Connecting the Pacific Union Adventist Family

Recorder

June 2011

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DeVon Franklin, vice president of production for Columbia Pictures, a division of Sony Pictures Entertainment, speaks before the award ceremony at the 2011 SONscreen Film Festival. Photo by Gerry Chudleigh.
Lord, Send a Revival...

Ricardo Graham

Revival is briefly and perhaps over-simplistically defined as “a reawakening of religious fervor.”

If this is a simple and unsophisticated definition, it is nonetheless true. It seems to many that a revival in the churches here in the Pacific Union would be more than a blessing; it is essential to finishing the work God has entrusted to us. This is nothing new, as Ellen White wrote generally about Seventh-day Adventists in her lifetime: “A revival of true godliness among us is the greatest and most urgent of all our needs. To seek this should be our first work” (Selected Messages, book 1, p. 121).

We may need more churches, and better-equipped people to lead them, and institutions to facilitate the work, but none of these concerns fits “the greatest and most urgent of all our needs.”

We live in a world that is being manipulated by the enemy of our souls. He is using all the resources at his disposal to hinder our preparedness for the main mission: loving God and living and working for the return of Jesus.

And because he is unrelenting in his efforts, it is possible that we will always be in need of revival.

Many Bible commentators and students of Christianity recognize the seven churches of Revelation as symbolic representations of stages or phases through which the Church would pass. The last of the seven churches, Laodicea, describes the condition of the church before Jesus returns in glory. Prominent within its description is the condition of being “lukewarm.” Jesus is quoted here; therefore, the description is heart-wrenchingly accurate.

See Revelation 3:15-22 for Jesus’ diagnosis of our spiritual status. Pause in your reading to reflect on verse 19. Here, Jesus tells us He rebukes us because He loves us; yes, even the Laodiceans are loved deeply by God, hence He warns us in love to repent.

What marks genuine revival? “All true revival is characterized by three things: earnest, heartfelt prayer; a deep searching of the Bible; and a passionate commitment to win lost people” (Ministry Magazine, January 2011, pg. 17). I would add repentance as a sign of revival.

Are any of those elements missing in our collective or individual experience? If so, I would suggest, based on the above criteria, that we need a revival in our homes, schools and churches.

What brings revival? “A revival need be expected only in answer to prayer” (Selected Messages, book 1, p. 121).

There is only one route to revival: sincere, repentant prayer. And since this is and will remain our most urgent need, we should be praying for revival.

This should be “our first work,” a priority. We recognize priorities by their prominence in our lives and the time we invest in them.

We don’t neglect to eat — at least I never have! I will confess, however, that sometimes I have frittered away my time for prayer. I believe that demonic entities may not tell us to forgo prayer, for that is too obvious an approach that most of us will catch. However, could it be that they will attempt to get us to delay praying, planning that we will get so distracted by the issues of life that we fail to pray at all?

We don’t control revival by praying; we merely meet the conditions God has set for a revival of true Godliness to occur. See 2 Chronicles 7:14.

I’m praying for revival in my life and in the churches in the Pacific Union. An old song has these words: “Lord, send a revival and let it begin with me.”
Pastor Laffit Cortes has accepted the position of Pacific Union College campus chaplain and associate pastor of the PUC church, and will begin the new post effective July 1.

“I hope to collaborate with others as we develop future servant leaders that will not only love God, but live lives dedicated to serving as Christ did,” he says. “By God’s grace, He will use us to raise an army of youth … that will live the message of a crucified, risen, and soon-coming Savior.”

Cortes currently serves as the youth director for the New Jersey Conference, and he comes with a wealth of outreach and young adult ministry experience that makes him an ideal fit for the position. As youth director, Cortes coordinates ministry events and programs for young people within the 13,000-member New Jersey Seventh-day Adventist community. He has also been a featured speaker at a variety of programs for young people within New Jersey and across the country.

Cortes began laying the groundwork for his ministry at PUC April 7-15, when he met with student leaders and administrators on campus to begin planning for the 2011-2012 school year. He also led PUC’s Friday night vespers service that week and took the opportunity to meet and greet the campus April 8 at a special program for PUC students.

Incoming Student Association religious vice president Wally Perralta will work closely with Cortes in his ministry next year, and the two met to discuss plans and strategies to enhance spiritual life opportunities on campus.

“I think he’s a guy that takes action. As soon as I met him he wanted to get down to business,” says Perralta. “Next year will definitely be a blessing.”

Tentative plans include a recurring Friday night program that will engage a diverse group of panelists with the student body on a variety of spiritual issues. Cortes and Perralta plan to delve into even controversial, hot button issues as they encourage students to take an investigative look at their faith.

Cortes will travel to Angwin with his wife Lynda, an occupational therapist, and his children Raylyn and Caleb, in seventh and fifth grades, who will finish this school year before transitioning to their new home in July.

Cortes replaces interim chaplain Tyler Kraft, who has been serving the campus since January. Former chaplain Roy Ice, who had been PUC’s chaplain for five years, accepted a call in January to be the executive pastor of the Napa Adventist Church.
Alumni Recall Lessons Learned at La Sierra

Darla Martin Tucker

Not long after Marla Osborne Anderson arrived at La Sierra University as a freshman communications major in 1977, she noticed something odd taking place in her dormitory. Except in her case, all the other dorm residents seemed to be paired with someone of similar ethnicity, and the paired roommates all seemed to be having fun.

So Anderson approached the dorm’s dean and complained. The conversation was an eye-opener for the young student and broadened her perspectives going forward. The dean explained that she had hoped Anderson, who is African-American, and her blond-haired roommate would serve as an example of how people who seem to be different can live in harmony.

The dean’s words changed Anderson’s mind and heart. “She told me I was special and chosen to help make change,” said Anderson, a superior court judge in Monterey County, Calif. She said La Sierra University teaches first to the heart and then to the mind, and that the character-building lessons incurred while a student there were unique in her educational experience. Such values ultimately aid and influence her judicial decision-making, said Anderson. “La Sierra taught me how to love people even though they don’t look like me,” she said.

Anderson, a 1981 La Sierra graduate, relayed her story during an award ceremony the evening of April 15 in which she was honored as La Sierra’s Alumnus of the Year. University President Randal Wisbey presented Anderson with the award during La Sierra’s alumni banquet and vespers.

Anderson began her legal career in business litigation. Eventually she developed a love for the courtroom, and as a result, joined the Monterey County district attorney’s office in 1987. She served as a deputy district attorney until 1995, when she was appointed by Governor Pete Wilson to serve on the Monterey County courts. Anderson has presided over a variety of trial calendars for more than 16 years.

A member of the California Judges Association and National Association of Women Judges, Anderson has received several honors and awards from community, educational and professional organizations. She received the Outstanding Achievement Award from the Association of Adventist Women in 2002.

Judge Anderson is married to Frederick Anderson, director of African-American ministries for the Central California Conference, pastor of the Seaside church and retired computer information science instructor.

In addition to Anderson’s award, the university’s three schools and its college recognized four “Honored Alumni” who have made long and lasting impacts since their respective graduations, and four “Rising Star” graduates who are ascending their career ladders. The university also recognized BALL (Black Alumni of Loma Linda and La Sierra universities) La Sierra Alumnus of the Year Gwendolyn Anderson Meredith for her lengthy contribution and dedication to education.

Honored Alumni are: Juli Ling Miller, ’71, ’75, College of Arts and Sciences; Gregory Nelson, ’83, School of Business; Ginger Ketting-Weller, ’88, School of Education; and Louis Venden, ’51, School of Religion.

Rising Star honorees include: Grace Oh, ’00, College of Arts and Sciences; Ichen “Ivy” Lee, ’05, School of Business; Mary Han Young, ’10, School of Education; and Reuben Sutter, ’98, School of Religion.

To read how honorees recounted the ways in which La Sierra influenced their values and life trajectory, and their biographical sketches go to: http://bit.ly/jDJw7u.
Documentary on Haiti Provides Life-Changing Experience for Young People

Dustin R. Jones, M.A.

More than 400 students from the Chicago area witnessed what was, in their own words, a life-changing experience. “I used to be afraid of facing hard struggles in my life, but seeing the amazing film ‘Out of the Rubble’ made me believe that I truly can achieve something,” wrote one seventh-grade student, following a viewing of the documentary in February.


Less than one month after the earthquake, Cosmin Cosma and Michael Wolcott, co-directors of the film, traveled to the Adventist hospital in Haiti, where they discovered Sebastien and were gripped by his story. “Here is a young boy who has experienced tremendous devastation in his life, including the loss of a limb, but he continues to smile and share smiles with those around him,” states Wolcott.

Both Cosma and Wolcott are video production specialists for Loma Linda University.

In March of this year, Wolcott received a letter from Nick Angotti, co-founder and executive director of the Peace On Earth Film Festival. “Michael,” the letter begins, “I just wanted you to know that we screened ‘Out of the Rubble,’ in two separate sessions, to 400 Chicago school students and their teachers on the first day of the 2011 Peace On Earth Film Festival. We have yet to go through all the letters and evaluation cards; however, I can tell you that Sebastien and your film have absolutely inspired our youth. They talked during the discussions of how Sebastien reminded them to appreciate what they have. How he ‘continued to smile, even though he lost his leg and most of his family’ and much more. On behalf of Peace On Earth Film Festival, thank you. Nick Angotti.”

