UTOH PATHFINDERS
Fundraising for 2019 Camporee
APPLE PIE SALES ARE A BIG HIT ... page 19
Charlie Whitehorse, Native American ministries director for the Pacific Union, is excited about the debut of a new magazine highlighting Native outreach in the Southwest. Approximately 25,000 copies of the Southwest Native News were mailed to members of Arizona, Nevada-Utah, Rocky Mountain and Texico conferences in October 2014.

The colorful magazine contains stories and photographs of Native work, such as Christian education in Waterflow, N.M.; building a new church in Chinle, Ariz.; a cowboy/Native American camp meeting in Gallup, N.M.; missions in the Southwest; prison ministry at La Vida Mission; reports from Maricopa Village Christian School and Holbrook Indian School; Navajo outreach at Coppermine, Ariz., and much more.

Southern Adventist University student Chris Janetzko spent his summer roaming Native lands throughout the Southwest gathering stories and taking pictures. “I felt called by God to volunteer on the Navajo Reservation,” he said.

“As you read this magazine,” says Whitehorse, “you will discover exciting things are taking place in the Native American work in the Southwest.”

His plans for Native American ministry through 2015 include:

- A Native training center in Monument Valley, Utah, for Native Bible workers, lay pastors, lay evangelists and health educators.
- A plan to begin work in un-entered Native territories starting in Tuba City, Ariz., with the Hopis, Havasupai and Navajos tribes.
- Native leadership meetings will be held across the Navajo reservation six times annually for planning and strategizing effective ways to reach more Natives.
- Three evangelistic meetings are planned annually across Native lands.
- Trail of Hope Ministry will provide a mobile trailer to be used across Native lands for evangelistic meetings and seminars.
- Annual Native American Youth Congress

“I solicit prayers and support as we take on this challenge of reaching Native American Indians across the nation; Whitehorse adds. “With the blessings from the Lord, we truly believe all things are possible.”

“Reaching Native Americans with the Good News of Jesus is one of the most important mission challenges we face in North America,” says Ken Denslow, assistant to the president for Native ministries for the North American Division. “This often-neglected area of ministry makes Native work a true mission field right here at home.”

For more information or to receive a copy of Southwest Native News, email phildraper@azconference.org or shirleychipman@azconference.org or call 480-991-6777.

Phil Draper
January 2015
Northern California Conference

Stockton Mayfair Church Hosts Fun and Informative Outreach Events

Committed to reaching their neighbors in North Stockton, as well as their greater community, the Stockton Mayfair church simultaneously hosted two events on a Sunday last August: their annual health fair and a neighborhood block party.

Inside the church facility, the church’s medical ministry team hosted the fair, themed “Passport to Better Health.” Outside in the parking lot, the community services team — led by Stella Williams — hosted the block party with a “Back to School” theme.

The day was inspired by Christ’s four-prong method of ministry, described in the book Ministry of Healing, advising Christians to mingle with people, meet their needs and win their confidence before witnessing to them. “Most people know that if they want to live a better life, they need to take care of their health. The health fair gives us an opportunity to meet people who live in our community and offer health services and health education to help meet those needs,” said faith community nurse Stephani Walton, who coordinated the fair. (Church member Marilyn Williams-Jerrels also worked to organize both events.)

The combined event offered 12 stations for attendees to visit, including a wide array of health services, information booths, games, giveaways (including school supplies) and helpful services, such as free back-to-school haircuts (provided by students from the Marinello School of Cosmetology) and clothes. Guests were encouraged to visit each station in order to be entered into a drawing for prizes. Activities were available for children, teens, adults and senior citizens.

Church and community members worked together to staff the many health areas. Dentist Rommel Bal and optometrist Hershie Mann performed free exams. St. Joseph’s Medical Center provided information on diabetes and breast health. Mary Nicolson from Healings in Motion presented facts about strokes. Church elder Ernest Pontiflet represented the Man-up Prostate Cancer Survivors’ group, encouraging men not to be afraid of screenings that can save their lives. Members of the Alpha Phi Chapter of Chi Eta Phi Sorority, Inc., and the church medical ministry team performed blood pressure screenings. Representatives from Covered California informed attendees about changes in national health care policies. Stockton Fil-Am church member Randy Preston shared ideas from the San Joaquin Master Gardener program that supports community gardening.

Two stations that kept attendees actively engaged were the cooking demonstrations and the exercise classes. Charlotte Holmes, Stockton Central church member and cancer survivor, conducted a lively cooking class during which the participants asked questions and tasted samples. “I learned that food is like medicine,” said guest Deloris Creer. “The darker the food, the better it is for me.”

Exercise station leader Kimber Dailey believes in making workouts fun. “You can get your exercise and enjoy it at the same time,” said Dailey, who teaches a Zumba Fitness class in the church’s multipurpose room every Sunday. “Getting exercise and staying healthy don’t have to be boring.”

The day’s events included many enjoyable activities for children. Sabbath school superintendent Shontell Watson monitored the kids as they put together puzzles, played Frisbee, participated in Bible challenges and had their faces painted. Youth also enjoyed basketball games and the dunk tank, with Pastor Lanston Sylvester as the “dunkee.”

Of special interest were presentations by two young poets from WOW (With Our Words), a local poetry/spoken word organization. They presented a “poetry slam” style message encouraging the youth to think about the choices they make and to strive to reach their full potential.

The Stockton Mayfair church is planning more ways to reach out to its community in 2015.

Audrey Weir-Graham
How can Adventists from many different backgrounds come together in unity? One example was this fall’s Northern California Conference Asian/Pacific Convocation — a time of inspiration, music and fellowship — focused on the theme “One Heart, One Mission.”

About 500 people attended the convocation at the Antioch church on a Sabbath afternoon in late October. Members from 25 churches, companies and groups — representing 11 ethnicities — attended the meeting, which focused on the unity of believers. “Even though we all come from different cultures and speak different languages, we’re all one,” said James Miho Lim, NCC Asian/Pacific Ministries coordinator. “We want to do the work of the Lord in our territory.”

The program’s main speaker was NCC President Jim Pedersen. Other highlights included a video, which introduced attendees to the various NCC Asian/Pacific pastors, their families and churches. “The video gave everyone a chance to see the churches where other people worship and the ministries that the churches are doing,” said Long Adam Thatcher, pastor of the Oakland Vietnamese church plant.

Also during the program, Lim presented plaques to show recognition and appreciation for Pedersen, retired Alameda East Bay Chinese church Pastor Cap Ly and William Gemora, former Asian/Pacific Ministries coordinator, who has returned to the full-time pastorate at the All Nations church of Elk Grove.

Many people commented afterward how much they enjoyed the music. In addition to the program’s special musical presentations, about 10 church groups participated in a “Festival of Music” after the program, playing instruments or singing. “My church members’ favorite part was the music,” said Alameda East Bay Chinese church Pastor Wai (Larry) Chu. “Even if they don’t understand the words, they follow the melody. Music breaks boundaries.”

Many Asian/Pacific church members feel most comfortable worshiping in their native tongues, which makes gatherings such as the convocation somewhat difficult. “The challenge is the language,” said Citrus Heights/Sacramento Samoan district Pastor Fred Toailoa. “We use English to bring everyone together, but they have the opportunity to use their various languages in their music.”

In addition to the harmony of music, there was also “the universal language of eating together,” joked Toailoa, who serves as Asian/Pacific ministerial fellowship president. Everyone at the convocation was invited to stay for a meal in the church’s fellowship hall. This year the menu was bibimbap, a signature Korean dish. “For Asian people, a fellowship meal is so important,” said Lim. “For some Asian cultures, eating together — sharing time, sharing fellowship — means becoming one family.”

That fellowship was an important aspect of the entire day. “Every year we see people from other churches and get to know each other. It’s very friendly,” said Napa Valley Korean church member Gloria Suh.

Lim and his team hope to make the convocation an annual event to encourage members and let them know that they are important to the Church in Northern California. “We want them to feel that they belong to one big family,” said Lim. “If we are not united as one, we cannot finish this work of God.”

Julie Lorenz
Three Pastors Celebrate Ordination

Along with the other ordinations in 2014, this past fall Southeastern California Conference celebrated the ordination of three of its pastors. On Sept. 20, David Marlow was ordained at the Hemet church. A month later, on Oct. 25, the Redlands church celebrated the ordination of Craig Hadley. And most recently, on Nov. 8, La Sierra University church welcomed Vaughn Nelson as an ordained pastor.

Each service began with music, prayer and the presentation of the ordination candidates. Church officials and the respective congregations affirmed support for each pastor. Scripture reading and a sermon followed the presentations, after which church officials and leaders in the congregations laid their hands on the candidates.

Jonathan Park, conference executive secretary, delivered the ministerial charges, Ernest Furness, SECC ministerial secretary, affirmed the pastors in their calling to ministry and, finally, each candidate was officially welcomed to the ministry by Sandra Roberts, conference president. The newly-ordained pastors were presented with gifts as tokens of this welcome, and the services closed with prayer.

David Marlow

David Marlow grew up in San Diego, Calif., and felt a pull toward the ministry early in life, but for many years he followed other paths. He earned a bachelor’s degree in communications at Pacific Union College and worked in various business-related fields, but he felt something was missing. He “went to Tarshish,” he said, when he “should have been going to Nineveh.”

After Marlow prayed for direction, a series of events occurred within a short span of time in which people told him they felt compelled to urge him to go into ministry. He enrolled in graduate school and completed his Master of Divinity degree at La Sierra University in 2008. That same year, he married Catherine, who he said has been a constant source of support in his life of ministry. Last March, they adopted baby Nathaniel.
While still in graduate school, Marlow worked as a youth pastor at the Bonita Valley church. After graduation, he was appointed associate pastor of the Palm Springs church. He later worked three years as the district pastor of the Hesperia, Phelan and Lucerne Valley churches in the High Desert before being appointed to his current post as senior pastor at the Hemet church. He summarized this experience with one word — “blessed.”

“The reason I love ministry so much is that every day is completely different — the people, the circumstances,” said Marlow. “It is really about finding meaningful relationships with people — that’s the most important thing to me.”

Craig Hadley
A native of Redlands, Calif., Craig Hadley, like Marlow, didn’t initially feel called to the ministry. He was studying architecture at Montana State University when he felt the strong desire to dispel the negative picture of the church presented by some of his fellow students. He said he felt such a strong call of God to the ministry at that time that it became difficult to focus on his studies. Thus, after completing his degree, Hadley began studying theology at La Sierra University in 2008 and concurrently took an internship with Re:Live, the young adult ministry of Loma Linda University church. A year later, he became a youth director at CrossWalk church and created a Friday night program for high school students.

In 2010, SECC hired Hadley as a pastor, and he earned his Master of Divinity degree the following year. In 2012, he accepted his current post as the young adult pastor of the Redlands church, where he continues to build the project Shadow ministries, designed for young adults and focused on growth.

“We focus on the idea that God meets imperfect people where they are rather than where He needs them to be, and that He works with them in their broken state,” Hadley said.

In 2010, Hadley married Kimi, and last Christmas Eve they welcomed daughter Maya into their lives.

Vaughn Nelson
Growing up in Washington, California and Nebraska as a pastor’s son, Vaughn Nelson felt an early call to the ministry and said that through watching his father, he came to see church work as energizing, exciting and meaningful. He studied theology at Union College before transferring to La Sierra University, where he earned a bachelor’s in religious studies in 2004 and a Master of Divinity in 2012.

During his undergraduate work, he became involved in Campus Ministries. While in graduate school, he was hired by SECC, first as the sole pastor of the Norco church and later as the associate pastor of the Bonita Valley church. There he led a ministry focused on empowering young adults in the growing community to find relevance and meaning in their church.

“For me,” said Nelson, “ministry is that incredible gift of being asked to celebrate a good God, to look for where that God is at work, and to find where we can join in that work — in our personal lives, in our communities, and in all the corners of the world.”

Nelson married Becky in 2009. Last year they moved to Nelson’s newest post as associate pastor for discipleship and nurturing at La Sierra University church.

Nelson spoke warmly of the people he has served, saying, “I have been so grateful to these communities that have given me a picture of a kind, generous and life-giving God.”

Heather Thielen
Forty-four churches from around the Central California Conference have reported that throughout 2014, more than 2,400 children and their families have been shown the love of Jesus through the ministry of Vacation Bible School. Close to 670 leaders, including nearly 400 teens, mentored those attending VBS, assisting in various capacities and sharing Jesus with the younger children.

Many churches used the VBS kit, Galactic Quest — The Story of Salvation, provided by AdventSource, a distributor of Seventh-day Adventist resources. For 2014, the VBS focus was on knowing and growing in Jesus, and how to share Jesus with family and friends. As a result, continuous outreach and meaningful relationships have blossomed within various communities following local VBS events.

Several churches offered programs following VBS. Bakersfield Southside church offered “Footprints for Kids,” a Clovis-based InDiscipleship ministry. It is available at AdventSource or at InDiscipleship.org. “We have had only good reports come from this. It has changed the parents and their children,” said VBS leader Maxine Rhamie. “The 12 families are now having family worship. The parents and the children are all loving to get into the Bible. The children will ask, ‘When is family worship?’ After the spiritual gifts study, one family has gone out into their neighborhood to get acquainted with neighbors and to pray with them.”

At the Caruthers church, it has become a tradition to collect offering money during VBS to help children in Guatemala get necessary prostheses. In addition, Pastor Victor Martinez assists the church’s teens with monthly follow-up programs for their community, including a mini-VBS program on the second Sabbath of each month. The church and community children have embraced this ministry.

Stories of connection and new birth continue to surface. In Los Banos, a little boy wanted to talk to the pastor to see if he could get a Bible for his family. Pastor Carlos Garcia found one in his
Children at Modesto Hispanic church lead praise music.

office. The boy was very excited and marked the verses for each day. At home, he read them, and the surrounding verses, to his mom and dad. The family was soon in Bible studies with Garcia, and they are now attending services at the church. At the Modesto Hispanic church, a little girl wanted special prayer that her family would want to attend church. Her prayer was answered, and they began attending. Now, they would like to send her to the local Adventist church school.

Several churches saw VBS as an opportunity to minister to parents, as well. Featuring the Galactic Adventures with Jesus, the San Jose Spanish church leader, Gerson Perla, reported 151 in attendance. To enhance the VBS program, pastor Ricardo Viloria and local elders led out in 90-minute parent programs. There was standing room only each night for topics including loving obedience, marriage, family worship, stewardship and health.

Others are finding ways to use VBS year-round. The Merced Bethel church is the host location for the community Narcotics Anonymous meetings on a regular basis. Member Hulda Cisneros prayed for a way to make an impact. She then noticed that mothers attending the meeting seemed to face challenges in finding ways to care for their children during the meetings. “What better way to help these women than to care for their children,” explains Cisneros. She quickly organized and offered free VBS-style children’s programming for all attending the meetings. Several of the primary- and junior-aged children from the church assist her with crafts and activities. Parents are thrilled with the care their children are receiving, while the children of the local church are given an opportunity to get involved serving Jesus.

Friendship and outreach continue throughout Central California with many varied programs and approaches, such as Vacation Bible School. “We are so honored to be able to provide ministries and services to families and communities around our conference,” remarks Central California President Ramiro Cano.

Rosa Gillham

2015 Investigation Station: Destination Paradise

Destination Paradise is a new Vacation Bible School program for Adventist churches where kids investigate God’s Word! Bring your VBS leaders and team to one of the training seminars.

