

SOUTHWESTERN UNION

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When Rivers Rise

ACS Disaster Response provides relief for Southern Louisiana flood survivors

ADVENTIST COMMUNITY SERVICES DISASTER RESPONSE



In this Issue...

DEPARTMENTS

To Your Health 4
 MyFaith 5
 Pass It On 6
 Visión Hispana 7

FEATURES

Adventist Community Services Disaster Response Provides Relief 8
 Rain, Rain, Came Down, Down . . . 10
 God Saw Us Through 14

NEWS

Arkansas-Louisiana 16
 Oklahoma 19
 Southwest Region 22
 Texas 25
 Texico 28
 Southwestern Adventist University . . 31
 Southwestern Union 34

ETCETERA

Classified Ads 36
 Announcements 37
 Obituaries 37
 On the Record 39



ADVENTIST COMMUNITY SERVICES DISASTER RESPONSE PROVIDES RELIEF TO SOUTHERN LOUISIANA FLOOD SURVIVORS



Rain, Rain, Came Down, Down



GOD SAW US THROUGH: THE GREAT LOUISIANA FLOOD



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On the Cover

The August 2016 flood in Southern Louisiana damaged more than 140,000 homes and thousands of businesses. More than 30,000 people had to be evacuated from the area and 13 people lost their lives. In this issue, read about the efforts of Adventist Community Services Disaster Response to provide comfort and relief of to the survivors. [Cover photo courtesy of the Arkansas-Louisiana Conference. Inset photo courtesy of Stephen Ruf.]

Point of View»

BY LARRY MOORE » SOUTHWESTERN UNION CONFERENCE PRESIDENT



Following in His Footsteps

The work of Adventist Community Services Disaster Response is a work of love. It's a work that follows in the footsteps of Jesus' own ministry. The often-quoted method for successfully reaching people from *Ministry of Healing* is precisely the work of ACS DR.

"Christ's method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Savior 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'...The poor are to be relieved, the sick cared for, the sorrowing and the bereaved comforted, the ignorant instructed, the inexperienced counselled. We are to weep with those that weep, and rejoice with those that rejoice" (p. 143).

The work of ACS DR often involves disaster relief efforts, as we see in the case of the recent disastrous flooding in Southern Louisiana. ACS DR works alongside government and non-profit organizations to bring immediate relief to those who are suffering. ACS DR has developed a specialty for helping to warehouse and distribute donations, and is often called upon to do this work.

When there is no disaster, Adventist Community Services is busy preparing for future events, gathering and organizing donations, as well as training churches and individuals to become involved in the ministry.

ACS leaders also motivate our churches and members to become involved in their local communities by posing the question, "What can you do in your community to show people that we do desire their good, to minister to their needs, and win their confidence?" They invite members to become active in food pantries,

community health clinics, or other creative ministries that meet the specific needs that they see in their communities.

The people of Southern Louisiana needs assistance now, and we can and should help them by donating our time and physical labor, money, or goods through ACS DR.

Don't forget, however, that there is a family in crisis near you that needs to be cared for and comforted. I invite you to also follow in Jesus' footsteps by showing that you desire their good, by ministering to their needs, and bid them to follow Him.



Help Southern Louisiana Now:

Learn about the best ways you can provide assistance or to donate to the ACS DR Southern Louisiana flooding relief effort by visiting: www.southwesternadventist.org/communityservices



To Your Health

BY JESSICA LOZANO » RECORD EDITOR



Dealing with Stress in the Aftermath of Disaster

In the aftermath of a disaster, when immediate needs have been met and the volunteers have gone home, we sometimes overlook the fact that there may be lasting emotional consequences. We are counseled to comfort the bereaved and “weep with those that weep” (*Ministry of Healing*, p. 143). Through prayer and reliance on God, many are sustained, but many also may need help in dealing with disaster-related stress.

Disasters such as floods, wildfires, or hurricanes happen quickly and are unexpected. Survivors of disasters may sustain no physical injuries, but, according to the American Psychological Association (APA), untreated stress can result in serious health conditions including anxiety, insomnia, muscle pain, high blood pressure, and a weakened immune system. Stress can contribute to the development of major illnesses such as heart disease, depression and obesity.

Understanding common emotional responses to these events will enable you to learn about and develop healthy coping mechanisms for dealing with the emotional fallout of disaster.

According to the APA, the following are common signs of disaster-related stress:

- **Intense or unpredictable feelings.** One may feel overwhelmed, anxious, irritable, or moody.
- **Changes to thoughts and behavior patterns.** Constant anxiety and vivid memories of the event can cause changes in sleeping and eating behaviors, which affects physical health.
- **Sensitivity to environmental factors.** Certain sights, sounds, or smells may trigger stressful memories.
- **Strained interpersonal relationships.** Conflicts and arguments with coworkers and family members become more frequent. One may also withdraw socially and become isolated.
- **Stress-related physical symptoms.** These symptoms include headache, nausea, and chest pain.
- The APA recommends taking the time to decompress, finding support, keeping to a routine, and actively avoiding negative behaviors as strategies in coping with stress.
- **Give Yourself Time.** Be patient with yourself and allow your-

self to mourn the losses you have experienced. At a time of high stress, be cautious of making major life decisions. As you become overwhelmed, remember to cast “all of your anxieties on Him because he cares for you” (1 Peter 5:7, NIV).

