In living rooms, a garage, one school, and the church, newly trained members preached nine simultaneous meetings in as many locations in San Jose. Part of a two-week reaping series from November 1-15, 2008, the members preached the first seven nights.

For the second week, the groups merged, meeting at the church where Evangelist Juan Quirogo preached for the second week.

The San Jose Hispanic church had scheduled the two-week reaping meetings for Spring 2009. But at the completion of the Homeland Campaign training weekend this past June, the newly trained members were too excited to wait. “They said, ‘Pastor, we have to preach as soon as possible,’” explains Pastor Cesar De Leon.

Most were surprise by whom the Holy Spirit selected to preach. “These men and women are not the usual, dynamic, up front leaders,” De Leon explains. “We trusted God and moved forward.”

Now, each preacher needed a support team. During a church service, the plan was presented, the speakers introduced, the congregation prayed, and all were dismissed to the fellowship hall to join an outreach team as the Spirit led. Team members would provide a meeting place, equipment and technology support, door-to-door invitations, childcare, and dinner each evening.

Fifty percent of the neighborhood guests attended the second week of meetings at the church. Thirteen made the decision for baptism. “We will continue the meet in small groups each week,” says De Leon. “These people are hungry for spiritual food. We will continue teaching them in their neighborhoods.”

Ambitious outreach plans for 2009 include 15 simultaneous neighborhood meetings in March and Fall 2009.

Sergio and Patricia Lopez’s newly cleaned and painted garage. More than 70 guests attended regularly, spilling down the driveway. The nine outreach locations were staffed by a total of 240 church members.

Lay speakers (back row) William Cruz, Marcos Terron, Jaime Jimenez, Pastor Cesar De Leon, Jose L. Vargas, Amado Lopez, Zenon Marquez, Gonzalo Tolento (front row) Ana Romero, Clarisa Hernandez, Maria Inez Gu nerva, Clarisa Hernandez.
Pastoral Couples Ordained at Black Convocation

“For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, 'How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!'” Romans 10:13-15

Frederick and Marla Anderson

At age 15 when Frederick Anderson headed to Oakwood College, his mother shared her prayer for him: “I believe you would make a good preacher and you should give your life, gifts and talents to be used by God and the church.” He had other ideas.

Summer riots in Harlem set God’s plans in motion. For safety, his parents sent him to Omaha, Nebraska for the summer to live with his uncle, Pastor James Parker. From Parker, Anderson learned soul winning from the ground up, working as a Bible worker by day, singing in the quartet at the evening tent meetings.

Anderson stayed on, graduated from the University of Nebraska with a history and economics degree and was recruited by Dr. George Summers to join the faculty at Loma Linda University. There his passion for growing God’s kingdom continued. He helped establish “Soul Church” for African American students at La Sierra University and, with Dr. William Loveless, began an innovative College Student Sabbath School for Loma Linda Medical students.

A faculty position at Hartnell College, Salinas, California, drew him to the Central Coast. In the 80s, he immersed in the budding technology age, became a Computer Information Science (CIS) professor and taught in the CIS department for 28 years.

And he married Attorney Marla Osborne, now the Honorable Judge Marla O. Anderson for the Monterey County Superior Court. The active church member and father of three felt life was complete.

When the Seaside church’s pastor moved, the local elders, including Anderson, stepped in to lead and assigned responsibilities accordingly. It wasn’t long before the church members were requesting Anderson as their interim pastor.

With the support of his family, he cautiously agreed. Steve Horton, conference vice president for ministries, served as his mentor.

“The transition was fairly simple,” Marla explains. “I am used to him being involved with students, in the community, in the church. He’s always reaching out, helping people,” Marla says. “Our phone was always ringing off the hook.”

It wasn’t long before the bi-vocational work schedule was too challenging. Immersing into full-time ministry, Anderson retired from teaching. He was also selected as the Conference African American coordinator.

Anderson’s ordination as a minister of the gospel on September 20, 2008 was the consummation of his mother’s prayers. “All I can exclaim is to God be the glory!” he shares. “And we should never stop praying, because prayers are answered in due season.”

David and Jeannie Hudgens

David Hudgens surrendered his life to Christ at age 13 with his decision to be baptized. “It was not until four years later that I began to make a full surrender of my life plans to the Lord Jesus Christ,” he says about becoming a local church elder at 17.

Bible worker training by the legendary Maude Ester Masters two years later turned his world upside down! “Nothing has so filled my life as the blessing of this one event,” Hudgens says.

A business degree from California State University, North Ridge led to a successful career in insurance as a large loss property adjuster. Marriage to Jeannie Canson his “lifelong friend and partner” in 1983 and welcoming three children completed the family.

A move to the Valley Crossroads Church (then named Pacoima) in San Fernando Valley in 1988 was another spiritual journey milestone. Pastor John Nixon invited Hudgens to join a lay-preaching seminar. Three months later and after one speaking engagement, Hudgens was asked to the pulpit pastor of the Sun Village Church in Littlerock, California on a contract basis.

Now, he was officially a bi-vocational pastor. He and Jeannie loved it! Nine years later, he was asked to be the Young Adult/Family Life pastor of the Lancaster English Church, another bi-vocational opportunity.
When Hudgens’ company moved him to Modesto, California in 2002, he was asked by his father-in-law, Earl Canson, Jr., to pastor the Modesto Westside church. Hudgens continued to serve his Lord in ministry while maintaining a successful career.