The 2011 Peace On Earth Film Festival was hosted by the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and took place at the Chicago Cultural Centers’ Claudia Cassidy Theater from Feb. 25 through Feb. 27.

One student was so moved by the presentation of young Sebastien, she wrote a two-page hand-written letter explaining how much the film had changed her life. “Watching this young boy fight through hard times and having the strength to keep moving forward really made me think twice about my living situation here in America,” she wrote. “This film touched my heart in many different ways. I thank you so much for giving me an opportunity to examine the life of a Haitian. For now I am praying to God for all of those who are struggling, but believe me, I will be the change you wish to see in the world!”

“In final consideration, this adventure you have given me was truly a life learning journey. You have made a big impact on the world for letting young adults like us experience these life stories from different cultures. Someday I hope there will be peace in the world, and we won’t have to worry about starvation or violence. I’m hardly worried, because I know our Lord will get us through it.”

As the film continues to reach entirely new audiences who have not heard the story, the inspiration of Sebastien’s story will continue to give hope. “Out of the Rubble” can be viewed at www.llu.edu/360.
Leadership Training Focuses on Youth and Children’s Ministries

Feryl Harris

Participants from the Hawaiian Islands gathered together for the fourth annual Hand ‘n Hand leadership training weekend held in the newly-dedicated Church Ministries Training Center adjacent to the Hawaii Conference headquarters. The event was themed “Crossing the Line: Good News, Better Vision, Great Spirit!” A special ribbon-cutting dedication ceremony preceded Friday evening’s activities. Because of their volunteer service to the youth and children of the islands, Rachel Layman and Mike and Ina Lane were honored.

Keynote speaker Judi Rogers, children’s ministries specialist and author of the Vacation Bible School “Kids in the Kitchen” cookbook, began the events of the weekend with a challenge encouraging leaders to inspire the youth with the good news of the Bible in a media-saturated society.

On Sabbath morning, James Black, North American Division youth director, encouraged the leaders to study the environment of today’s kids and to initiate better visioning in providing for their needs.

Weekend highlights included Kaitlin and Mark Bankhead’s puppet drama with information on how to begin a puppet ministry in the local church. Pastor Milton Coronado spoke about street art ministry and how he decided on the theme for the wall he created in the ministry center. Then there was an interview with 13-year-old Diamond Garcia regarding his desire to work for Jesus through Bible studies with classmates in his public school.

Honolulu Japanese church pastor John Abbott and two members of his team introduced the “Kids in Discipleship” program. They explained how the family focus of the program has impacted their personal spiritual growth and mission. Plans are under way to provide further training in this ministry for individual churches throughout the islands.

Breakout sessions included a variety of subjects and activities for ministries that focus on children, youth, Pathfinders and Adventurers. Black and Manny Cruz, Rogers, and Gael Murray presented.

Cruz, NAD youth ministries associate, closed the Sabbath with a focus on imparting “great spirit” through mentoring, interaction and personal relationship with young people.

Weekend musicians included the Kailua church praise team, the Young Disciples of the Waipahu Samoan church and Pastor Jon Clark.
New Las Vegas Company Led By “Tentmaker” Pastor

Denny Krause

In an action taken by the Nevada-Utah Conference executive committee April 21, 2011, a new company joins the list of 10 Adventist churches and two Adventist companies already existing in the Las Vegas area.

The newly-minted New and Living Way Company has been a growing group under Fil-Am SDA Christian Fellowship for the past three years. It is an energetic, young, family-oriented, multi-ethnic fellowship. New and Living Way Company intentionally charted their course from inception to be one of calling people out of a secular lifestyle to follow Jesus in a new and living way.

The look and feel of New and Living Way Company is comfortably contemporary in an effort to reach secular people, while at the same time, preserving and proclaiming the traditional Adventist message. An emphasis is placed on praise singing, incorporating appropriate, contemporary Christian music pleasantly balanced with age-old hymns.

While groups and companies do not have pastors funded by the conference, New and Living Way has been pastored since its beginning days by Loren Yutuc, a “tentmaker” pastor who makes his primary living in another vocation. A minimal stipend salary is provided by the membership and paid through the conference.

Reflecting on his “tentmaker” pastoral position, Yutuc explains, “Even though I work nearly full time in secular work, and then work about half-time as a pastor, I love it!”

A 2004 graduate of Pacific Union College with a degree in theology, Yutuc’s education and training have prepared him well for his “tentmaker” pastoral position. During the three-year history of New and Living Way, Yutuc has has provided the leadership and vision to grow the weekly Sabbath attendance from about 20 to a current attendance of 50 to 100-plus weekly.

“It was exciting to fellowship with the New and Living Way Group recently and to see over a hundred people in attendance,” comments Larry Unterseher, Nevada-Utah Conference president. “We congratulate them on their continued growth and their new company status.”
New Conference Pastoral Position Created

Denny Krause

A new pastoral position has been created in the Nevada-Utah Conference and dubbed the Operations and Special Events Coordinator.

The position was designed to provide an individual who would coordinate and collaborate with the conference president, pastors, churches, ministry groups and members to encourage members to lead and participate in ministry and evangelism.

The ultimate goal is to help the entire conference — from the grassroots level of membership right on through conference administration — to work as a team utilizing the unique gifts of each participant.

Tammie Lindsey, a May 2011 Master of Divinity degree graduate from Andrews University, is already on the job and interacting with pastors and members in the Las Vegas area in preparation for the city-wide evangelism effort in early 2011.

Uniquely qualified for the position, Lindsey, hailing from California’s Silicon Valley, has a communications degree from Pacific Union College (1996), and a law degree from the University of Southern California Law School (1999).

Lindsey’s successful legal career, combined with an active involvement in local church leadership and activities, though satisfying, did not seem to fulfill her as completely as she desired. Little by little, she says she began to feel the Lord’s call to ministry, which led her to the seminary.

While at Andrews, Lindsey found herself drawn to Christian education and seized upon teaching opportunities offered to her in addition to her seminary studies.

“We are delighted to have Pastor Lindsey as part of our conference team,” said Larry Unterseher, conference president. “Her education and experience have been the perfect preparation for her current assignment.”

“I help God’s people minister with other ministers, and work out the details to insure that their ministry happens,” Lindsey said.
Tragedies Lead to Decision for Service

Phil Draper

Scottsdale attorney Mark Jewett died suddenly at a Super Bowl party at his home. Andrew Anobile, then 17, was at the party.

Four months later, Pastor John Martin collapsed during a basketball game at Arizona camp meeting. Anobile watched the futile attempts at resuscitation.

In November, a man collapsed at the Thunderbird Adventist Academy gym, a victim of heart attack. Witnessing these three deaths was sobering and life-changing for this high school senior.

Anobile was deeply troubled. “I asked why I was allowed to witness these tragedies,” he said. “Was there a greater plan God was directing me to? Was this more than coincidence? I started seriously praying and asking what His purpose was in all this.”

Realizing the deep impact these events had on his son, Arizona Conference President Tony Anobile recommended that he enroll in the medical missionary training program under the direction of Rico Hill, which is a part of Lifestyle Burning Heart.

Young Anobile is grateful for the medical missionary training he received. “It showed me that before I look into the world and see its methods of healing, I must not leave God at the door. He needs to be the Healer, not me. My job will be giving people a second chance. No matter how healthy you are, people are going to get injured. But prevention is the best way to avoid disease and live a better life.”

“During my training, Rico Hill pointed out clearly that ours was gospel medical missionary work. Without the gospel, we would just be making healthy sinners! He reminded us of Christ’s example. ‘Christ neglected no opportunity of proclaiming the gospel of salvation’ MH 27.”

Anobile, now 18, plans to enroll at Pacific Union College this fall to study to be an Emergency Room physician.

Medical missionary trainer, Rico Hill, once an executive with a major media company, made his decision to relocate to Arizona to begin training people to become medical missionaries.

“The timing was perfect,” says Hill. “The Arizona Conference was launching a program to reach every home in the state for Jesus with Lifestyle Burning Heart. While there was active Bible and literature work, there was no medical missionary component.”

Hill leads out in the medical missionary arm of the project. Already 58 medical missionaries are now sharing the health message, which focuses on the role of health in the plan of salvation.

Training programs are offered quarterly. At the conclusion, participants are consecrated and receive a certificate of completion of the medical missionary field training.

“Working full-time for Jesus is the most gratifying work experience I ever had in my career,” says Hill. “It’s thrilling to watch the trainees’ lives change before my very eyes as they lose weight, get closer to Jesus, and develop a fervor to serve the Lord.”

For more information about medical missionary training or the Beehive ministries, visit www.beehivevision or www.lifestyleburningheart.com.
Bluegrass Program Available on LifeTalk Radio

Phil Draper

Tom Macomber is an attorney by profession, but a banjo-picking gospel bluegrass musician at heart.

Macomber, a member of the Paradise Valley church in Phoenix, has performed as a vocalist and instrumentalist with a gospel bluegrass group called Summer Church. The group has recorded five albums, and has performed throughout the United States.

In 2008, the group took extended leave and Macomber moved from California to Arizona. Although not on tour with the band, his love for gospel bluegrass music never diminished.