- **Find Support.** Social support is key. Find positive individuals whom you can trust to ask for support. Also, find a local support group where you can share your experience. “Two are better than one...If either of them falls down, one can help the other up” (Ecclesiastes 4:9, 10, NIV).
- **Engage in Healthy Behaviors and Establish Routines.** Try to eat well-balanced meals, exercise, and keep to a regular sleeping/waking cycle. As you do, remember the words of God in Jeremiah 29:11 (NIV), “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, ‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future’”.

When to Seek Professional Help:

If feelings of hopelessness persist, and you continue to struggle with your daily responsibilities and activities, consult a mental health professional to assist you in making a plan to move forward.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) also notes that it is especially important to address the emotional needs of young children, older adults, and vulnerable individuals. It is important to understand that children’s anxieties are mostly related to fear that the event will happen again, fear of someone close to them dying or being injured, and fear of separation from their family. FEMA recommends comforting your children through personal contact, calmly sharing factual information about the disaster and safety/recovery plans, encouraging them to share how they’re feeling, and re-establishing routines.

God Cares for You

God cares for you at all times. When you cry out to Him, He will answer. Carry the psalm of David in your heart, knowing that there will be times of distress but that God will take care of you. “The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge” (Psalm 18:2, NIV).

Shining Light into the Darkness: A Pastor's Kid Gains a New Perspective on Faith

I WAS BORN INTO AN ADVENTIST HOME IN CHILE. My home wasn't just Adventist; my dad was also a pastor. Church was my life, and everything in it revolved around the church. I grew up listening to Bible stories at home and dad preaching every Sabbath. Needless to say, I learned the "ins and outs" of the Bible, the church, and the Adventist religion as a whole, and I loved it! It was familiar and comfortable. My family and I would go to church every Saturday from early in the morning until late at night. Every Wednesday, we would attend prayer meetings, and every Friday we were at vespers. My dad was the pastor of a big, beautiful church by the beach in Viña del Mar, Chile, and I loved my church and my friends.

One day my parents gathered my sisters and I and told us that they had received a calling. They said that, after much prayer, they had decided we would accept it. I was excited until I heard where we were moving. Our next mission field would be Ecuador. I had moved before, but I had never left the country where I was born! Days after the news, my house was torn apart, everything was sold, and we were all packed for our trip to Ecuador.

As hard as it was to leave behind everything I knew—my friends, home, school, and church—I have no doubt in my heart that it was God's plan. It was not easy getting used to a completely new and very different culture from my own, but I would do it all over again. Dad went from pastoring a church to becoming the ADRA director for Ecuador. Ecuador is a country with much need, need that I had not been exposed to before in Chile. It was all so new to me and, to be quiet frank, it was very uncomfortable at first. During my dad's work in Ecuador, we took part in many mission trips and ADRA projects. During these projects, we lived for weeks among the indigenous people of Ecuador in order to understand their culture and meet their needs. During the first weeks living in the jungle or in the mountains, I kept thinking that I could not wait to get back my comfortable home.

You see, before, my life had been about

my religion, my church, and me. When my life stopped being just about myself, I saw that the people in Ecuador, who lived in mud huts on the top of the mountains or in tiny houses made out of palms in the jungle, had such passion for God, my perspective about my religion changed. People who hadn't heard

about God before now burned with his love and shared it to everyone they would come across. It was then that I realized that religion alone is not enough. We must also have faith. And that faith will stay with us whether we are on the top of a mountain or deep in the jungle. Sometimes we find ourselves so comfortable in our lives that we forget to work on our faith, especially if we've grown up in the church, because it is easy to get caught up in the routine. If you find yourself lacking that glow that only a living faith can give you, remember, "Feed the hungry, and help those in trouble. Then your light will shine out from the darkness, and the darkness around you will be as bright as noon" (Isaiah 58: 10, NIV).



Darling Michelle Rojas lives in Cedar Hill, Texas, and was a communication intern during the summer at the Texas Conference.



Pass it On...

A Monthly Focus on Evangelism in the Southwest

BY JESSICA LOZANO » RECORD EDITOR, SOUTHWESTERN UNION

Love in Yellow Buckets: How Cleaning Supplies Can Show Christ's Love to Communities in Need

A prepared church can stand ready to assist in a vital way in the midst of disaster. Disasters can strike at any time, and an important and simple way every Adventist church can share the love of Christ is through the Adventist Community Services Disaster Response's Yellow Bucket Program. Through the Yellow Bucket Program, Adventist churches are able to provide immediate assistance to individuals and families in need.

According to Sherry Watts, Texas ACS co-director, "One of the first things people have to do after a major disaster hits them and their homes is to clean up the mess. When you've just lost everything, your funds are limited, and insurance may or may not provide any relief, a bucket filled with garbage bags, masks, gloves, and other valuable cleaning supplies can truly be a blessing."

According to Watts, if a single church keeps an inventory of 10 filled buckets, it will be equipped to deal with a crisis that affects up to 10 families. If a crisis occurs that affects more than 10, local Adventist churches can join their resources together to assist. If more than 50 families are affected by a disaster, the local churches will work with the network of churches as well as ACS to develop an action plan, and ACS will bring donated items to the necessary location.

It's a simple, effective program that allows churches to easily get involved in serving the community. Ask your church leaders if your church has filled yellow ACS DR buckets on hand. If not, contact your local ACS director to request empty buckets.



