from a special concert that we gave to an audience of one person, H. M. S. Richards, the founder and speaker of the Voice of Prophecy radio broadcast. Richards loved young people, and he loved music.

After we sang our last song, Richards thanked us with very gracious words and encouraged us to never stop singing those songs. As he reached for his Bible, he said that he was concerned that so many people who were followers of Jesus were living lives of anxiety and confusion about their personal salvation. He told us that those people need the hope and assurance of the gospel to truly become real in their hearts.

Richards told us that there was a very special promise found in Romans 10:9, and, without looking down at his Bible, he quoted it just as it reads: “If you declare with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.” He challenged each of us to work through those words in our own heart, to ask ourselves the questions, “Am I willing to declare that Jesus is my Lord and, do I believe that God raised him from the dead?” The word of promise, he said, is pretty strong: “*you will be saved.*”

Most everyone I knew and, without a doubt, the majority of Christians in most of our churches, were very hesitant to express any sense of assurance about their salvation. The burden of human effort (being good enough) was so heavy that the message of salvation “by grace, through faith as the gift of God” (Eph 2:8) seemed to fade into the background. These words have remained in my heart throughout these many years and I am so very grateful that Jesus has continued to encourage my faith journey with the assurance of His gracious gift of salvation to me. Some 25 years after that experience I served as a chaplain at Loma Linda University Medical Center; I was called to the room of a woman who was in the late stages of a terminal illness. She was struggling with a deep anxiety about whether she was “qualified” to go to heaven.

She was a Catholic and had already been visited by a priest, yet she was severely troubled about what would happen to her in eternity. I pulled my little New Testament from my pocket and read this passage from Romans. I asked her if she had accepted Jesus as her Lord and, if she believed that God had raised Him from the dead. Her response was unequivocal, “Absolutely, yes!” Then I continued, “The words from scripture are very clear ‘thou shalt be saved.’ A look of peace and joy washed over her face as her tears flowed freely. As she experienced the assurance of that promise, it was renewed once again in my own heart, and there were some tears on my own cheeks as well.

What a blessing it is to experience the power of the gospel as it is recorded and revealed through the precious pages of scripture. May each of us know that peace, joy, hope, and assurance as we listen to God speak to us through His Word.

By Phil Robertson, Executive Secretary/Treasurer



Celebrating God's Goodness

Texico Conference 41st Quadrennial Constituency Session

Albuquerque, N. Mex. » The Texico Conference held its 41st Quadrennial Constituency Session on Sunday, October 22, 2017 at the Albuquerque Heights Seventh-day Adventist Church in Albuquerque, N. Mex., where delegates met to elect officers for the 2017-2021 quadrennial term. The theme for the session was "Celebrating God's Goodness."

In his devotional presentation, Jorge Rico, Professor of Theology at Southwestern Adventist University (SWAU), challenged the delegates to "not dwell on past challenges but to focus on the victories and use past challenges to grow."

The session was then declared open, and delegates voted to reelect Lee-Roy Chacon, President; Phil Robertson, Executive Secretary/Treasurer; Derral Reeve, Education Superintendent; and Jeff Metherell, Estate Planning,

Religious Liberty, and Stewardship for another four-year term. They also voted to accept the Albuquerque La Roca Spanish Seventh-day Adventist Church into the sisterhood of churches, officially changing their status from that of a company to a church.

Chacon was moved and grateful for the opportunity to serve another term. "It is always a privilege to serve the Lord, and with humbleness I commit myself wholeheartedly to the Lord's task, to make sure God's kingdom is enhanced here at the Texico Conference," said Chacon.

Phil Robertson, Executive Secretary/Treasurer, also expressed gratitude after his reelection. "It is an incredible privilege and a very great honor to serve the Texico Conference. I love this family, and praise God for making us family," said Robertson. "It is a great privilege to share and

continue leadership and I pledge myself to do everything possible to expand God's kingdom here. I pray that we continue to be faithful until that day we see Jesus."

Ken Shaw, President of SWAU, was among the presenters and gave an informative report about plans that are currently underway for a new Nursing and Administration facility on the campus of SWAU. Helvis Moody, Prayer Coordinator for the Southwestern Union, offered a prayer of dedication to close the session.