When the FAA released low power FM stations a few years ago, Macomber thought there might be a need for quality programming with a sacred theme. He believed bluegrass music, combined with a gospel message, would be a good blend. And since he had already produced the music performed by Summer Church, it was a natural progression to use that music production experience with his idea for a radio show.

“The format came about by trial and error,” Macomber explains. “Each show runs for an hour. I open with a Bible verse and play songs for about 20 minutes. Then I give a devotional thought that ties in with the opening text. Next, I feature an artist or song with a little background information to make it more interesting. And finally, I play music until the end of the hour.”

“Walkin’ on Water,” Macomber’s radio program, is now heard on eight independent radio stations, plus the 70 stations affiliated with LifeTalk Radio, an operation from the Adventist Media Center in Simi Valley, Calif. He recently produced his 100th show.

“One of the few things really free today is radio,” Macomber says. “All you have to do is turn on your radio and there is an abundance of quality, Christ-centered programming anywhere you might be.”

“Walkin’ on Water” can be heard over the Internet Sunday nights at 8 by visiting www.lifetalk.net.

For more information about Walkin’ on Water and other LifeTalk programs, visit their website or call 800-775-4673.

In early 2009, Macomber shared with Elvin Vence, a former LifeTalk Radio engineer who runs WTRL-FM in Vonore, Tenn., a sample radio show he had produced in his office-studio in Phoenix. Vence was pleased with the result and began playing the program on his station. With Vence’s comments to other station owners, the show began airing on stations in the South and Mid-West.
Larry Dodds Retires
Larry D. Dodds retired from his role as executive vice president and chief operating officer of Adventist Health this past May, ending his nearly 40-year career with the health system.

“Larry has been a dedicated and skillful leader in our system for nearly four decades, and I will miss his talents and management acumen,” stated Robert G. Carmen, president and CEO. “I have personally appreciated his deep commitment to furthering the mission of Adventist Health, something he is well-known for throughout our organization.”

Dodds began his career in 1971 working for a health care organization in Maryland. Two years later, he joined Verticare, one of the forerunners of Adventist Health in the Northwest. In 1979, he became the associate administrator at Walla Walla General Hospital in southeastern Washington and shortly thereafter accepted the position of senior vice president at Adventist Medical Center in Portland (AMC-P), Oregon. In 1983, Dodds was named president and CEO of AMC-P, Adventist Health’s flagship facility in the Northwest. He served in that role for 15 years until relocating to the corporate office to assume the role of senior vice president in 1998, and in 2007 was appointed executive vice president/COO of the health system.

Scott Reiner, previously senior vice president at Adventist Health, has filled the role left by Dodds.

Administrative Changes
As a result of rapid growth and future business opportunities, Adventist Health is restructuring executive functions at its Hanford, Calif.-based, operations, according to Scott Reiner, senior vice president and board chairman of the Central Valley Network. The Central Valley Network (CVN) is comprised of Adventist Medical Center – Hanford, Central Valley General Hospital, Selma Community Hospital and more than 20 clinics.

Wayne Ferch, previously president and CEO of Feather River Hospital in Paradise, Calif., joined the CVN as president and CEO in May. He reports to Richard L. Rawson, the network’s previous president/CEO, who assumed the title of vice president of Adventist Health with responsibilities for Central California. Rawson continues to focus on service expansion, community outreach, growth and industry relationships, while Ferch oversees day-to-day operations across the 2,500-square mile network.

To fill the role left by Ferch, Kevin Erich, former president and CEO of Howard Memorial Hospital, has been named president and CEO of FRH. Erich assumed his new role in May.

In addition to Ferch, the CVN welcomed Charles Sandefur to the newly-created position of vice president of mission and community development. He reports to Rawson and oversees mission focus, outreach, chaplaincy and foundations.

Sandefur most recently served as president and CEO of the international Adventist Development and Relief Agency for eight years. The nonprofit humanitarian agency of more than 4,000 staff members globally improved the lives of 20 million people in more than 120 countries in 2010 through community-based efforts to provide food and water and establish livelihoods, among other initiatives. Sandefur also served in U.S. Adventist hospital governance and church leadership roles for more than two decades.
Recent Awards

Two Adventist Health hospitals were recently honored with California Awards for Performance Excellence (CAPE) awards from the California Council for Excellence (CCE).

Feather River Hospital received a Gold CAPE award. This is their second Gold (2008), and they have also won silver and bronze in the past. The Central Valley Network was honored with a Silver CAPE award. This is their second silver (2009), and they have also won bronze (2008).

In addition to winning a Gold CAPE award, Feather River Hospital was also awarded with the Governor’s Award for Excellence, presented by the CCE on behalf of the governor of California, Jerry Brown. FRH is only the fourth organization to ever receive the Governor’s Award, and the only hospital to achieve such recognition.

New Website Debuts

Adventist Health has recently launched a new corporate website. After months of working on content, visually pleasing design and increased functionality, the new site is now more user-friendly and patient-centered. Visitors to the website will find:

- Directions (and zip code search) to find all Adventist Health facilities
- Health library with interactive tools, recipes, articles and more
- Links to hospitals, Find a Doc, bill pay and giving abilities
- Employment opportunities
- Convenient links for employees and physicians

San Joaquin Community Hospital in Bakersfield, Calif. also launched their site, www.sjch.us, which was the Adventist Health beta site along with a mobile site. Rollout of all hospital sites is in progress.

Check out Adventist Health’s site at www.AdventistHealth.org. While you’re there, read the most recent annual report online.
There’s new energy and excitement at the former Soquel Seventh-day Adventist Community Church. Two congregations merged last fall, creating a new congregation and a new name — the Soquel Bilingual Seventh-day Adventist Church. The new church is home to approximately 100 Hispanic and 65 Anglo members.

“It’s an inspiration to see four adult Spanish classes meeting in the sanctuary and other church rooms being used,” says Pastor Joe Reynolds, former pastor of the English church, “and to hear engaged teens studying together and innocent little ones eagerly singing about Jesus in cradle roll. The almost-full sanctuary when we’re all together for church is a visual reminder of how God has blessed us in Soquel.”

How God Has Led

The process began six years ago. The Soquel congregation invited the Santa Cruz Hispanic church, then pastored by Marvin Santos, to use the church social hall for their Sabbath worship. As the Hispanic congregation continued to grow, it was evident that they would soon outgrow these accommodations.

As the two congregations shared occasional worship services and potluck lunches, they began bonding, making the merger a natural transition. This past year, the Hispanic congregation also gained a new leader when Pastor Roberto Aguilar and his wife, Josefina, came to serve when Santos was reassigned. Both men participated in the merger.

“We felt God leading during the merger process, but there were many organizational details for us to work through,” remembers Arnold Cisneros, long-time member and head elder at the time. “However, we felt strongly that God was leading this effort, and we’re excited to see the positive results of how He is working in our church.”

What Members Are Saying

Efigenia Hernandez, who sometimes translates for the congregation, “It has been good having a steady place to worship. Not only are we becoming closer as a church family, we are also learning from each other. It’s almost like being in school — hearing the sermon and singing songs in both languages. My English brothers and sisters have said the same about learning Spanish.”

“We’ve always loved and actively supported our church,” said Vera Baker and her husband Don, Soquel church members since 1970. “Back in the ’70s, there were 300 members. Our attendance dwindled to about 10 percent in recent years, so it’s a joy for us to worship with a large, committed church family on Sabbath mornings.”

Pedro Velez, head elder of the new church, agrees. “I’m seeing a real spirit of cooperation and desire to serve Jesus from our members,” he says. “In fact, several Hispanic members have told me that having an actual church home makes them feel proud and excited about inviting their non-Adventist friends and family to church.”

According to Aguilar, there is a renewed commitment to evangelism and reaching out to the Soquel community. Currently, the church is holding a Saturday night Scripture study and Wednesday night prayer meeting. Several members are actively visiting sick or discouraged members and passing out literature in the community.

“However, we’ve only just begun to meet the needs of our community,” says Aguilar. “People are hurting right now, and we want them to know there is comfort and support when they accept Jesus into their lives. We want to be a voice for them to receive this message of hope.”
Living Under the Church Leads to Couple’s Baptism

Caron Oswald

Terry Beucler was annoyed. As pastor of two Central California churches — Dinuba and Reedley — his time was stretched thin. And once again he had discovered an unlocked door at the Reedley church. “I kept complaining to church members,” Beucler says. “But again and again, I’d find an unlocked door or window.”

One day (a few years ago), Beucler was in Reedley meeting with a church member when he discovered the answer. Ricardo and Beatrice Figueroa were caught in the act of entering illegally. They had been living in the dirt basement under the sanctuary for more than six months, using the church’s facilities when able. “Please don’t call the police,” they begged. (Beatrice’s mom was an Adventist and had come back to church two years earlier. Her membership was at the Reedley church.)

“Well, we won’t call the police if you take Bible studies,” Beucler answered. “You can stay in the Pathfinder trailer, and I will give you a key to the fellowship hall. And you can help around here with cleaning, painting and yard work.” The couple gratefully agreed.

Beatrice fell in love with Ricardo “because he was loving and kind.” Unfortunately, they shared another passion — drugs. Beatrice’s mom rescued her 2-year-old granddaughter as the couple’s life spiraled out of control.