HERE'S WHAT GOES IN EACH BUCKET:

- Household cleaner: One 16-24 oz. bottle
- Dishwashing soap: One 14-20 oz. bottle
- Scrubber sponges: 4-6
- Scrub brushes: 2 (one for floors)
- Cleaning towels: 6-8 (reusable wipes)
- Dust masks: 2-4 (N-95 preferred)
- Latex or non-latex kitchen gloves: 1 pair
- Disposable gloves: 5 pair
- Work gloves: 1 pair
- Trash Bags: Heavy duty 20-30 bag roll (33-45 gallon size)
- Laundry detergent: liquid or powder, 30 to 40 loads
- Clothes line: 50 ft. or 100 ft.
- Clothes pins: 30-50
- Insect repellent spray: One 6-14 oz. non-aerosol

To see Sherry fill a bucket and find other community services resources, visit, www.southwesternadventist.org/communityservices.

When a family or individual is feeling overwhelmed in the face of disaster, a yellow bucket filled with cleaning supplies is a welcome gift.



Amor Dentro de Cubetas Amarillas

Como Material de Limpieza Puede Demostrar el Amor de Dios a las Comunidades Necesitadas

Una iglesia preparada puede estar disponible para ayudar de una manera vital en medio de un desastre. Los desastres pueden ocurrir en cualquier momento, y una manera importante y sencilla que cada iglesia Adventista puede compartir el amor de Cristo es a través del programa de Servicio Comunitario Adventista de Desastres “Cubeta Amarilla”. A través del programa Cubeta Amarilla, iglesias adventistas son capaces de proporcionar ayuda inmediata a las personas y familias necesitadas.

Según Sherry Watts, Co-directora de Texas ACS (Servicio Comunitario Adventista de Texas), “Una de las primeras cosas que la gente tiene que hacer después de un desastre mayor es limpiar el desorden. Cuando han perdido todo, los fondos son limitados, y el seguro puede o no puede proporcionar algún alivio, un cubeta lleno de bolsas de basura, guantes, máscaras y otros artículos de limpieza valiosos realmente puede ser una bendición”.

Según los Watts, si una sola iglesia mantiene un inventario de 10 cubetas llenas, estará equipado para enfrentar una crisis que afecta hasta 10 familias. Si se produce una crisis que afecte a más de 10, las iglesias adventistas locales pueden unir sus recursos para ayudar. Si hay más de 50 familias afectadas por un desastre, las iglesias locales trabajarán con la red de iglesias, así como con ACS para desarrollar un plan de acción y ACS traerá artículos donados a la ubicación necesitada.

Es un programa sencillo y eficaz que permite a las iglesias involucrarse fácilmente en el servicio a la comunidad. Pregúntele a sus líderes de la iglesia si su iglesia tienen cubetas amarillas de ACS a la mano. Si no es así, póngase en contacto con su director local de ACS para solicitar cubetas amarillas.

ESTO ES LO QUE LLEVA CADA CUBETA:

- Limpiador general: 16 - 24 oz.
- Jabón para lavar platos: 14-20 oz.
- Esponjas Scrubber: 4-6
- Cepillos de fregar: 2 (uno para suelos)
- Toallas de limpieza: 6-8 (toallitas reutilizables)
- Máscaras de polvo: 2-4 (N-95) preferida
- Guantes de cocina látex o no látex: 1 par
- Guantes desechables: 5 pares
- Guantes de trabajo: 1 par
- Bolsas de basura: Rollo de 20-30 bolsas resistentes

(33-45 tamaño galón)

- Detergente de lavandería: líquido o en polvo, 30 a 40 cargas
- Línea de ropa: 50 pies o 100 pies (cordel para ropa)
- Pinzas para tender: 30-50
- Repelente de insectos: 6-14 oz. no aerosol

Para ver a Sherry como llenar una cubeta y encontrar otros recursos de servicios a la comunidad, visite www.southwesternadventist.org/communityservices.

Jessica Lozano, directora de comunicaciones, Unión del Suroeste





ADVENTIST COMMUNITY SERVICES DISASTER RESPONSE PROVIDES RELIEF TO SOUTHERN LOUISIANA FLOOD SURVIVORS

Volunteers and Donations Needed and Welcome as ACS DR Maintains Warehouse, Distribution Center in Baton Rouge

Jessica Lozano, *Record* editor

Adventist Community Services Disaster Response (ACS DR) is the nonprofit, humanitarian agency for the Seventh-day Adventist Church that works within the United States and Bermuda, through more than 1,250 localities, and upholds the beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

ACS has been established as a humanitarian relief agency, as well as an individual and community development ministry to fulfill the mission of the church to “serve communities in Christ’s name.” ACS provides services through the ministries of disaster response, crisis care, Youth Empowered to Serve (YES!), tutoring and mentoring, elder care, and community development.

Southern Louisiana Flooding Response:

Recent flooding in Southern Louisiana is being called the worst natural disaster in the U.S. since Hurricane Sandy in 2012. The record rain began on August 11, when a storm system remained stationary over the areas surrounding Baton Rouge and Lafayette. Rain fell at rates of 2-3 inches an hour, with accumulations peaking at nearly 32 inches, dropping nearly three times as much rain on Louisiana as Hurricane Katrina did in 2005. Flooding began on





August 12, and by August 15, ten rivers had reached varying degrees of flood stage. Approximately 30,000 stranded residents were rescued in this flood with 13 individuals losing their lives.

