Veterans Honored in Sonora

by Caron Oswald

On Sabbath, November 13, the Sonora Adventist Church held the 10th annual Veterans’ Recognition program. Held during the worship service on the Sabbath nearest Veteran’s Day, guests were treated with special gifts, a guest speaker and lunch.

Leslie Goodwin, a former history teacher at Monterey Bay Academy and WW II veteran, years ago was invited to speak at a service to honor community veterans at the Lemoore Adventist Church.

“I was amazed when I saw the response of the veterans to the service, to the gift they received and the special vegetarian dinner that followed,” Goodwin says. After three years helping at Lemoore, he turned his attention to his own community of Sonora.

Sixty-six veterans attended the first Sonora Veterans’ Recognition program. Jim Harris, retired youth director of the World Church and a WW II POW joined Goodwin in planning the Sabbath program.

Harris designed a medallion as a gift to each veteran that attended the service. The medallion became a “must have” as attendance grew each year. With his health failing, Jim designed two new medallions, the last one he designed from his death bed.

Robert Evans, a Korean veteran, stepped up to lead the recognition program. He designed dog tags with the emblems of the six branches of service and a scripture. This year’s message was John 15:13: “Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.”

NIV

Through the years, word has spread. “Please don’t stop this program celebration!” is an ongoing response. For some, the annual Adventist recognition is the first time they have been publically thanked for their sacrifice.

Church member Susette Muth overheard a conversation between two men in a local eatery. “Are you going to the Veterans’ Day program at the Adventist church?” a gentleman asked his friend.

“I hadn’t heard about it,” was the reply. “Oh, you should come. It’s really nice and they feed you lunch too.”

“Praise the Lord, there has been three conversions to Jesus Christ because of this program,” says Goodwin. “All three are now asleep waiting for the resurrection.”
The weekly Bible study begins with singing and ends with each one around the table – resident and volunteer - sharing prayer requests or answered prayers. “It’s always good to pray for those who really need prayer,” Cathy explains.

Eighty-four-year-old Ilene has a burden for the other residents and their need of the gospel. Irma prays for her son to become the spiritual leader of his family. “I am so glad to have this prayer session,” Edna says. “Bless your little hearts.”

Since August 2010, a small group Bible study has happened every Thursday night at the Capitola Manor Convalescent Home. Attendance continues to grow – from the residents, their family members and volunteers from several Santa Cruz Area Adventist churches.

This dynamic outreach is the legacy of former resident Betty Sue Holcomb.

For the last six months of her life, Betty Sue traveled the halls on her walker exclaiming “Praise the Lord!” When she died on July 15, 2010, she was 79 years old and a six-month new Christian.

Her spiritual journey began with a weekly visit by Terry Helton that began in July 2009, who was also on a spiritual journey. Terry had recently moved to Santa Cruz to work with his brother-in-law, Betty Sue’s son. Terry, who was exploring Christianity through the Adventist church, began visiting Betty Sue on Sabbath afternoons.

“Why don’t you share what you are learning,” Betty Sue told him. Terry began taking detailed notes on each Sabbath’s sermon and then presented what he had heard to her that afternoon. And on one January Sabbath afternoon, Betty Sue said, “Terry, I am at the end of my life. I am going to die soon. I want to accept Jesus as my Savior.”

A brand new baptized Adventist Christian himself, Terry was stunned. “It caught me off guard. We hugged and cried. She was the first person I led to Jesus. It was awesome.”

The administrator of Capitola Manor had taken notice and asked Betty Sue, “Who is the guy in the suit? Is he a pastor?” When Betty Sue told about the weekly Bible studies he was giving her, the administrator asked another surprising question. “Do you think he would give Bible studies here?”

Yes he would! The first small group Bible study began in August 2010 with six participants. The second week there were 10 and the third week 16 came. Terry knew he needed help and called for volunteers. Now, members from the Santa Cruz, Soquel and Watsonville churches faithfully volunteer each week.