The church basement was under the sanctuary. It turns out that they could hear Sabbath school and church services each week. In 2009, Taj Pacleb, conference evangelist, preached an evangelistic series and those messages had filtered down onto receptive ears.

With Bible studies, the kindness of strangers and encouragement, Ricardo and Beatrice gave up their drugs. A Dinuba church member hired Ricardo to work in his business. And when a gentleman died, leaving his belongings to the church, Beucler gave the couple the pick-up truck, tools, furniture, and household items.

With a stable income and home, Beatrice was able to get her daughter back. Wednesday night prayer meeting and Sabbath services became the family’s weekly habit. Beatrice’s sisters began joining her at church.

By February 2011, two sons had joined the Figueroa family. Pacleb was preaching an outreach series in the Dinuba church. Ricardo made his decision for baptism, and Beatrice decided to be re-baptized.

“This is a tragedy that God has transformed,” Beucler says. “They were living in the house of God, and now God is living in their house.”
Sunnyvale Church Sends Volunteers to the Streets of San Francisco

Shenalyn Page

They had $10 per group, four hours and a big task — help as many of San Francisco’s homeless as possible. The 14 teenagers and six adults from the Sunnyvale, Calif., Adventist church set out in groups of five through streets where drugs and prostitution are rampant among the city’s 5,000-10,000 homeless.

It didn’t take long for Pastor Rob Colon’s group to discover a man who lives on the streets. “How are you?” they asked. “Look at me!” he muttered, a patch over one eye. “How do you think I am?”

“How can we help you?” one of the teens asked.

“I want a big soda,” the man replied.

A large soda was purchased and delivered. Team members also bought soup and sandwiches for several other homeless people nearby. Other Sunnyvale groups prayed with people and found simple ways to improve their lives.

The Sunnyvale volunteer missionaries spent their five-day spring break seeking and then helping those who did not have a place to live. They worked with Center for Student Missions (CSM). The non-denominational organization helps young people reach out to inner city homeless through urban mission trips.

The Sunnyvale group packed 34,000 pounds of oranges, sorted clothes at the Salvation Army, helped at an after-school program, packed and delivered 500 bags of food to the elderly poor, and distributed food to AIDS shut-ins.

CSM full-time urban missionaries led the Sunnyvale group on a prayer drive through the city’s seediest districts, had them share their
supper leftovers with street dwellers, sent them out on a rainy afternoon with just $2 each for lunch, and had them pass out new socks and blankets.

“I liked passing out the socks and blankets,” says Kaitlyn Richmond, a junior at Mountain View Academy. “It was neat to see people’s faces. They got really excited.”

“We wanted to help our students see those in need as God sees them, and learn skills in how to interact with the homeless and meet their needs,” says dad Greg Richmond, a trip sponsor. “The trip made them more sensitive to the needs around us and want to serve people more.” Since returning home, the youth have begun planning a sock and blanket drive to nearby San Jose and are looking for other opportunities to serve the needy in their own neighborhoods.

Sunnyvale volunteers have gone on a yearly Mexico mission trip during spring break for the past 20 years, but couldn’t do it this year because of the violence. “I really liked how close this trip was to home,” says Kaitlyn, who has participated in the Mexico mission trips before. “It showed me how much need is in the area close by where I live.”

Mariana Kaplan, a senior at MVA, was moved by a conversation with a 60-year-old druggie. “I’ve never met someone who lives without taking something every day,” the man said. “What else is there to live for?”

“It made me realize how many people need to know about Jesus and realize there is something better to live for!” she says.
NCC Prayer Retreat Celebrates Ten Years

A bout 250 people converged at Leoni Meadows to fellowship, pray and experience deep soul rest at the 10th annual Northern California Conference Prayer Retreat, held March 4-6. The retreat provides “an environment where we can connect with God without distractions, recommit our own lives, make new friends, and gain new ideas for prayer leadership in local churches,” said NCC prayer ministries coordinator Naomi Parson, who organizes the weekend every year.

This year’s theme was “More About Jesus,” with guest speaker Lee Venden — the author of three books, who has served as a pastor, educator and presenter for 30 years. “Elder Lee Venden made the subject of prayer both practical and inspiring. His personal passion for prayer, along with his insightful humor, made this retreat intensely moving and memorable,” said Del Dunavant, NCC director of evangelism and church growth.

Many who attended were struggling with private issues and personal hurt. “I came to the retreat to see if God is Who He says He is. I’ve had a lot of struggles this year,” said one person whose faith was restored during the weekend.

“I came with a burdened heart, but praise the Lord, with the wonderful music, preaching and sharing, I have peace,” said another.

The retreat offered meetings for a variety of age groups. Camino church member Tami Holland taught the younger children how special they are, focusing on heaven and prayer. Placerville church member Sarita Parham created a medieval castle, guarded by a knight in God’s full armor for older kids. Henry Johnson, youth pastor at the Granite Bay company, led teens in games and discussions about the relationship behind prayer. “Prayer is a two-way friendship,” Johnson said.

With Dunavant’s encouragement, Parson planned the first of the annual retreats in 2002, with speakers Ruthie Jacobsen and Randy Maxwell. Since then, a variety of speakers have touched the hearts of those who attended, including Ron Clouzet, Philip Samaan, Guillermo Garcia, Tony Moore, Ron Halvorsen, Sr., Alvin VanderGriend, Jerry and Janet Page, and Derek Morris. Paul Goia — a pastor in Romania for many years, now pastoring in Lexington, Ky. — will speak at next year’s retreat, March 16-18, 2012.

Through the years, the prayer retreat experience has made a big difference in people’s lives. “We are here because it’s absolutely fabulous. You draw closer to the Lord,” said Foresthill company member Lillian Morgan.

“Miracles happen here,” said Antelope Hills church member Cindy Downard. “There is healing.”
Students Present Bible Seminar in Yreka

In February the fifth- through eighth-grade students at Yreka Adventist Christian School presented “The Big Picture” Bible seminar in the Yreka church auditorium.

Not only did the 17 students discover more about the Bible, they also learned public speaking and leadership skills — important abilities for Adventist Christian young people to have, according to Marilee Dalton, principal and upper grades teacher. “I want to train students not just to be good people and good citizens; I want to train them to be leaders for God … and to make a difference in their world.”

In preparation for the seminar, Dalton asked the kids to think of questions they would like to ask God, and she grouped the students with common questions together. Then she gave each group a written sermon designed for young people and a PowerPoint presentation based on the group’s topic. The kids read through the sermon together, looked up Bible texts, and worked to personalize the talk and update the slides. Topics included “Who Is the Real Jesus?” “How Will the World End?” and “Why Do Innocent People Suffer?” Each student was assigned a portion of a sermon to present.

“We emphasized grace and Adventist biblical principles and teachings in the context of grace,” said Dalton. “We tried to have Jesus be the center and the focus.”

The students held a practice session in the classroom to encourage each other and get suggestions from Dalton’s husband and assistant teacher Mark. They also practiced with microphones in the auditorium. One afternoon, they went around the neighborhood, handing out fliers and inviting people to attend.

After about a month of preparation, the week of the seminar arrived. Between 30 and 50 people attended each evening presentation, and the final group made their presentation during church on Sabbath. Most of the students were nervous, but they felt the support of their teachers, friends and families, who responded with encouragement and enthusiasm.

“I enjoyed speaking to people about something they liked hearing about. It helped me get over my fear of speaking in front of people,” said eighth-grader Briana Smith.

Sixth grader Tyler Foster nervously kept his eyes on his notes during his entire presentation. At the end of his talk, he asked the audience members to make a decision for Christ and show it by waving their hands. “I looked up and saw everyone waving at me!” he said. “It made me smile, and I said, ‘Wonderful!’”

The students learned they can rely on divine support to help them witness for the Lord. “Something that helped me relax was knowing God was with me,” said fifth-grader Daniel Beck. “I trust Him and know angels were with me.”

“Something that I learned about myself was that I could talk in public — and not be nervous because it’s not scary,” said seventh-grader Bobbi Ogren. “I felt good all around at the Bible seminar.”
Serena Garden Brings Comfort to School Community

Julie Lorenz

Throughout this school year, the El Dorado Adventist School community has found a place of remembrance and comfort in the campus Serenity Garden. The beautiful spot was created last school year in memory of two teachers who passed away within months of each other during the summer of 2009 — seventh and eighth grade teacher Laurie Helms and science and history teacher Clifton Anderson.

On warm days, faculty members have worship in the garden, and teachers use the area for outdoor Bible classes and special prayer times. Older students eat lunch there or take a little retreat from a busy day. Sometimes students write down prayer requests and place them in nooks of the garden’s rock wall. Other students and teachers pull out these requests and pray for them.

“The garden is something special,” said senior Cody Holthouse. “Finding a place that is quiet and calm is comforting. I love having a place to listen and wait. I can’t count the number of days that I’ve gone out to visit the garden, just me and the Lord.”

After the deaths of their colleagues, EAS faculty members wanted to build something meaningful and beautiful in the teachers’ memories. They asked Scot Sutton to head the project. Not only did he have landscape design experience, he was a friend to both teachers, the husband of a faculty member, and the father of three students at EAS. Sutton is quick to point out that the garden was a school community project. He received a lot of input as he designed the garden features to reflect the interests and personalities of Helms and Anderson. “Everything from the prayer wall to the water feature to the apple trees — they all have relevance and pay homage to the teachers who died,” said Sutton. “When we go to the garden now we can remember Laurie’s beautiful smile, her love of rocks and love of flowers. We can remember Cliff’s laughter and his love of trees.”