Twenty Louisiana parishes were designated as federal disaster areas, more than 140,000 homes and thousands of businesses were severely damaged, and Governor John Bel Edwards declared a state of emergency. More than 100,000 individuals and families have registered for assistance with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

Amongst those affected were many of our Adventist members, as well as some of our churches and schools. An analysis of the damage and the number of members affected is currently underway.

During the first week of the relief effort, the Berean SDA Church's Wellness Center served more than 100 families. The Arkansas-Louisiana mobile unit was on sight distributing emergency supplies, personal hygiene kits and blankets.

ACS DR has worked in collaboration with the State of Louisiana and FEMA, as well as other non-profit agencies, to set up a multi-agency warehouse under the direction of Arkansas-Louisiana Conference ACS DR director Lavidia Whitson. This warehouse accepts undesignated donated goods, and make them available to

authorized distribution centers helping the flood survivors.

The distribution center in the Wellness Center of the Baton Rouge Berean SDA Church is still active, under the direction of Lyn Hakeem, with the assistance of Durandel Ford, Southwest Region Conference ACS DR's director, and Irene Williams, Southwest Region Conference ACS DR's South Louisiana coordinator.

Both locations are accepting, organizing, and distributing donations, and are also currently scheduling volunteers to work at both locations.

The relief effort is and will continue to be ongoing, and assistance in the form of donations and volunteers are desperately needed.

Contact your local ACS DR director to offer your assistance:

- **Arkansas-Louisiana Conference Director:** Lavidia Whitson, 318.631.6240, lwhitson@arklac.org
- **Oklahoma Conference Director:** Stan Buckmaster, 405.612.4602, stanb1@cox.net
- **Southwest Region Conference Director:** Durandel Ford, 817.312.2965, dlfordsr@swrgc.org
- **Texas Conference Directors:** Joe and Sherry Watts, 817.556.1257, swatts@txsda.org
- **Texico Conference Director:** Leonard Cummings, 505.660.7408, pastorleonard@yahoo.com

View video stories of flood survivors, relief efforts, and volunteers at www.southwesternadventist.org

RAIN, RAIN, CAME DOWN, DOWN

A report on Adventist Community Services activities from the Arkansas-Louisiana Conference

Alberto Valenzuela, communication director, Arkansas-Louisiana Conference

Winnie the Pooh's song in *Winnie the Pooh and the Blustery Day* probably resonates in a lot of people's minds when one of those summer thunder storms strikes around us: "The rain, rain, rain, came down, down, down, in rushing, rising riv'lets, 'til the river crept out of its bed and crept right into Piglet's!" It's fun to watch the scene and it's even fun to sing along with it. Most of the time.

Southern Louisiana, and the Baton Rouge area in particular, normally receives an average annual precipitation of 60.65 inches, which is about 20.2 inches of rain more than the national average. The weather forecast for August 12, 2016, for the area was cloudy with thunderstorms in the afternoon and evening. It was a normal weather forecast. Nothing unusual. Nothing uncommon. After all, it was expected at this time of year. During the entire summer months, the afternoons had turned cloudy and thunderclaps filled the area with the scent of ozone. The forecast said that probably from 1 to 2 inches of rain would fall. Again, nothing unusual. Nothing uncommon.

But weather and thunderstorms do not always follow the forecasts. Genesis 7:11 states, "all the springs of the great deep burst open, the floodgates of the heavens were opened" (NIV). The storm, once it began, continued for three solid days, breaking an all-time record, even for Louisiana and the Greater Baton Rouge area. A historic and

deadly flood had begun and continued from Friday through the weekend.

By Friday morning, almost three inches of rain had soaked the area. All told, more than 20 inches fell in less than 72 hours, peaking at six inches per hour. Ten rivers crested at record levels, and the water drained into the Louisiana Delta. By Monday, the rain had tapered but the flooding continued for days. The rainfall and the flooding that came along with it affected 20 Southern Louisiana parishes, devastating more than 140,000 homes and thousands of businesses.

John Anderson, an elder of the Zachary SDA Church, was visiting Shreveport for a preaching appointment.

"Oh, there's going to be some heavy rain; well here in South Louisiana we have heavy rains all the time," he thought. He called his wife to check with her and everything was fine. A normal weekend was coming along and he had to be on God's business. "I had a message from the Lord for that congregation and I prayed as I drove to be faithful to Him and His people," he said.

Some 25 miles east, as the crow flies, Keith Rusk, pastor of the Denham Springs SDA Church was making plans for preaching at the Gonzales Church and then visiting the Denham Springs congregation. "I'm new to the area but the previous summer we'd had similar



weather, so I didn't think anything of it," he said. But things changed drastically for the Denham Springs congregation. By Friday evening some of the neighbors had moved their vehicles to the church's parking lot—some even parked blocking the entrance to the building itself—because they considered it to be higher ground and they feared that a major flooding was coming.