— *By Debbie Márquez*
Communication Director

Bottom left: Newly re-elected Texico Conference officers, from left: Derral Reeve, Education Superintendent; Phil Robertson, Executive Secretary/Treasurer; Lee-Roy Chacon, President; Jeff Metherell, Estate Planning, Religious Liberty, and Stewardship.



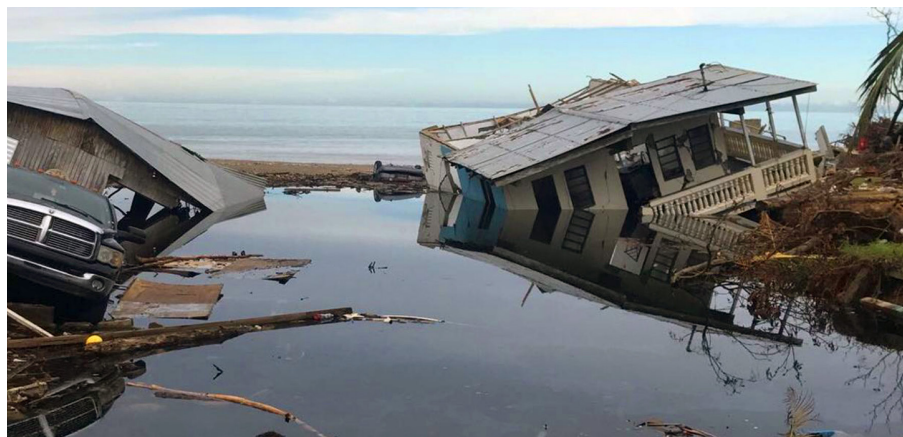
Hope in a Hopeless Situation

God is Still in Control After Hurricane Maria

San Juan, Puerto Rico » On September 20, 2017, Hurricane Maria slammed into Puerto Rico, ranking as one of the worst natural disasters to have ever passed through the island. We all saw the images of the catastrophic damage and the major humanitarian crisis it caused. My

wife and I were born and raised in Puerto Rico, and as news started coming in about the devastation, it broke our hearts to hear that roads were impassable and that our beloved island was left without power and communication. Worst of all, we were grieved to hear that thousands

of people had lost their homes and all that they had worked for their entire lives. As we worried about our families and started to think about what we could do to help, the Lord inspired us to see the situation as an opportunity to minister to others. We felt impressed to go directly



to the island and help out in whatever capacity we could. As a pastor of several churches in southern New Mexico, I informed the members that we would be heading to Puerto Rico as soon as flights were available. Our people were generous and eager to help as they collected supplies and offered financial support.

Eleven days after Maria made landfall in Puerto Rico, we arrived in San Juan and we were greeted with a shocking and appalling reality. At the airport, there were dozens of people lying everywhere, water dripped from the ceiling and, due to the lack of power, the heat was suffocating. The scene outside the airport was not any better. Destruction was far and wide but we were not disheartened because we knew God had a mission for us to fulfill. We immediately drove to San Sebastian on the west side of Puerto Rico to check on our family and we were grateful to find that they were safe. For the next few days, we went through the community distributing bags full of groceries and toiletries, but most importantly we prayed with people. Sadly, I learned

that the Eneas Seventh-day Adventist Church, the place where I met the Lord, had been severely damaged by the hurricane. We spent time there helping to clean it out and salvage what was left. Several days later, we went back to the east side of the island to help in the areas of Toa Baja and Toa Alta. The hurricane affected these areas most dramatically due to the flooding of the La Plata River. Unfortunately, my mother-in-law's home was one of the many homes damaged.

Despite seeing the loss and suffering, we were encouraged to see how the Holy Spirit worked in the hearts of the people we encountered. We rejoiced every time we saw the smiles on people's faces after they would hear our words of encouragement or receive a bag of groceries. We heard dozens of testimonies as people told of how God had protected and saved their families. We also saw first-hand how God made it possible for my wife and I to get to people and places that needed our help. After two and a half weeks, we came back to New Mexico safely, but not without thanking God for this wonderful

experience. Puerto Rico has a long road to recovery but there is no doubt in my mind that our God is in control and that He is coming soon! In the meantime, I invite you to keep praying for the people of Puerto Rico and for all those who were affected by this tragic storm.

