Columbia Union President Dave Weigley offered the opening prayer to convene yesterday's U.S. Senate meetings in the U.S. Capitol at the invitation from U.S. Senate Chaplain Barry Black. It was on the same day that conference presidents, healthcare and university leaders were in town for Weigley's regularly scheduled presidents council and a special religious liberty symposium, so all were able to attend the occasion with him and to present Black with an award for his service.

“It is a great honor for me to participate, but it is not about me. It is about the church,” said Weigley. “We are a viable force that God has designed to be on the Earth just before His return. This is recognition that God is calling our church to be involved in the last days. That is why Barry Black is there.” Watch a recording and read MORE.

A new treasurer, Joyce Jones, was unanimously elected by the Seventh-day Adventist Church (SDACC) in Canada Board of Directors Sunday, Mar. 2. She will take over the position currently held by John Ramsey who will retire on May 1. Mrs. Jones, a Certified Management Accountant, has experience both in denominational work and the corporate world. She started working for denomination entities in Canada in 1992. This included being the general accountant for Pacific Publishing Association (Canada) and various positions at the SDACC starting on Jan. 1, 2005, ranging from senior accountant to under-treasurer.

Gone but Not Forgotten — Margaret Taglavore, who has served as Children's Ministries director of the Southwestern Union since 1998, passed away on Thursday, Feb. 27, in Irving, Texas.

"Margaret has been a tireless worker in children's ministries for many years. She and her army of trained workers have made children's ministries a vital part of the evangelistic and ministry outreach in the Southwestern Union. She will be greatly missed," said Larry Moore, Southwestern Union president. MORE
On Holy Ground with Admiral Black

The NAD Women’s Ministries Convention, "Free Indeed 2014," will be held Sept. 25-28 at the Rosen Shingle Creek Resort in Orlando, Fla. The theme is about how Jesus sets women free from everything that keeps them from experiencing the joy of life at its fullest in Him. Then He frees each woman to be His witness of God's saving grace. The convention will be packed with opportunities for community outreach, seminars, powerful preaching, and lots of fellowship with women from the U.S., Canada, Bermuda, and beyond. Women 18 and older who want to experience a faith-building weekend should plan to attend. Seminars in Spanish and French available; all general sessions will be translated. Register by June 3 for early bird fee. MORE

Hymnals and songbooks available at up to 20% off until Mar. 31. The Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal, $12.99, is available in black, blue, brown and burgundy. A special 100th anniversary replication of the 1908 favorite, Christ in Song, $15.99; the new Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal, Word Edition Color, $11.99. Click here to browse more titles that are currently on sale.

The following NAD Colleges and Universities offer online courses which are listed on the links provided below:

- Adventist University of Health Sciences
- Andrews University
- Kettering College
- La Sierra University
- Loma Linda University
- Southern Adventist University
- Southwestern Adventist University
- Walla Walla University
- Washington Adventist University

Did you know Jesus is our advocate and judge? Fundamental Beliefs #24 from My Way to Jesus
Just "Click" to share your beliefs: The Fundamental Beliefs videos and other updates are shared on the My Way to Jesus Facebook page and from there onto the NAD Facebook page. Both updates link back to www.MyWaytoJesus.com, NAD's "seeker site." The site offers options such as sending a prayer request, enrolling in the Discover Bible Course, watching a beliefs video, and provides a connection to Adventist Information Ministry where people can chat with someone about spiritual issues or things that are troubling them. "Like" these pages on Facebook, and then share the updates with your friends.

You can share the Beliefs videos on your own website: Just go to www.vimeo.com/channels/didyouknow for the entire video series and click on the "Share" button in the upper right corner of a specific video for the embed code, or to share on social media or email it to a friend.

REACH: Community Outreach and Evangelism
Exchanging old for new reasons for going to prison

After a life of crime and 24.5 years of prison, David Casey, once a violent criminal, is an example of the grace and redemption of God. "I have lived a life of total destruction – self-destruction, that is – and that comes with drugs, violence, gangs, and crime. Yet, God's grace kept me alive through it all to be where I am today," says David. "Today I have Jesus. Is it enough? No – I want more of Jesus! It is what drives me to study His Word. The search comes down to what we value. What is the treasure of your heart?"

A street friend told David, "If you ever get a chance to go to the chapel for the Seventh-day Adventist® Church, go." He did, and met a prison ministry team from the Ann Arbor, Mich., Adventist Church. He was baptized while in prison and now is blessed with a prison ministry called Onesimus Freedom Ministry. He supplies Bible studies and also does a Bible-teaching radio broadcast on KWEL Radio out of Midland, Tex. He and his wife, Gina, witness to juveniles at a juvenile detention center every Sabbath. On the first Sabbath of Feb. 2014 he returned to prison again. MORE: March 2014 Southwestern Union Record, pp 8-11
Columbia Union President Offers Prayer for U.S. Senate

March 4, 2014 · by Michelle Bernard · in Columbia Union News

**Columbia Union President Offers Prayer for U.S. Senate**

*Story by V. Michelle Bernard*

On Tuesday Columbia Union President Dave Weigley offered the opening prayer for the U.S. Senate in the Senate Chamber of the U.S. Capitol.