- Sabbath, March 14, 2015, at the Mt. View Central church
- Sunday, March 15, 2015, at the Central California Conference office

Register at cccchildren.adventistfaith.org.
Fresno Spanish Pastor Antonio Huerta Named Central’s New Director of Hispanic Ministries

It has been an extraordinary 22-year spiritual journey for Pastor Antonio Huerta, who was recently named Central California Conference’s director of Hispanic Ministries. Prior to accepting his new position, Huerta served for more than nine years as senior pastor of the Fresno Spanish church. He replaces Daniel Escamilla, who retired last month after a 40-year career in full-time ministry, including 27 years in Central.

Throughout his ministry, Huerta has been committed to church growth and leadership training, and providing effective resources to help strengthen pastors and churches. He is grateful to former Central California Conference president Jerry Page who, five years into Huerta’s pastoral ministry, first encouraged him to consider the importance of leadership training. As a result of Huerta’s commitment and diligent efforts, three new congregations were planted in CCC — Coalinga, Fresno Remnant and La Esperanza Spanish churches.

In addition, he has presented seminars for the General Conference official television broadcasting network, HOPE Channel’s “Ministry in Motion” program, and facilitated similar seminars for pastors in the Pacific Union as well as for the annual SEEDS church planting conference in the North American Division. Huerta currently serves as a member of the executive committee for the Pacific Union; from 2006-2010, he was a member of the North American Division executive committee; and he served eight years as a member of Central’s executive committee.

“We’re grateful for the retiring Elder Escamilla’s distinguished and faithful service, and we feel blessed that Dr. Huerta has accepted the call to serve as our new director of Hispanic Ministries,” said Ramiro Cano, president of CCC. “He comes to the position at an opportune time to impact the rapidly growing Hispanic community for Jesus. With his leadership, expertise and commitment to evangelism, he is also poised to help further our goals with the expansive CCC initiatives. It’s a delight to have him join our administrative ministry team.”

A Family Legacy

Having come from an impressive line of pastors and lay church planters, including six older brothers who are all Seventh-day Adventist pastors, it wasn’t surprising that Huerta also received a calling from God to enter the ministry.

“It seemed an impossible dream, because I didn’t have the money to attend college,” said Huerta. “However, my church pastor at the time arranged funding for my first year at La Sierra University, a clear signal of God’s direction. I praise God for the strong encouragement and affirmation of my decision to serve Him, and for how He led in providing the finances to complete my studies.”

Huerta’s path took him all the way to Andrews University Theological Seminary, where he earned both Master of Divinity and Doctor of Ministry degrees. He began his ministry at the El Centro Spanish church in November 1990 as an associate pastor and Bible worker. He served two years as associate pastor of Fresno Spanish, and then nine years as senior pastor of the Hanford-Sanger Spanish Church District before returning to Fresno Spanish as senior pastor.

In his new position, Huerta plans to expand upon his expertise in church growth and leadership for pastors who minister to the Hispanic community. He will also function as CCC’s director of religious liberty. “I want to be a positive influence on other pastors, so they’ll have the resources they need to see results, and also important, to really enjoy what they’re doing,” he said.

“I’m excited and humbled to serve Central in this new capacity,” added Huerta. “My wife Leticia and I strongly believe God has called us to this ministry, and we trust that He will equip us to continue to build upon the work that will bring honor and glory to His name.”

Nancy L. Reynolds
GLAR Director Anthony J. Kelly Passes Away

Anthony J. Kelly, director, Greater Los Angeles Region, passed away Nov. 1, 2014, in Los Angeles after a long and painful battle with cancer.

“I spent an hour with Elder Kelly the Sabbath before he passed away,” said Larry L. Caviness, SCC president. “He knew the end was near, but his faith was strong and he talked about the soon coming of Jesus and how eagerly he looked forward to that day. He knew he was safe in the Father’s hands and expressed no fear of dying. His joy was in looking forward to the resurrection morning.”

Kelly had come a long way from St. Louis, Mo., where he grew up. During his early years there, he was bent on being anything other than what God had destined for him. Street life beckoned him. With that came consequences, and he paid dearly for his rebellious behavior.

“I was on a course of self-destruction,” he acknowledged. “My life was spiraling out of control. One day I found myself on my knees in a doorway in St. Louis pleading with God to save me from myself.”

Little did he realize, God had never left him but was true to His word: “I know the plans I have for you” (Jeremiah 29:11).

One Sunday evening, Kelly was invited to attend an evangelistic meeting. Because he had promised two Bible workers he would meet them at a certain time in front of the church, he tried to keep his word.

After hearing a message on the seven last plagues, his decision was sealed, and he continued to attend the services each evening for a week. At the end of the series, he decided to go all the way with Christ and was baptized into fellowship of the Seventh-day Adventist Church on May 30, 1981.

Kelly first served in the Lake Region Conference as a literature evangelist. In 1991, he earned a Master of Divinity degree at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University. Following graduation, he served as a pastor and then a district leader in the Lake Region before being asked to lead the conference’s youth ministry department, where he served for eight years. Kelly was passionate about ministering to young people, providing strong leadership to Pathfinders and Master Guides. As a reflection of that passionate interest, Kelly asked to be buried in his Master Guide uniform.

Kelly accepted a call to pastor the Smyrna church in the Southern California Conference in 2006 and then served as region director from 2011 until his death.

On May 6, 2012, Kelly received a Doctor of Ministry degree from the seminary at Andrews.

“Pastor Kelly was very interested in lay involvement in our churches,” James G. Lee, Jr., SCC vice president, noted. “He felt as though the church is blessed and equipped with people who can do ministry and they represent untapped potential. He worked with lay people to engage them in ministry positions. This was his vision.

“When I visited him in the hospital toward the end,” Lee said, “he was continuing to work as much as he was able, from his hospital bed. He needed purpose and being in ministry gave him that purpose.”

“Our brother Anthony fought a good fight,” said Caviness, “and like Paul, knew there is a crown awaiting him that the Lord Himself will give him. He went to his rest with that strong confidence.”

Colleagues and members continue to keep Marva Kelly and her family in prayer.

Betty Cooney
About 15 members of a Master Guide Club from the Huntington Park Spanish church in Southern California Conference went canyoneering at Eaton Canyon, near Pasadena, Calif., on Nov. 9, planning to enjoy the day and return home that evening.

When the sun began to set, they realized that they had lost track of the time: hiking back down the hillside in the dark would be treacherous on a rocky dirt trail. They decided at last that the wisest thing to do, now that darkness was falling in earnest, was to stay where they were and call for help.

Dying cell phone batteries and the height at which they had arrived made it difficult to call anyone. A few with batteries still functioning tried texting 911 for help. As one member of the group texted their situation, the others were praying: “Please let the text go through; please, God, help it to reach the police.”

They settled down together, staying as close together as they could to stay warm as the temperature dropped. “I never stopped praying,” said Melyssa Ramirez, 26, who is currently substitute teaching in Los Angeles while working on a teaching certificate. Ramirez was concerned about the teens who had come without their parents. She prayed for their safety and the whole group’s protection.

Ramirez had hiked with the Master Guides a few times; this was only her second time canyoneering. “I knew I would be out of my element since canyoneering is rugged, but I wanted to try it,” she said.

One of the Bible promises the Master Guides turned to through the night was Joshua 1:9, “Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.”

The next morning, they heard the sound of the police helicopter approaching. “We were excited and happy,” Ramirez recalled. “We had thought they would find us; we trusted God to help rescue us.

“Looking back, we felt the experience was a blessing,” Ramirez reflected. “We were rescued; we had trusted in God, and no one was seriously hurt. (One hiker sustained an ankle injury from...
flying rocks stirred up as the rescue helicopter approached; two others were treated for hypothermia.)

“I was not at all scared or worried about getting through the night,” said Nancy Picado, 22, an optician. “We weren’t lost; we just lost track of time. All during the night we had faith that God would be with us.

“We were cold, though, because we hadn’t brought clothes for an overnight stay; and our food had run out. This was a new experience for me,” Picado said. “We didn’t sleep the entire night. It was a blessing that we were united as a club, a family. We needed each one’s help — without it we would have panicked, though we knew panicking would not help.

“We knew that we had God on our side. We were singing hymns. We were alive, we had no injury at the time; we had the light of the moon and the stars. We were grateful.”

Betty Cooney

Hikers warmed by the fire, which also kept animals at bay.

Later, at the Huntington Park Spanish church, some of the Master Guides gather for a prayer of thanksgiving for their safe return from the canyon. (l. to r.) Vanessa Perez, Carmen Campos, Kimberly Perez, Hugo Leyva, Amid Solano, Carlos Arias and Nancy Picado.
Volunteers Feed and Befriend Homeless in Clearlake

Pacific Union College students have many opportunities when making weekend plans: Vespers services on Friday, hikes on campus trails, trips to the ocean, and Student Association gatherings on Saturday night. For many students, service to others through Clearlake Homeless Ministry is an essential part of each weekend.

After Sabbath church services and lunch, students hop in to vans and make their way to Clearlake, a small town 40 miles from PUC with a large homeless population. This outreach began in the fall of 2012 with a senior theology major, Gresford Thomas, who saw a need in the Clearlake community during his service as a pastoral intern. “The homeless of Clearlake impacted my life in a marked way,” shares Thomas, who is in graduate studies at the seminary at Andrews University. “I appreciated the frank discussions about life and God. I heard their stories, held them as they cried, and prayed with them.”

The ministry Thomas started continues to serve. Each Friday afternoon, volunteers pack nonperishable food into bags to hand out behind a parking lot and at a park by Redbud Lake. The bags are filled with a variety of supplies, including donations from the school dining commons and from Gott’s, a local restaurant. Sometimes the group includes specific items that homeless individuals request. The ministry also makes calls for seasonal items, including coats and tarps in winter.

The team is led by husband and wife Cristian and Shelina Villegas, PUC students who faithfully visit Clearlake each week and make sure the needs of the homeless are met. “We’ve become great friends with them now and are introducing them more and more to the love of God each time we visit,” shares Cristian Villegas. “It’s a mutual blessing each visit.”

For some time, the blessing has included a warm meal as well as the bagged supplies. Volan Andrianarivaona, professor of physics, and his family began cooking a warm meal to share with the homeless. Instead of passing out the bags and leaving, the students now stay and talk to the homeless while they eat together. “There is something special when people eat together,” group sponsor Gilbert Abella, a PUC librarian, explains. “Homeless have said beyond the food, they value the kindness and respect. Lives have been changed.”

Angel Castillo, a junior, values the opportunity to learn from those in different circumstances. Before transferring to PUC, Castillo visited Clearlake with friends involved in the ministry. “I went four or five times and remembered names and faces, even though some didn’t remember me,” describes Castillo, who now visits Clearlake regularly. “We receive more than we give them, and we can learn so much from the experience.” Castillo stressed that the ministry’s main focus is to befriend the homeless and feed them. He says their job is to plant the seed and introduce them to Jesus.

Jonathan Goorhuis, a senior who has been involved with the ministry in Clearlake since it first began, calls the ministry a good opportunity for students. “It taught me how to treat everyone,” Goorhuis reflects. He has made genuine friendships with the homeless of Clearlake, and receives a blessing each weekend he goes.

While the ministry is already providing meals and friendship, the leaders have larger goals they hope to reach in the near future. One pressing issue is the warming center—a facility that sheltered the homeless from the winter’s cold weather and rain—which closed last year due to lack of funding. The team has been brainstorming and networking with the community, and the warming center reopened at the beginning of December. The ministry has gathered blankets and coats to supply the center.

Abella has nothing but praise for the PUC students involved in Clearlake Homeless Ministry, remarking that the students leave an example to the homeless of what is like to lead a life with the love of God. “The love that they have received has touched their lives and inspired them,” he shares.

Amanda Navarrete
YEARS AGO MY FAMILY AND I were requested by the Seventh-day Adventist Church to transfer to the Republic of Singapore. Even though Mandarin, Bahasa Malaysia, and Tamil languages are used in Singapore, English is the predominant language. Because my family and I were all native English speakers, I expected no difficulty in communicating.

One weekend I was at a youth retreat in Malaysia, a three- to four-hour drive north of Singapore. I spoke to the group, and in my talk mentioned that I would be returning to Singapore by car on Sunday afternoon.

That evening, two young adults asked me a favor. One, who was a doctor, asked, "Pastor, can the two of us follow you down to Singapore when you leave?"

I responded, "I'm not too familiar with the roads in Malaysia. It might be the blind leading the blind."

When I asked if they had their own car, they responded, "No, Pastor, we only want to follow you." Finally, the young ladies clearly explained that they actually wanted a ride to Singapore, in my car.

George Johnson
Assistant to the President, Central California Conference

Continued on page 4>>
A story is told of identical twins, one of which was a hope-filled optimist who often said, “Everything is coming up roses!” The other twin was a pessimist, often seemingly sad and hopeless, who continually expected the worst to happen. The concerned parents brought them to a psychologist in hopes he might be able to help them balance their personalities.

The psychologist suggested that on the twins’ birthday, the parents should put them in separate rooms to open their birthday gifts. “Give the pessimist the best toy you can afford,” the psychologist said, “and give the optimist a box of manure.” The parents did as he said.

When they peeked in on the pessimist twin, they heard him audibly complaining, “I don’t like the color of this toy... I’ll bet this toy will break... I don’t like to play this game... I know someone who has a bigger toy than this.”

Tiptoeing across the corridor, the parents looked in and saw their optimist son gleefully throwing the manure up in the air. He was giggling as he said, “You can’t fool me! Where there’s this much manure, there’s got to be a pony!”

Which twin do you identify with the most? Which attitude will rule the day as we cross the threshold of a new year?

The happiest and most fulfilled people don’t necessarily have the best of everything, they just make the best of everything. The apostle Paul spoke to this in his letter to the Philippians. “For I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content,” he writes. “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”

Doing “all things through Christ” means trusting, having confidence, believing His promises and living by and through His abundant strength.

The results and consequences of one’s attitude, be they positive or negative, are vividly described in Scripture. For example, take the account in Numbers 13, which chronicles the experience of 12 spies who were sent to spy out the Promised Land. Ten of them came back with a negative, pessimistic attitude, crippled by their outlook due to their “grasshopper” mentality (verse 33). In turn, the remaining two had a positive and optimistic can-do attitude. Why? Because they trusted God’s promises.

In a sense, the new year presents a crossing of sorts, an entering into an unknown land, the pages of the new year which are yet to be written. If we look at verse 30, we can see the kind of attitude we need to have in order to enter the Promised Land. Caleb said, “Let us go up at once and take possession, for we are well able to overcome it!” This is a can-do attitude. It’s the same attitude that David had when he encountered Goliath in the Lord’s name. When Goliath came up against the Israelites, the soldiers basically thought, ‘He’s so big we can never kill him.’ David looked at the same giant and thought, ‘He’s so big, how can I miss?’

If we are ever going to reach the place that God has called us to in this new year, then “Let us go and take possession, for we are all able to overcome it,” by God’s grace and through His strength. The Lord has “spied out” the land for us and is urging us to lean on Him, to move forward, to be a can-do people in Central.

“I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me.” Phil. 4:13

Ramiro Cano
President, Central California Conference
The Auberry Church
shares the goodness of
God's grace

By Juli Jones

As the leaves change color and fall, and the air becomes crisp with the coming of colder weather, the Auberry Seventh-day Adventist Church, nestled in the eastern foothills outside of Fresno, California, prepares for its annual Fall Festival, a community celebration of the fall season filled with food, fellowship, and fun. This year the festival took place on Sunday, October 26th, a nineteen-year tradition celebrating this bountiful season with church and community members while providing an alternative to the holiday of Halloween.

