The childhood rhyme, “Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me,” is a lie! Name calling and gossip traumatizes us — sometimes for life. The flipside of negative labeling and criticism is speaking words of positive encouragement. Proverbs states that “The words of the godly are a life-giving fountain ... like sterling silver ...The words of the godly encourage many ... [and] The lips of the godly speak helpful words” (Proverbs 10:11,13,20,21,32, NLT).

Church Support Services is happy to introduce a free web tool to help facilitate positive interpersonal communication. SpiritRenew.org is a portal of encouragement and blessing throughout the Pacific Union and beyond. Features offered include a smartphone app (with over 30,000 downloads) that publishes weekly devotional, health and family life content, and now SpiritRenew eCards to help you commemorate anniversaries, baby dedications, baptisms, birthdays, Sabbath events, and more! SpiritRenew’s eCards include heartfelt messages for family, friends, colleagues, missing church members, as well as other church-related categories. New cards are being developed as well. The format makes it easy to introduce new cards for little cost.

The service is free, but to help limit spam, we do require users to create a username and login. Give it a try, and let us know what you think!

Go to: www.spiritrenew.org/ecards

Stories of Faith

God is moving upon hearts 24/7 and changing people’s lives. Throughout the Pacific Union, Adventist members are entering into the excitement of sharing God’s healing message with others. What’s your story?

View videos: www.vimeo.com/channels/storiesoffaith
We recently interviewed Chad Stuart, lead pastor of the Visalia Seventh-day Adventist in the Central California Conference, and asked him about his vision for outreach and evangelism.

— ChurchApplied Editor

Editor – There is so much that goes into ministry that people don’t immediately see. How do you measure ministry effectiveness?

Stuart – The first personal measure of effectiveness for me is found in the question, “Am I being true to the convictions God has laid upon me?” If I can answer “yes” to that question, then I find I am able to do my most effective ministry. The times in my life and ministry where I have had my biggest “fails” are when I have compromised on a decision because I didn’t listen to the Holy Spirit convicting my heart, but let another individual or a group’s convictions push me in a direction I was not comfortable with. God is our first boss and the ultimate authority, and we must be true to Him above all! Even if it means conflict or losing our jobs.

The second way I measure ministry effectiveness, and I am aware even as I say this that in some eyes this will make me less spiritual, but that is okay; for me, I measure effectiveness numerically. I used to go along with the reasoning that “numbers don’t matter,” but then I heard Rick Warren say, “Every number represents a person, and every person matters to the heart of God, therefore numbers should matter to us, because people should matter to us.” So at our church, we analyze all kinds of numbers. City demographics, guests/contacts/door knocks, literature distributed, baptisms, overall attendance, retention, giving patterns, volunteers, Bible studies, Bible study leaders, prayer warriors, etc.

Read full article: www.churchsupportservices.org/stuart

Evangelism: Why Numbers Matter

Studying Together App

Studying Together, by Mark Finley, is now available as an iPhone and iPad app. Finley includes 39 new video Bible Study introductions as a part of this valuable study resource. Need study material to share your faith? You now have 50 ready-to-share Bible studies at your fingertips. Price $4.99. Available in iTunes: www.itunes.com.

Survivor of the Fatherless

Sometimes we don’t have the luxury of having an earthly father to nurture us along and show us the ropes. Then what? Lavance Meeks can tell you all about this.

View video: www.tinyurl.com/okc4cyn
coun·ter·in·tu·i·tive

Adjective: Contrary to intuition or to common-sense expectation.

The more we try to be sensible and follow conventional wisdom, the less like Jesus we are. You may not agree with this, but the evidence is overwhelming that true Christians are “weird” in a good kind of way:

“Love your enemies and be kind and do good [doing favors so that someone derives benefit from them] and lend, expecting and hoping for nothing in return but considering nothing as lost and despairing of no one” (Luke 6:35, AMP).

This is not “normal” by today’s standards.