“It is a great honor for me to participate, but it is not about me. It is about the church,” said Weigley. “We are a viable force that God has designed to be on the Earth just before His return. This is recognition that God is calling our church to be involved in the last days. That is why Barry Black is there.”

U.S. Senate Chaplain Barry Black invited Weigley to serve as guest chaplain for the day. Black, whose prayers during the Federal shutdown made federal headlines, encouraged Weigley and the other leaders from the Columbia Union to become more involved in their local governments.

“Your group represents the greatest number of Seventh-day Adventist leaders who have ever visited my office. In the nearly 11 years that I’ve been here, there haven’t been many of our leaders to visit this office … You’re missing a great opportunity frankly to become more involved in the governments where you are. Many of you know that the prayers that I prayed during the Federal Shutdown became almost a cause célèbre. People are waiting for gadflies. People are waiting for individuals who are not afraid to call sin by its name,” he continued.

Black, chaplain since June 2003, is the first Seventh-day Adventist to serve in this position.

“We’re thankful to Chaplain Black for providing this opportunity,” says Celeste Ryan Blyden, the union’s communication director, who coordinated the prayer with Black and his staff. “As a church we need to seek more opportunities to make connections, build relationships and increase awareness of our faith.”

The prayer includes six Bible texts and the “Doxology,” and espouses Adventist beliefs in creation, the Second Coming, religious liberty and community service. It aired on C-Span2. **Here is a transcript of the prayer:**

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Let us pray.

Almighty God, Creator and Maker of all. Who sits enthroned above the Earth, and in whom we live, move and have our being.

We praise You from whom all blessings flow. We thank You for Your sustaining power, for peace and for the freedoms we enjoy.
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We ask Your blessing on our great nation, influential leaders and dedicated lawmakers. Establish their steps, and give them discernment and courage to act justly, love mercy and walk humbly. Strengthen them to uplift those who are downcast, who need the compassionate touch of a brother or sister’s hand.

Above all, may Your Kingdom come, may Your will be done and may we readily incline our ears to Your call today.

This we pray in Your holy and righteous name. Amen.

Before the prayer, Weigley, his Columbia Union leadership team and the presidents of the union’s eight conferences, Washington Adventist University in Takoma Park, Md., and an Adventist HealthCare representative met with Chaplain Black and some several Adventist Hill staffers. Earlier that day, they met nearby for a special symposium on religious liberty.
Southwestern Adventist Headquarters

Margaret Taglavore, Southwestern Union children's ministries director, passes away

Click on an image to view a larger version of that image.

Margaret Taglavore, Southwestern Union Children's Ministries director, passed away on Thursday, February 27, 2014 in Irving, Texas.

With great sadness, we share that Margaret Taglavore, who has served as Children's Ministries director of the Southwestern Union since 1998, passed away on Thursday, February 27, 2014 in Irving, Texas.

"When you think of children's ministries," says Buford Griffith, executive secretary of the Southwestern Union, "you think of Margaret Taglavore, who had a tremendous passion for seeing children saved in God's kingdom."

Taglavore was born in Carlisle, Arkansas, on November 29, 1941. A loving wife, mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother, Margaret Taglavore's life was dedicated to children's ministries. She spent many years as a ministry volunteer until 1989, when she became child evangelism coordinator of the Texas Conference. She became child evangelism coordinator of the Southwestern Union in 1996 and in 1998 she assumed the position of director of children's ministries at the Southwestern Union.

She is survived by her husband, Alphonse; a son, Franklin; a daughter, Karen Champagne; and a son, Phillip; six grandchildren, and two
great-grandchildren; seven siblings, and a host of loving family and friends. She was preceded in death by a sister.

The viewing will be held on March 1, 2014 at Donnelly's Colonial Funeral Home, 606 West Airport Freeway, Irving, Texas, from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. A memorial service will be held on March 8 at 3:00 p.m. at the Burleson Seventh-day Adventist Church, 601 S. Burleson Blvd., in Burleson, Texas. Condolences may be sent to the Taglavore family at 1018 Glencrest Court, Irving TX 75061. A memorial fund is being established at the Southwestern Union and contributions can be sent to Southwestern Union Children's Ministries at P.O. Box 4000, Burleson, TX 76097.