The celebration was born when local church members Richard and Juli Jones were convicted to move away from a traditional celebration of Halloween with their two older children. Not wanting to give up the opportunity to celebrate the fall season—a season dear to Juli's heart—the Jones' looked for alternatives around them. As new members of the Auberry church, the family joined like-minded members who were already having a fall celebration on a smaller scale. Thus, decades of fall celebrations began, growing with each year.

Seventy-five people attended the celebration this October, making it one of the biggest events so far. Each year brings new ideas, new leaders, new volunteers, and new enthusiasm. “This celebration is one-of-a-kind in our community; an opportunity for families to come together and celebrate,” commented community member Bobie Begaye. “My kids look forward to this every year.”

Returning this year, after a few years of being absent, was the hayride, a favorite of the children. The cakewalk is also a favorite, with church members contributing all sorts of baked goods including the well-known annual tradition involving Lori Elming’s buffalo chip cookies. This year featured an old-fashioned dunk tank and was a huge hit. In addition, a meal of veggie burgers with salad was provided for all attendees.

“It is nice to see a church that is so interested in making an impact in their community,” says newly installed pastor, Terry Beucler. “I am excited to be part of a church that is so dynamic; with so much love to share. I know God will use us in a powerful way to make an impact for Him.”

Each new year, the Auberry church finds an opportunity to share the goodness of God’s grace to all those around as they celebrate the fall season.

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Shepherdesses Take a Break

By Onalee Showalter

From all across Central California Conference, shepherdesses gathered in Yosemite National Park to rendezvous at Camp Wawona on November 14-16, 2014. Spouses of Central’s ministers came together for a weekend of physical and spiritual refreshing. From working a “25/8” week balancing family, ministry, and jobs, attendees were following the counsel of Jesus to “come aside and rest awhile.”

This annual retreat is the one time each year during which pastoral spouses get together to focus on personal spiritual renewal as well as getting acquainted with each other and building relationships with ministry colleagues.

The theme “My Story, His Story” was developed through several studies of women found in the Bible. As they delved into the stories of Ruth, Esther, Sarah, Abigail and others, discussions naturally flowed to personal experiences of God’s leading and love. There were deep seasons of prayer for personal needs, their pastor spouses, family, and local churches.

By a show of hands, it was noted that about one-third of the attendees did not marry a pastor; rather they had been called out of other successful professions into full-time ministry. For these especially, the retreat was a time of additional support from those more tenured pastoral spouses.

Pastor Carlos Pasillas was so positive that his wife, Lisseth would enjoy the weekend, that he drove the 5-hour round trip to and from the camp so she could attend, not to mention caring for their two young children. “I loved it!” exclaimed Lisseth Pasillas, who was reluctant to come to her first retreat. “I told my husband I’m going again next year. It really helped me spiritually.”

The weekend program also included excellent meals, an evening of games and interaction, and Sabbath afternoon free time for walks in the fresh air of God’s gorgeous forest, or time just to rest and reflect.

Central California Conference pastors’ spouses won’t want to miss next year’s retreat on November 13-15, 2015 at Camp Wawona.
“Follow!” “Follow Me!” This is the command Jesus gave to his disciples when he called them into service and to a walk with him. However, at times I fear that, much like my humorous misunderstanding in Malaysia, we may not truly understand what Jesus meant by “follow.”

When Jesus asked Peter, James, John and the other disciples to drop their trades and tools and “follow,” they left home and immediately obeyed. In asking those early disciples to part with their comfort zones, I wonder, is Christ asking less of us today?

Jesus was not proposing that His disciples make a New Year’s resolution. He was not suggesting that they join God’s cause part-time. Neither was he suggesting that they follow at a distance; but rather live and labor side-by-side with Him. He later sent them out to minister, instructing them not to take along extra shoes or clothes or wallets. He Himself would supply their needs. He would teach them total dependence, down to the very issues of life and death. They were to follow by faith, receiving through faith what He personally would provide for them.

John 21 and Jesus’ farewell to His friends is one of the most touching accounts in the New Testament. After their meal, which Christ provided and served, Jesus asked Peter three times, “Do you love me?” After testing his loyalty and obedience, Jesus reinstated Peter to full discipleship after his shameful denial. At the end of the conversation, Christ told Peter, “Follow me!”

Then Peter looked behind and saw John the Beloved following them. Peter had just been challenged to follow Christ. John was already following. His love for Christ naturally lead him to follow his Lord.

Every member of God’s church has been invited to follow. He invites each one of us again and again. We misunderstand, we debate, we delay and many times we go off in other directions. But Christ still says, “follow me.” It is not just an invitation to come along at a safe distance. It is an invitation to let him be in your driver’s seat, to love and serve and be miraculously cared for by his divine presence until He comes. My challenge to you is: just do it! Be a disciple! Follow!

2015 Hispanic Women’s Retreat announcement

As we look forward to a new year, I encourage you to plug into the many events and developments within the Seventh-day Adventist Church, both locally and beyond. 2015 will feature many exciting events, including the 60th General Conference session. Below are several resources that will help keep you connected.

Central California Conference eNewsletter (NEW in 2015)
ccc.adventist.org/SignMeUp
Subscribe now to keep up with the latest news and events in our conference!
Facebook.com/CentralCaliforniaConference
LIKE our Facebook page to keep up with breaking news, inspirational stories and much more!

Pacific Union Conference eNewsletter
PacificUnionRecorder.com
Click “Digital Edition” and subscribe to Pacific Union’s eNewsletter.

North American Division (NAD) NewsPoints
tinyurl.com/2ozsvmu8
Subscribe to the NAD’s very informative eNewsletter to connect with national Adventist happenings.

ANN News Bulletin
News.adventist.org
Subscribe to the Church’s global news bulletin service to receive breaking news from around the world.

Costin Jordache
Vice President for Communication, Central California Conference
The Ogden Wasatch Pathfinder Mountaineers (OWAPAMO) Pathfinders have had a busy year preparing for, and attending, the International Pathfinder Camporee in Oshkosh, Wis.

The year leading up to camporee was a busy one, filled with fundraising activities for the trip, and learning how to plan and organize a big event. The club took advantage of many sight-seeing opportunities between Ogden, Utah, and Oshkosh, Wis. They visited Independence Rock State Park in Wyoming where they found “Pathfinder 1908” inscribed in the rock. They also stopped at Mt. Rushmore for the sunset flag ceremony and at Wind Cave National Park, S.D. At each of the five stops at National Parks, the youngest Pathfinders, Cody Eller and Zach Carson, received Junior Ranger badges for completing the required workbooks.

Most OWAPAMO kids are not Seventh-day Adventist Church members. During the camporee, they learned the story of Daniel and how his unwavering faithfulness to God saved him many times. They each came back with a clearer picture of how much God loves them. They also learned a lot about prayer by participating in the camporee prayer challenge. Each day at 9 a.m., noon and 3 p.m., each club blew a shofar (horn) to signal a special time to stop whatever they were doing and have prayer at that moment. “We would stop and invite someone that we didn’t know to pray with us,” said Mariesa Galloway, Pathfinder director. “It was a special experience to meet people in prayer.”

They also spent an afternoon at a nursing home, donating their time and muscle to some landscaping projects. “What really stood out to me was the way that the kids were interested in all of the international cultures present; the way they do things and the way we all love and serve the same God,” said Daniel Galloway.

Pastor Ryan Hablitzel and Mariesa Galloway worked especially hard prior to camporee to complete all the requirements to become Master Guides. They were inducted on Sabbath morning at camporee. “It was really amazing to see all of these like-minded people together, focusing on being faithful to God,” said Galloway.

Looking Forward to 2019

The OWAPAMO Pathfinders were so enriched by their trip that they have already started to raise funds for the 2019 trip with their annual apple pie sale. Using a top-secret recipe, they create delicious apple pies that are frozen and ready to bake. Hands of all ages and sizes got in on the pie-making process. The littlest helpers are not yet old enough to be in Pathfinders, but were really excited to get to help make pies. One of them, Jenni, showed how she was covered in flour from nose to knees. “Of course I’m having fun,” she said. “Look at me!”

“People who don’t normally care for pie have called to tell us that they love our pies,” said Mariesa Galloway. “They are really delicious. I’m grateful that Vera Carson, our former director, gave us permission to use her recipe. It’s a great fundraiser.”

The group sold 41 pies. Some who forgot to order in time were disappointed that there weren’t left over pies to purchase. The event is expected to grow next year, as is the OWAPAMO Pathfinder group.
Loma Linda University Receives Grant to Train Entry-Level Health Care Workers

Three hundred Inland Empire students who are pursuing certificates in entry-level health care professions are receiving tuition benefits and career coaching for three years, thanks to a “Skills, Training and Health Workforce of Paraprofessionals Program” grant for $600,000 to Loma Linda University.

Funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ Human Resources Service Administration and part of the Health Careers Opportunities Program, the grant is enabling students from San Bernardino and surrounding communities to train for careers in health care professions.

“Loma Linda University is pleased to partner with the San Bernardino City Unified School District on this important initiative for our young people,” says Richard H. Hart, M.D., Dr.P.H., president of Loma Linda University Health. “As our San Bernardino campus is built, we expect this type of collaboration to increase even more. These scholarships will benefit not only those receiving them directly, but their families, communities, and future employers.”

Loma Linda University Health – San Bernardino is a new health care and educational initiative which will be located in downtown San Bernardino. The project includes San Manuel Gateway College, an educational center which will provide a variety of 6- to 12-month certificate training programs to prepare graduates for a number of rewarding career options in the health care field.

The grant will be implemented through Loma San Manuel Gateway College and will provide $200,000 annually from September 2014 through August 2017. During the first year, students working on certificates as licensed vocational nurses, certified nurse and medical assistants will receive scholarships, as well as books, supplies and career coaching. Students will receive their certificate training through SBCUSD at its adult education campus.

Andrea Mitchel, grant writer for Social Action Community Health System, researched and wrote the grant application. Assisting her in the process were Nancy Young, M.S., president and CEO, SACHS; Karen Bautista, principal, SBCUSD adult education program, and her team; and Cindy Dickson, pre-award grant analyst and Jessica Portillo, financial analyst, Loma Linda University research affairs.

Larry Kidder
Hundreds of Academy and High School Students Visit La Sierra

The group of high school seniors from Toronto, Canada, journeyed the farthest, it was decided, of the more than 800 students who visited La Sierra University on its annual University Experience Day on Nov. 5.

But the two-flight, nearly 2,500-mile journey to Southern California was worth it to the seasoned young travelers. John Zabana, a senior at Crawford Adventist Academy in Toronto, said he liked La Sierra University the best of the campuses he visited. “If I do get accepted, I will pray about it, and most likely make my way here,” he said.

His classmate, Marquis Kennedy added, “I love it here. It’s beautiful. It’s very open.” Kennedy plans to study international business and Zabana aims toward a career in finance.

The students from Crawford Adventist, whose bright blue uniform shirts were easily spotted in the sea of high school and academy students filling La Sierra’s campus mall, were among hundreds who arrived from regions far and near to meet with leaders of academic programs stationed at outdoor booths, and to participate in interactive games, fun activities and question-and-answer sessions.

The annual event is designed to introduce academy and high schoolers to the experiences of college life, and specifically to La Sierra University. “We had group leaders cover safety issues, what’s the food really like, the number of worships students are required to attend,” and other daily life topics, said Wayne Dunbar, associate vice president of Enrollment Services.

Sara Pinto da Silva, a La Sierra music student, fielded questions from a group of high school students seated on the grass under a sprawling tree. She promoted the benefits of living in La Sierra’s dorms — “you have most of your time free to work out or to study” — and the social life at La Sierra. “There are tons of clubs and things to do,” she said.

Barrington Taylor, a senior from Los Angeles Adventist Academy with aspirations of becoming a director, talked with film and television professor Rodney Vance at the department’s booth. In front of the booth, faculty and university students set up a moving camera on a short track to display some of the equipment film and television students work with. “He presented the department well, and gave me ideas,” Taylor said of his interaction with Vance.

“It’s a really nice school, and I like the campus a lot,” said Taylor.

Yesminn Sosa, a San Diego Adventist Academy senior interested in pre-physical therapy said the availability of campus events is high on her list of criteria when considering colleges. Sosa frequently heard La Sierra described as a “family-oriented campus. Campus life seems close,” she said.

Ximena Salinas, a Glendale Adventist Academy senior said two “very nice girls” gave her a tour of La Sierra’s Price Science Complex and explained classes she would need to take as a pre-med major. “It was very useful because I had a lot of questions. I was able to ask them, and they were able to answer,” she said.

President Randal Wisbey welcomes the more than 800 visiting students to the 2014 University Experience event.
Rebok Retires as Senior Vice President of Adventist Health

Doug Rebok retired as senior vice president and chief administrative officer of Adventist Health effective Dec. 31, 2014, ending his nearly 40-year career with the health system.

Since April 2014, Rebok has served in the CAO role overseeing various Roseville-based support services shared across Adventist Health’s four-state service area. However, for most of his lengthy career he was senior vice president and chief financial officer.

“Doug has been a dedicated and skillful leader in our system for nearly four decades,” stated Scott Reiner, president and CEO. “I have personally appreciated his deep commitment to furthering the faith-based mission of Adventist Health, something for which he is well-respected throughout our organization.”

“It has been an honor to serve within Adventist Health for so many years,” stated Rebok. “I have met and worked with many dedicated people, all who have inspired me. I will miss working for this organization and with the people who serve within it. It is a privilege to work with people who are committed to a mission statement that does not just hang on the wall.”

Rebok holds a bachelor’s degree in accounting from La Sierra University in Riverside, Calif., as well as an MBA from the University of Southern California, Los Angeles. He is a certified public accountant (inactive) and a member of many professional associations, including the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants and the Healthcare Financial Management Association.

Adventist Health Hospitals Receive Quality and Safety Awards

Patient safety and quality efforts are an ongoing process as a part of the Adventist Health mission to provide physical, mental and spiritual healing. Facilities in California and Hawaii received the following awards:

- The Joint Commission 2013 Top Performer on Key Quality Measures® program recognizes accredited hospitals that attain excellence in accountability measure performance.
  - Castle Medical Center
  - Simi Valley Hospital
  - Sonora Regional Medical Center

Collaborative Alliance for Nursing Outcomes, the nation’s first nurse quality indicators database, announced its annual Performance Excellence Awards.
Performance Excellence in the Reduction of Hospital Acquired Pressure Ulcers

- Adventist Medical Center - Reedley
- Frank R. Howard Memorial Hospital
- Glendale Adventist Medical Center

Performance Excellence in the Reduction of Injury Falls

- St. Helena Hospital Clear Lake
- San Joaquin Community Hospital
- Sonora Regional Medical Center
- White Memorial Medical Center

Performance Excellence in the Reduction of Central Line-Associated Blood Stream Infections

- Sonora Regional Medical Center

Performance Excellence in the Reduction of Cather-Associated Urinary Tract Infections

- Sonora Regional Medical Center
- St. Helena Hospital Napa Valley

The LeapFrog Group announced Feather River Hospital in Paradise, Calif., was awarded an “A” grade for excelling in protecting patients from accidents, errors, injuries and infections.