The whole school family worked on the garden. Students and teachers cleared weeds, dug holes, planted flowers, set flagstone and helped community member Bob Overton install the water feature and the prayer wall. Other adults volunteered their time for the more complicated aspects such as electricity and the arbor trellis. “The garden was built 100 percent by volunteers and kids from the school,” said Sutton.

Even though almost two years have gone by since their loss, the community still grieves for the teachers. However, the garden provides a quiet reminder of the hope that they share: a great reunion is coming. “Our sense of loss is still acute,” said EAS administrative assistant Bonne Daggett. “Whether just basking in the sights and sounds of this Serenity Garden, or praying or reading — it is such a wonderful place to be still and know that He is God.”

Sutton views the garden as a living lesson: “We can see and illustrate to the students that God can make something beautiful out of heartbreak.”
As they prepare for this summer’s “Giving Back” homeless ministry day of service, Palo Cedro church youth leaders can build on the success of last year’s event.

On a cold and rainy Sabbath last August, Palo Cedro church youth, parents and other members showed up early in downtown Redding for “Giving Back.” They set up tents, unpacked and displayed donated clothes, set out practical items such as toiletries, vitamins and bandages, and prepared to offer manicures and pedicures. Those in the food tent chopped vegetables, grated cheese and warmed refried beans for hay stacks. Young people mixed hot chocolate and laid brownies out on trays.

Before opening the event to the homeless, Palo Cedro church youth leaders Jonathan and Devann White, who organized “Giving Back,” reviewed last-minute instructions and prayed with the youth who had prepared to minister to the homeless in a variety of creative ways. Brian Gruber headed up the bike repair station, which was busy throughout the day. “The biking world is really friendly, so offering a bike tune-up is a good way of reaching out to people who have a need,” he said.

Haley Fowler handed out dog food for the dogs that accompany many of the homeless. The Palo Cedro youth band Enroute played worship music all day. Other young people prayed with individuals who requested prayer and visited with those who were enjoying the event. “We asked people their story and got to know them,” said Claire Brayshaw. “We told them how much God loves them and how blessed we were that they would allow us to pray with them.”

Daylene Alexander helped staff the station for manicures and pedicures. Unsure at first if the homeless would want to participate, Alexander encouraged those who seemed interested and then watched the line grow. “We got to hear their stories and see the joy on their faces when they chose the colors for their nails,” said Alexander. “We put lotion on them so they could smell good. We got to personally be Jesus’ hands.”

Although most who received pedicures were women and girls, one man called “Bulldog” asked if he could soak his feet. “He told me he had diabetes,” said Alexander. “But I really wasn’t expecting what happened.” When Bulldog took off his shoes and socks, his feet were so big and swollen that Alexander had to prepare two basins of warm water, one for each foot. “Most people would cringe at the sight of his feet,” she said, “but two high school girls showed this man love and compassion. They took their time washing his feet and hearing his story. Those who saw this had tears in their eyes.”

“I cried when he said that his granddaughter, who had died, reminded him of me,” said Riley Tompkins.

“At first we were reluctant, but I saw his hat that said, ‘Jesus Saves,’” said Rachel Dunbar. “It became one of God’s little reminders, and I knew we should do this.”

At the end of the day, almost 300 homeless and needy people had taken part in “Giving Back.”
didn’t know what to expect,” said Iki Taimi, pastor, The Genesis Group, and coordinator of the connect.cultivate.carry Pheron* Collegiate Retreat held recently at Camp Cedar Falls. Some 80 Adventist students from secular campuses attended. “We wanted to have a retreat to which Adventist students could feel empowered in their everyday walk with Jesus on their campuses. What happened was a massive shifting of the Holy Spirit! Students were giving their lives back to God, hungry for an experience with Him!”

Joseph Kidder, D.Min., associate professor of Christian ministry at Andrews University Theological Seminary, was the weekend’s main facilitator. Through small group activities and discussions, Kidder’s focus was, “God’s Presence in My Past, Present and Future.” The retreat offered ample time for fellowship, prayer and games. Hour-long prayer walks interspersed the weekend schedule.

Students from the UCal Irvine, USC, Valley Junior College, Cal State Northridge, Mount San Antonio and Pasadena City colleges attended. The planning team of a dozen young adult pastors and lay people ran the sound equipment and other media, announcements, games and registration; handled trouble shooting; and got involved in activities that Kidder assigned and led.

“Once we got there Friday night, I could hear the praise music,” said Andrew Esposo, a UCal Irvine student. “I got so excited, I wanted to run up the stairs to the lodge and start singing with everyone. I remember singing the words ‘Amazing love, how can it be?’ I closed my eyes, and I could feel all my burdens just drifting away.”

“It was exciting to see God moving in people’s lives, in spite of our inabilities,” said Glenn Gibson, associate pastor, West Covina Hills church, and Pheron team member. “One person talked about feeling isolated and alone. During the weekend, he realized that he wasn’t alone; others believed as he did. It was a God moment and a God weekend. I pray that the flame that was lit will continue to burn.”

“We have been neglecting a vital part of our church,” commented Taimi. “You could see it in the hunger of these students. We had realized that in SCC’s history, we probably hadn’t done anything conference wide like this before. This was for any students in our conference and the service was solely for them — all of it!

“It took all hands on deck, and each one on the team stepped up to the cause. We are freshmen at this, but it was so obvious that, in spite of us, God was going to bless His kids! So we took what He gave and the blessings multiplied all over that campsite. We are leaving it totally open for God to pack out the whole camp at next year’s retreat!”

Saturday evening, the group enjoyed games, moving in teams from station to station for group activities.

“The times when we were asked to go by ourselves in nature with the Bible, meditate upon our lives and just spend time with God were the most refreshing parts of this retreat,” said one student.
Pathfinder Fair Celebrates SCC’s Diversity of Cultures

Brenda Richards

“Many Cultures, One Family” was the theme of the 2011 Southern California Conference Pathfinder fair. “The objective was to emphasize that although people come from different countries, they can be all one family in God’s eyes,” said Bob Wong, SCC youth ministry and Pathfinder director. “As a Pathfinder family, we can all work together in harmony, with Christ as our focus. I did not hear one word of complaint or criticism during that day, which is unusual for a large gathering.”

More than 1,350 Pathfinders, parents, leaders and community visitors attended the fair, held at Prado Regional Park in Chino, Calif. Clubs began arriving at 6 a.m. to set up their areas as mini-villages, with food booths, displays and games representing the country, city or cultural theme the club had chosen to depict. More than 60 countries from all over the world were represented in not only food and decoration, but also in national costume and crafts.

“A mile-long parade started the day with a drum corps leading a large assembly of American flags, followed by the different clubs,” said Wong. Activities available for the Pathfinders included archery, canoeing, geocaching, orienteering, a pinewood derby, fancy drill, an overhead water sprinkler system, “A Minute to Win It” game section with 20-plus different challenges and a 10-element obstacle course. Clubs participated in a chili cook off and a home-made ice cream competition. A club’s beautiful real race car was on display near the pinewood derby area, which drew a lot of attention as the driver started the engine to show the power and efficiency of the car. Terry Ingram, a teacher at West Covina Hills Adventist School, provided a Dutch oven cooking demonstration.

Just to hear and see the enthusiasm, laughter, happiness and cooperation of everyone who attended was a taste of what Heaven will be like,” added Wong. “Many expressed a desire that the day would never end.”

“This fair was very special, because the many cultures theme showed that our conference is a very diverse place where the world’s cultures converge,” said May Lee, a member of the Los Angeles Chinese church. May and her husband Ron Lee are members of the SCC Pathfinder advisory. “Each club had their cultural display, so we learned about different cultures around the world, as well as tastes the many delicious ethnic foods and beverages that the clubs were selling.”

Pathfinder fair booths displayed cultural artifacts and crafts and sold foods of the many cultures represented in the conference membership.
L.I.F.E Festival Launches 130 Youth Small Groups

Carlos Acosta and Pablo Gaitan

Following a Friday-evening meeting at the Spanish-American church, 1,100 youth gathered on Sabbath at Forest Lawn Hollywood Hills for the L.I.F.E Youth Discipleship Fest. Organized by SCC Hispanic youth ministry, the weekend introduced phase one of a four-part strategy. The weekend was offered in English, and many of the young adults who attended were from the various regions of the conference.

The Hispanic youth ministry team and its director, Paul Gaitan, associate pastor, San Fernando Spanish church, established a five-year goal, including discipleship training, small-group training, an evangelism week and baptisms.

Following the L.I.F.E. (Love, Interests, Faith, Economy) curriculum for training Adventist youth in active discipleship, youth will be trained to share personal testimonies, form small groups and receive small-group resources.

The Friday-night session featured Pastor Roger Hernandez, L.I.F.E. curriculum author and Oregon Conference Hispanic director. The message of Harold Altamarano, pastor, Mosaic church, Oregon, centered on life in Jesus. “To be a disciple, you need to experience life in Jesus before you can share Him with others,” Altamarano said.

