Before camp meeting began, the campground was bathed in prayer. Five thousand two hundred eighty campers – more than ever before – filled the campground for the annual 10-day spiritual retreat July 16-25, 2009.

Twenty speakers preached powerful messages from God’s word. Seventeen practical seminars provided a variety of choice for learning how to have victory in Jesus in relationships with Him and others, money, health, and life issues like fear, anger and bitterness.

“I learned a lot from [speaker] David Asscherick, like the difference in the righteous and the wicked. When the righteous fall, they get up again,” says 17-year-old Alexa Burkhart. She and friend Chelsea Lynch love camp meeting and come every year. “This year reaffirmed my faith in the Holy Spirit – Christ living in you. What a gift!” says Frances Baerg, a lifelong Adventist who is passionate about camp meeting.

The Camp Meeting Evangelism Offering

Once again God’s people responded to His leading, giving more than $1,065,000 in gifts and pledges by Saturday night’s close. During the last chorus of the last song, a family added their pledge of $2 million to the offering, bringing the total to just over $3 million.

“This [offering] is a God thing, a prayer and faith journey. It is not about the economy or rich people. It is about a call to sacrifice. That is the message to Laodicea,” says President Jerry Page. “One of the most precious gifts was from an unemployed woman who brought a jar filled with pennies,
My story is your story if you were born in the Adventist faith. Thirty years of ministry have shown that most have not found the intimate love of Jesus. Two evidences: Grouchiness and still drawn by the world's attractions.

My story is your story if you are a convert. We have taught you to believe many doctrinal and theological propositions, but we did not teach you how to abide in Christ. Two evidences: Still have one foot in the world and tendency to backslide.

Like many third generation Adventists, I grew up a good son of two parents and in the church. The son of a preacher, I early saw the elegant beauty of our message, the solid foundation of objective truth on which our message and mission to the world rests.

I wanted to serve. I loved everything about the truth. I entered the ministry. But soon I discovered that I was happy only when studying and sharing it. I was happy only when preaching, teaching, witnessing, visiting, and doing for God.

I dived into work and “superior” Adventist living. But when I asked myself if I was happy, I could not give a strong affirmative. I wanted to be like the apostle Paul but I still found the world, with its material things and diversions and addictions, very interesting and inviting.

I always prayed, intensely and earnestly, especially in times of trials. Always had worship every morning. Always found some comfort. Yet, I wondered how can one pray this much, study this much, share this much, give this much, and not be full of Christian joy.

I had an emptiness that demanded filling. What is wrong with me? Aren’t Christians supposed to be full of joy, rejoicing always? Isn’t the yoke easy and the burden light?

A sadness was manifested whenever I was alone and silent. I felt empty, unworthy and unproductive. People would often comment that I had two personas – the public/professional and the private/personal.

I do not apologize for what I preached for all those years. It was biblical, Christ-centered and anointed by the Holy Spirit. My theology was always correct. I knew that all true virtue was from Jesus and only by grace. I was dedicated, orthodox, evangelistic, outwardly pious, hard
working, devoted to the church, and to the flock of God.

I do apologize for what I didn’t preach.

### My Spiritual Growth Journey

Several pastors in our conference began to call us to prayer. Initially planned for our conference, Operation Global Rain (OGR) quickly went world-wide. For ten days in the summer of 2007, members gathered in churches to pray for the Holy Spirit. My learning how to abide in Christ began during OGR when I asked the church to pray for my spiritual growth. (James 5:16)

Since then, I have learned:

That dedication is not enough. (Matt. 7:22, 23)

To ask others to pray for me — my progress in faith, my faults. (James 5:16)

And God began to teach me about love — His love. I learned that:

1. **I need to love God!** (Matt. 22:37)
   Evidences that I didn’t love God very much:
   1. Poor Obedience (John 15:10)
   2. Little joy (John 15:11)

   I need a supply of love that will not run dry. (John 4:14, 15)

2. **I need God’s love!** I was created to be loved and to love. (1 John 4:7, 10 & John 15:9)

3. **Love seeks to be united with its object — Jesus in me!** (John 17:23)
   1. Eating
      (I am the Bread, eat my flesh)
   2. Drinking
      (Drink the water that I give, drink My blood)
   3. Breathing
      (Receive my Spirit)
   4. Hearing
      (Faith comes by hearing)
   5. Seeing
      (The light of the body is the eye)
   6. Spiritual Intimacy
      (The Holy Spirit shall come on you and the power of the Highest shall overshadow you)
   7. Sword Puncture
      (The Word is a sharp two-edged sword piercing to the dividing of soul and spirit)
   8. Organ Transplant
      (Take away the stony heart and give you a heart of flesh)
   9. Death and Reanimation
      (Crucified and now Christ lives in me)
   10. Opening the Door of My Heart
      (I stand at the door and knock)
   11. A Temple
      (My body is the temple of the Holy Ghost)