"Margaret has been a tireless worker in children's ministries for many years. She and her army of trained workers have made children's ministries a vital part of the evangelistic and ministry outreach in the Southwestern Union. She will be greatly missed," said Larry Moore, Southwestern Union president.
Adventist health care summer program for students

By Stephanie Avila Special to The Enterprise

This summer, Adventist Health Central Valley Network is launching an innovative program—Discover Health Care: Volunteer Summer Program—focusing on volunteer service and career development for high school- and college-aged students.

“Discover Health Care: Volunteer Summer Program is an opportunity for high school and college students to utilize their summer break to volunteer at Adventist Health hospitals and learn more about a career in health care,” said Clay Ipsen, Assistant Director of Volunteer Resources for Adventist Health. “This unique combination will allow youth to really have a more complete understanding of health care and opportunities for future careers.

“All student volunteers will take part in four career core sessions that allow them to explore various health care careers, assist them to be stronger applicants in the workforce and help them discover if health care is the right career choice for them,” Ipsen said. “During that time they will also volunteer in different areas of the hospital for 100 hours during the summer.”

According to Ipsen, the four career core sessions that student volunteers will take part in are:

- Physician — learning more about being a physician, the requirements, the skills it takes to be successful and what specialties they can study.

- Nursing — presenting the wide variety of nursing opportunities, what qualifications they need to have and what skills they need to possess to be successful.

- Additional health care careers — educating participants about health care careers they may not know of such as technicians, physical therapists and clinical engineers.

- Presenting yourself — an opportunity to have a resume reviewed by HR professionals, be interviewed by hiring managers and learn more about presenting themselves for success.

Discover Health Care: Volunteer Summer Program will allow student volunteers to build their resume, gain experience, network with health care leaders and develop a greater understanding of the diverse health care industry in the Central Valley, Ipsen said.

The deadline to register for the program is March 24.

“The actual program will begin June 3 with an orientation session and will end on Aug. 28 with a graduation ceremony,” Ipsen said. “We are excited to be partnering with local high schools, technical schools and universities to promote this program. Our slogan for the program is, ‘Volunteer Your Passion. Discover Your Career.’”

“Selma High School is looking to find any students in grades nine to 12 who are committed to serving their community and learning about health care to join the program,” said Mark Babiarz, Selma High School principal. “The program will provide high school students in the Valley the opportunity to learn about the many professions in the health care field as well as provide students the opportunity to provide community service to their community.”

“Any high school or college student may submit an application with a letter of recommendation and a minimum GPA of 2.75. Applying can be done online at www.AdventistHealthCV.com, just click on the volunteer tab to find the online application,” Ipsen said.

Requirements for the program are:

- Students must be in grade nine to 12 or currently enrolled in a college or technical school.

- Submit a completed application at www.AdventistHealthCV.com/about_volunteer.html.

- Submit a letter of reference from a teacher, counselor, youth leader, or clergy.

- Have a minimum GPA of 2.75.
q Clear an employee health screen.
q If 18 and over, pass a criminal background check. If under 18, submit a signed parental consent form.
q Commit for the duration of the program from June 3 to Aug. 28.
q Pledge to volunteer for 100 hours.

Adventist Health Central Valley Network is a nonprofit, faith-based organization that operates more than 60 sites in Kings, Kern and Southern Fresno counties.

“Our goal as an organization is to be the health care industry leader in youth development. This program allows us to start that journey by giving youth additional opportunities to serve others within their local communities,” Ipsen said. “We want our youth here in the Central Valley to know that there are great health care career opportunities here in their own communities.”

Information on registration, selection qualifications and other topics may be found at the Selma High School counselor’s office. Adventist Health will post additional information on its website, www.AdventistHealthCV.com as well as the Discover Health Care volunteer Facebook page, https://www.facebook.com/DHVSP.
Adventist Hinsdale Hospital Foundation memorial fund set up for cancer patients

By SUBURBAN LIFE MEDIA

HINSDALE – Up to the point of her cancer diagnosis, Erin Potts was a healthy, athletic teenager. Then she started experiencing pain around one of her knees and losing weight.

Despite a series of tendonitis diagnoses and physical therapy to strengthen her knee, the pain would not subside, said her mother, Mary Potts, in a news release from Adventist Hinsdale Hospital.

During an ultrasound done to analyze her weight loss, doctors found a tumor on her thigh bone. She was diagnosed with Ewing’s Sarcoma, a rare form of bone cancer that affects children and adolescents.

Potts’ daughter lived another three years after her diagnosis. She was 18 when she died.

Potts hopes a new memorial fund established through the Hinsdale Hospital Foundation will do the same for others facing their own cancer diagnosis and treatment. The Scatter Kindness Erin Potts Memorial Fund will support the patient experience program at the Adventist Cancer Institute and Outpatient Center, according to the release.

While the institute is still in the construction phase, Scatter Kindness will start helping cancer patients coming to the hospital now.