It was the call to full-time ministry in 2006 as senior pastor of the San Francisco Philadelphia and Rainbow churches that gave the Hudgens pause. This was a huge step – not to mention a two hour commute from Modesto, home to the children’s Adventist school and Jeannie’s teaching job. Greatly reducing income and adding expenses would definitely be life-changing!

“My husband is doing something that he loves. Even before he went full-time, ministry was his passion,” Jeannie says about their new life. “The people in San Francisco have been the most kind-hearted people to our family,” she adds. Her biggest adjustment is getting up early Sabbath morning to get to Sabbath school on time.

“We’re just having too much fun,” Hudgens says about the recent public meetings in San Francisco. “It has been my privilege throughout the years of my life to over and over see men, women and children go down into the water grave of baptism!” Ordination into the ministry of the gospel confirms the Holy Spirit’s leading.

Ernest and Patricia Lewis

The last words Ernest Lewis’ mom said to her son before she died were “I hope and pray that you make it.” Lewis, a theology and religion major, was just two weeks into his senior year at La Sierra University, Riverside, California.

Years before it was an Adventist cousin that first introduced Lewis to Jesus. “When I would visit her and watch her read the Bible, I saw such peace and joy on her face.” During one visits his cousin took him to public meetings with Evangelist E. E. Cleveland and Lewis made his decision for baptism.

Back home in Arizona, he struggled with his walk spiritual life, and Lewis eventually found his way back to church, becoming an active member. He enrolled at Pacific Union College. When asked to speak for a church service, he knew that God was calling him to theology. But he firmly pushed that aside.

Finally in 1983, Lewis surrendered the plans for his life to Jesus and was re-baptized in Los Angeles by Evangelist George Rainey. Working with Rainey, Lewis helped plant a church and became a local elder. When a letter from the religion department at Loma Linda University seeking students for their pastoral ministry program arrived, Lewis enrolled. He graduated in 1988 with a bachelor’s degree in theology and religion.

Immediately he received an invitation from Pastor Earl Howard to come and help with a public meeting for the Merced Bethel Church in Merced, California. Now a stipend Bible worker, he stayed on.

Lewis met Patricia Sims in Los Angeles and they married in 1989. Now he needed to support a wife, and in time their three children. Merced County needed social workers and counselors and Lewis, with further education, began a new career.

Thirteen years later in 2002, Earl Canson, Jr., African American coordinator for Central California Conference, asked the Lewis’ to lead the Merced Bethel Church as a bi-vocational pastor.*

Lewis is grateful to his wife Patricia for the years and years of encouragement. She would say “Remember God has everything in His time.” Says Patricia, “I’ve know about my husband’s talent for a long time. It couldn’t have happened to a better man. It [ordination] was a blessed opportunity.”

About his ordination, he says, “God designed this and set up the time it was to take place. It took awhile because He had to prepare me to be ready.”

*Bi-vocational pastors receive a small stipend for mileage.
“Have a hundred pennies. Is that enough to go to your school?” Baruch Valencia, a rambunctious seven-year-old, showed his handful of coins to Elaine Garcia, Kern Adventist Elementary School’s teacher.

Baruch’s mother promised $20 a month, all she can afford as a farm worker. She and her three children worship with the Shafter Spanish congregation. Church members willingly pledged the rest of Baruch’s tuition.

Kern Adventist Elementary School nearly closed last year. In brighter days, it had been a thriving 12-grade school. Many of the church’s older members graduated from it then sent their children and grandchildren there. They refused to give up on the school and hired Garcia in faith with only two students planning to attend.

Garcia and her husband had been praying for a missionary post and immediately set to work. They visited Shafter’s many farm workers and gathered children to attend the school. When school opened, there were seven students in seven grades.

“We want with all our hearts for these children to learn about Jesus and get a good education,” says Garcia, who has taught in the Central California Conference for 20 years. Her daily lessons about Jesus are producing fruit.

“The students are comprehending that God has a plan for our lives and the power to change us if we trust Him. I see them responding to His love.”

“The school is primarily an outreach to the community,” says Pastor Baze. “Over half of the students were from non-Adventist homes at the beginning of the year. Both families were baptized in evangelistic series, so now they are all from Adventist homes!”

(Nine people, four Anglo and five Hispanic, were baptized after public meetings in preached simultaneously in English and Spanish in September.)

Baruch, the first-grader with the handful of pennies, is no longer a spoiled, disobedient child who refuses to believe Jesus loves him. Under Garcia’s consistent discipline and loving guidance, he has become a boy who obeys well, loves to learn about Jesus and gets A+s. “He’s just amazed me,” says Garcia. “He is a little boy who really needed to be at our school and has just blossomed.”

As might be expected, Baruch’s parents are thrilled.

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Youth Prayer Conference

More than 200 teens attended the annual conference-wide Youth Prayer Conference October 23-26, 2008 at Central Valley Christian Academy, Ceres, Calif. Activities included small group Bible studies, seminars, worship, testimonies, and prayer times. There were two Sabbath afternoon outreach opportunities: visiting shut-ins in homes and nursing homes and door-to-door surveys with free literature. They received 46 Bible study requests! The spiritual growth event was planned and led by the two conference Youth Evangelism Teams, with participation by Pastors Godfrey Miranda (Modesto Central), Anil Kanda (Ceres), and Steve Hamilton (Oakhurst), conference and local prayer ministries team members and local church sponsors for each teen group.

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Pennies for School

On January 3, 2009 at 11:00 a.m. (Rebroadcast at 2:00 p.m.)

Join the live Sabbath morning worship service broadcast from the North American Division

with Pastors Dwight Nelson, Don Schneider and Winley Phipps as the Year of Evangelism begins.

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