“If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two [miles]” (Matthew 5:41, AMP).

Read full article: www.churchsupportservices.org/weird

inSpire Artist Database
If you are an Adventist artist, poet, photographer, songwriter or writer who is serious about your craft and wish to share it publicly, please join the inSpire artist database. Tell us about your passion, give us your website link and contact information so others can learn about your work. Go to: www.visitinspire.org/artist/inspire

October 26-28, 2013, a convergence of songwriters, artists, photographers and creative-types of various stripes took place in Berkeley, Calif., to celebrate the arts and share how creativity can be used to glorify God and enrich our lives. One of the opening messages displayed on the big screen throughout the weekend read:

“In the beginning God created...”

“Then God said, ‘Let us make human beings in our image, to be like us’” (Gen. 1:1, 26, NLT).

Sponsored by Pacific Union Conference Church Support Services, the idea of an event for creatives was to foster a greater awareness of the importance of creative expression in our daily lives, specifically as it relates to our mission as a church. Because we live in a media-driven age, we must use media creatively if we want anyone to notice. We can no longer depend upon bland music, stodgy graphics or 20th century media models to attract audiences. We need auditory and visual stimuli that captures people’s hearts with God’s compelling story; music and art that enchants people’s imaginations with heaven’s possibilities and promise!

Read full article: www.visitinspire.org/inspire

Dorothy Stiegler is a renowned blacksmith artist who has taught and practiced her craft in many locations. Not only does she produce incredible art, but she has a powerful conversion story. Listen to her tell how God protected her from serial killer Ted Bundy. Go to: www.visitinspire.org/escape
No Greater Love, by Karl Haffner – No Greater Love is a compilation of timeless stories of human sacrifice and divine love. Full of inspirational stories of those who made the ultimate sacrifice for others — both known and unknown. Author, Karl Haffner. Published by Pacific Press. Available at: www.adventistbookcenter.com.

Manifest: Our Call to Faithful Creativity, Edited by Nathan Brown and Joanna Darby. Manifest is a movement of creatives within the South Pacific Division of Seventh-day Adventists who are responding to God’s call to use their gifts to create redemptive art, music, poetry and literature. Paperback, 181 pages. Publisher: Signs Publishing. Church Support Services has a limited quantity of Manifest and is making it available for $25 (includes shipping). Send check to Pacific Union Conference, Church Support Services, P.O. Box 5005, Westlake Village, CA 91359. Please write the word “Manifest” on your check and include your mailing address.

Sharing Scripture – Sharing Scripture is designed for personal reflection by individuals every day of the week, or for groups to use as a springboard for discussion in a private or public gathering place. The thought questions and real life applications transform ordinary Bible reading into dynamic learning adventures. Sharing Scripture is now mobilized! Take it with you anywhere your smartphone, tablet or laptop has Internet access! Save time, save paper and use it on the go! Visit: www.creativeministry.org/scripture.

GOandDO: Becoming a Missional Christian, by Don Everts. – We are not meant to live safe, happy, successful Christian lives. Jesus calls us to something more. Don’t settle for a life that will soon be forgotten. Mission is not just something for “them.” Mission is for us, here and now. Published by InterVarsity Press. Available at www.ivpress.com.

Roku Correction – In our spring newsletter we stated that you can get 3ABN free of charge using a Roku box, but we have since discovered that 3ABN charges $9.99 a month. HOPE TV and Loma Linda Broadcasting are free. We apologize for the misinformation.

Web Round-Up

Video Blocks
www.videoblocks.com

Living It
www.livingiths.org

SmartSound
www.smartsound.com

inSpire
www.visitinspire.org

Tech Video Training
www.lynda.com

Need to Sell Tickets?
www.ticketleap.com

Pacific Union Recorder
www.pacificunionrecorder.adventistfaith.org

Adventist WestPoint
www.adventistwestpoint.org

Resources You Can Use