For more information, visit hinsdalehospitalfoundation.org and click on the Scatter Kindness link.
Student art show benefits Family Crisis Center

A Southwestern Adventist University art student prepares an entry in the Art for Awareness exhibit to benefit scheduled for 4-6 p.m. Monday in the Meadows Gallery at the Chan Chun Centennial Library on the SWAU campus. The free exhibit benefits the Johnson County Family Crisis Center. (Keene Star/Makala Coleman)

An art exhibit at Southwestern Adventist University will help give victims of domestic violence strength to draw on.

Southwestern art students will raise awareness for domestic violence at the biannual art show from 4-6 p.m. Monday, March 10, in the Meadows Gallery at the Chan Shun Centennial Library.

Admission is free. However, attendees are asked to bring items to benefit the Johnson County Family Crisis Center. Items needed are laundry detergent, dish soap, pillows, light bulbs, toilet paper, paper towels and tissues can be dropped off at the event.

Every year the students, under the direction of instructor Marcela Wall, pick a charity or cause to highlight with their artwork. “Domestic violence is a sensitive issue,” communication major Makala Coleman said. “The art show is a different way to bring awareness and start the conversation. There is help available.”

The Johnson County Family Crisis Center seeks to empower and equip victims of domestic violence, JCFCC representative Amy Lane said. “The center is a country home where victims can feel safe,” Lane said. “In every aspect of the center there is an air of hope. Each room is named after an encouraging word: ‘faith’ and ‘courage,’ for example. Inspirational decorations fill the building. Visitors do chores and cook as a large family.” There are many obstacles to overcome, Lane said.

“We work and support in any way that we can until victims of domestic violence are able to get back on their feet and can start life again.” Lane visited Southwestern’s art class earlier this semester to share with the students what their art will support.

“Our Art for Awareness program helps our students realize that art is more than just an elective or hobby,” Wall said. “They can paint with a greater purpose.”

A light reception will accompany the showing. The Chan Shun Centennial Library is located on the campus of Southwestern Adventist University, on the corner of North College and West Magnolia Street. Free parking is available in the library parking lot.
International Women’s Day of Prayer will be celebrated by women’s ministry departments in Adventist Churches around the world today.

“This is a global campaign with churches around the world to address violence against women and girls,” said Dr. Tamara Clunis, education and communications director at Mount of Blessings Seventh-Day Adventist Church, 1600 N. Bivins St.

“We are having a special program to not only pray for women’s safety across the globe, but for the safety of women in Amarillo, and for women in general.”

The Seventh-Day Adventist Church is a worldwide organization, committed to sharing the good news of the gospel, Clunis said.

Clunis, who is the keynote speaker, will present the message at the church’s 11 a.m. service.

Held the first Sabbath of each March, the International Woman’s Day of Prayer is an opportunity for Christian women of all nationalities to learn about each other and strengthen spiritual bonds, said Ennis V. Johnson Sr., senior pastor of Mount of Blessings.

“This event is open to everybody,” he said. “It’s time for a healing and I firmly believe that prayer changes things.”

There will be a prayer room available from 9:15 a.m. until sunset on the Sabbath, said Rhonda Merritt, member of the Women’s Ministry Department at Mount of Blessings.

“I will be doing the call to worship during the service,” Merritt. “There are a lot of women in need of help who feel alone, and we just want to let them know we are here for them.”

How to go

■ **What:** International Women’s Day of Prayer Service

■ **When:** 11 a.m. today

■ **Where:** Mount of Blessings Seventh-Day Adventist Church, 1600 N. Bivins St.

■ **Cost:** Free

■ **Information:** 806-381-5815
On Holy Ground with Admiral Black

Dr. Albert Reyes

One of the greatest highlights of the National Prayer Breakfast was our visit with the Rev. Dr. Barry Black. Chaplain (Admiral) Black is the 62nd Chaplain of the US Senate. I first met Chaplain Black at Andrews University in the spring of 2010 during my graduation ceremony for the PhD in Global Leadership from Andrews. He was being awarded the Honorary Doctorate of Divinity from Andrews University and was the commencement speaker the day I graduated. Belinda, my wife, and my parents were there to celebrate the day with me.

When Chaplain Black took the podium and began to speak, I thought in that instant that I had never heard a voice more like what I imagine the voice of God to sound like than at that moment. Wow, his booming voice filled Pioneer Chapel. Not expecting much from a commencement speaker, I quickly sat up and was riveted to every word he said. He told his the story of his ministry and selection as Senate Chaplain and described how he was led by the Lord each step of the way, exercising his faith with each step. He shared how he became the first African American, the first military chaplain, the first Navy Chaplain, the first Admiral and the first 7th Day Adventist to be confirmed by the Senate to serve as the 62nd Chaplain of the US Senate.