San Joaquin Community Hospital Sponsors Free Concert

San Joaquin Community Hospital recently hosted the fifth annual GospelFest. The Christian music concert was a free community event and featured Dove-Award winning Christian artist Plumb, Rhett Walker Band and several other local Christian artists.

The event was held at a local outdoor amphitheater in Bakersfield, Calif. This year SJCH provided an interactive health fair, a locally grown farmer’s market and a kids play zone. Hundreds participated in the health screenings that included blood pressure checks, stroke awareness education and hands-on CPR training.

More than 4,000 attended GospelFest, hosted by San Joaquin Community Hospital.
Kids ages 6 to 13 took part in Health Expo 2014 at Hawaii Conference Oahu Convocation on Sabbath, Sept. 27. As they entered the hall, they received canvas backpacks with “God Made Me and YOUunique” printed on them. They then sang praise songs to energize them for their journey around hall, which contained eight stations, each highlighting a health principle.

A ladder with shelves represented a nutrition pyramid and gave kids an opportunity to choose where to place a variety of food items. Of course, the vegetable and fruit shelf was full of tasty choices and showcased the beautiful colors God assigned to the fruits and veggies. “The life-sized food pyramid was an excellent interactive tool that helped the kids understand and remember the importance of healthy foods and portions,” remarked volunteer Tami Eaton.

From there, they moved to the air station, where they tested their lung capacity with a spirometer. They also viewed the function of the lungs and learned what happens when they’re abused.

The sunshine station was next. There, they learned how to care for their skin with water, sunglasses, sunscreen, a clock (to keep track of in-sun time), a hat, a t-shirt and an umbrella. They also learned that children with red hair and light skin have to be more careful because the sun burns them faster than someone with dark skin.

At the rest station, they played a game matching photos of animals with the number of hours they sleep. Kids learned how many hours of rest they need.

At the exercise station, kids learned the importance of strengthening their muscles and learned how much exercise they need to stay fit.

The temperance station was an eye-opener as they counted the number of teaspoons of sugar in one 12-ounce can of pop, as well as in a bottle of juice and a serving of sweetened cereal. They also
learned about the amount of caffeine in various drinks and the effect it has on their bodies.

At the water station, participants tried to guess how many gallons of water would be equivalent weight to an 88-pound child. Many were surprised to learn that even a five-gallon bottle was not big enough (it's about 6.25 gallons).

Lastly, at the trust in God station, kids reviewed the importance of time spent with Jesus, and time spent for Jesus in service to others. They ended by writing a note of love, encouragement or thanks for someone special to them.

Young adults volunteered at stations and made connections with children. "It was really great to be part of the amazing group of facilitators for this convocation's children's ministry program," said Natasha Geigle, one of the many volunteers.

"The health expo was an excellent opportunity to provide a participation-based program with fun activities, visual aids and group exercises as we shared practical health information with the children. This program helped them know how and why to make healthy choices as they grow."

Kids left with their backpacks full: take-home activity sheets to help them choose the right foods, keep track of their exercise and water consumption, a piece of fruit, a packet of almonds, and a bottle of water. "This made me realize how our amazing God created our bodies!" said Nylah Safuto, 11.

Feryl Harris

Notice of Constituency Meeting of the Hawaii Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

Notice is hereby given that the Regular Quinquennial Constituency Meeting of the Hawaii Conference of Seventh-day Adventists is called to convene at 10 a.m. Sunday, April 26, 2015, at Honolulu Central Seventh-day Adventist Church, 2313 Nuuanu Avenue, Honolulu, Oahu, Hawaii.

The purpose of this meeting is to receive reports, to elect conference officers and the Executive Committee, and to transact other business as may properly come before the constituency meeting.

Each organized church shall be represented by one (1) delegate and one (1) additional delegate for each forty (40) members, or major fraction thereof.

Ralph S. Watts III, President
Gerald D. Christman, Secretary
RAW FOODS POTLUCK Supper (Jan. 12) 2nd Sat. of each month, Central church, 777 W. Montecito, Phoenix, 6:30 p.m. Newcomers, please bring a vegetable or fruit salad without dressing. Info: stanhowerton@yahoo.com or call 480-430-5496.

TRAVEL & LEISURE AUCTION (Jan. 18) 1 p.m. Tuscani Falls Clubhouse in the PebbleCreek Community in Goodyear, sponsored by the Desert Cove church. Info: Cathy, cdfields1975@gmail.com, or phone 602-494-4480.


BEAUTY FOR ASHES BANQUET (Feb. 8) Homeless ministry 4th annual banquet. 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. Community Service Center, 1320 N. 15th St., Phoenix. Help is needed with food, serving, gifts, monetary and children’s ministry program. Your creative decorating or centerpiece ideas are appreciated as well as your time, talent and prayers. Info: Felicia Smith-Anderson, 602-459-0152 or Denise Sanderson, 480-272-5074.

Central California

HISPANIC CHURCH OFFICERS and Sabbath School Training (Jan. 3) San Jose Hispanic church. Info: Florina, 559-347-3144.

YOUNG ADULT RETREAT (Jan. 9-11) Camp Wawona. Contact: Sandra, 559-347-3174 or cccsdayouth.org.


WOMEN’S RETREAT (Jan. 30-Feb. 1) Tenaya Lodge. Info: Pat Curtis, 559-642-2396 or 2patcurtis@gmail.com.

HISPANIC WOMEN’S RETREAT (Feb. 27-March 1) Wonder Valley. Info: Florina, 559-347-3144.

La Sierra University

SPIRITUAL EMPHASIS WEEK (Jan. 27-30) Features presentations by faculty members.

THE BRANDSTATEr GALLERY (Jan. 11 - Feb. 5) Exhibition curated by C. Feign Jr., showcasing a group of works by contemporary Los Angeles artists.

WINTER QUARTER BEGINS (Jan. 5) Info: 800-874-5587.

FIRST SERVICE WORSHIP Fridays at 8 p.m. Info: 951-785-2090.

Northern California Conference


CHURCH CLERK TRAINING & Orientation (Jan. 25) 9:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. NCC Headquarters, 401 Taylor Blvd., Pleasant Hill. Topics: church clerk certification, clerk responsibilities, eAdventist training and news, document retention. Pastors are welcome! Lunch included. RSVP by Jan. 13. Info and registration: clerk@nccsda.com; 888-434-4622, ext. 1237.

HISPANIC CHURCH OFFICERS and Sabbath School Training (Jan. 3) San Jose Hispanic church. Info: Florina, 559-347-3144.


Southern California Conference

CONCERT (Jan. 2) 7 p.m. Paradise Village, 2700 E. 4th St., National City. Soprano Esther Neal will perform a holiday concert. Info: 619-245-5845.

SECC INTERMEDIATE HANDBELL Festival (Jan. 29) 7 p.m. Murrieta Springs Adventist Christian Academy, 32477 Starbuck Cir., Murrieta. Info: Mandi Staples, 951-50-2521.

Southern California Conference

50TH ANNIVERSARY ALUMNI Talent Show (Jan. 10) 7 p.m. South Bay Junior Academy Gymnasium, 4400 Del Amo Blvd., Torrance 90604. Info: 310-370-6215; www.sbjja.com.

S.A.R.P. (Substance Abuse Recovery Program) Seminar (Jan. 18) Learn how to overcome co-addiction or enabling challenges related to substance abuse. Presenter Wayne Dooley. Free to all. 1-2:30 p.m. School of Evangelism & Resource Center, 1501 East Chevy Chase Dr, Glendale 91206. Info: 818 549-4147; www.endtimeslikethese.org.


IN HIM WE HAVE REDEMPTION Ephesians 1:7

TO LEAD. TO LIVE. TO LOVE.

How will you serve Him today?

“Remember to observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.” — Exodus 20:8

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Religious Liberty Offering JANUARY 24, 2015

Stand firm and see

Holy Bible

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Employment

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ADVENTIST DEVELOPMENT and Relief Agency (ADRA) International in Silver Spring, MD., is seeking a full-time Senior Accountant II. Responsibilities include review reconciliations, wire transfer requests, grant loans/advances, and prepare reports to government agencies. Record questioned cost, review GIK documentation, and compile budgets for cost centers. For more information, go to www.adra.org.

ADVENTIST DEVELOPMENT and Relief Agency (ADRA) International in Silver Spring, MD., is seeking a full-time Senior Program Finance Manager. Responsibilities include providing day-to-day support to implementing field offices on financial management processes, compliance, policies and adherence to donor regulations. Field experience preferred. For more information, go to www.adra.org.

ADVENTIST DEVELOPMENT and Relief Agency (ADRA) International in Silver Spring, MD., is seeking a full-time Finance Director. Responsibilities include preparing all budgets, and maintenance of accounts. For more information, go to www.adra.org.

ANNOUNCING: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR opening for Adventist Heritage Ministry. Full-time salaried position, including benefits; located at Ellen White Estate office, Silver Spring, Md. For information, job description, or to submit résumé, contact James Nix, Ellen White Estate: nix@gc.adventist.org. Application deadline: March 31, 2015.

BIOLOGY DEPARTMENT, Southwestern Adventist University is seeking a qualified applicant (Ph.D. preferred). Primary emphasis in paleontology and zoology; ability to teach introductory geology, microbiology and/or bioinformatics desirable. The successful candidate will be supportive of literal creationism. Send cover letter and CV to Schwarz.arthur@swau.edu. Position open until filled.

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HEALTH MINISTRY DIRECTOR Sought. Adventist Whole Health Network (AWHN), a ministry endeavor of the Pennsylvania Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, is now accepting applications for the position of Executive Director. The successful candidate will work towards expanding opportunities for collaboration between AWHN and the communities it serves, as well as create and foster collaborative working relationships between AWHN’s free clinic, parish nursing program, corporate health program, and other programs offered by AWHN to the community. AWHN is open to new and innovative ideas for developing the vision for medical missionary work. The incumbent will possess a clear understanding of the Seventh-day Adventist message and medical methodology. Qualifications: Master’s prepared (MSN, MSW, CRNP, MHA, etc.) candidates with Healthcare managerial experience, multidisciplinary team approach background, a strong financial background and experience in recruiting and managing volunteers will be considered. Contact the AWHN Search Committee: apply@awhn.org.

LEAD PROGRAMMER/ANALYST. Pacific Press Publishing Association

ADVENTIST DEVELOPMENT and Relief Agency (ADRA) Sudan, is seeking a full-time Finance Director. Responsibilities include preparation of all financial reports, process disbursement of funds, review of financial statements, bank and journal vouchers, project budgets, and maintenance of accounting records. For more information, go to www.adra.org.
seeks Seventh-day Adventist for the full-time position of Lead Programmer/Analyst to support all information technology (IT) software support functions, including problem analysis, design, programming, testing, implementation and training. Applicants should have bachelor's degree in Computer Science or related field and knowledge and experience in industry standard programming language including web development tools, and the ability to lead a team of programmer/analysts. Contact Ms. Alix Manksr, HR Director, P.O. Box 5353, Nampa, ID 83653; phone, 208-465-2567; fax, 208-465-2531; email: alix.manksr@pacificpress.com.

PACIFIC UNION COLLEGE is seeking a full-time faculty in the Religion Department to begin during the 2015-2016 academic year. Preference is for candidate with a Ph.D. in Religion (open to ABD), with an emphasis in Old Testament, New Testament, or any branch of Theology, and with successful teaching experience. For more information or to apply, call 707-965-6231 or visit www.puc.edu/faculty-staff/current-job-postings.

PACIFIC UNION COLLEGE is seeking a full-time manager of the Albion Biology Field station to begin immediately. Ideal candidate will possess a bachelor's degree (business administration preferred) and strong organizational and communication skills. Expertise in budget management and knowledge of boat operations is also desired. For more information or to apply, call 707-965-6231 or visit www.puc.edu/faculty-staff/current-job-postings.

PACIFIC UNION COLLEGE is seeking a Special Collections Librarian to begin July 1, 2015. Ideal candidate will possess a bachelor’s degree (business administration preferred) and strong organizational and communication skills. Expertise in budget management and knowledge of boat operations is also desired. For more information or to apply, call 707-965-6231 or visit www.puc.edu/faculty-staff/current-job-postings.

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SOUTHWESTERN ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY Education and Psychology Department seeks full-time qualified psychology professor beginning July 1, 2015. Doctorate degree is required. Please submit CV and cover letter to Dr. Marcel Sargeant at sargeant@swau.edu. Position is open until filled.

THE KINESIOLOGY DEPARTMENT at Southwestern Adventist University seeks full-time physical education professor to begin July 1, 2015. Master's degree required; doctoral degree preferred, must have some teaching experience. Submit curriculum vitae and cover letter to Human Resources. Contact Mr. Vesa Naukkarien at 817-202-6684 or vnaaukar@swau.edu.

Events
39TH ANNUAL BIBLE INSTRUCTORS GUILD (B.I.G.) Rally (Jan. 16-17) Fairfield church, 1101 E Tabor Ave, Fairfield, Calif. Speakers, Elder Bobby J. Mitchell Sr., Pastor Willie Johnson, Dr. Kristee Haggins. Ministering to the inner city? Don’t miss this rally. Info: betyglen@sbclglobal.net.

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ATTENTION FORMER PASTORS and Members of the Camarillo church. 40th Year Reunion Sabbath (Jan. 3). Continental breakfast, 9 a.m., Sabbath school, 9:30 a.m., Worship, 10:45 a.m., Fellowship luncheon; and a time of sharing 2:30-3:30 p.m. Info: 805-462-4632.

CAMPION ACADEMY ALUMNI Chapter Meeting (March 7) 6:30 p.m., Hilton Garden Inn, 1755 S. Waterman Ave., San Bernardino, Calif. A buffet will be served. This location is different than last year. Info: 970-667-5592, ext. 110.

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Full children’s program available for volunteers throughout the event.

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A few years ago I attended The One Project and served as a table moderator. As we were receiving instructions on how to moderate during the discussion times, the leader said something that made a significant impact that I’ve never forgotten. He said, “Don’t focus on liberal or conservative; instead focus on central or peripheral.”

The more I thought about this the more I think it is excellent advice! The most liberal and the most conservative Christians can agree on what is central — lifting up the name of Jesus!

This year will be very significant for the Seventh-day Adventist Church. In a few months, thousands from all over the world will gather in San Antonio, TX for the 60th General Conference Session. We will have many important issues to discuss and vote on as we seek to follow God’s will for His Church.

The temptation may be to base decisions on whether we are liberal or conservative. I hope and pray delegates will make decisions based on what is really central to the Gospel and the Church.

During the 2014 North American Division Year End Meetings, Elder Artur Stele, BRI Director and Chairperson of the GC TOSC (General Conference Theology of Ordination Study Committee) shared powerful words as he addressed the NAD Executive Committee. He stated emphatically the Seventh-day Adventist Church has bread that needs to be given to a world that is starving. But while we are so busy arguing about issues, people are starving to death while we spend time inside discussing. It’s time to distribute the bread!

I agree whole-heartedly with Elder Stele. In reality, it’s nothing new how the enemy gets the Church off course by internal issues. In the book of Acts we find many attempts by the devil to disrupt the Church. First he tried through persecution. All that did was cause the Gospel to be spread everywhere as the saints fled. When that didn’t work he attacked from the inside through disunity and distractions. The Church was so busy dealing with internal issues, spreading the Gospel slowed down.

Please don’t misunderstand. I believe it is very important for God’s Church, through proper channels, to discuss important and central issues -- then move forward together with the ultimate goal of growing the Kingdom of God.