Cyndy Grange, teacher and principal of the Jones Creek Adventist Academy, which is right next to the Baton Rouge Adventist Church, had endured a busy week. Classes were about to start and there still was a lot to do. She wasn't concerned about the weather. "This is Southern Louisiana, we're used to rain," she said. There was a myriad of things to get in order for the students and she methodically prepared the materials and items on her to-do list. "We are not in a flood plain," said Mike Martínez, pastor of the Baton Rouge



said. "Who would have thought we would get flooded?" When she woke up next day, she discovered that more than two inches of water covered the floor of the school. "I checked and every room was flooded," she said. And the water continued rising. The academy was flooded with more than six inches of water.

"Cyndy moved in with us," said Martínez. "Even though we are not in a flood plain, we are next to two rivers, the Jones Creek and the Knox Branch. And they meet right behind our church and the academy. There was too much water to be contained."

But the six inches or so of water that flooded the Jones Creek Academy paled in comparison with what pastor Rusk faced when he finally managed to get to the Denham Springs church, three days later. "The water reached more than six feet. Everything inside the building was ruined. The cars



Adventist Church, "so we weren't concerned."

By Friday, Cyndy noticed that the water was getting into her home, so she decided to spend the night at the school. "It's high ground, not on a flood plain," she



parked in front of the church were totally covered by water. It broke my heart," he said.

Meanwhile, about 20 miles west, the Baton Rouge Spanish SDA Church had geared for a special event that weekend. "We had a women's ministries program planned," said Marisa Rodriguez, Youth Leader. "And that was a blessing because



we had prepared lunch and supper. Because of the rising water people began to arrive at our church and we fed them. We decided to clear the fellowship hall and bring blankets and pillows and sheets. People were being taken out of their homes by boat but they were just being dropped off on the street! We sheltered all kinds of people, English, Spanish, even some with special needs. For two weeks we fed them breakfast, lunch and supper. We were helping people from our own church and from the community.”

On Sabbath, in Shreveport, John Anderson heard from his wife that their home was flooded. Scores of Adventist families lost their homes due to the flooding. John Anderson wasn't alone. “They

asked me if I wanted to get back home,” he said. “I said no, I have a message from the Lord. He will take care of my family.”

As soon as FEMA realized the magnitude of the disaster, Lavidia Whitson, director of the Arkansas-Louisiana Conference ACS Disaster

Response, was mobilized and a warehouse was setup to provide help to the communities affected. “This is much bigger than Katrina,” said Lavidia. “I was at Katrina and it was bad. I tell you, this

is worse.” Then supplies began to arrive. Truckloads of materials began to pour to the warehouse from as far away as Tennessee. Water, cleaning supplies, canned food and other items were almost immediately available for distribution. “Our part is to manage the warehouse,” said Lavida. “It’s not a front line activity, but it’s vital for this type of relief work. All the relief centers in the area receive our help. That’s what we are good at. That’s what we do. And the Lord blesses us for that!”

The De Queen Spanish Adventist Church collected canned and boxed goods that were shipped right away to the Lafayette Spanish Church. “That’s as far as we could go,” said David Farmer, pastor of the Shreveport First



Church. From there, members of the Lafayette and Baton Rouge Spanish Churches managed to transport them to Baton Rouge for distribution.

By now the words of Pooh’s song were more like a sad reminder of the grim reality of what the area was facing. “People lost their homes, even those that were renting,” said Lavida. “This is a major catastrophe for the area, for our church members.”

Two weeks later, visiting the area, it looked like a war zone. Mile after mile, block after block, home after home had been totally gutted and all the families’ belongings were on the street, waiting to be picked up by sanitation. It was a sad picture. Furniture was mixed with clothing, children’s cribs with soaked sheetrock. In most cases, it represented a lifetime of dreams, memories, and hard work piled up for the trash.

On Sunday, August 28, more than 50 Adventist volunteers from New Orleans, Baton Rouge, and students from Bass Memorial Academy, joined forces to help completely gut out the Denham Springs Church. “It was heartbreaking to see all the hard work that had been put into the church when we built it back in ‘84,” said

Gene Kepper, the first elder. “But I know that the Lord is in control, that no matter what amount of flooding we get, God’s love is strong and we are still in His loving care.”

The Arkansas-Louisiana Executive Committee designated Sabbath, September 24, as a day to collect a special offering to help our brethren affected by the flooding as well as the church and schools affected. Pastor Rusk’s words summarize the feeling of our brethren in the area, “We are not giving up. We are here to stay. The Lord has a message for Denham Springs and we will rebuild. We will recover and people will thank Him for His many mercies.”

What can we say that is positive about this tragedy? Marisa Rodríguez put it best, “When people received our help they were surprised. Who are you? Adventist? They had never heard of our church. Now they are aware of who we are. Some of the people we have helped have even began to come to the church.”

Well, Pooh’s song maybe rings true beyond the physical rain we are used to. We need that “rain, rain” of the power of God to help us shine wherever we are. Regardless of the situation, “Rain, rain, come down, down.”



GOD SAW US THROUGH: THE GREAT LOUISIANA FLOOD

Evelyn M. Edwards, Southwest Region Conference correspondent

I dubbed it “Baton Rouge’s own Katrina,” in reference to the hurricane that devastated the New Orleans area in 2005. I had not been adversely affected by Katrina, but this as-yet-unnamed disaster would be different. The unrelenting, week-long rain, which had resulted in school closing on Friday and then Sabbath services canceled the next day, should have been a clue. Even as I observed men walking through waist-high water in the street behind my home, the flooded intersections nearby, my own street rapidly filling with water and spilling over into my driveway, and then my backyard taking on an unprecedented amount of water, I chose to monitor the situation instead of making evacuation plans. At about 9:00 p.m. on Sabbath, I peered out into my driveway to discover that my massive potted plant collection was upside down and floating in muddy water.