“I wanted to support Terry,” says Phil Frisbie about assisting with the weekly Bible studies. He enjoys the outreach. “I see my mom in them,” Phil says.

Nine-year-old Delilah Hernandez is the youngest volunteer. “I like reading the Bible and praising the Lord,” she explains. Sebastian Astorga comes “because I love being here.” Audries Blake plays the piano and now leads the weekly studies. “I love the elderly and thought it would be a wonderful way to not only serve them, but show them the love of God,” she says. The group is currently using Pastor Lee Vendon’s “It’s all about Jesus” material.

The participating residents were gifted miniature rose bushes as a symbol of how their relationship with Jesus is growing. And the spiritual nourishment goes both ways. “I’ve always wanted to do something more for God and this was perfect,” Audries says.
Depression affects the whole family. Ask Stanley Carty who experienced the illness for two years. He knows firsthand how devastating it can be. Learning that victory over depression is possible has been liberating for him. Though not an upfront person, Carty is so excited he just has to share the good news.

“Following Dr. Neil Nedley’s Depression Recovery Program has changed my life,” Carty says. He is eating healthier, going to bed earlier, exercising daily, thinking positively, has a deeper relationship with God, and has lost 50 pounds.

Now a certified director, Carty completed leading his first eight-week Depression Recovery Program on October 26, 2010 at the Carty Community Center in Chowchilla. Participants kept track of their improved mental and physical health during the eight weeks. Shawn, already an avid reader of the Bible, began praying Psalm 18 in the morning and evening. With renewed encouragement and peace he is exercising more, sleeping better and is now correcting negative thoughts. Dorothy learned how essential water, deep breathing exercises and morning sunshine are.

“Although I am not under any physician’s care, I knew beforehand that I suffered from depression, and that it has increased over the past three years,” says Brenda. “Since attending the program, I have begun to make lifestyle changes.” Evaluating her thoughts, she is learning to replace negative with positive thinking. “I have found the book of Proverbs to be a wonderful tool of encouragement. When I read one each day of the month, my day goes better, and I’m able to think more positive.” Walking more and eating better, her motivation is increasing too. “I am finding that I have been happier, and have a better outlook on life.”

The next Depression Recovery Program for the community is schedule for the spring.

According to Dr. Neil Nedley, depression is reversible and does not have to be tolerated as a life-long condition. His book Depression: the Way Out educates and can help readers find a path to recovery, renewal and wellness.

Some Facts about Depression:

- Major depression is the most common mood disorder.
- It knows no cultural, social or economic barriers.
- It is largely misunderstood.
- One out of three Internal Medicine patients has it.
- Proper treatment can effectively reduce or cure it.
- Most cases can be treated on an outpatient basis.

Youth Prayer Conference: 350 students from 7 academies and 13 churches registered for the annual conference-wide event held at Monterey Bay Academy on Oct. 21-24, 2010. The packed schedule included worships, prayer times, small group Bible studies, Friday afternoon community outreach – in the rain, students went door-to-door with religious surveys, handed out GLOW literature, gifted random acts of kindness, and visited nursing homes in Santa Cruz, Seaside and Watsonville. Saturday night’s closing meeting ended at 9:30 p.m. but students stayed until after 11:00 p.m. praying together. At least 15 students made decisions for baptism, 21 asked for Bible studies, and the aisles were filled with students coming forward to accept Jesus as their Savior. The Youth Prayer Conference was planned and led by the four-member Youth Evangelism Team. Both the team and Youth Prayer Conference are funded through the Camp Meeting Evangelism Offering.