My prayer for the Arizona Conference in 2015 is that we, as a Conference family, will continue to live out our Mission Statement that challenges us to “Light the World with Jesus’ Love to grow the family of God.” The beauty of this statement is it allows all of us, young and old, to share Jesus’ love in different ways, based on the gifts and talents God has given us. The goal is the same for all — to grow the kingdom of God.

Let’s pledge this year to focus on what is really central to the Gospel, to stop arguing about peripheral issues and go out and feed a starving world with the Bread of Life — Jesus Christ!

Tony Anobile
President
Mesa Pastor Preaches
44 Sermons in 30 Days in Kenya, Africa

by Phil Draper

The first missionary to Kenya was Elder Eric Beavon in 1906.

Pastor Terry Darnall has pastored the Mesa Palms Seventh-day Adventist Church in Mesa, Arizona for twenty years. When his church family voted to send him on a mission trip to evangelize two cities near Nairobi, Kenya, he eagerly accepted the challenge. Two five-week, back-to-back series were held from July through September, 2014. By the end of the meetings, Darnall was given a new name, “Mogaka,” which means “Respected Elder.”

Darnall’s first series was in a remote area of Kenya called Kisii Land, four hours west of Nairobi. There are almost no tourists in this beautiful rain forest. The small airport does not entice many visitors.

Kisii children have never seen a white man. Darnall found the bright-eyed children wanted to touch him, be around him, and enjoy the candy he brought from America to share with the young people.

There are 1,200,000 people living in a 40-mile radius. Of these, 250,000 are Seventh-day Adventist Christians.

One of Darnall’s series of meetings was held at Kemboa, a new church plant with just 70 members who currently meet on a small piece of property in an open-air building with no facilities. The last Sabbath, 4,000 people sat on a hillside along with 1,000 children. After the series, Pastor Charles Bonukay and his members changed the name of their church to Kemboa Mesa Palms Seventh-day Adventist Church.

“We now have a sister church,” beams Darnall. “We hope to help them build their own church this next year.”

Members from the Mesa Palms church, along with some members from Kenya, raised $11,000 to pay for all of the expenses for the meetings in Kisii Land and Nukuru. Overwhelmed with the living conditions, Darnall says, “I wish I was a billionaire so I could help meet the many needs I saw while there!”

The first missionary to Kenya was Elder Eric Beavon in 1906. From Kisii, missionaries went to the rest of Kenya to preach a message of a soon-to-be in the next 30 days.
coming Jesus. Beavon’s son, Harold, was born in Kisii, and eventually spent many years as a missionary there with his wife and three girls. Until recently, Beavon, now 92, was an Elder for the Mesa Palms Church.

Darnall says, “I felt in some way I was returning to Kisii Land to represent and continue the work of the Beavon family 108 years later. God has his ways!”

At the conclusion of the Kisii meetings, Darnall baptized 77 precious people in a muddy creek. “What a thrill that was,” he recalls. “These people are wonderful, committed Adventist Christians now. Their lives revolve around the activities of the church. Many arrive on Sabbath morning at 8 a.m. and return home after 6 p.m. That is real commitment.”

One new convert, Steve, was married to a faithful church member who had prayed for his conversion for many years. He told Darnall his story.

Steve had lived in the United States for a year. However, he stayed beyond the dates allowed on his visa. Eventually he was arrested and sent to a jail in Mesa, Arizona. Then he was deported back to Kenya.

When he heard an American evangelist was coming to Kenya from Mesa, Arizona, he felt it was a sign that God was giving him a second chance. He had been deported and banned from America for ten years. During the meetings, Steve found the Lord. To the delight of his wife and children, he was baptized!

In Nukuru, two hours north of Nairobi, Darnall held meetings nightly for two weeks. At the conclusion, he baptized 78.

Most were under the age of 30. The baptism was held during a thundering rainstorm in a rented aboveground swimming pool.

Darnall expresses gratitude for some of the key people who assisted and supported his campaigns in Kenya. Pastor Robert Tinega, Nukuru’s local evangelist and acting ministerial director, was such a great help.

Mesa head elder Don Jacqua kept the local church programs running smoothly while his pastor was in Kenya. Darnall expresses deep gratitude to his Mesa Palms church members, especially local leaders Francis Obiagwa and Alfred Momanyi, who made it possible for this mission to Kenya.

Darnall returned home totally exhausted but with a heart filled with the memories of what God has done in Kenya. He says with reflection, “I’m happy for the work missionaries have done in Africa since 1908 to bring Jesus to these amazing, wonderful people. Perhaps we need missionaries to come from Kenya to America to help us!”
“God Restores” was the theme of the 34th Annual Arizona Conference Regional Ministries Convocation held at the Center for Performing Arts at Pima Community College in Tucson, Arizona November 14-15.

The carefully planned event attracted visitors to Tucson from metro Phoenix and throughout the valley.

Arizona Conference President Tony Anobile greeted the people saying, “The Regional work in the Arizona Conference continues grow and prosper. What a privilege to see this auditorium packed with men and women eager to spread the Gospel to all people! I’m deeply grateful for the work Elder Kingsley Palmer and his staff have done to make this day a reality.”

Vandeon Griffin, Youth Director for South Central Conference, was the keynote speaker. He advised his audience to “Stop living life like an Oreo cookie!” Speaking on the topic, “Living Life in the Middle,” Griffin quoted a text in Revelation 3, “I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other.” He said God couldn’t restore us until we make a decisive decision to live the way He wants us to live.

Sabbath morning began with an early morning prayer service followed by a panel discussion of the Sabbath School Lesson, “Taming the Tongue.” Panelists included Elder Jackie James, Cynthia Johnson, Lorraine Daniel-Palmer and Elder Chris Morris.

During the morning worship service, Griffin held the audience spellbound as he preached on the topic, “Hold Your Corner.” He illustrated the story of the paralytic — each has work to do where the Lord has placed us. Once we do our part in our corner, God will restore us.

US Air Force Retired Master Sergeant Virginia Bailey directed a moving tribute honoring 20 veterans for their bravery and service to their country.

The larger-than-anticipated crowd was a huge concern as lunchtime drew near. Preparations had been made to feed approximately 400. But there were more than 700 in attendance. After a prayer asking God to bless the food, amazed staff watched as more than 700 were fed with food left over. Some compared it to the miracle of Jesus’ feeding the 5,000!

An afternoon concert pleased the crowd as musicians young and old presented their songs of praise. Then Pastor Jerold Thompson of the Hope Community Church in Thousand Palms, California concluded the program with his sermon, “Down and Up.” He admonished, “Just as the Lord did with Naaman the Leper, He may need to take us down in order to lift us up and restore us!”

By Valbert Francis

The audience stood in committing their lives to a full restoration by the Lord.
YEARS AGO MY FAMILY AND I were requested by the Seventh-day Adventist Church to transfer to the Republic of Singapore. Even though Mandarin, Bahasa Malaysia, and Tamil languages are used in Singapore, English is the predominant language. Because my family and I were all native English speakers, I expected no difficulty in communicating.

One weekend I was at a youth retreat in Malaysia, a three- to four-hour drive north of Singapore. I spoke to the group, and in my talk mentioned that I would be returning to Singapore by car on Sunday afternoon.

That evening, two young adults asked me a favor. One, who was a doctor, asked, “Pastor, can the two of us follow you down to Singapore when you leave?”

I responded, “I’m not too familiar with the roads in Malaysia. It might be the blind leading the blind.”

When I asked if they had their own car, they responded, “No, Pastor, we only want to follow you.” Finally, the young ladies clearly explained that they actually wanted a ride to Singapore, in my car.

George Johnson
Assistant to the President, Central California Conference

Continued on page 4>>
A story is told of identical twins, one of which was a hope-filled optimist who often said, “Everything is coming up roses!” The other twin was a pessimist, often seemingly sad and hopeless, who continually expected the worst to happen. The concerned parents brought them to a psychologist in hopes he might be able to help them balance their personalities.

The psychologist suggested that on the twins’ birthday, the parents should put them in separate rooms to open their birthday gifts. “Give the pessimist the best toy you can afford,” the psychologist said, “and give the optimist a box of manure.” The parents did as he said.

When they peeked in on the pessimist twin, they heard him audibly complaining, “I don’t like the color of this toy... I’ll bet this toy will break... I don’t like to play this game... I know someone who has a bigger toy than this.”

Tiptoeing across the corridor, the parents looked in and saw their optimist son gleefully throwing the manure up in the air. He was giggling as he said, “You can’t fool me! Where there’s this much manure, there’s got to be a pony!”

Which twin do you identify with the most? Which attitude will rule the day as we cross the threshold of a new year?

The happiest and most fulfilled people don’t necessarily have the best of everything, they just make the best of everything. The apostle Paul spoke to this in his letter to the Philippians. “For I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content,” he writes. “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” Doing “all things through Christ” means trusting, having confidence, believing His promises and living by and through His abundant strength.

The results and consequences of one’s attitude, be they positive or negative, are vividly described in Scripture. For example, take the account in Numbers 13, which chronicles the experience of 12 spies who were sent to spy out the Promised Land. Ten of them came back with a negative, pessimistic attitude, crippled by their outlook due to their “grasshopper” mentality (verse 33). In turn, the remaining two had a positive and optimistic can-do attitude. Why? Because they trusted God’s promises.

In a sense, the new year presents a crossing of sorts, an entering into an unknown land, the pages of the new year which are yet to be written. If we look at verse 30, we can see the kind of attitude we need to have in order to enter the Promised Land. Caleb said, “Let us go up at once and take possession, for we are well able to overcome it.” This is a can-do attitude. It’s the same attitude that David had when he encountered Goliath in the Lord’s name. When Goliath came up against the Israelites, the soldiers basically thought, “He’s so big we can never kill him.” David looked at the same giant and thought, “He’s so big, how can I miss?”

If we are ever going to reach the place that God has called us to in this new year, then “Let us go and take possession, for we are all able to overcome it,” by God’s grace and through His strength. The Lord has “spied out” the land for us and is urging us to lean on Him, to move forward, to be a can-do people in Central.

“I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me.” Phil. 4:13

Ramiro Cano
President, Central California Conference

11 Philippians 4:11,13
The Auberry Church shares the goodness of God’s grace

By Juli Jones

As the leaves change color and fall, and the air becomes crisp with the coming of colder weather, the Auberry Seventh-day Adventist Church, nestled in the eastern foothills outside of Fresno, California, prepares for its annual Fall Festival, a community celebration of the fall season filled with food, fellowship, and fun. This year the festival took place on Sunday, October 26th, a nineteen-year tradition celebrating this bountiful season with church and community members while providing an alternative to the holiday of Halloween.

The celebration was born when local church members Richard and Juli Jones were convicted to move away from a traditional celebration of Halloween with their two older children. Not wanting to give up the opportunity to celebrate the fall season—a season dear to Juli’s heart—the Jones’ looked for alternatives around them. As new members of the Auberry church, the family joined like-minded members who were already having a fall celebration on a smaller scale. Thus, decades of fall celebrations began, growing with each year.

Seventy-five people attended the celebration this October, making it one of the biggest events so far. Each year brings new ideas, new leaders, new volunteers, and new enthusiasm. “This celebration is one-of-a-kind in our community; an opportunity for families to come together and celebrate,” commented community member Bobbie Begaye. “My kids look forward to this every year.”

Returning this year, after a few years of being absent, was the hayride, a favorite of the children. The cakewalk is also a favorite, with church members contributing all sorts of baked goods including the well-known annual tradition involving Lori Erming’s buffalo chip cookies. This year featured an old-fashioned dunk tank and was a huge hit. In addition, a meal of veggie burgers with salad was provided for all attendees.

“It is nice to see a church that is so interested in making an impact in their community,” says newly installed pastor, Terry Beucler. “I am excited to be part of a church that is so dynamic; with so much love to share. I know God will use us in a powerful way to make an impact for Him.”

Each new year, the Auberry church finds an opportunity to share the goodness of God’s grace to all those around as they celebrate the fall season.

Shepherdesses Take a Break

By Onalee Showalter

From all across Central California Conference, shepherdesses gathered in Yosemite National Park to rendezvous at Camp Wawona on November 14-16, 2014. Spouses of Central’s ministers came together for a weekend of physical and spiritual refreshing. From working a “25/8” week balancing family, ministry, and jobs, attendees were following the counsel of Jesus to “come aside and rest awhile.”

This annual retreat is the one time each year during which pastoral spouses get together to focus on personal spiritual renewal as well as getting acquainted with each other and building relationships with ministry colleagues.

The theme “My Story, His Story” was developed through several studies of women found in the Bible. As they delved into the stories of Ruth, Esther, Sarah, Abigail and others, discussions naturally flowed to personal experiences of God’s leading and love. There were deep seasons of prayer for personal needs, their pastor spouses, family, and local churches.

By a show of hands, it was noted that about one-third of the attendees did not marry a pastor; rather they had been called out of other successful professions into full-time ministry. For these especially, the retreat was a time of additional support from those more tenured pastoral spouses.

Pastor Carlos Pasillas was so positive that his wife, Lisseth would enjoy the weekend, that he drove the 5-hour round trip to and from the camp so she could attend, not to mention caring for their two young children. “I loved it!” exclaimed Lisseth Pasillas, who was reluctant to come to her first retreat. “I told my husband I’m going again next year. It really helped me spiritually.”

The weekend program also included excellent meals, an evening of games and interaction, and Sabbath afternoon free time for walks in the fresh air of God’s gorgeous forest, or time just to rest and reflect. Central California Conference pastors’ spouses won’t want to miss next year’s retreat on November 13-15, 2015 at Camp Wawona.
“Follow!” “Follow Me!” This is the command Jesus gave to his disciples when he called them into service and to a walk with him. However, at times I fear that, much like my humorous misunderstanding in Malaysia, we may not truly understand what Jesus meant by “follow.”

When Jesus asked Peter, James, John and the other disciples to drop their trades and tools and “follow,” they left home and immediately obeyed. In asking those early disciples to part with their comfort zones, I wonder, is Christ asking less of us today?

Jesus was not proposing that His disciples make a New Year’s resolution. He was not suggesting that they join God’s cause part-time. Neither was he suggesting that they follow at a distance, but rather live and labor side-by-side with Him. He later sent them out to minister, instructing them not to take along extra shoes or clothes or wallets. He Himself would supply their needs. He would teach them total dependence, down to the very issues of life and death. They were to follow by faith, receiving through faith what He personally would provide for them.

John 21 and Jesus’ farewell to His friends is one of the most touching accounts in the New Testament. After their meal, which Christ provided and served, Jesus asked Peter three times, “Do you love me?” After testing his loyalty and obedience, Jesus reinstated Peter to full discipleship after his shameful denial. At the end of the conversation, Christ told Peter, “Follow me!”

Then Peter looked behind and saw John the Beloved following them. Peter had just been challenged to follow Christ. John was already following. His love for Christ naturally led him to follow his Lord.

Every member of God’s church has been invited to follow. He invites each one of us again and again. We misunderstand, we debate, we train, we equivocate, we delay and many times we go off in other directions. But Christ still says, “follow me.” It is not just an invitation to come along at a safe distance. It is an invitation to let him be in your driver’s seat, to love and serve and be miraculously cared for by his divine presence until He comes. My challenge to you is: just do it! Be a disciple! Follow!

As we look forward to a new year, I encourage you to plug into the many events and developments within the Seventh-day Adventist Church, both locally and beyond. 2015 will feature many exciting events, including the 60th General Conference session. Below are several resources that will help keep you connected.