On Sabbath morning, Hernandez based his message on active discipleship on the book of Joshua, concluding with an altar call. “Churches cannot remain inside four walls,” he said. “We must be intentional about reaching out to the unchurched people all around us.”

Gaitan followed, with a new tool for youth evangelism, as he unveiled the newly developed L.I.F.E. app for iPhones and Androids. The app includes small-group Bible studies for youth, videos and a L.I.F.E. small-group activity calendar.

Sabbath afternoon, the speakers presented simultaneous seminars on how to share personal testimonies, how to give Bible studies and the ABC’s of starting and sustaining a youth small group. Carlos Acosta, pastor, Baldwin Park Bilingual church, led in the anointing ceremony for all who would accept the call to become missionaries by establishing small groups in the cities.

Answering the call were 130 young men and women. Pastors anointed them, placing their hands on their heads as they prayed.

Afterward, the 130 youth received their apps.

“Phase two is now underway,” said Gaitan, “with the establishment and monitoring of the 130 small groups in Greater Los Angeles by selected area leaders, which will continue until mid-August. Phase three will kick off with 20 simultaneous youth evangelism meetings July 30 to Aug. 5, 2011. Phase four is the baptisms that will take place during that time.”

“A week after the L.I.F.E. meetings, we started a youth small group at the Carson Spanish church,” said Ashley Romero. “The curriculum is very practical. Adventist youth are bringing other youth. Suddenly, sharing Jesus is no longer intimidating, but fun. I’m very happy to see the excitement in the youth.”

“The initiative will conclude Aug. 6 at Forest Lawn with a L.I.F.E. youth congress,” Gaitan added. “At that time, we will launch the 2012 challenge.”
Fellowship Bible Bowls Challenge
Pathfinders and Parents

Don Roman and Betty Cooney

What started as an invitational Bible game by the Pasadena church has grown into the Fellowship Bible Bowl, involving a number of SCC churches. “My dad had the idea to create a Bible Bowl as a way of reviving Sabbath afternoon AY meetings,” said Resa Recalde, Pasadena church Pathfinder director.

David Recalde, then pastor of the church, knew how potent AY meetings are in the Philippines and other countries, so he suggested that it would be good to involve other churches as a way to focus children’s interest on the Bible.

Beginning in 2004 with Pasadena, Alhambra, Altadena and Crescenta Valley Filipino churches, the Fellowship Bible Bowl has since grown to include more than a dozen SCC churches. Adult and Adventurer groups have been added to accommodate additional family members.

“This is the second year we have been involved,” reported Valetta Manurung, the Indonesian church Pathfinder director. Like most leaders and parents, she already had a busy schedule, but added the Bible Bowls to her calendar to provide additional Bible-centered activity for the church’s young people.

“Their include meeting other Pathfinders as well,” she added. “We have attended almost every Bible Bowl since we became involved.”

Taking 37 young people to a Bible Bowl each quarter involves car pooling. “We are glad for any volunteer driver,” Manurung added, “but especially welcome those with big cars!”

Joel Kindrick, Canoga Park church Pathfinder director, got involved at the invitation of fellow leaders Carlos Williams, Altadena church Pathfinder director; and Recalde. “It sounds interesting,” I said.

Can other churches get involved?
“I liked the idea of having young people learn Bible texts for a Bible Bowl contest, and also studying two entire books of the Bible each time. Having the challenge of preparing for a Bowl motivates them to study.”

Signing on gave Kindrick and his Pathfinders a literal front-row seat at their first Bowl. “You’ve got a big church, so can you please host this one?” asked his friends. Kindrick also gave the worship talk on the selected books and arranged for the supper that followed, as all Bible Bowl hosts do. With as many as 500 attending, the meal was a contest in itself, just to see if enough food could be provided.

“I looked at the food when we started and was sure it would not be enough,” he said, “but I knew God wanted us to be involved, so I asked Him to provide enough. When we finished, we had had plenty!”

Bible Bowl participants frequently express surprise about what they learn from their Bible studies. “I didn’t know that was in the Bible,” is often heard. “The Bible Bowls really focus both youth and adults’ attention on the Bible,” reported Resa Recalde. “They learn history and other lessons, while learning to see the Bible as a learning tool for life.”

Since the inclusion of parents and other adults, some former members participate, enjoying renewed fellowship and studying Scripture in enjoyable settings.

Can other churches get involved? Each category has 15 questions and quarterly cumulative scores are summed up. By the end of the fourth quarter, the church with the highest score takes home a trophy. That same trophy is up for grabs the following year.

The next Bible Bowl is scheduled for Aug. 27 at the Glendale Filipino church. The Book of Daniel will be the focus for all categories. Leaders wanting their churches to experience Bible Bowl benefits may e-mail Don Roman, Bible Bowl coordinator, donglads@yahoo.com.

Junior participants from nine SCC churches display the correct cards for their answers to multiple-choice Bowl questions.

June 2011 Recorder
Southeastern’s church membership report was a visual one at the midterm constituency meetings conducted this spring in each of the conference’s five counties.

Sandra Roberts, executive secretary, enlisted the help of those attending the meetings to illustrate last year’s membership figures. A typical report went like this:

“Last year we added just over 2,700 members. For the sake of illustration, one of you will represent every 100 of them. My helpers are asking 19 of you to come forward and stand up front here with me,” Roberts explained to them, “You represent the 1,900 people who were baptized last year.”

Roberts called three more people forward; they represented the 300 who joined the church by profession of faith. Five more represented the 500 who transferred their membership to SECC from outside the conference.

“This is a lot of people — in fact, it’s the equivalent of about five good-sized churches. But now let me show you a burden we have,” Roberts said, asking five people to take their seats.

“Five hundred members transferred out of the conference,” she said. “We lost about as many as we gained.”

Four people returned their seats because they had “died.” Eight more people were asked to sit down, one for the 100 who had been dropped from church membership at their request, and seven for the 700 who are listed as “missing” on church membership records — their local congregation has lost track of them.

“The 10 people left standing represent our real growth last year,” Roberts said. “We have a lot of work to do to nurture and keep our members. We also need to be intentional about finding those who are missing. This is kingdom work. Church membership is not about numbers — it’s about people.”

At the end of 2010, 69,502 people belonged to churches in SECC, Roberts said. Membership is expected to cross the 70,000 mark during the second quarter of this year.

Gerald Penick, president, and Thomas Staples, treasurer, gave verbal reports at the area meetings, held April 10, 18, 19, 25, and May 1. A bylaws committee member was present at each meeting to present an overview of the principles that guide the conference, particularly during constituency meetings, which are held every five years. The most recent one was in 2008; the next one will be in the fall of 2013.

Q&A periods and group discussions about ways in which the conference can be of better assistance to the churches brought the meetings to an end.

Directors of SECC’s departments attended the meetings but did not give reports there. To read their reports, go to seccadventist.org, click on “Members,” and click on “Midterm Reports.”
Churches and Schools Respond to Japan Crisis

Enno Müller

Since the devastating earthquake and tsunami in Japan in March, stories have been pouring in from churches and schools that were touched by the tragic events that occurred on the other side of the world and decided to do something to help.

Through his friends in Japan, Dean Horinouchi, pastor of the Mission Road church (formerly the Loma Linda Japanese church), found out that there was a lack of funds to help Adventist church members.

His members began raising money and informed other churches of this project.

“We received money from all over the United States,” Horinouchi said. “We did not advertise it. Although we have gotten funds from different places it has been only by word of mouth and by connections through our members.”

Morihiro Kohama, former assistant pastor of the Mission Road church, and his family returned to Japan at the end of March. This transition, planned before the crisis, worked well, as Kohama was able to take with him over $40,000 to help with specific needs of Japanese Adventists.

When CrossWalk church members heard of Kohama’s return, they also collected money.

“It was a quick campaign to help. In one week’s time our members donated $15,000,” said Jeff Gang, associate pastor. “We ended up sending that money with the pastor for his relief work in Sendai.”

People heard of the Kohama family’s return to Japan, and the Loma Linda community rallied around them. A big concern for Kohama’s wife, Shinobu, was that air drying clothes could cause health issues because of the increased levels of radiation. Anita Roberts, from the Loma Linda University church, and her friends collected enough funds for the Kohamas to purchase a dryer in Japan.

Other churches and groups got involved. Heather Barbian, youth pastor at Laguna Niguel, shared, “When our church had a garage sale, the youth sold concessions to raise money for ADRA’s Japanese relief. They spent the day getting sweaty and sunburned selling water, soda, chips and candy.”

Students at Calexico Mission School also felt a need to help. Gilberto Del Vecchio, Bible teacher, said that the school had a “junk food day” sale as well as an elementary soccer tournament that raised $1,600.

As students and church members throughout the conference contributed in small ways, these actions collectively made a big difference in the lives of the Kohamas and others.

Read more stories at seccadventist.org.
Four Pathfinders Are Baptized at Crystal Cathedral

Jocelyn Fay, with Ciro Beltran

Four Pathfinders from the San Juan Capistrano Spanish group were among the 65 people baptized March 12 at the Crystal Cathedral at the close of meetings by evangelist Alejandro Bullon.

The boys encountered Seventh-day Adventists one evening last summer while drifting around town looking for something to do. At the park, they found San Juan Capistrano members conducting an outdoor Vacation Bible School and joined in. They have attended church ever since, and have become Pathfinders.