While his story his impressive (See his autobiography From the Hood to the Hill), even more impressive was his evident and obvious walk with the Lord. This was my third meeting with him and each time I come away with another deep truth to think about regarding my own spirituality. In the past he has focused on the experience of Daniel and Joseph. He has talked about revelatory knowledge; how God sometimes gives us wisdom from above as we attempt to lead. This time he mentioned the concept of “Prayer as Listening.” This is listening for the voice of God, the still small voice. He talked about God’s power connected to prayer. He pointed us to Romans 8:26 and Luke 11:13 as reference points to what he is learning about prayer.

At the end of our visit we took a moment to pose for a group photo with Admiral Black. In the photo you will see Joann Cole, Vice President of Buckner Children and Family Services, Inc., Bea Mesquias, CEO of Bee First Home Health Care and President of the Hispanic Baptist Convention of Texas, Rev. Mauricio Elizondo, Sr. Pastor of Walnut Park Assembly of God – Casa de Mi Gloria, Randy Daniels, VP for International Resource and Program Development, and Margaret Elizabeth McKissack, Vice Counsel for Government and Institutional Relations. We left the room with a sense of awe of God’s presence on Chaplain Black and we learned about prayer and listening for the voice of God.

My prayers are different now. I pray but I also try to listen for the voice of God. He speaks in many ways and forms; through the Scripture, through the words of others, through songs, the still small voice, etc. I find the more I listen, the more I can hear his voice. One of my key goals as the leader of Buckner is to secure resources for our ministry. While I will do lots of activity toward this end, my sense is that I should start on Holy Ground listening for the voice of God every day.
2014 North American Division Women's Convention

When: September 25-28, 2014
Where: Rosen Shingle Creek Resort
Orlando, FL

Speakers:

Dan Jackson
Ella Simmons
Katia Reinert
Sara Bullón
Adrienne Townsend

Music by:

Kelly Mowrer
Gale Jones Murphy

Preliminary Schedule:

Thursday:
Noon-9:00pm Registration
2:00pm-5:30pm Seminars
7:00pm God in Shoes training (required for everyone participating in God in Shoes outreach to women's shelters on Friday)

Friday:
8:00am-9:00pm Registration
8:00am-1:30pm        God in Shoes
9:00am-11:45am      Seminars
1:30pm-4:45 pm       Seminars
7:00pm-9:00pm        General Session – Dan Jackson

Sabbath:
9:00am-12:45am       General Sessions – Katia Reinert and Adrienne Townsend
3:00pm                      Afternoon meetings and seminars

Sunday:
8:00am-9:15am         Seminars
9:30am-noon             Brunch/General Session – Ella Simmons

** General Sessions translated in Spanish, French, and ASL for the deaf.
Seminars translated in Spanish and French only.

Who Should Attend: All women fifteen and older who want to experience a faith-building weekend should plan to attend.

Hotel Registration: Each attendee is responsible for reserving their lodging by calling (866) 996-6338. You must complete your registration with AdventSource/PlusLine to attend the North American Division Women's Ministries Convention and have your customer order number to complete your lodging reservation. The special event rate is good through August 29, 2014 only. No one can reserve more than two hotel rooms.

Room Rate: $125 per night (for up to four persons)

Convention Registration Fees:
- Early bird registration through June 3, 2014 - $149
- June 4 - September 16, 2014 - $199
- Sabbath Only (through September 16, 2014) - $99

Ground Transportation: You may call Mears Airport Shuttle (407) 423-5566 to schedule transportation.

Meals: A full event attendee will receive supper on Friday; lunch and supper on Saturday; and brunch on Sunday. A Saturday Only attendee will receive lunch and supper on Saturday. All meals will be served as lacto-ovo vegetarian meals with some vegan selections. Please take care of all special dietary needs and all other meals on your own.

Children: As a courtesy to other participants, and to maximize your benefit during this event, we ask that you make other plans for the care of your children.

Event Registration: Click here
(Please note: A mailing address and/or email address is required for registration.)
HEBREWS 8:1-5
Now the main point of what we are saying is this: We do have such a high priest, who sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, and who serves in the sanctuary, the true tabernacle set up by the Lord, not by a mere human being. Every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices, and so it was necessary for this one also to have something to offer. If he were on earth, he would not be a priest, for there are already priests who offer the gifts prescribed by the law. They serve at a sanctuary that is a copy and shadow of what is in heaven. This is why Moses was warned when he was about to build the tabernacle: “See to it that you make everything according to the pattern shown you on the mountain.”