Central California Conference eNewsletter (NEW in 2015!)
ccc.adventist.org/SignMeUp
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LIKE our Facebook page to keep up with breaking news, inspirational stories and much more.

Pacific Union Conference eNewsletter
PacificUnionRecorder.com
Click “Digital Edition” and subscribe to Pacific Union’s eNewsletter.

North American Division (NAD) NewsPoints
tinyurl.com/2gpmwu8
Subscribe to the NAD’s very informative eNewsletter to connect with national Adventist happenings.

ANN News Bulletin
News.adventist.org
Subscribe to the Church’s global news bulletin service to receive breaking news from around the world.

Costin Jordache
Vice President for Communication, Central California Conference
Aloha and Happy New Year! In this first newsletter for 2015, I want us to consider again our emphasis for our Hawaii Conference — Each One, Reach One. You may ask, “Why should I be so passionate about people, the lost?” The answer is pretty simple and straightforward. It is because people, the lost, matter to God.

In Luke 15, Jesus tells three stories to make this point. You remember and recall these three stories: the lost sheep, the lost coin and the lost (prodigal) son. There are some very profound common threads and themes found in these stories. For example, something of great value was missing, something that really mattered. The lost sheep was very important to the shepherd. The lost coin was vital to the woman’s survival. And you know how much that son mattered to that farther.

Consider another common thread. That which was missing was important enough to warrant an all-out search. The sheep got lost and the shepherd searched until he found it. The coin was lost and the woman hunted through her house until she found it. And the father kept a constant vigil searching the horizon, waiting for the day his son would come back home.

When you really value something, and it winds up lost, you just naturally want to search for it until it is found. In the heart of this chapter (verse 10) Jesus declares, “Likewise I say to you that there is JOY in Heaven over one sinner who repents!” All heaven erupts into a giant cosmic celebration!

If people matter to God, then people (the lost) must matter to us! Jesus said: “For the Son of Man has come to seek and save that which was lost” (Matthew 18:11).

Each One, Reach One. Why? Because our mission is to reach the lost for Jesus Christ. If we pray earnestly for God’s blessing He will help us achieve our goal through outreach and evangelism. But it must begin with a deep-hearted conviction that people are valuable to God.

Would you join me in praying as never before to become an instrument for souls to know Jesus, to ask Him what He would have us to do, and then move forward in faith? Thousands await our ministry. God can do it. “Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us, to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever!

Amen” (Ephesians 3:20, 21).

Because of Him,

Ralph S. Watts, III
CONFERENCE PREPARES FOR APRIL CONSTITUTENCY SESSION

BY GERALD D. CHRISTMAN

Aloha, Hawaii Conference Ohana,

It is my privilege to convey to you recent decisions of the Hawaii Conference Executive Committee.

The formation of conference financial budgets and assumptions are required as one calendar year concludes and a new one begins. Budgets consume considerable time and energy — ultimately requiring, of course, approval from the executive committee.

A new and revised Hawaii Conference Building and Property Policy has been endorsed. This new policy should bring clarity to church and school leaders regarding proper and acceptable construction procedures, the purchase of land and/or buildings, and the maintenance or renovation of existing structures. This policy also details conference financial assistance that churches or schools may expect when projects have received approval. More information can be obtained from the Hawaii Conference treasury.

Some other executive committee agenda items include preparing for the conference’s up-coming constituency session, scheduled for April 26.

The word “constituency,” at its root, means “con” (with or together) + “stitu” (to establish or to set up). Constituency, etymologically, means to establish or to set up together. Constituents, then, are a body of people eligible to elect or to establish representatives or leaders. Delegates will come from Seventh-day Adventist churches in Hawaii to elect or “to establish” leaders that will, in turn, administer and coordinate churches and their ministries.

Seventh-day Adventist church members in Hawaii are Hawaii Conference constituents. Since it’s neither practical nor feasible to assemble every member from all of the churches on the islands, churches select delegates to represent them at constituency sessions. Therefore, churches hold the real power in the conference. Although larger churches are apportioned a greater number of delegates than smaller churches, they, together, are the voice of the conference.

The Hawaii Conference’s Constitution and Bylaws state that constituency sessions are to convene every five years. The proposed date, as stated above, is Sunday, April 26, 2015; the venue: Honolulu Central Seventh-day Adventist Church. The purpose of this meeting is for delegates to transact conference business; this includes electing conference:

• administrative leaders
• executive committee members and
• constitution and bylaws committee members.

Other business will include voting on proposed changes that the constitution and bylaws committee is recommending.

Constituency sessions are, by nature, business sessions; they are organizationally necessary in order to accomplish the mission Christ has given to us. The focus of the Hawaii Conference’s approaching business session should be to reveal the likeness of Christ’s character and to labor to enlarge His Kingdom. Nothing else should truly matter.

Gerald D. Christman
Executive Secretary
Why We Do What We Do

BY MIKI AKEO-NELSON

Kaleo transferred into the school well after school had started. For some time, his parents had prayed for the opportunity to enroll him in a private school, but affording it seemed out of reach. After talking with the principal and pastor, the opportunity to be a part of Adventist education became a reality.

The late transition was not easy for Kaleo, nor for the school. He struggled with the structure of the day, in getting along with others and in obeying the adults around him. The school struggled with devoting so much time to Kaleo when other students needed attention, too. Sometimes it seemed Kaleo spent more time in the office than in his own classroom.

“Why are we allowing Kaleo to stay here?” some asked.

“Because it’s what we do — he needs us,” was the only reply. There was something about this student. A great controversy was happening in his young body — we had to help him.

One day, the call came in to the office, “Please come and get him — he’s out of control!” As the principal headed toward the classroom, she wondered how much longer the school could be captive to Kaleo’s outbreaks. When she reached the classroom, the principal saw Kaleo yelling and crying. She caught his attention and got Kaleo to leave with her. The silence on the walk to the office was broken on by the boy’s sniffles.

As Kaleo entered the office, he headed straight to the seat he had become so familiar with. The principal went to her desk to retrieve papers while silently praying for God’s divine intervention. Within seconds, the principal heard Kaleo humming “Jesus Loves Me.” Tears filled her eyes and peace took over. She didn’t utter one word of “correction.” Kaleo, his teacher and the principal talked about all that had happened and strategized a plan to help the young student claim victory over what was upsetting him. They talked about a safe place in the classroom he could go to settle himself when he felt frustrated or upset. It was important for Kaleo to know that the school was on his side.

A few days later, it happened. Something triggered Kaleo’s anger, and he started lashing out, but this time there was a plan. And as he worked to follow it, he cried out, “I want to be good — I just don’t know how! Will you please help me? Will you pray for me?” Tears filled the teacher’s eyes, and she assured him, “Yes!” Adventist education can make a difference!

READY TO MOVE?

BY ERIK VANDENBURG

Whenever we move from one home to another, the question that always comes up between my wife and I, “What do you hate worse, packing or unpacking?” For me, it has always been the unpacking, but with my family’s recent move to Hawaii, packing was the hard part.

Before this move, I had never had a limit on how much I could take. I always found a way to make it all fit, even if it took multiple trips. This time, as we packed up our belongings, we realized that it might not all fit in our 40-foot shipping container. We needed to leave some things behind.

The process of deciding what to take and what to leave is difficult. Some things are still useful, and others are part of wonderful memories. It’s hard to let go of the things that hold us back. Yet, in the end, each of us must learn to let go in order to move forward.

Jesus said, “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Matthew 6:19-21).

God is calling His church, youth and people to move! Are we willing to let go of the things we hold dear in order to move forward with Jesus? As we move into 2015, I pray that our answer is a resounding, YES!

Pastor Erik Vandenburgh

Pastor Erik Vandenburgh, Hawaii Conference Youth Director

January 2015
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE VOTES BUILDING & PROPERTY POLICY

BY GARY G. JOHNSON

On Dec. 7, 2014, the Hawaii Conference Executive Committee voted a Building and Property Policy to give guidelines and best practices for building, renovation, purchase, sale, and holding title to church and school property. Some of the highlights include:

1. All real property owned by the church in Hawaii must be titled in the name of the Hawaii Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

2. Property used exclusively for religious purposes is normally granted a property tax exemption by the County, and is charged only a nominal property tax. Care needs to be exercised in not using church property for “commercial purposes,” which would jeopardize this property tax exemption.

3. Only licensed contractors who can obtain the necessary building and occupancy permits from the County should be utilized on building projects.

4. All church property must be insured through Adventist Risk Management for property and liability insurance. Please contact the conference treasurer’s office to report changes in property ownership that would affect insurance coverage.

5. The policy gives guidelines on steps to follow in a capital project.

6. Conference approval is required for the following projects:
   a. New construction (adding square footage)
   b. Purchase of land or property with existing facilities
   c. Sale of existing land or property
   d. Borrowing of funds
   e. Requesting an appropriation from the Hawaii Conference

7. Conference appropriations are granted, subject to availability of funds, for new construction, purchase of land or property with existing facilities and renovation/major repair of an existing facility or land improvement.

8. Cash requirements in a major building project are 35% of the entire project in hand before the project is commenced, with satisfactory provision for securing the remaining 65% of the project cost.

9. Borrowing on major capital projects shall be exclusively through the loan funds administered by the Pacific Union.

If your church or school is contemplating a building project, contact the conference treasurer’s office to go over the specifics of the policy as it relates to your unique situation.

I would also be happy to share with any interested church employee or member who is interested in the full wording of the conference Building Policy.

Kailua Church Holds Will Seminar

BY FERYL HARRIS

Members of the Kailua congregation were recently invited to take a fresh look at biblical evidence for the importance of estate planning by way of a will or a trust. Trust officer Feryl Harris based her remarks on God’s message to Hezekiah through the prophet Isaiah. The king was advised, “This is what the Lord says. ‘Set your affairs in order, for you are going to die and not live’” (Isaiah 38:1, NLT). While one would not bear this message joyfully, it is nonetheless a truthful fact. It was Benjamin Franklin who stated, “In this world nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes.”

Participants were reminded that when YOU prepare your estate, it is YOU who makes the decision as to who will serve as the executor of your will or as the administrator of YOUR trust; YOU direct the distribution of YOUR assets; YOU decide how to provide for YOUR family, YOU decide how YOU wish to gift the furthering of God’s work.

Harris related a recent account of one who knew the importance of making preparations in view of her poor health but who “never got around to it,” and, in the end, failed her children by not being prepared prior to her death. Wrote Ellen White, “Many are not exercised upon the subject of making their wills while they are in apparent health; they should know their financial standing and should not allow their business to become entangled; they should arrange their property in such a manner that they may leave it at any time” (Stewardship, p. 328).

“I don’t have very much,” said one participant, “but I certainly don’t want the State of Hawaii to make decisions on who gets what I’ve got.” Don’t put off until tomorrow what you can do today.

Gary Johnson
Do you realize that it’s already been 15 years since the year 2000 showed up? It’s hard to believe! That change of calendar year, you’ll recall, was filled with all sorts of worries about “Y2K” – fears that computer systems would crash and would send the world spiraling into some sort of cataclysmic meltdown. None of us knew exactly what would happen when the clock struck midnight – but there was hardly even a blip in our lives.

Each year that comes along is filled with potential, with challenges, with tragedies, with uncertainties – a balance of fear and hope. We mortals can’t see the future; we can only live each day holding on to our faith system and facing each new day’s events with the knowledge that God is walking the day with us.

Looking back over the previous year gives us the opportunity to be thankful and grateful for so many wonderful things, events and people that God brought into our lives. We also have the chance to see where we certainly could have done things differently, and where we could have been more faithful in our walk with God. It’s good to spend time on both of those lines of thinking – to reinforce the good and to encourage a renewed positive direction for the future.

What lies ahead this year? In many ways I wish I had the answer to that question, since it could give me a chance to prepare for both the good and the bad. But since that’s not possible, I choose to live each day knowing that the God I serve will not only provide what I need, but also be at my side whatever may take place. That knowledge gives me confidence and hope for the future.

Many years ago, the Apostle Paul wrote to the church members in Rome this prayerful expression: “I pray that God, the source of hope, will fill you completely with joy and peace because you trust in Him. Then you will overflow with confident hope through the power of the Holy Spirit” (Romans 15:13, New Living Translation). Is there a more appropriate thought or prayer for today?

I look forward to the journey that lies ahead in this new year. I may not know what tomorrow holds in store for me or for those I love, but as the songwriter put it, “I know Who holds tomorrow.” Being secure in that faith experience with God provides me with the “confident hope” Paul writes about – just what I need for each and every day. My prayer for each of you is that you have that life-changing experience of being filled “completely with joy and peace because you trust in Him.”

Peace.

By Jim Pedersen, who serves as the president of the Northern California Conference.
Angels Camp
In late spring, the Angels Camp church hosted the “What’s In Your Kitchen?” cooking class. The church’s newly formed temperance committee asked church member Diane Frazier to lead out in the class because of her past experience conducting a vegan cooking class in her own home.

A cooking class is a great form of outreach, according to Frazier. “Everybody needs to eat,” she said. “This is a common ground that brings us as a people together – regardless of culture, religion and social status.”

During the eight-week seminar, participants received information about substitutes for meat, coffee and dairy products. They also learned about the benefits of brown rice, water and raw foods. Frazier and her team made the class fun, giving out prizes and food samples. The final night of the seminar, church members and community residents sat down together to enjoy a vegan potluck. “Getting to know the people in the community has been rewarding,” said Angels Camp church Pastor David Calderaro.

Frazier was delighted by the attendees’ reaction when they tasted the healthy recipes. “The smiles on their faces were a confirmation of delight in not only what was prepared for them in a healthy manner, but the actual flavor of the food and its presentation,” she said. “For them, the door was opened for more possibilities.”

Fairfield Community
During the past several years, Bernadette Johnson had been looking for a cooking program to present at the Fairfield Community church (where her husband serves as pastor). She finally discovered one she really likes – Natural Lifestyle Cooking by Ernestine Finley.

Johnson appreciates Finley’s materials because they take the guesswork out of the cooking instruction process. “The class is completely outlined for you – with a cookbook, workbook and instructor’s book,” said Johnson. “My favorite part was just knowing that I could do it.”

Each of the seven class sessions had a different theme, such as holiday food, breakfast and drinks/smoothies. At every session, Johnson gave cooking demonstrations for seven different vegan and low-sugar recipes. Two audience favorites were German carob cake and blackberry cobbler. Church member Shana Doolin, a family nurse practitioner, gave a talk about nutrition at each meeting.

Church member Beverly Davis—who served as Johnson’s assistant—appreciated Finley’s user-friendly recipes. “It’s very easy to get the necessary ingredients from regular grocery stores; you don’t need to go to specialized stores,” she said. “You can be healthy without spending your whole paycheck.”

According to Johnson, cooking schools are not only a good method of community outreach, but they also serve as an important ministry to church members. “When you’re bringing new people into the church, you shouldn’t just tell them about the health message, you should show them how to cook healthfully,” she said.

By Kathy Batchelor, who serves as human resources director of the Northern California Conference, and Julie Lorenz, assistant director in the communication department of the Northern California Conference.
Members of the Pleasant Hill Trailblazers Pathfinder club helped make it possible for kids and adults in need to get bicycles for Christmas. For the third year in a row, the club volunteered for the Adopt-A-Family Bike Program, based in San Ramon.