Then it happened. Water began to flow beneath two exterior doors and, ultimately, through the foundation and baseboards of other rooms. Knowing what we had to do, my grandniece, Darielle, and I hastily threw a few personal items and a change of clothing into a bag. We scooped up some photo albums and a few incidentals and tossed them on

top of my bed, which I was convinced was high enough to escape the ensuing water (later I would learn that the bed’s foundation and a supporting mattress did not survive the water, but the top mattress held its own). We called for help and proceeded outside into almost five feet of water while we waited to be rescued. As we waited, I remembered that my church’s historical documents, dating back to the church dedication in 1949, were in a packet vulnerable to water, and so I dashed in with the water rushing behind me to rescue the packet and placed it in a safe area. I shut and secured the door, and re-joined the others waiting to be rescued from

our subdivision. After what seemed an eternity, we heard the welcome sound of an outboard motor making its way through the murky water and shouts of “We’re coming” from our rescuers. The sheriff’s deputies manning the boats took us to dry land, where we water-soaked passengers anxiously awaited city buses to transport us to shelters where we received a meal, were given cots and blankets, and were made as comfortable as the situation would allow. A relative came to pick us up, and from there we went to stay with a friend, Annie (in whose home we’re still residing).

The next morning, I was awakened



Volunteers assisting flood survivors at the Baton Rouge Berean Church’s distribution center.

by a call from my pastor, T. Ron Weegar, who had learned of my plight and that of so many others. He was relieved to find that, although many of his parishioners had been impacted by the flood and consequently displaced, none had lost their lives.

Weegar reported that the Southwest Region Conference's community services director, Durandel Ford, along with the NAD's director of disaster response, Derrick Lea, had reassured members that the conferences, Southwestern Union, and the North American Division were all in collaboration with the relief efforts.

Irene Williams, Southwest Region's South Louisiana community services director, has worked with the Baton Rouge Berean church's assistant pastor, Michael Bailey, and the church's distribution center director, Lyn Hakeem, in obtaining resources for the church's distribution center, which is open to the public.

FEMA and the American Red Cross have already contributed to the center's stock. Williams and Hakeem were ecstatic to have a truckload of supplies donated by the Arkansas-Louisiana Conference, as well as donations from the Maranatha Adventist church in Mississippi, the Morning Star church in Lafayette, Louisiana, the Faith church in Baton Rouge, and the Ephesus, Caffen, Westbank, and other Adventist churches in the New Orleans area.

Another church from Nashville, Tennessee, sent a crew to help knock down the mold-infected walls of anyone in need of the help. The crew resided in the distribution center for the duration of their trip.

A church member's daughter, who is not Adventist, repeatedly provided resources through her work.

Funds were donated by other members and individuals, and, once the fund receives more contributions, they will be tallied and distributed to those who need financial assistance. The Slidell and Covington-area groups have made numerous trips to the distribution center, not only delivering donations, but also remaining to work with the organizing of items donated.

On Sunday, September 11, the South Louisiana Youth Federation, under the direction of its president, Earniesha Lott, and vice president, Shannon Williams, brought 16 of the youth to the distribution site to load, unload, organize, and hand-out items to flood survivors for a "Love in Action Day." Lott said that the group was motivated by 1 John 3:18, and wanted to put their love for Christ into action by serving others.

I am so grateful to my friend, Annie, who is not a member of the church but does attend Sabbath worship, who has shared her

home with us for more than a month. In fact, has been so generous, she gave her master bedroom and another room to Darielle and I while she relocated to a downstairs bedroom. This is truly "compassion in action." My gratitude also goes out to my church family, who, on more than one occasion, has rallied and reported to my home to remove furniture, clothing, flooring, and other non-salvageable items. Mega kudos to Alvin and Judy Decay, who traveled by Greyhound from Oakwood University to Baton Rouge to help with the relief effort. There is no way that I can forget or



◀ Southern Louisiana Youth Federation (SLYF) vice president Shannon Williams; Chandler Burk; and SLYF president Earniesha Lott, were among the 16 youth who volunteered at the Baton Rouge Berean Church's distribution center.

Below, far left: Sharon Weegar and Lillie Miller packing up dishes from Evelyn Edwards' home



Above middle: Two sheriff's deputies who assisted in evacuating Evelyn Edwards and many others.

Above right: Darielle Patin, Cynthia Taylor, and Lyn Hakeem cleaning out Darielle's room after the water receded.

repay the Baton Rouge Berean church's pastor, T. Ron Weegar, and his wife, Sharon, who, along with the Glad Tiding's church's personal ministries director, Tony Draper, who commuted to Baton Rouge to assist in loading and unloading a moving truck rented at the expense of the church and made available to its members and me. I am grateful also to some new-found friends, the "Christian Aid Ministries," a group of 15 Amish disaster response volunteers from Ohio. This group not only gutted my home, but cleaned out two utility rooms as well. In spite of my losses (and there were many), God has been so good to us and I am confident He will replace our losses beyond measure. When the adversary whispers "Ask God, 'Why you?'" I reply with "Why not me!" I thank God for His faithfulness to me and pray I am worthy of His love!