Ciro Beltran, their pastor, tells their story:

“During Pastor Bullon’s meetings one of these boys, Mayco, said to me, ‘Pastor, are you picking me up?’

“I said, ‘Of course! Get together with your friends [Sergio, Humberto and Christian], and I will pick you up.’ On our way to Anaheim, Mayco said to me, ‘Pastor, I’m part of the family, right?’ I said, ‘Yes, you are, but you need to accept Jesus as your Savior.’ He asked how — by being baptized?

“Yes, I said, ‘if you would like to be a full part of our family, you will follow Jesus’ example and be baptized.’ That Sabbath all four boys were baptized, along with four others from our company. Two more people were baptized at our church the week before, and one joined by profession of faith, bringing our membership to about 90.”

San Ysidro Breaks Ground

Enno Müller, with Raul Maldonado

After waiting for more than 20 years, San Ysidro Spanish church members held a ground-breaking ceremony on March 20 for a multipurpose hall.

During the ceremony, Sandra Roberts, executive secretary of the conference, preached on building for miracles and doing great things for God. Thomas Staples, conference treasurer, shared a message of hope and the challenge to support the building project. Alberto Ingleton, vice president for Hispanic ministries, did the translation.

During the service members shared testimonies and gave offerings.

The pioneers of the church built a small building next to the church to hold Sabbath lunches and social gatherings. They named the building Sombras, or “shade.” With constant growth, the church had to build a larger facility to accommodate all the various ministries. The new multipurpose hall will include a kitchen, dining area, Sabbath school rooms, and offices.

“We are very grateful to God, the members and our conference for the support we have received,” said Pastor Raul Maldonado. “Our desire is that our building project, called Projecto Sombras, will be a means to reach out to our community with the eternal gospel.”
The Kansas Avenue church revamped this year’s Black History Month celebration. Themed Sabbaths during the month of February showcased the diversity within the church.

Senior Pastor Bron Jacobs and the pastoral team encouraged church members and visitors to participate each Sabbath according to their cultural background. He asked them to break out their traditional African garb, their bright Caribbean colors, and their African-American attire.

“This celebration was a wonderful reminder that we can be different but united in purpose and mission,” said church member Charlie Jo Morgan.

The theme for the first Sabbath was Africa and featured several countries from that continent. Members read Scripture, sang songs and offered prayer in native African languages. The church was packed with members and visitors dressed in their traditional African clothing. As representatives of the various African countries entered the sanctuary, Jacobs read interesting and insightful information about each country.

The following Sabbath featured countries from the Caribbean and parts of South America. The church was filled with traditional bright and lively colors. There were the vivid bright green and yellow from Jamaica, beautiful and flowing white dresses from Costa Rica, and one of the youngest church members in his mariachi outfit from Mexico. The speaker for the morning was Sherwin Jack, from Decatur, Ga.

The last of the themed Sabbaths was African-American Day. This service was centered on early traditional African-American church services. Instead of featuring and describing different countries, Jacobs introduced and highlighted various aspects of the American Black church such as the roles of elders, deacons, deaconesses, ushers, choir, and most important, the “Mothers of Zion.” This particular Sabbath celebrated the different styles of worship particularly through Negro spirituals and a cappella and gospel music.

Kansas Avenue’s Black History Month celebration culminated with the final Sabbath in February, designated to Black Alumni of Loma Linda and La Sierra Universities. The B.A.L.L. Sabbath celebrated and highlighted the accomplishments of black alumni of the two universities. Ricardo Graham, president of the Pacific Union, was the guest speaker for the day.

The Kansas Avenue church was established in 1939 as the Riverside Emmanuel church and became the Kansas Avenue church in 1965. To watch a Kansas Avenue church service, go to the church’s website, www.kansasave.org.
Adventist Filmmakers Gather for 2011 SONscreen Festival

Betty Cooney

When Kristine Barker was a senior at Central Valley Christian Academy in Ceres, Calif., she won the special jury prize at the 2007 SONscreen Film Festival. Four years later, in 2011, as Barker was about to graduate from Southern Adventist University, her film production, “Blue,” directed by SAU student Tanya Musgrave, won Best in Fest. The film also was honored with the Audience Choice Award.

At the same time, Barker’s younger brother, Jonathan, a senior in high school, won the Jonathan Dulan High School Award for his film entry. In honor of the singular occasion, Kristine was asked to present the award to her brother. The Barkers’ experience exemplifies the mentoring aspect that the annual festival promotes.

“We feel like this is one of the best festivals we’ve attended,” commented Jason Satterlund, director, Big Puddle Films. “I think it’s because the focus was so much on mentoring the artist. Most festivals tend to be very star struck. With SONscreen, the talk was all about nurturing people and helping them grow into successful people for God’s kingdom.”

“I think that’s a great description of what we are trying to do as a community,” said Paul Kim, SONscreen Film Festival director. “One of the things that I was most excited about was our new workshops that were scheduled on Friday. For one workshop, a director, a screenwriter, and an editor led out in a critique session with the students. The session was basically by appointment.

Having your work professionally critiqued is incredibly important and valuable, and this was something SONscreen participants have never had before, aside from what they have experienced with their teachers.”

For critiquing sessions, professionals screened film entries with the filmmaker, then offered 20 minutes of critique and analysis of the film. “While this can be a pretty tough experience for them,” Kim noted, “it’s critical to a young or beginning filmmaker’s success and thought processes. They need to hear what real professionals think of their work, and what they could have done better to connect with the audience. These three particular professionals involved in the sessions represented key aspects of
The fact that they had actually worked together previously brought a unique camaraderie and dynamic to the session that made it a success. Zach Gray and David George, two attending teachers from Southern Adventist University, also were invited to show one of their films for feedback. It was clear that, from their perspective, they found the critique experience invaluable.”

The nearly seven hours of screenings scheduled throughout the event reflected the variety of film genres from which Adventist students and professionals choose to convey their messages: public service announcements, documentaries, comedy and drama.

A Sabbath afternoon panel featured Dean Batali, Robert Kirbyson, Cheryl McKay and Clare Sera, professionals in the film industry who have written and produced for major Hollywood studios. Panelists spoke openly of sexual and other issues, including spirituality, with which they have to deal almost daily as Christians in a secular creative workplace. For young filmmakers in the audience who may dream of working in Hollywood or some other film or television capital, the panel injected a measure of reality. “We try to provide a varied Christian perspective on the industry so that students can understand issues with which different Christian filmmakers wrestle,” said Kim.

For a list of 2011 SONscreen awards and other festival information, visit http://SONscreen.org.
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- Musical guests include: Kelly Mowrer, Charles Haugabrooks, Sandy Johnson, Jennifer LaMountain and Jarrod McNaughton.

- Evening concert at 7 p.m.

**For more info, call 661-869-6560 or visit [www.sjch.us](http://www.sjch.us)**

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CALENDARS

Arizona

YOUTH RUSH LEADERSHIP TRAINING (June 3-4) and Arizona Youth Rush (June 5-Aug. 12) Literature Evangelism program in Arizona. Info: Jason Carlson, 269-325-2578.

NATIVE AMERICAN CAMP MEETING (June 3-5) Holbrook Indian School. Info: Pastor Phil Vecchiarelli, pasphilvec@ yahoo.com, 928-524-6845.


RAW FOODS POTLUCK SUPPER (June 11) Central church, 777 W. Montecito, Phoenix, 6:30 p.m. Newcomers: Please bring a vegetable or fruit salad without dressing. For recipe ideas, visit www.hacres.com. Info: Stanhowerton@yahoo.com or call 480-340-5492.

WOMEN’S MINISTRIES EMPhASIS DAY (June 18) with Pastor Elizabeth Talbot at the Central Spanish church, Phoenix. Info: Cinthia Riffel, 480-991-6777, ext. 125.


CAMP YAVAPINES (June 3-31) Summer camp is still only $100 per camp. Registration is online at www.azsdayouth.com. Adventurer Camp, July 3-10, ages 6-9; Junior Camp, July 10-17, ages 10-12; Tween Camp, July 17-24, ages 12-15; Teen Camp, July 24-31, ages 14-17.

Central California

YOSEMITE SABBATH SERVICE (May 28-Sept. 3 except July 16) Lower River Amphitheater. Sponsored by the CCC. Info: Edie and Ray Defehr, 209-586-4325 or rayandedie@mlode.com.


TEEN BIBLE ACADEMY (June 20-July 10) Info: Jon Tillay, 509-301-9438 or jontillay@gmail.com.

PRE-CAMP MEETING PRAYER WALK at Soquel (July 9) 10 a.m.-1 p.m. & 3-6 p.m. Casual dress, bring your own lunch and Bible. Info: Joyce Mulligan, 559-696-3692 or joycejmulligan@sbglobal.net.


La Sierra University

BIG BAND CONCERT (June 4) 8:15 p.m. Hole Memorial Auditorium.

FACULTY RECITAL CONCERT (June 5) Lee Zimmer, guitar. 7 p.m. Hole Memorial Auditorium.

SPRING ORCHESTRA CONCERT (June 11) 8:15 p.m. Hole Memorial Auditorium.