This year 17 Pathfinders and parents spent part of a Sunday early in December cleaning and repairing used bicycles donated to the program. During the morning, club member Ella Hoban scrubbed a child’s rusty bike with a wire brush. “I think it got left out in the rain,” she said. “I was fixing it up for a kid.”

Fellow club member Evan Farley changed two bike tires, in addition to other tasks. “It’s important for the Pathfinders to do this because some children won’t get any presents but bikes,” he said.

Since 2002, the Adopt-A-Family Bike Program has delivered more than 2,000 bicycles to adults and children in need – 389 last year alone. The program depends on volunteers to ensure that the bikes are clean, safe and in good working order.

After being refurbished, the bikes are donated to a variety of nonprofit agencies, including a local public school district, a drug and alcohol rehabilitation program, a crisis center and a church charity. A bicycle can make a huge difference in the life of a child, who may not receive any other Christmas gift. It can also really help adults trying to get back on their feet, who don’t have cars or even money for bus fare. Along with every bicycle, the program gives each recipient a helmet and a bike lock.

The Trailblazers club learned of the charity through club counselor Isaac Chin, a member of the San Ramon Valley church. At his dental practice, he met Joseph and Mimi Hui and their family. The Huis are active members of the Adopt-A-Family Bike Program team, and they told Chin about the nonprofit organization. “Joe told me they could always use more help,” said Chin, who thought it would be an excellent community service project for the club. “My favorite part is getting our Pathfinder group out to the community, instead of being isolated and just doing things with our own group,” he said.

An added benefit of the volunteer work is that it enables the kids to learn about bike maintenance and repair – essential skills for the cycling honor, which has requirements such as: “repair a punctured bike tire” and “take apart, clean and properly reassemble a bike.”

Cycling has traditionally been a very important part of the Trailblazers club. Each year, members take practice rides together before the NCC Bike-athon, and last year the club’s bike-athon mileage totaled about 2,500 miles.

Read more about this nonprofit organization at www.adoptafamilybikes.org.

“**My favorite part is getting our Pathfinder group out to the community, instead of being isolated and just doing things with our own group.**”

By Julie Lorenz, who serves as assistant director in the communication department of the Northern California Conference.
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Keynote Speaker
Dorothy Means is the director of the Pacific Union Conference Women's Ministries Department. A licensed clinical social worker, she serves as an elder and prayer coordinator for the Normandie Avenue church in Los Angeles.

Seminar Presenters
- Theresa Clarke - “Understanding Spiritual Gifts”
- Taya Gyorkey - “Resting to Run: The Fruit of Centered Leadership”
- Mary Maxson - “God’s Design for Woman-Discipling”
- Kelly Mowrer - “Growing in Prayer: 7 Simple Steps”
- Sharon Perry - “Healing Oils of the Bible”
- Joanne Pierson - “Bible Studies Series for the Women in Your Church”
- Corletta Taylor - “Ministering to the Young Women in Your Congregations”
- Karen White - “Empowering Daughters of God through Transformational Leadership”
- Judy Williams - “Awaken to Grace”

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Greetings in the Lord, to my Nevada-Utah Adventist family. What a joy it has been to get to know so many of the members of this conference in such a short time.

As I read the letters of the Apostle Paul I am reminded that everywhere he traveled he met new “family.” He often uses the terms brother or sister in his writings and now I know why. When you are a part of the Seventh-day Adventist church you are a part of a great worldwide family. This fact transitions nicely to my first trip story in this newsletter.

For only the 2nd time in the 29 years I’ve worked for the SDA church, I had the privilege of attending the Annual Council of the General Conference. There were many important topics on the agenda, which would take me 12 pages to cover them all, but the thing that impressed me the most was the Christ-like spirit displayed by all the participants.

The meetings were all bathed in prayer and I believe that made a real difference. With subjects like women’s ordination, the churches’ response to homosexuality, and other difficult issues, we truly needed that prayer to keep us focused on God’s ways. I believe ultimately the Lord’s will was done in the actions that were taken. Since we are so close to the General Conference session, many of the major issues will be voted on there. If we are praying daily for that special meeting of our world leaders, the Church will not fail. That is something we can be assured of.

After getting back to Reno, my first preaching assignment was at the Susanville church. I was truly blessed with the Bible-focused Sabbath school and the wonderful church service. I found a very responsive audience to preach to that Sabbath, which tells me this church is filled with members who love God and His Word.

On October 19, I was a part of one of those “mixed emotion” programs. It was the day the NUC office said farewell to Lila Sumrall-Lindsay as she began her retirement. Working with Lila just a short time, I could tell she is a deeply devoted follower of Christ, and a truly committed worker for His Church. It was great to meet her husband Ed for the first time and see what a wonderful couple they make. To emphasize how special she was to this conference, the last three conference presidents of NUC—Dr. Brad Newton, Elder Larry Unterseher, and myself—were all on hand to wish her well in her retirement. I was also told by several pastors to send her their love and regards on her retirement. My favorite “send off” came from Pastor Bill Davis who said, “When you see her, go give her a big hug for me” and I did just that. Thank you Lila and...
may God bless you and Ed in this next chapter of your life.

When I first got to know our literature ministry director, Westney White, he asked me if I could come down to Souls West in Prescott, Arizona, to meet some of our young people training for God’s work there. Well, it took a while to find a place in my crazy schedule to do that, but on October 22, it finally happened. I had the privilege of meeting with all of the young people we have training there and I can truly say with assurance that the Church is in good shape with young men and women like these. I was asked to speak to the entire student body and I was truly blessed by their response to my simple challenge. It says in Gospel Workers (page 66): “With such an army of youth, rightly trained, how soon the message of a crucified, risen, and soon-coming Savior might be carried to the whole world.” After spending time with these young people at Souls West, I felt I was witnessing at least a partial fulfillment of that statement. May God richly bless our young people, especially those who have taken up the challenge to witness for Him.

Later I attended the North American Division year-end meeting. All of the officers of each of the 58 conferences, and the Micronesian mission are invited to attend these meetings, so Elder Carlos Camacho, Doug Reeves, and I were all there to participate in this annual event. However, only the president can vote on issues discussed. I felt a great spirit of unity and Christian love at these meetings. Even when there was differing opinions on various issues, it was always done in a Christ-like way, not pushy or with anger. It is wonderful when we can work together in that kind of spirit. Again many weighty items were on the agenda and all were dealt with in a Christian manner. One of the issues was to move the NAD out of the building they now share with the GC. After a lengthy discussion, that was approved. I want to publicly tell you that NAD President Elder Dan Jackson, and NAD Executive Secretary Elder Alex Bryant did an outstanding job leading us through these items. I would ask that you remember them in your prayer life as they have incredible challenges to deal with everyday.

After living out of a suitcase for the last four months, it was a blessing for my wife and I to be able to close escrow on a home in Reno, after returning from the NAD meetings.

The weekend of November 21-22, I had the joy of spending the day in Ogden, Utah. I got to participate in Sabbath school, and then preach at the Ogden church. I also met the Hispanic members of that church who did a simultaneous translation while I preached to the English-speaking church.

After church I met with several different groups of people and even had an anointing service with the elders for a woman who has been suffering for some time with various illnesses. My 3rd appointment that day was to visit with our church school leaders at the Deamude SDA School. It was a great visit. The dedication that Camille Hopkins and Jessica Michel have shown to this school is something to admire. God has truly blessed them and our student body is growing both spiritually and in number.

That afternoon I met with Ogden Pastor Ryan Hablitzel and his church board to plan an evangelistic meeting for his church in the spring of 2015. We decided to do a nine-day reaping series in March. From what I see of the dedication of these members, Pastor Ryan, and his Bible Worker Heather Shurtliff, I believe this will be an outstanding meeting. I’m looking forward to it. That evening I had the joy of meeting with Pastor Angel Cuenca and some of the members of the Ogden Spanish Church. I gave a short message for vespers, met the members and then headed to a nice meal with Pastor Angel, his wife, Marigold, and their children. It was truly nice to get to know this wonderful pastoral couple a little bit better.

As a worker fully committed to the work of soul-winning, I have attended and spoken for an evangelism council almost every year of my ministry. This year was no exception since I had already committed to participating in the
Dayton Evangelism Council at last year's meeting. The meetings were held in Daytona, Florida, from December 1-4, with various speakers and workshops all revolving around the great theme of finishing the work on earth. One of the speakers, Elder Ron Clouzet, shared some startling statistics on how the Church has almost stopped growing in North America. However, in the places where the Church is growing, the common denominator is a strong emphasis on a combination of personal and public evangelism. Let us commit ourselves fully to sharing this amazing message that God has entrusted to us of His great love and salvation.

The following weekend I was blessed to be a part of the first ever Asian-Pacific Convocation in the Nevada-Utah Conference. This meeting was held at the Fil-Am SDA Church in Las Vegas, yet delegates from all over the conference were there. It was a true joy to hear prayer, scripture, and music in all the languages represented. There were Korean, Filipino, Tongan, Samoan, and others all working together to challenge their members to action for Jesus. What a wonderful and high Sabbath it was. I especially want to thank all of the pastors who worked together in unity under the direction of Pastor Villamor Meriales. I was especially touched by the diverse, powerful and awe-inspiring music. Pastor Sheldon Bryan and two of his young people from the Tali-Ki-Mamani church sang a powerful song near the end of the day that just made me long for that great day when we shall worship before Jesus in person in the kingdom made new.

That afternoon, in between my sermons, I ran over to the Mountain View Church, at the request of Pastor BJ Boles, to be a part of a special retirement program for Pastor David Wallace. While I have only known Pastor Wallace for a short time, his kindness, love, and professionalism stood out to me from the very first time I met him. The testimonies and stories that were told all spoke of a man whom God has greatly used to further his kingdom on earth. God bless you Pastor Wallace, and may your retirement bring you great happiness.

My last appointment of Sabbath, December 6, was truly a blessing. I was able to attend the vespers program at the Maranatha Spanish Church and welcome the new pastoral team to this wonderful church. Pastor Benjamin Carballo and his wife Veronica are joining us from Miami, Florida, where he served as the Youth Director for the Inter-American Division. It was great to introduce him and his family to the NUC conference, but I was the one who truly received the bigger blessing as I listened to him sing several songs that he had written himself over the years he's been in ministry, including a song he wrote when he was just a young teenager. The Lord has truly blessed this godly Christian pastoral couple with

“I was especially touched by the diverse, powerful and awe-inspiring music.”

Continued on the next page
many gifts, and it is my prayer that they will be used to do great things for the Maranatha church in the years to come.

November also featured the highlight of the year for me so far as president in the NUC—the annual pastors’ retreat. We met as a team of gospel workers in a venue in Las Vegas to discuss what has been happening since the new office team has started working together. We had time for discussing issues that we as a conference family have been facing, and how to deal with them and grow the kingdom of God in the NUC. There were inspirational worship talks given by our own workers that no guest speaker could have topped. Elder BJ Boles spoke about making Jesus our Hero and not seeking to be a hero, or find a hero in earthly leaders. It was a great way to kick off our time together. Then Elder Omar Palmer spoke on the story of Jesus in the storm on the Sea of Galilee. His emphasis was to make sure we always have Jesus in the ship of our life. How powerfully appropriate for a group of ministers in this age. Then Elder Joe Garcia shared from his heart how God moves people to action and shared his own heartfelt testimony as well. It truly moved us closer to God. Finally Elder Adam Case shared how God has led him through some of the most difficult moves of his career and how he has gained strength through it all. All of these messages had me praising God for His goodness, and challenged me to seek Him with a deeper commitment. Thank you all for letting the Holy Spirit lead you. Every message had a deep impact on my personal spiritual life. The pastors’ wives meetings, led by my wife, Lillian, ran concurrently with the main informational meetings. She mentioned what a joy she had listening to the testimonies of how God is using these pastoral spouses to help others find Jesus and nurture those who already have a relationship with Him.

The thing I will savor the most of this get-together was the time we spent in prayer. I had heard Elder Peter Neri speak on prayer at a seminar I attended some years ago and asked him if he would lead the prayer time for us throughout our meetings. It was the best thing we did. What can be sweeter than praying in the Spirit of God with coworkers in God’s vineyard?

“What can be sweeter than praying in the Spirit of God with coworkers in God’s vineyard?”

Thank you Pastor Neri for calling us to the throne of grace to receive mercy and power to do God’s work. I can’t wait until the next time we meet in this way. Hopefully it will be in heaven, but if not, anywhere on earth will do with this great group of workers.

May God Bless the NUC,
Ed Keyes
Southeastern California Conference Turns 100

Southeastern California Conference turns 100 years old in a few weeks.

This year will be the centennial celebration for our conference. We will share much more, as the year unfolds, about how faithful God has been to us, stories of our history and ways we will celebrate as a conference.

Here is how we started:

Southern California Conference Executive Committee voted in February, 1915 to split the conference into two conferences “for the sake of efficiency,” (Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia, Vol. 11, p. 661). The new Southeastern California Conference was assigned the territory of San Bernardino, Riverside, Orange, San Diego and Imperial counties, and received $35,379 in tithe funds. W.F. Martin was elected president. We began with 27 churches and 1,645 members and the conference office was established in Santa Ana. There were a total of 23 employees made up of 13 ordained ministers, three licensed ministers, five bible workers and the other two were a medical missionary and office worker.

Besides the churches, 15 schools were in operation that first year, with 18 teachers working and over 400 students enrolled. In addition to these schools operating in a new conference, it is reported that 24 students from SECC were attending what was then San Fernando Academy and 20 more were enrolled at Pacific Union College.

At the first SECC constituency session, held August 1–11, 1916 in San Diego, one year after SECC was formally organized, 68 delegates from churches and 27 pastors and office workers wanted to express gratitude to God, so they voted this statement: “Whereas, The Lord has signally blessed our conference during the past year as manifested in preserving the health and lives of our workers, and giving them a large number of souls for their labor, and in putting into the hearts of the people to give of their means to support the work at home and abroad, we hereby render to Him a tribute of thanksgiving and praise, and pledge ourselves to more consecrated service for the coming year,” (Pacific Union Recorder, September 1916).

What a statement of thanksgiving our founders made in the infancy of our conference. A 100 years of ministry has made a great impact in the five counties that comprise our conference. God has been faithful!

Decades of pastors, educators, conference personnel, church members and students have all been faithful. We have seen the results of dedicated, Spirit-led work through the growth of membership, churches and schools throughout our territory. We have grown in depth and breadth of diversity and in our journey with God.

Today we stand on the shoulders of those who have worked ahead of us. I look forward to sharing more of this story which is, after all, God’s story in Southeastern California Conference.

By Sandra Roberts, SECC President

What a difference 100 years of ministry has made in the five counties of our conference territory. God has been faithful!
Friday mornings start at 7:30 a.m. for students at Redlands Adventist Academy. Nearly 100 students arrive at school, voluntarily, each Friday morning 30 minutes early to participate in RAA’s Run Club.

Kindergartners to junior high students run laps to add more miles to their Run Club cards. They carry mile cards and receive a hole-punch for each lap they run, with 10 laps equaling a mile. When they complete a mile, they ring an old-time school bell to celebrate their accomplishment. RAA Run Club foot charms are earned for reaching significant milestones. Each week the runners also receive Jamba Juice as a reward for their hard work and exercise.

Jacob Diaz, 7-year-old RAA second grader, said he likes “to run in the morning and get the wiggles out.”

Parents support the club by helping punch mile cards, handing out charms and Jamba Juice and encouraging participants each week.