By Jorge Luis Morales

Previous page, top left: Jorge Luis Morales at a grocery store in Puerto Rico with two people from the local community. Morales distributed groceries and prayed with families after Hurricane Maria.

Top right: Local residents help in the clean up efforts at Ocean Park Beach, an upscale beach-front community in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

Middle left: The Eneas Seventh-day Adventist Church lost its roof and was severely damaged during Hurricane Maria.

Middle right: Flooding of the La Plata River caused damage to one of the main streets that connects the areas of Dorado, Toa Baja and Toa Alta.

SAVE THE DATE

TEXICO CONFERENCE CAMP MEETING
 JUNE 7-9, 2018
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REGISTRATION AND PROGRAM DETAILS
 COMING SOON



Stand Down

Rancho Viejo Church Reaches Out to Homeless

Santa Fe, N. Mex. » Reaching out to our community and showing God’s love to people who don’t get to experience love every day has been the focus of community outreach at the Rancho Viejo Seventh-day Adventist Church in Santa Fe, N. Mex. Seven years ago, a member of the Rancho Viejo Adventist Church, Phillip Chavez, felt the call to reach out to the large population of homeless people in the Santa Fe area. Looking into statistics of homeless people, Philip found that there were many who were also military veterans. Being a veteran himself, it hit close to home. “As a veteran and a Christian, it is our job to serve others,” says Philip, when asked why the Veteran Stand Down was important to him. This Veterans Stand Down is hosted by Adventist Community Services.

Not only does it allow the churches in the Santa Fe area to get involved, but it also gives the churches an opportunity to get other businesses and organizations involved. About 10 organizations and businesses were able to provide services and goods to homeless veterans and non-veterans this year. Some of the services provided were haircuts, free dental care, health education, free physicals, free flu shots, clothes, hand massages, and more. This year, the Santa Fe Veterans Center and Lithia were the main sponsors.

One of the most popular services were the free hugs that were being offered by some church members. There were volunteers walking around and talking to people who were wearing signs that said “free hugs.” One of the volunteers said it was heartwarming to see the huge smiles on people’s faces after they received their hugs. One of the homeless people even said they hadn’t felt human touch in a long time, and they appreciated what the church was doing.

The head elder of the Rancho Viejo Adventist Church, Robert Winn, said that it is a special opportunity to be able to “invite people to church services, just talk to people, and hand out Bibles.” He also mentioned that it was great to see people who return every year and the people keep in touch with them throughout the year whenever they need help.

Among the businesses and organizations that got involved was the local Adventist school, Adventist Academy of Santa Fe. The students were honored to draw patriotic and veteran-themed pictures for the event. The paintings the students made were displayed at the Veterans Stand Down so that people could enjoy them. Phillip expressed how much the veterans enjoyed the paintings because it reminded them of drawings they received from children

while on deployment. The students from the 4th-8th grade class were honored and proud that they could contribute with their art, serving people food, and helping with the event.

Thank you to the sponsors who helped with the Veterans Stand Down: the Equine Services for Heroes, State Veterans Service Offices, Women Veterans of New Mexico, Goodwill, Santa Fe Modern Dental and Pacific Dental, Walgreens, and the Guadalupe Credit Union were organizations that came together for the event. It was also great to have the support of our local conference, and have our president and his wife, Lee-Roy and Nelva Chacón, support the event.

The Santa Fe community hopes that they can continue to reach the people in the area. Pray for outreach to continue so that we, as an Adventist family, can continue to reach others by simply showing God’s love to those who don’t experience love every day.

By Melissa Chacón

Left: Eric Redic, pastor of several Adventist churches in Santa Fe, praying with an attendee of the Veterans Stand Down event.

Below: Local Santa Fe Color Guard enjoying a meal at the Veterans’ Stand Down event in Santa Fe, N. Mex.



Classified Ads

EMPLOYMENT

Walla Walla University is hiring! To see the list of available positions, go to Jobs.WallaWalla.edu.