HEBREWS 4:14-16
14 Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. 15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. 16 Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

HEBREWS 9:11-28
11 But when Christ came as high priest of the good things that are now already here, he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not made with human hands, that is to say, is not a part of this creation. 12 He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption. 13 The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. 14 How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God! 15 For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance—now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant. 16 In the case of a will, it is necessary to prove the death of the one who made it, because a will is in force only when somebody has died; it never takes effect while the one who made it is living. 17 This is why even the first covenant was not put into effect without blood. 18 When Moses had proclaimed every command of the law to all the people, he took the blood of calves, together with water, scarlet wool and branches of hyssop, and sprinkled the scroll and all the people. 20 He said, “This is the blood of the covenant, which God has commanded you to keep.” 21 In the same way, he sprinkled with the blood both the tabernacle and everything used in its ceremonies. 22 In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no
forgiveness.  It was necessary, then, for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these sacrifices, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.  For Christ did not enter a sanctuary made with human hands that was only a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence.  Nor did he enter heaven to offer himself again and again, the way the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood that is not his own.  Otherwise Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. But he has appeared once for all at the culmination of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself.  Just as people are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment,  so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.

HEBREWS 10:19-22

19 Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, 20 by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, 21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God, 22 let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.

HEBREWS 1:3

3 The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.

HEBREWS 2:16, 17

16 For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham's descendants. 17 For this reason he had to be made like them, fully human in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people.

DANIEL 7:9-27

9 “As I looked, “thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days took his seat. His clothing was as white as snow; the hair of his head was white like wool. His throne was flaming with fire, and its wheels were all ablaze. 10 A river of fire was flowing, coming out from before him. Thousands upon thousands attended him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him. The court was seated, and the books were opened. 11 “Then I continued to watch because of the boastful words the horn was speaking. I kept looking until the beast was slain and its body destroyed and thrown into the blazing fire. 12 (The other beasts had been stripped of their authority, but were allowed to live for a period of time.) 13 “In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. 14 He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed. 15 “I, Daniel, was troubled in spirit, and the visions that passed through my mind disturbed me. 16 I approached one of those standing there and asked him the meaning of all this. “So he told me and gave me the interpretation of these things: 17 “The four great beasts are four kings that will rise from the earth. 18 But the holy people of the Most High will receive the kingdom and will possess it forever—yes, for ever and ever.' 19 “Then I wanted to know the meaning of the fourth beast, which was different from all the others and most terrifying, with its iron teeth and bronze claws—the beast that crushed and devoured its victims and trampled underfoot whatever was left. 20 I also wanted to know about the ten horns on its head and about the other horn that came up, before which three of them fell—the horn that looked more imposing than the others and that had eyes and a mouth that spoke boastfully. 21 As I watched, this horn was waging war against the holy people and defeating them, 22 until the Ancient of Days came and pronounced judgment in favor of the holy people of the Most High, and the time came when they possessed the kingdom. 23 “He gave me this explanation: 'The fourth beast is a fourth kingdom that will appear on earth. It will be different from all the other kingdoms and will devour the whole earth, trampling it down and crushing it. 24 The ten horns are ten kings who will come from this kingdom. After them another king will arise, different from the earlier ones; he will subdue three kings. 25 He will speak against the Most High and oppress his holy people and try to change the set times and the laws. The holy people will be delivered into his hands for a time, times and half a time. 26 "But the
DANIEL 8:13, 14

13 Then I heard a holy one speaking, and another holy one said to him, “How long will it take for the vision to be fulfilled—the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, the rebellion that causes desolation, the surrender of the sanctuary and the trampling underfoot of the Lord's people?” 14 He said to me, “It will take 2,300 evenings and mornings; then the sanctuary will be reconsecrated.”

DANIEL 9:24-27

24 “Seventy 'sevens' are decreed for your people and your holy city to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the Most Holy Place.

25 “Know and understand this: From the time the word goes out to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes, there will be seven 'sevens,' and sixty-two 'sevens.' It will be rebuilt with streets and a trench, but in times of trouble. 26 After the sixty-two 'sevens,' the Anointed One will be put to death and will have nothing. The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end will come like a flood: War will continue until the end, and desolations have been decreed. 27 He will confirm a covenant with many for one 'seven.' In the middle of the 'seven' he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And at the temple he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him.”

NUMBERS 14:34

34 For forty years—one year for each of the forty days you explored the land—you will suffer for your sins and know what it is like to have me against you.'

EZEKIEL 4:6

6 “After you have finished this, lie down again, this time on your right side, and bear the sin of the people of Judah. I have assigned you 40 days, a day for each year.