COMMENCEMENT WEEKEND (June 17-19): Consecration, June 17, 8 p.m. featuring Sam Leonor, LSU church; Baccaulaureate service, June 18, 9:30 a.m., featuring Chris Oberg, senior pastor, LSU church; Educator dedication, June 18, 4 p.m., LSU church; Commencement concert, featuring performances by graduating seniors, June 18, 6 p.m., Hole Memorial Auditorium; Conferring of Degrees, June 19, 8 a.m., featuring Dr. Charles Scriven, Founders’ Green, LSU campus.

Nevada-Utah

PATHFINDER/ADVENTURER CAMPOREE (June 16-19) Las Vegas. Speaker: Willy Ramos. Contact: PastorHallSDA30@yahoo.com or 775-322-6929.

CAMP N.U.C.A. SUMMER CAMP (June 3-10) Grass Valley, Calif. Speaker: Pastor Jeff Wait, Ogden. Theme: Becoming a SON Seeker. Contact: PastorHallSDA30@yahoo.com or 775-322-6929.

PRAYER & DEDICATION SERVICE (July 30) for (Reno Area) married couples; 4-6 p.m. NV-UT Conference Office; 10475 Double RR Blvd; Reno. Presenters: David & Connie Hall. Contact: PastorHallSDA30@yahoo.com or 775-322-6929.

Northern California

STRESS MANAGEMENT CLASS (May 31-June 7) St. Helena church, 1777 Main Street. Info: info@shsda.org or 707-963-4461.

SUNDOWN PRAISES (Sabbath evenings) Lodi-English Oaks church, 1260 W. Century Blvd. (June 4) 7 p.m. Musical: Wes & Marion Blythe Peppers; (June 11) 6 p.m. Venden DVD; 7 p.m. “Star Gaze” Robert Ramos. Contact: PastorHallSDA30@yahoo.com or 775-322-6929.

90-DAY FITNESS CHALLENGE (June 5-Aug. 27) Every Sunday, 1-3 p.m. Sacramento-Capitol City church, 6701 Lemon Hill Ave. Info: Karen Johnson, 916-381-5353.

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL (June 12-26) 9 a.m.-6 p.m. Sacramento-Capitol City church, 6701 Lemon Hill Ave. “Goin’ Fishin’” and “Carnival.” Info: Carol Herbert, 916-381-5353.

WESTERN YOUTH CONGRESS (June 15-19) Weimar Center, 20601 West Paoli Lane, Weimar. Info and registration: www.westenyouthconference.org or 916-455-7512.

REDWOOD CAMP MEETING WORK BEE (June 24-26) 2437 Dyerville Loop Road, Redcrest. Pathfinder clubs, church members and families are invited to camp out and participate in a work bee to prepare the campgrounds for camp meeting. Info: Julia Courtney-Williams, 707-496-5896.

ST. HELENA CAMP MEETING (July 8-9) St. Helena church, 1777 Main Street. Guest speaker Elder James Gilley; Sabbath School speaker Luke Fessenden; lunch provided on Sabbath. Info: info@shsda.org or 707-963-4461.

REDWOOD CAMP MEETING (July 21-30) 2437 Dyerville Loop Road, Redcrest. Info and registration: www.ncc.adventist.org/redwood.

Pacific Union College

PUC GRADUATION WEEKEND (June 10-12) Info: 707-965-6303.

DIGITAL ARTS PHOTOGRAPHY CLASS (July 10-21) Learn the art of digital photography this summer at Pacific Union College’s Albion Field Station on the Mendocino coast. Info: 707-965-6303.

SQUEL CAMP MEETING (July 16) Pacific Union College representatives will attend. Info: 707-965-6303.

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June 2011 Recorder

Southeastern California

LSU CHORALE AND CHAMBER SINGERS (June 4) 5 p.m., Loma Linda University church, 11215 Campus St., Loma Linda.

SOLO DE Vocalis (June 11) 5 p.m., Loma Linda University church, 11215 Campus St., Loma Linda. Korean choir from Los Angeles.

ADVENTIST BOOK CENTER Summer Savings (June 11-July 31) Riverside and Loma Linda branches. Info: pacificpress.com/riverside or 800-765-6955.

BARSTOW CHURCH HOMECOMING (June 18) 9:30 a.m., Sabbath school; 11 a.m., worship service with Musicappel, from the Loma Linda Filipino church; fellowship meal; 1:30 p.m., program of reminiscences. 250 Broadway, Barstow. RSVP Richard Parent: rparent@san.rr.com or 760-718-3398.

ORGAN VESPERS (June 18) Angela Kraft-Cross. 5 p.m., Loma Linda University church, 11215 Campus St., Loma Linda.

CAMP MEETING 2011 (June 22-25) Riverside Convention Center, 3443 Orange St., Riverside. Info: 951-509-2298.

VIETNAMESE CAMP MEETING (June 24-26) McGrath State Beach, Oxnard. Info: 714-557-7999.

DISABILITIES MINISTRIES SABBATH AND SEMINAR (June 25) 11 a.m., worship service; 3 p.m., seminar. Fellowship Hall, Loma Linda Filipino church, 11180 New Jersey St., Redlands. Info: 951-509-2337.

CHRISTINA LIEM, SOPRANO (June 25) 5 p.m., Loma Linda University church, 11215 Campus St., Loma Linda.

SUMMER CAMP at Pine Springs Ranch (June 26-Aug. 7) June 26-July 3, Discovery Camp (8-10); June 29-July 3, Pathfinder/Adventurer Mini-Camp; July 3-10, Junior Week 1 (10-12); July 10-17, Junior Week 2 (10-12); July 17-24, Tween Week (12-15); July 24-31, Teen Week 1 (13-17); July 31-Aug. 7, Teen Week 2 (13-17). Info: www.psrcamp.org or 951-509-2266.


NORTH COAST CHRISTIAN FELLOW- SHIP Celebrates 13 years in Carlsbad (July 2) 9:45 a.m., Sabbath school; 11:15 a.m., worship service, with special music and the spoken word; fellowship luncheon; afternoon activities to be announced. 3254 Eureka Pl., Carlsbad. Info: 760-720-6363.

Southern California

L.A. CAMERATA ORCHESTRA & CHORUS CONCERT (June 11) Best of Bach, Vivaldi & Mozart. 8 p.m. H. Vincent Mitzelfelt, director, Vallejo Drive church, 300 Vallejo Drive, Glendale. Soloists: Wayne Shepperd, Eugene Carbajal, Corl Prochnow, Nami Sinha and others; Connie Washburn, harpsichordist. Info/ Tickets: Call 818-246-2476, or Bruce, 818-487-2821.

SECOND SATURDAY CONCERT (June 11) Violinist Louis Mo. Glendale City church, 610 E. California Ave. Reception following concert. Info: 818-244-7241.


SFC CAMPING SEASON (Starting June 26) Camp Cedar Falls. In addition to Adventurer, Junior, Tween and Family camps, special 4-day camps (Sun.-Thurs.) will be available. Specialty classes may be selected for each of the camps. Details: www.campcedarfalls.net; 818-546-8439.

URBAN EMBRACE FUNDRAISER (June 26) The Dodgers vs. the Angels at Dodger Stadium. Urban Embrace is the White Memorial Church Summer Day Camp. Game time, 1:10 p.m. Tickets/Info: call the White Memorial Church, 323-264-2170.

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ELGIN, TEXAS CHURCH 100th anniversary (July 8-10) All former pastors, teachers, members, and friends are cordially invited. Bring old photos. Info: Betty Hold, 512-281-3268 or earlhold@msn.com.


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AHUMADA, JOSE – b. May 21, 1936, C.D. Mante Tamaulipas, Mexico; d. April 1, 2011, C.D. Mante Tamaulipas, Mexico. Survivors: sons, Alfonso, Jose, Jesus; Juan; daughters, Rosa, Martha, Maria; 10 grandchildren.


GILLESPIE, GWENDOLYN MAE – b. April 7, 1936, Chester, Pa.; d. April 1, 2011, Grand Terrace, Calif. Survivors: father, Earl Gillespie; son, Jimmy Seyle; daughter, Heather Seyle; five grandchildren.


GREGG, ROBERT JAMES – b. May 5, 1918, Exira, Iowa; d. April 3, 2011, Sun City West, Ariz. Survivors: wife, Diane (Snarr) Snow; son, Jim; daughters, Phyllis Lee, Carol Hudson; stepson, Ronald Snow; stepdaughter, Becky Herzberg; 18 grandchildren; 12 great-grandchildren.


HOPKINS, ROBERT E. – b. March 13, 1921, Oakland, Calif.; d. April 26, 2011;
Sandpoint, Idaho. Survivors: wife, Rae Owens; sons, Larry, Gary; daughter, Marilyn Davidson; five grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren.


MARSOLLIER, GIOMAR – b. May 5, 1932, Traiguen, Chile, South America; d. April 25, 2011, Glendale, Ariz. Survivors: husband, Rene; sons, Claudio, Dennis; three grandchildren.


RHODES, JOHN D. – b. June 9, 1920, Los Angeles, Calif.; d. March 26, 2011, Riverside, Calif. Survivors: wife, Jo; son, John D. III (Randy); daughter, Robin Jolene Tapanes; one grandchild; two great-grandchildren. Served as a pastor in the Southern California Conference for 27 years, ministerial secretary for 16 years and retirees’ director for 18 years in the Southeastern California Conference.


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