Four Angels Holding the Four Winds



ARKANSAS-LOUISIANA CONFERENCE

“I saw four angels holding the four winds of the earth” (Revelation 7:1). Adventists have always preached that the time will come when the four winds will be loosed and there will be a time of trouble. During the last few years we have watched as the winds of strife and confusion have seemed to loosen and commotion and destruction have swirled around us. Do we believe what we preach?

The role of Adventist Community Services (ACS) has broadened from the church’s Dorcas Society to food pantries and cooking and nutritional classes. The ACS Disaster Response teams have grown from mobile units passing out supplies to managing whole warehouses of supplies and semi-truck loads of commodities for people in need. We have learned to work with other organizations: FEMA, the state VOAD pro-

grams, United Way, and other agencies have teamed up to help supply the Multi-agency Warehouse that the Adventist Disaster Response team has been asked to manage. Lavida Whitson, director for Arkansas-Louisiana Conferenc’s ACS Disaster Response, has played a major role in writing new disaster procedure manuals for the NAD and FEMA. In 2016, she has already spent eight months managing two different disaster warehouses pertaining to the Louisiana flooding.

I have been blessed to see the response from our members from all over the United States. Volunteers have come and camped in the area, helping with the work of cleaning out homes and beginning the necessary repairs. Young people from our schools have spent a few days getting things started for the newly homeless. Church groups have gathered truck-loads of supplies and brought them to the dis-

tribution sites. People have sent checks and donated needed items to help with rebuilding churches and homes.

As we look with concerned eyes to the future, we know that God is preparing His people “for such a time as this.” Whatever events may happen in the future, He is leading and teaching us to rely on Him daily. Whitson is very knowledgeable in supporting volunteers and helping in a disaster, but without our wonderful churches, pastors, and willing volunteers helping to supply and work away from home when needed, we would not be able to be of much use to the unfortunate, hurting people who suffer through many different disasters. Thank you for all the support you give to the Arkansas-Louisiana Adventist Community Services and Disaster Response.

Sylvia Downs, communication secretary

Heber Springs SDA Church Beats the Heat

HEBER SPRINGS, ARK. » In an effort to introduce the local community to the Heber Springs Seventh-day Adventist Church, the church hosted “Free Snow Cones” and “Story Lady” stories during the long, hot days of June and July. They provided children’s stories and crafts inside the cool church. Some of the children were excited to hear the stories and the pastor’s snow

cone machine was a big hit with everyone. There is nothing like a nice cool snow cone, with different flavors, to make anyone feel great!

During this endeavor, the church leaders and members have met some wonderful people. God opened a door to make a new friend with a woman who had opened a new business next door to the church.

The church welcomed her with a pretty flower basket. This included a DVD on end-time events and Bible studies. The church has also been invited to meet with the local chamber of commerce and civic leaders as they discuss the beautification of Heber Springs.

Judith Newton



The Heber Springs church reached out to the local community by offering free snow cones, children’s stories, and crafts during the long, hot days of June and July.



God's Feeding Hands Mission Celebrates First Anniversary

MENA, ARK. » In the Fall of 2015, Kyong and Larry Weathersby, members of the Bonnerdale Seventh-day Adventist Church, began a new welfare ministry. Despite a lack of resources, God impressed upon them to step out in faith. One morning as Kyong was praying to the Lord, she mentioned that they needed at least \$3,000 in startup funds. She had posted their plans for the new ministry on Facebook. That very morning, friends on Facebook starting sending donations. A few days later, they received a donation for \$5,200.

The Weathersbys looked for a building that would meet their needs. By the grace of God, they

found a building with 2,100 square feet in Mena, Ark. The building has central heat and air, and included a 15-passenger van, which they are using to transport groceries. The Weathersbys purchased the building for \$40,000. God brought seven staff members who dug in and helped renovate the building

and give it fresh paint, inside and out. They ordered groceries, toiletries, Bible studies, books, DVDs and recovery DVD programs.

God's Feeding Hands Mission Center had its grand opening on October 26, 2015.

Since opening, the Center has been serving approximately 500 people each month.

It now has four staff members and six volunteers. Kyong says that the Center is not affiliated with nor does it receive funds from any church; it is running totally on cash donations and grants, which allows the Center to purchase groceries, toiletry items, cleaning items, and items such as Bibles, Bible studies, recovery DVDs, vegetarian cooking program DVDs, Christian books, and other Christian DVDs. Most of the groceries are ordered from the River Valley Regional Food Bank in Fort Smith and cleaning supplies and toiletries from

Dollar Tree.

God's Feeding Hands Mission Center has made a big spiritual and physical impact in the community. The Center is open every second and fourth Monday of the month from 9 a.m. until 12 noon, and they expect to feed even more people in the near

future, as many are losing their food stamps. So far, 395 people have received Amazing Facts Bible studies and many took copies of *The Great Controversy*, *Steps to Christ*, *Desire of Ages*, *Ministry of Healing*, and hundreds of recovery DVDs and many of the vegetarian cooking program DVDs.

God is faithful and God is Good!

Sylvia Downs with Kyong Weathersby



The God's Feeding Hands Mission Center, which opened in the fall of 2015, serves approximately 500 people each month, offering groceries, toiletry items, cleansing items, and items such as Bibles, Bible studies, recovery DVDs, vegetarian cooking program DVDs, Christian books, and other Christian DVDs.