“We are so grateful for every supportive individual,” said Keri Gatling, volunteer RAA Run Club coach.

RAA Run Club is sponsored by Loma Linda University Health. Their sponsorship helps cover the cost of the Jamba Juice, charms, mile cards and logo T-shirts.

“The relationship and connection with Loma Linda University Health has been immeasurable,” said Gatling.

Gatling founded the RAA Run Club last spring. She was inspired by her love of exercise, running and fitness to help motivate kids to move.

Gatling expressed her joy in watching the club grow. “It has been amazing to watch the club start with 35 eager students and grow steadily to now more than 90 each week. To date we have run 1,500 miles,” she said.

Friday morning RAA Run Club ends each week with runners reciting Hebrews 12:1 (NLT): “Let us run with endurance the race God has set before us.”

At RAA it does not matter why you run; participants come for friends, fitness, fun and much more.

“We remind and encourage the kids to keep Jesus first in their hearts, and they will succeed in the race of life,” said Gatling. The motto and cheer of the RAA Run Club resounds each Friday, “We RUN Together at RAA.”

*By Kari Gatling with Chloe Vander Zwan*
SECC Sponsors Prayer Ministries Breakfast

On Sunday, November 16 a group of 130 prayer leaders, prayer teams, church leaders and pastors gathered to a Prayer Breakfast sponsored by the conference. The event was hosted by the Corona church. The purpose was to empower, encourage and pray with those who came, so each one present could return to his or her own church and share what God is doing.

Bernard Brandstater, a church member and prayer team participant at the Loma Linda University church, inspired the group with his piano and worship music. As people ate, different individuals shared what God was doing in their churches through prayer ministry. As people shared, seeds were planted, new ideas grew and excitement for prayer ministry ignited across the room.

There was much prayer individually, with each other and corporately. One of the highlights for the attendees was being able to listen to SECC leaders express their requests for prayer and then to gather in groups around each of them to pray for the requests. Sandra Roberts, conference president, Jonathan Park, executive secretary, Alberto Ingleton, vice president of Hispanic ministries, George King, vice president for Black ministries, and Elizer Sacay, vice president for Asian/Pacific ministries, were among those leaders present.

Others that were unable to attend were also prayed for.

Hearts were moved as Miguel Mendez, pastor for evangelism and prayer ministry at Loma Linda University church, shared the keynote message titled, “Dialog or Monologue - The Dynamics of Relational Prayer.”

As the program closed, resources for prayer ministry were given out and everyone was anxious to go back to their home church and share ideas that would help develop a deeper prayer life and more personal relationship with God among their members.

“I believe that God’s richest promises for personal and church growth are in Scripture. God tells us to sow and He will grow. Prayer ministry is about sowing seeds of prayer to grow the Kingdom of God in every way and everywhere. God is calling His people to pray,” said Karen Martell, SECC prayer ministry coordinator.

By Karen Martell with Chloe Vander Zwan

SECC Intermediate Handbell Festival (Jan. 29) 7 p.m., Murrieta Springs Adventist Christian Academy, 32477 Starbuck Cir., Murrieta. Info: Mandi Staples, 951-509-2321.

Religious Liberty Day (Jan. 24) 11 a.m., Campus Hill church, 11057 Hill Dr., Loma Linda. Lincoln Steed, editor of Liberty magazine, will present the message. Info: Karl McCalla, 909-362-6496.

Upcoming Events

Concert (Jan. 2) 7 p.m., Paradise Village, 2700 E. 4th St., National City. Soprano Esther Neal will preform a holiday concert. Info: 619-245-5845.

Faces of Southeastern California Conference

Featuring people within our conference who impact our churches, schools or communities.

Gerry Chudleigh

This past October, at the annual convention of the Society of Adventist Communicators, Gerry Chudleigh received the lifetime achievement award. Gerry has worked for the Adventist church for over 47 years. Gerry got his first taste of ministry while working at Pine Springs Ranch at the age of 16. This experience led him to feel his calling to ministry. After his college and seminary experience, he pastored. Soon after pastoring, he started working as a youth director in various conferences, including SECC. During his years of service, Gerry worked in Adventist healthcare, evangelistic ministry and Church administration. Over the past years, Gerry has become known as “the man behind the lens.” Beyond his stellar photography work, his recent articles and research have greatly impacted the internal dialogue of the Adventist Church on several key issues.
A group of Fullerton church members participated in the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure on September 28. Their goal was to create awareness, gather donations and support church members diagnosed with breast cancer.

Gloria Palacios, 89-year-old grandmother, cancer survivor and Fullerton church member, asked William Edward Penick, another church member, to rally the congregation for the cause, as this would be her 19th time participating in the event.

Penick answered Palacios’s call by advertising the event, ordering T-shirts with the church’s name printed on the front, planning and conducting a pep rally the night before the event, arranging transportation for participants and committing to run in the race himself. Eventually, the church team had 22 members.

The senior ministries team members participated in the early morning one-mile walk, and the family ministries team members and their children participated in the kids’ one-mile fun run and walk. The youth, young adult and adult team members participated in the in the 5k run/walk.

Zenny Ivette Chi, church member, said, “It’s amazing how many people do walks to support cancer victims. I was surprised at how many people there were. It was a lot of fun.”

Another member, Kevin Tan, finished in the top 100 group and said, “It was fun running with more than 5,000 people. It was my first time doing it, and I will do it again if I get the opportunity.”

By Glo Haya

Some of the Fullerton church team members wearing their custom T-shirts.
Discouraged unto Death?

With God, There’s Always Hope!

Why did I not die at birth? Why did I not perish when I came from the womb? Oh, that I might have my request, that God would grant me the thing that I long for! That it would please God to crush me, that He would loose His hand and cut me off! Job 3: 11; 6:8-9 NKJV

And Elijah expressed similar feelings of utter darkness: “It is enough! Now, Lord, take my life, for I am no better than my fathers!” 1Kings 19: 4 NKJV

All of us are subject to discouragement from time to time. When the weight of this condition robs us of offsetting joy and peace, we often fail to realize that there are unseen players involved in our personal agony. During these times the enemy of souls is battling for our defeat. By tempting us to doubt God’s love and to resist reaching out in faith for help to rise above the oppressing circumstance, Satan can send us into a spiraling clutch of negativity.

Because we become what we believe we are when we allow the evil one to separate us from knowing that God is our Help, our loving Father, our Counselor and Guide, we become Satan’s trapped victims. His spell of despondency draws the body and mind into a pattern not conducive to thriving. At these times, the regenerative will to exercise, eat right, look for good around us and find opportunities to focus on others’ needs all decline. This places us at even further disadvantage and distance from the power to overcome discouragement and depression.

Overcoming these circumstances often requires help from others—including professional and clinical support. However, much redeeming
Pastor Christopher Famisaran is a fourth-generation Seventh-day Adventist whose roots go back to Adventist missionaries in the Philippines. On Nov. 22, 2014, Chris was ordained to the gospel ministry at the Temple City church.

In 2005, Chris graduated from La Sierra University with a Bachelor of Arts in Religious Studies. He then received a call to serve as a part-time youth pastor for the Central Filipino church. Less than a year later, he received a call to serve full time as an associate pastor for the Temple City and Pasadena churches. He served in both churches for a period of seven years while completing a Master of Arts in Pastoral Ministries in 2012 through Andrews University. In March of 2013, he was called to pastor the El Monte church, and has been blessed to work with a team that deeply desires to share Jesus with others and reach out to the community.

An explorer at heart, Famisaran fondly remembers his childhood as a series of adventures and exploration. When school work was done, he was always off in the hills and neighborhood exploring with his siblings and friends. As a teenager, music and the local church youth ministry became a serious part of his life. In high school, the call to ministry started to take shape. In college he changed majors several times until he finally settled on Theology. Several summers working with kids in camp ministry established a desire to serve full time in youth ministry.

While working at Camp Cedar Falls, Chris met and was smitten with the head lifeguard, Leisa Wong. Several years later he asked her father Bob Wong, SCC’s Youth Ministry director, if he could take her out on a date. Chris and Leisa were married seven years ago, and have a puppy named Jackson McGarrett. In his spare time, Chris loves to surf, cycle, CrossFit. He enjoys music and reading.

“I am appreciative of the people who have taken time to mentor me,” he said, “and God’s faithfulness in leading me into ministry. He has helped me in overcoming challenges—which has required a lot of faith (and some stubbornness) at times. At times, I didn’t know where it would lead.

“I have a wonderful current church. We are literally feeding the hungry and clothing the needy, getting out into the community just like the Scriptures tells us to. To finally see it all come together is awesome. It is awesome to see the hand of God at work though I didn’t recognize it at first. With God’s guidance, my life and ministry has come together and I am grateful.”

Famisaran was born in Loma Linda, CA, and was raised primarily in the Inland Empire. Early in his childhood he lived with his family for several years in San Diego, and also on the tiny island of Guam. He is blessed with his parents Noy and Michele, his brother, Andrew; his sisters Trisha and Briana.
benefit is as close as the nearest Bible. 

God’s promises are certain and true. He can be trusted even in the most difficult times. Though economic, social and moral challenges loom ahead, God counsels us to “seek first the kingdom of God.” As we enter a new year, perhaps two of my favorite statements from Patriarch and Prophets will offer help for remaining stable and assured:

In the darkest days, when appearances seem most forbidding, fear not. Have faith in God. He knows your need. He has all power. His infinite love and compassion never weary. Fear not that He will fail of fulfilling His promise. Never will He change the covenant He has made with those who love Him. And He will bestow upon His faithful servants the measure of efficiency that their need demands (White, Patriarchs and Prophets, pp. 164-165). To wait patiently, to trust when everything looks dark, is the lesson the leaders in God’s work need to learn. Heaven will not fail them in their day of adversity. Nothing is apparently more helpless, yet really more invincible, than the soul that feels its nothingness and relies wholly on God” (Ibid., pp. 174-175).

In this new year, may each of us be sensitive to the struggles of others, and may that sensitivity keep us offering loving care when we sense those needs. Whether through prayer, in physical or monetary support, or by just providing a hug of compassion and empathy, may God keep us in tune with His love and the needs of others. This in itself has much power for warding off negative thinking.

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**Sunland-Tujunga Church Dedicates Community Services Center**

On Nov. 22, 2014, the Sunland-Tujunga church dedicated a newly refurbished room in the church basement to serve as a Community Services Center for their neighbors.

Randy and Sarah Seltzer painted and helped renovate, with help from their son Eddie Seltzer. Others assisting with repairs included Demecio Flores and Marcos Guzman. Erold Fletcher, Board of Trustees chair, supervised the project.

At the end of the church service, members and guests marched and sang, accompanied by saxophones and an accordion. They marched from the front of the church, around the building and into the new Community Services Center for the dedication service.

Elder James G. Lee, Jr., SCC Community Services director, officiated at the ribbon cutting and service. “When you use this facility to feed the poor and clothe the naked,” said Lee, “you are fulfilling the role that Christ has called us to fill. May God bless you as you continue your work of meeting the needs of the Tujunga community, in His name.”

The Sunland-Tujunga church has aided its church school students for years by conducting three or four major rummage sales each year to raise funds to help with tuition costs. The sales also serve as major community service, health ministry and other outreach as well as contact opportunities with people from the surrounding communities. Mabel Duncan is the church’s associate pastor.

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*Discouraged Unto Death, cont. from page 1*

Francisco Mowat (foreground) and Victor Jones accompanied the procession to the Community Services room dedication. Ruth Ortiz, church pianist, followed, playing the accordion. Photo by Betty Cooney
Life Hope Centers is a new avenue of outreach that SCC administrators are currently exploring. The centers are a community-based, integrated form of evangelistic outreach, intended to provide an opportunity for lay people to use their unique gifts in urban ministry. The centers also involve pastors and other church workers, departments and institutions.

To initiate this type of urban outreach, conference leaders will seek help with funding from the Union, Division and the General Conference. Requests for funding will ultimately be taken to the General Conference Mission Board Strategic Funding and Planning Committee for consideration.

This community outreach approach can include lifestyle education, treatment rooms, bookstores, reading rooms, restaurants, literature ministry, lectures, small groups, instruction on preparing wholesome food—and more. The activities chosen for each center will vary, depending on an accurate assessment of local community needs. Please pray for us as we develop plans for this new, comprehensive outreach opportunity involving lay people as well as leaders. Ellen White championed wholistic urban ministry centers (which she called centers of influence) for connecting the church to the community.

The idea for the Life Hope Centers is based on a well-known teaching in The Ministry of Healing, by Ellen White: Christ’s method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Saviour mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs and won their confidence. Then He bade them, “Follow Me.”

L. A. Metro Region

The region will be encouraging on health ministry and discipleship training in 2015. First, region pastors will be involved in certification training for the CREATION Health Seminar from Jan. 17 – 19, in Palm Springs. This will give them skills to interface with their communities through this wholistic ministry.

In addition, region pastors will be exposed to a transformational model of discipleship-making as a means of spiritual growth and outreach. Maria Ovando-Gibson, PhD, associate pastor of the Vallejo Drive church, will share principles on the value and art of discipleship-making as an integral part of the local church experience.

This transformational model cultivates and encourages relationships with peers in groups of threes.

West Region

As an innovative way to announce a free Nutrition and Wellness Seminar they had scheduled in a local Presbyterian church, Roger and Becky Combs in the Acton Valley congregation invited 150 neighbors in their rural community to a get-acquainted program and lunch on their ranch. About 90 neighbors responded, glad for a chance to meet their neighbors and enjoy some good food, gospel literature and food gifts to take home. The Nov. 16 & 17 seminar, presented by Jim and Neva Brackett, provided information about preventing cancer and reversing heart disease, diabetes, hypertension and obesity. About 50 people said they wanted to attend a “Landmarks of Prophecy” video series that was planned for January.

Three Santa Barbara churches (Santa Barbara, Grace Community and Santa Barbara Spanish) hosted “The Ten Commandments” musical, in the Lobero Theatre on Nov. 23. (This musical is a production created by Dr. Schubert and Yolanda Palmer.) The musical was scheduled at the White Memorial and Loma Linda University churches on the same weekend, and involved 10 leading Adventist recording artists, with narration by former VOP speaker Lonnie Melashenko.

Response was so high that two performances were scheduled on that day, at 2:00 and 5:00 p.m., with a total of more than 1200 persons attending. Much prayer was invested in this “bridge” event for friendship evangelism. Members are following up with those who expressed interest in studying the Bible.

Hispanic Region

As a result of the Metropolitan Campaign held during November in our churches, 113 persons have been baptized. Please keep them in your prayers!

The region is planning the 2nd Holy Spirit Conference February 6-8, 2015, at San Gabriel Academy, as a preparation for members to receive the outpouring of the Holy Spirit so we can finish the work.

On February 18-21, the region will conduct the “Quiero Vivir Sano” (I want to live healthy) intensive seminar training for pastors and laity. Our purpose is to learn to use the health message as an effective tool for outreach. We believe the community is open to receiving information that will benefit their health. After having this training with our pastors and members, region church members and pastors will take it to the community.

Asian Pacific Region

Five Korean churches in our region participated recently in an SCC-SECC Korean music festival held in the Garden Grove church in Southeastern California Conference. The SCC churches had been practicing from six to eight months for the annual event, inviting new believers, neighbors and friends to choir practices, as they usually do. In the course of practicing for the festival, new believers are strengthened, and some guests have decided to be baptized. Others form favorable opinions of the churches where they attend choir practice.