4. **His yoke is easy and His burden is light!** Here’s how…

   1. *Get Jesus in the morning.* The manna given the Hebrews in the wilderness had to be gathered in the morning before the sun was hot. Jesus is the manna. (John 6:32,33, Ps. 5:3, Ps 59:16, Ps. 88:13, Ps 92:1-2, Ps.143:8, Mark 1:35)
   2. *Get Jesus together with friends.* (Matt. 18:19, 20)
   3. **Living in His love is possible.** (John 15:9)
   4. **Living in His love is easy — much easier than trying to do battle with sins.** (Matt.11:29-30)
   5. **Living in His love makes anything that would interrupt it seem dangerous and undesirable.** (1 John 3:5,6,9)
   6. **Living in His love makes obedience easy.** (1 John 5:3)
   7. **Living in His love is your choice, moment by moment.** You alone can do it and if you do, there is no other choice to make. (Jude 1:21, Rev. 3:20, Col. 1:27)
   8. **Living in His love — our only Hope.** (1John 2:28, 1 John 4:17, Rev. 3:16)

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**If you missed camp meeting…** Sermons and seminars are available on CDs through Mountain Top Media mtm@sti.net or call (559) 658-6867 DVDs are available through Tri-Angel Media www.triangel.tv or call (650) 625-0100

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Not for adults only, families attend an afternoon seminar with Clarence and Dianna Schilt titled “A Life Worth Dying For.” Seventeen seminars were offered Monday-Friday.

Inez Bitzer lets her Cradle Role campers touch a real turtle while assistant Tim Baze looks on. One hundred ten volunteers make camp meeting happen in the children’s divisions.

Sunday – Friday adult campers were in area communities with invitations to camp meeting, door-to-door surveys, GLOW literature, and cookies. They handed out more than 5,000 pieces of literature, visited more than 1,400 homes, prayed with many, many people, and received 32 Bible study requests. On Wednesday and Thursday, they partnered with the youth and juniors, growing the group to more than 100 volunteers.

Pastor Mark Finley prays over those who came forward during his appeal on Sabbath. Throughout the 10 days, hundreds responded to invitations for commitment, the Holy Spirit, re-dedication, and baptism.
Camp Meeting Highlights

Annual Blood Drive

Monica Doleshel-Aguirre oversees the 12th annual Blood Drive on the first Friday of camp meeting. Twelve years before she met her first Adventists at the Soquel campground. They made a very positive impression. Fast forward seven years. She met an Adventist co-worker who invited her church. Monica is now a baptized member of the Adventist church. Campers, who learned that one pint of blood helps four patients, donated 73 pints of blood this year.

Community Outreach

For the third year in front of the Santa Cruz church, a free car wash was offered by youth tent campers. Teenager Danielle Nelson helped out each year and was reminded how intentional Jesus is as He seeks to save the lost. When a lady drove up, Danielle recognized her as someone she had prayed with the previous year. She asked the lady how her son was. The lady began to cry. She told Danielle that she had been driving down the street every day since June to see if the group was there again. Praying with someone about her son was that important! Monday – Friday afternoon outreaches in Soquel, Santa Cruz and Capitola also included Random Acts of Kindness, door-to-door with GLOW literature (adult campers joined in), making and delivering lunches for homeless street dwellers, and a nursing home visit. “There were more kids than we had rides for,” reports Leah Page, one of the Youth Tent’s leaders. The participants grew each day, shuttling was the only transportation option. “We had 70 teens go door-to-door.”

Junior campers wave as they prepared to board three buses to go door-to-door with GLOW literature. Nelson Ernst, GLOW director, and Karen Hamilton, Bible worker coordinator, helped the staff and adult volunteers with the energetic future soul winners. Tent leader Steve Mackey, pastor of San Francisco Rainbow, reports there were more than 30 decisions for baptisms by juniors.

2010 Camp Meeting

For the Barrons, camp meeting is a family tradition. Sam Jr. (left) attended as a child with his dad. “It’s an encouragement for our year, a real inner battery recharging,” he says. Sam III attends with his wife Josie and son Sam IV. Sam Jr.’s wife Michelle (right) is very grateful the family had graduated from a tent to an RV. Sam IV’s favorite camp meeting memory – corn dogs.

Miracle Roadways

Karen Hamilton interviews Nick Ionashku during an evening meeting. Miracle Roadways, as the interviews are called, are program favorites as members — new and “old” — share what God is doing in their lives.

Anointing Service

The last day of camp meeting offers an early morning an anointing service. Handouts about preparing for anointing were available at the prayer booth. This year many requests were for spiritual and emotional healing. Campers, praising God for the realizing the assurance of salvation, sought victory in Jesus in such areas as anger and bitterness, for the Holy Spirit, and for ministry in their lives. “I’m going home a new man. The Lord took my jealousy away!” shared one camper.

Collegiate and young adult Friday evening held a Communion service at Parachute Park — “The most touching service I have ever experienced,” says Nate Gibbs.

Plan to attend next year’s Camp Meeting. July 15-24, 2010
Key Speakers Henry Wright and Dwight Nelson
For an application or more information, go to ccc.adventist.org or contact Wanda at scadventist@sbcglobal.net or call (831) 429-1842. Deadline for RVs is September 30. Deadline for cabins, campground or private tents is March 31, 2010.