Camporee: More than 600 Pathfinders and staff gathered to camp, worship, learn new skills, and make new friends at this annual event. Held at the Showalter Ranch in Coarsegold, the campers’ worships were given by Denny Grady, youth director of the Potomac Conference. Bird specialist Ross Laird from the Fresno Chaffee Zoo gave Pathfinders an up close view of several birds. Sunday activities included a 30-foot rock climbing wall, Bible memory drill, centipede race, compass 8 points challenge, Indian carriage race, and rescue aid relay. A highlight was a performance by an R.O.T.C. team. With new friends, new skills and a rekindled flame for service and mission, the clubs headed home to continue making a difference in their local communities.
What is tithing?
Tithe is 10 percent of what God has blessed us with. (Hebrews 7:2, Genesis 28:22)

What are offerings?
Offerings are expressions of gratitude, beyond tithe, that we choose to give. (Deuteronomy 16:17)

Why should I return tithes and give offerings?
We return tithe and give offerings because God asks us to and it is our acknowledgement that everything is God’s and that we are His stewards. God also says He will bless abundantly when we give out of thankfulness and love for Him. (Malachi 3:10-12, Psalm 24:1, Psalm 8:6, Deuteronomy 26:10,11)

What happens to the tithe I return?
All tithe is sent by the local church to the Central California Conference where it is distributed according to the “CCC Tithe Usage” graph.

What happens to “Local Church” offering?
Your local church board decides how to use your offering in the ministry of your church. Most churches use offerings for expenses such as: utilities, Sabbath School supplies, church school subsidy, student aid, church ministries, community services, evangelism and local projects.

Tithe and Offering Usage Charts
The graphs below show how tithes and offerings are used in the conference and the World Church. Here are examples of uses in the tithe categories.

- **Church Programs** include pastors’ salaries and benefits, expenses for conference departmental leadership such as children’s and family ministries, evangelism and personal ministries.
- **Education and Youth** include assistance to elementary schools, senior academies, PUC and La Sierra University, summer camp and Youth Ministries.
- **Supporting Services** include plant services, administration, Planned Giving and Trust Services.
- **Special Services** include communication, camp meeting and volunteerism.
- **Other Services** include contribution to the defined benefit retirement fund.

What if I have more questions?
The Treasury personnel at the Central California Conference office are helpful, friendly people. You are welcome to call (559) 347-3000 or visit anytime.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Have you ever had your picture taken over a headless frame? You know, the kind painted to represent a clown, or a muscle man, or even an animal of some kind? Mary Ellen and I were perusing through some family pictures the other day and ran into just such a picture that made us laugh.

You know why they are amusing? It’s because the head doesn’t fit the body. The picture reminded me of the following Bible verses: “Now we are the body of Christ...” (1 Cor. 12:27). “And He is the head of the body, the church...” (Col. 1:18).

I began to wonder about my own local church, the body of Christ in my community. What would we look like? Would our community laugh at the misfit? Or would they stand in awe of a human body so closely related to Christ’s divine head?

Now, I am blessed to be part of a church that is actively living Jesus’ love to our neighbors. And what we have observed is that the body of believers is filled with individuals – members who know their Savior, who prioritize spending time with Him everyday, who crave the indwelling of His Spirit.

Ellen White wrote: “Christ is the head of the church. The members of His body follow the directions of the Head, just as the members of the human body obey the impulses of the mind.” (RH, July 18, 1882 par. 21)

May my impulses be from Jesus. It is my hope and prayer that every day each of us would allow Jesus to make us more like Him, the Head of our church!

Trusting in Him,
Ramiro Cano

Web Sites to Visit

Go to [ccc.adventist.org](http://ccc.adventist.org) or just Google “Central California Conference” for conference news, coming events, registration forms, archived camp meeting sermons, and more...

**Camp Wawona’s weekly blog** will keep you up on weekly happenings. Great pictures are included. Go to: [blog.campwawona.org](http://blog.campwawona.org)

Go to [audioverse.org](http://audioverse.org) for new GLOW presentations and [www.glowctc.com](http://www.glowctc.com) for the new Colporteur Training Course.

**Ski Day (Feb. 27) at North Star in Tahoe.**
Please join us for a full day of skiing. Three guest speakers: Matt Parra, Jeffrey Rosario, Ivor Myers and a concert by Athena. Discounts for lodging and lift tickets are available for all Adventists. For more information call Tony at (415) 756-8970.