LEVITICUS 16

The Lord spoke to Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron who died when they approached the Lord. 2 The Lord said to Moses: “Tell your brother Aaron that he is not to come whenever he chooses into the Most Holy Place behind the curtain in front of the atonement cover on the ark, or else he will die. For I will appear in the cloud over the atonement cover. 3 “This is how Aaron is to enter the Most Holy Place: He must first bring a young bull for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering. 4 He is to put on the sacred linen tunic, with linen undergarments next to his body; he is to tie the linen sash around him and put on the linen turban. These are sacred garments; so he must bathe himself with water before he puts them on. 5 From the Israelite community he is to take two male goats for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering. 6 “Aaron is to offer the bull for his own sin offering to make atonement for himself and his household. 7 Then he is to take the two goats and present them before the Lord at the entrance to the tent of meeting. 8 He is to cast lots for the two goats—one lot for the Lord and the other for the scapegoat. 9 Aaron shall bring the goat whose lot falls to the Lord and sacrifice it for a sin offering. 10 But the goat chosen by lot as the scapegoat shall be presented alive before the Lord to be used for making atonement by sending it into the wilderness as a scapegoat. 11 “Aaron shall bring the bull for his own sin offering to make atonement for himself and his household, and he is to slaughter the bull for his own sin offering. 12 He is to take a censer full of burning coals from the altar before the Lord and two handfuls of finely ground fragrant incense and take them behind the curtain. 13 He is to put the incense on the fire before the Lord, and the smoke of the incense will conceal the atonement cover above the tablets of the covenant law, so that he will not die. 14 He is to take some of the bull's blood and with his finger sprinkle it on the front of the atonement cover; then he shall sprinkle some of it with his finger seven times before the atonement cover. 15 “He shall then slaughter the goat for the sin offering...
for the people and take its blood behind the curtain and do with it as he did with the bull's blood: He shall sprinkle it on the atonement cover and in front of it. 16 In this way he will make atonement for the Most Holy Place because of the uncleanness and rebellion of the Israelites, whatever their sins have been. He is to do the same for the tent of meeting, which is among them in the midst of their uncleanness. 17 No one is to be in the tent of meeting from the time Aaron goes in to make atonement in the Most Holy Place until he comes out, having made atonement for himself, his household and the whole community of Israel. 18 “Then he shall come out to the altar that is before the Lord and make atonement for it. He shall take some of the bull's blood and some of the goat's blood and put it on all the horns of the altar. 19 He shall sprinkle some of the blood on it with his finger seven times to cleanse it and to consecrate it from the uncleanness of the Israelites. 20 “When Aaron has finished making atonement for the Most Holy Place, the tent of meeting and the altar, he shall bring forward the live goat. 21 He is to lay both hands on the head of the live goat and confess over it all the wickedness and rebellion of the Israelites—all their sins—and put them on the goat's head. He shall send the goat away into the wilderness in the care of someone appointed for the task. 22 The goat will carry on itself all their sins to a remote place; and the man shall release it in the wilderness. 23 “Then Aaron is to go into the tent of meeting and take off the linen garments he put on before he entered the Most Holy Place, and he is to leave them there. 24 He shall bathe himself with water in the sanctuary area and put on his regular garments. Then he shall come out and sacrifice the burnt offering for himself and the burnt offering for the people, to make atonement for himself and for the people. 25 He shall also burn the fat of the sin offering on the altar. 26 “The man who releases the goat as a scapegoat must wash his clothes and bathe himself with water; afterward he may come into the camp. 27 The bull and the goat for the sin offerings, whose blood was brought into the Most Holy Place to make atonement, must be taken outside the camp; their hides, flesh and intestines are to be burned up. 28 The man who burns them must wash his clothes and bathe himself with water; afterward he may come into the camp. 29 “This is to be a lasting ordinance for you: On the tenth day of the seventh month you must deny yourselves and not do any work—whether native-born or a foreigner residing among you— because on this day atonement will be made for you, to cleanse you. Then, before the Lord, you will be clean from all your sins. 30 It is a day of sabbath rest, and you must deny yourselves; it is a lasting ordinance. 31 The priest who is anointed and ordained to succeed his father as high priest is to make atonement. He is to put on the sacred linen garments 32 and make atonement for the Most Holy Place, for the tent of meeting and the altar, and for the priests and all the members of the community. 33 “This is to be a lasting ordinance for you: Atonement is to be made once a year for all the sins of the Israelites.” And it was done, as the Lord commanded Moses.

REVELATION 14:6, 7

6 Then I saw another angel flying in midair, and he had the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth—to every nation, tribe, language and people. 7 He said in a loud voice, “Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water.”

REVELATION 20:12

12 And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books.

REVELATION 14:12

12 This calls for patient endurance on the part of the people of God who keep his commands and remain faithful to Jesus.

REVELATION 22:12

12 “Look, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to each person according to what they have done.
So many times I have sat back and asked myself, “Why me?” I know most people ask themselves, “Why me?” when things goes south in their lives. I have lived a life so far south, so bad, but now, with all that God has done and is doing for me, I still ask, “Why me?”

Let me tell you about grace. I have lived a life of total destruction—self-destruction, that is—and that comes with drugs, violence, gangs, and crime. Yet, God’s grace kept me alive through it all to be where I am today. God can and does use people even in the state that I was in.