PUC is Seeking a Candidate for Facilities Associate Director in our Facilities Maintenance Department. Preference is experience in planning, budgeting, maintenance of College facilities, in addition to strong leadership/interpersonal skills/team leader. Responsibilities in roads, building safety, HVAC, water distribution/treatment, general building maintenance, compliance for hazardous materials, etc. For more information or to apply, please call 707.965.6231 or visit PUC.edu/faculty-staff/current-job-postings.

PUC is Seeking Full-time Positions in Our Facilities Maintenance Department. Looking for positions of Tradesman Supervisor-Painter, and Tradesman I- Carpenter. Preference is for training and applied experience in trade areas of general painting, and carpentry. For Painter, experience in color/finish/application/etc. For Carpenter, experience in cabinet making/floor coverings/installation/etc. For both, able to be team player, handle multiple projects. For more information or to apply, please call 707.965.6231 or visit PUC.edu/faculty-staff/current-job-postings.

Southwestern Adventist University is Seeking an Online Adjunct Professor/s to teach part-time courses in newly organized Senior Living Management Certificate program through the Department of Business. Submit cover letter and current CV/resume to Denise.Rivera@SWAU.edu. Candidates must have industry-specific (Independent Living, Assisted Living, Memory Care) knowledge and/or experience and a minimum of a master's degree in a related field. Preference given with prior teaching experience.

Southwestern Adventist University is Looking for a Full-time English Professor with a Ph.D. Candidates with a degree in any literature or writing specialty will be considered. Send a CV to Dr. Judy Myers Laue, Chair, Department of English, Southwestern Adventist University, 100 W. Hillcrest Street, Keene TX 76059 or LaueJ@SWAU.edu.

The Education and Psychology Department at Southwestern Adventist University invites applications for a full-time faculty position. Preferred candidates will hold a doctorate in Educational Psychology or Secondary Education and have university teaching experience. Master's degree considered. Must have or be able to obtain a Texas teaching credential. Send CV and cover letter to Dr. Donna Berkner (DBerkner@SWAU.edu).

Southwestern Adventist University Seeks a Full-time Systematic Theology Faculty member for 2018-2019. Ph.D. preferred; master's degree considered. Successful candidates will have teaching and pastoral experience. Send CV and cover letter to Dr. Amy Rosenthal (ARosenthal@SWAU.edu).

OB-GYN and Pediatrician Needed for Adventist Owned/Operated Rural Health Clinic on the campus of Weimar Institute at Weimar, California. Competitive pay. Call Dr. Randall Steffens at 615.604.0142.

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1BR Condo in Honolulu, Hawaii, in Nu'uuanu, relaxing & affordable. Minutes to beaches, Chinatown, and hiking! Clean, comfortable, like new. Sleeps 6 comfortably. Furnished kitchen; washer/dryer and more. Free parking. Visit HonCentralSDA.org or call 808.524.1352.

MISCELLANEOUS

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NEW! The God-Shaped Heart. You're trapped in a cycle of sin, shame, and begging forgiveness. Get liberated! Author/speaker Dr. Timothy Jennings shows you how a correct picture of God will transform your faith forever. On sale at Amazon.com.

April 5-8, 2018 – ROSARIO SINGLES RETREAT in Anacortes, Wash., with keynote speaker Marvin Wray. Experience a spiritual, social and fun time. Registration opens March 1, 2018. Join the retreat email list: WashingtonASAM@gmail.com.

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Our Adventist Oregon-based agency specializes in giving you instant credibility using our strong internet marketing background, conversion-friendly design skills. View our work at DiscoverPeppermint.com Serving clients worldwide. Call Kama directly at 541.903.1180.