I grew up in a home with a father who was blind, and a mother who passed away when I was 14. It is sad to say, but I grew up to be just what my parents raised me to be, a violent criminal. You might ask, Why would anyone raise a child to be a violent criminal? This, I believe now, was not their intent. My mother wanted us to have things but had no money to buy them. She taught me and my seven brothers and sisters to steal and stealing was fine. The lesson was to not get caught. My father tried to beat out of us the behavior that my mother taught us. Through this experience, I learned that it was OK to take other people’s things. I also learned...
that I could control others with violence. So, was it any surprise that I was in the adult state prison system in Michigan serving a 5-to-15 year prison sentence for armed robbery at the age of 17?

Before I went to prison, I had gotten a girl pregnant. We were married in July of 1975, when I was 16 and she was 15. She delivered a baby boy in November of 1975. During this time, my life consisted of drinking and drugging. We called it “ripp’en and runn’en” in the streets of Detroit, meaning getting high and stealing.

I was not a dad at any level. I just didn’t care about anyone, including myself. I was a heroin addict at 16 and did any type of dope in any way it could be done. I really thought it showed toughness to shoot up drugs.

In October 1976, I found myself in state prison. Prison went well for me. It was very violent, but violence was a way of life for me. My parents insisted that we kids were very aggressive, even with each other. I fit right in at the prison. I understood the “Big Yard” rules and did not mind playing them. You had to be the aggressor or be preyed upon. You could not show any weakness. I am a big guy, so I was good at the game. It did not help that I saw the movie Easy Rider in the late 60s about some hard-partying, drug-doing bikers. It gave me a love for motorcycles. It was no surprise I gravitated to a motorcycle club. But, it was not just a motorcycle club, it was a 1%er club, a subculture of men willing to kill and die for the club. They were the 1% of the bikers who were the worst of the worst.

That first trip to prison set the stage for the next 30 plus years. In the “B.C.” or “Before Christ” era of my life, I served 24.5 years in state and federal prisons on five different trips.

Through my life in the streets, I became very well known in Detroit and was a well-respected, street-wise guy. I was a man for hire and did work for all other organized crime. It involved doing every act of violence that comes with that lifestyle. I have owned a tattoo shop, nightclub, bar, gambling business for bars, and sold drugs. I did it all and have seen it all. There was no limit or line that I was afraid to cross. This brought in very large amounts of cash, and I had all the toys that comes with the lifestyle—motorcycles, cars, and jewelry.

I know this is where I am supposed to say none of that worked. Well, it did not work. It was things that I was going after, and there were never going to be enough. Let’s look at it as it is for me today. I have Jesus. Is it enough? No—I want more of Jesus! It is what drives me to study His Word. The search comes down to what we value. What is the treasure of your heart? Is it enough today? Do you have enough of the Holy Spirit in your life? We can never become complacent with our faith. We are all given a measure of faith. But what is your measure? When can you say, “There—now I am good with Christ? I know enough. I have made it.”
How did I come to be a witness of the Three Angels’ messages to the world? I know this is going to sound wild, but all my life I believed myself to be a Christian—even while living such an evil lifestyle. I thought all it took to be a Christian was to believe the Bible was the Word of God, that Jesus is the Son of God, and that Jesus died for our sins. This historical belief made me believe I was a Christian. But that is not enough. That can be the start, but it is not enough.

I was in federal prison for felony in possession of a firearm, serving a 92-month sentence. I was not thinking that I needed Jesus, but that I had it all together. After all, I believed I was a Christian. But a friend in the streets told me, “If you ever get a chance to go to the chapel for the Seventh-day Adventist Church, go.” Well, I did, and met a prison ministry team from the Ann Arbor, Michigan, Seventh-day Adventist Church. I found what they were saying to be outrageous. I challenged them on every point, and they lovingly walked me through the truths of the Bible. Eldon Hickman, one of the men who volunteered at the F. C. I. Milan prison each Sabbath, told me one day, “David, you are going to have a powerful testimony when you get out.” I replied to him, “Brother, you have a powerful testimony.” He said, “I have not done anything wild or loud.” I said, “What are you talking about? Sir, you have lived it. You have walked with Christ all your life. To me, that is a testimony!” Wow—this Lord we serve will use all walks of life if we just let Him. The best thing I learned from the Adventist prison ministry team was to let the Scriptures interpret themselves, that it is the Holy Spirit talking to me. I was baptized while in that prison into this remnant body of Christ. This is the grace of God to use a man even as I was. Through His love and mercy He calls us unto Himself. Now I am happy to share this
The first Sabbath of February 2014 I had the privilege of once again returning to the prison, but this time it was to share the message of Jesus’ love and truth to inmates through this ministry. God has brought me full circle!

I will be attending the next Amazing Facts Center of Evangelism (AFCOE) program beginning August 2014 in Albuquerque, New Mexico. I am very excited to be a part of this great movement—the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Please pray for me to be the man the Lord has always wanted me to be.

I ask, “Why me?” The answer? Grace—Jesus did it all for me.

David Casey