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

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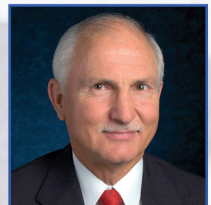


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 Gentry Seventh-day Adventist Church



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Steven Orian
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IN His LIKENESS

Women's Spiritual Retreat

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(February 1 - June 30)
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Erica Jones
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Carla Wright
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Dr. H. Jean Wright
*Clinical and Forensic
Psychologist*



Diana Jaworski
*Director
Creative Box*

**TO REGISTER VISIT: www.SouthwesternAdventist.org/Women
Southwestern Union Women's Ministries**

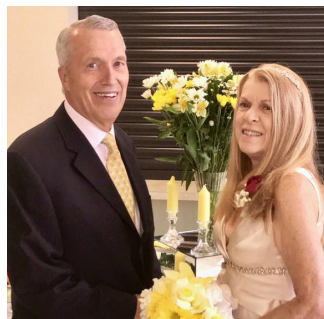
StartMyOwnBusinessToolKit.com An Adventist-founded, Christian-based, video-formatted tool kit with over seven hours of 12 successful entrepreneurs helping you utilize your God-given talents and start your own business! Available online for \$498.

Ouachita Healthy Living Center in Southwest Arkansas. This is where you need to go if you want to change some habits, eat better, develop an exercise program, and do it in a natural setting with a Christian emphasis. Our first week-long, live-in program begins April 1, 2018. Please contact us via email at drsi@ohhealth.org or call 318.426.1843.

LOSE Weight, FEEL Great — and other health materials such as tracts, magazines, books and cookbooks for your church, health fair or personal use. For a free sample call 800.777.2848 or visit FamilyHeritageBooks.com.

Milestones

50th Wedding Anniversary: Will and Dian Kowarsch recently celebrated the 50th anniversary of their wedding on June 4, 1967 in Asheville, N.C. They renewed their vows



with Pastor Buster Swoopes at the Crowley Seventh-day Adventist Church in Crowley, Texas. Their four children, nine grandchildren, and the Crowley church members rejoiced together.

Obituaries

DeLong, Louis C.; born May 7, 1933, Syracuse, N.Y.; died Oct. 30, 2017, Longview, Texas. Church membership: Jefferson Adventist Academy. Surviving: wife, Wilma; children, Rodney (Jeanene), Allan (Sharon), Keith (Missy), Greg; step-children, Michael (Rhonda) Littell, Sharon Rogers, Skip (Joy) Lowery, Randy (Barbara) Williams, Julia Harvey, Kathy Williams, Steven Williams, Caitlin Williams; sister, Dorothy Parish; 21 grandchildren; 16 great-grandchildren.

Horne, Isaac Edward; born Feb. 18, 1932; died March 16, 2017, West Monroe, La. Church membership: Westlakes Seventh-day Adventist Church. Ministries: Arkansas-Louisiana Conference and Southwestern Union Conference.

Horne, Nola Williams; born Nov. 9, 1932; died June 24, 2017. Church membership: Surviving: son, Dr. Stephen Horne (Kathy); two grandsons and two great-grandchildren.

Hubbart, Ray; born April 11, 1933, Guthrie, Okla.; died Nov. 2, 2017, Jefferson, Texas. Church membership: Linden Seventh-day Adventist Church. Ministries:

Dolly Janice Spells was born on September 5, 1932, in Joinerville, Texas, and died on January 6, 2017. She was preceded in death by her parents, Ruby Lee (Johnson) and Raleigh Black. She is survived by her daughter, Lisa Foster (Rob) of Keene, Texas; son, Henry David Spells III of Sachse, Texas; brother, Billy Ray Black (Patsy) of Henderson, Texas; sister, Betty Heinrich (Gary) of Keene; grandchildren, Meagan Dutton (Sean); Ethan Foster; Chelsea Foster (fiancé Billy Hungate); Henry David Spells IV; Gabrielle Spells; great-grandchildren: Kamryn, Beckett, and Falyn Dutton. She was a retired hairdresser and a long-time resident of Keene, who was active in her local church and community, having received the Chamber of Commerce "Pioneer Award."



Christian Record Services, Lincoln, Neb.; Pastor, Laurel Heights Seventh-day Adventist Church, San Antonio, Texas and Houston Central Seventh-day Adventist Church, Houston, Texas; Texas Conference ministerial director. Surviving: wife, Gail; son, Robert; daughters, Rhonda and Jill; eight grandchildren and 13 great grandchildren.

Lambeth, Virgie Maurine; born Aug. 10, 1921; died Aug. 17, 2017, DeQueen, Ark. Church membership: Beacon Hill Seventh-day Adventist Church. Surviving: son, Cleve Lambeth, of Hot Springs, Ark.; son, Clem Lambeth, of Little Rock, Ark.; daughter, Wanda Juhl, of Minn.; daughter, Jackie Pogue, of DeQueen, Ark.

Walker, Lettie C.; born Jan. 26, 1921; died May 9, 2017. Church membership: Westlakes Seventh-day

Adventist Church. Surviving: daughter, Betty Jean Millican; daughter, Nellie Ruth "Midge" Willis.

Submissions

Back Pages: To submit family milestones, obituaries, announcements, or address changes, visit www.SWURecord.org, or call 817.295.0476.

The *Record* also accepts expanded obituaries. For submission and cost information, contact record@swuc.org, or call 817.295.0476.

News and Articles: Send your local church news and high-resolution photographs to your local conference communication representative listed on page 2.

If you are interested in writing for the *Record*, view our writer's guide at www.SWURecord.org, or email record@swuc.org.

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Sabbath Sunset Calendar JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2018

Remember the Sabbath day
to keep it holy.

-Exodus 20:8

	1/5	1/12	1/19	1/26	2/2	2/9	2/16	2/23
Abilene	5:47	5:53	5:59	6:06	6:12	6:19	6:25	6:31
Albuquerque	5:08	5:14	5:21	5:28	5:35	5:42	5:49	5:56
Amarillo	5:49	5:55	6:02	6:09	6:16	6:23	6:30	6:36
Brownsville	5:52	5:58	6:03	6:08	6:14	6:19	6:23	6:28
Dallas	5:34	5:40	5:47	5:53	6:00	6:06	6:13	6:19
El Paso	5:15	5:21	5:27	5:34	5:40	5:46	5:52	5:58
Fort Worth	5:37	5:43	5:49	5:55	6:02	6:09	6:15	6:21
Gallup	5:15	5:22	5:28	5:36	5:43	5:50	5:57	6:05
Gentry	5:17	5:23	5:30	5:37	5:44	5:52	5:59	6:06
Houston	5:36	5:41	5:47	5:53	5:59	6:05	6:11	6:16
Little Rock	5:12	5:18	5:25	5:32	5:39	5:46	5:53	5:59
Muskogee	5:21	5:28	5:34	5:42	5:49	5:56	6:03	6:10
New Orleans	5:14	5:20	5:26	5:32	5:38	5:44	5:49	5:54
Oklahoma City	5:31	5:37	5:44	5:51	5:58	6:05	6:12	6:19
Roswell	5:04	5:10	5:16	5:23	5:30	5:36	5:43	5:49
San Antonio	5:49	5:54	6:00	6:06	6:12	6:18	6:23	6:29
Shreveport	5:23	5:29	5:35	5:42	5:48	5:55	6:01	6:07
Tulsa	5:23	5:29	5:36	5:43	5:50	5:58	6:06	6:12

All 2018 Sunset Calendars are available at www.SouthwesternAdventist.org/sunset



She
humbly and
intentionally
gave all she had...

What is my motive for giving?

God is moved by a gift given in faith. Jesus noticed what most would call the tiny gift of the widow giving her mites, and He was moved. Not because of the size of her gift, but because of her faith.

“And without faith, it is impossible to please God.” – Hebrews 11:6

Your life is a statement about your values, the things that matter to you, and your faith. A life dedicated to God will be evidenced in gifts to Him – gifts of time spent with Him and in service for Him, praise given up to Him and, yes, monetary gifts.

And just as giving gifts to those you love brings you joy, giving gifts to the God that you love does as well. You’ll want to continue giving and blessing through your gift of the things that you spent your life accumulating – money, property, and other assets – when you no longer have use for them.

If you would like help in creating a plan that will continue to bless the family and the God that you love, contact us. We’d love to spend some time together and answer your questions.

“A heart of faith and love is dearer to God than the most costly gift. The poor widow gave her living to do the little that she did. She deprived herself...in order to give those two mites to the cause she loved. And she did it in faith...It was this unselfish spirit and childlike faith that won the Saviour’s commendation.” – *The Desire of Ages*, p. 615

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