ARKANSAS-LOUISIANA CONFERENCE

Slidell Church Hosts VBS and Children's Church

SLIDELL, LA. » The Slidell Seventh-day Adventist Church hosted a children's church in June with Seema Bethala and Tami Salem. The service began with a song service and one of the children's favorite songs, "Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus." Prayer was by Clint Jones, Jr. The children enjoyed watching an animated version of the Good Samaritan story from the New Testament. The children all enjoyed the service. When asked how she enjoyed the service, Angelle Jean Pierre said, "I really love children's church!"

Bethala has added a children's church service on the fourth Sabbath of each month through December.

In July, the Slidell church had a very successful Vacation Bible School with 31 children between the ages of three and 11. Denise Deroam led out with this year's "Kidsville" themed VBS

with a group of youth and adult helpers to ensure every aspect of VBS ran smoothly. There were clubhouse activities, "Bible Adventure with Dr. Luke," crafts, games, snack time, and music. Approximately 30 children attended each day.

The children all had fun remembering the daily point, which coincided with the daily verse and story. The closing program

on Sabbath, July 9, gave the parents a chance to see what the children learned each day. We are thankful to all the helpers and especially to Denise Deroam for a job well done!

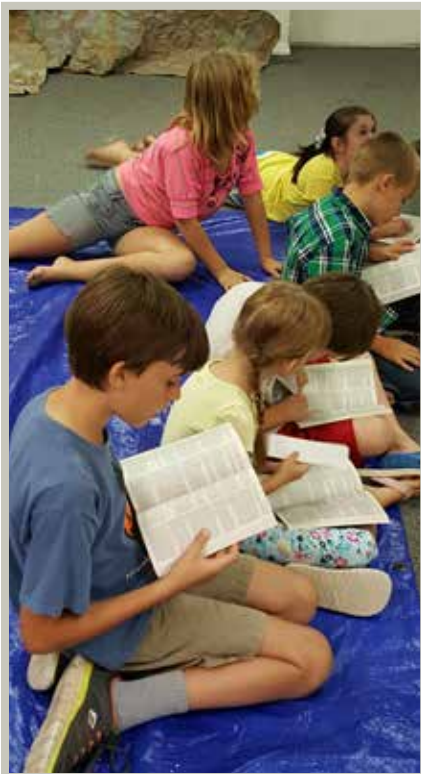
Vernella Rogers

Below left: VBS is always fun!

▼ Children meet for children's church.



Cave Quest VBS at Decatur Church



DECATUR, ARK. » The Decatur church held a "Cave Quest" Vacation Bible School for the community this past summer. There were approximately 33 children involved. Many stations were set up for the children to learn about caves. Those lessons pointed the children toward Christ,

◀ Learning the Bible lessons at VBS

▼ Small group study is fun



the Light of the World.

One of the classes provided was the Deep Bible Quest, which showed the children how to search the scriptures and study the Bible. Another class that took place was the "imagination station" where the children learned many amazing things about the details of caves, such as the stalactites and stalagmites, and how they can relate to our spiritual walk with God. It was such a blessing to see how excited the children were to learn more about God.

At the end of VBS, each one of the children was able to take home a Bible with them, thereby encouraging them to continue to share Jesus, the Light of the World, with the people around them. Overall, the young people had an amazing time and God magnificently blessed all that participated. We will continue in our quest to spread His light unto the world.

Kody Fly

Let Us Serve Each Other



Our supreme example of love for others is Jesus coming to this earth to minister to the lost. Of course, He came to save those lost in sin, but He also took care of their physical needs.

What does that have to do with us today? Have you ever been in a foreign country, unfamiliar with the food and unable to read or write in the native tongue? How about being in that foreign country and having to buy a house, get a job, learn to feed a family, search for a doctor, or even a school for the children? These are just a few of the overwhelming fears and anxieties experienced by many immigrants to our land. How would our Father in heaven deal with all of this?

That was the question that certain members in Tulsa were asking themselves and each other, and began searching for an answer from above. Being immigrants themselves, each one knew the emotional

trauma experienced by such individuals. How could God use them to help new immigrants? Fortunately, I was that immigrant more than 30 years ago. I had an English-speaking wife who could help with some of the major issues that came before me, but that didn't lessen the fear and turmoil that I experienced in a foreign setting. Since that time, He has put many non-English-speaking individuals in my path for me to help.

It took eight months of prayer and dedication to understand the answer that God gave those Tulsa members. On Sabbath, August 25, 2016, the Tulsa Community Center celebrated its beginning! People speaking at least four languages (Burmese, Spanish, Korean, and English) gathered together to dedicate the facility for God's purpose. They and others prayed throughout the building for all the people that would be blessed by such a service.

The Tulsa Community Center is staffed by volunteer professionals meeting the

needs of new immigrants coming to the Oklahoma area in the legal, medical, welfare, family counseling, educational, and financial training fields. God staffed His community center with people of vision and faith! May He be praised.

"Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me" (Matthew 25:34-36).

As the song says, "May the prayer of our hearts always be: Make me a servant, humble and meek. Lord let me lift up those who are weak, and may the prayer of my heart always be, make me a servant. Make me a servant today."

Apple Park, youth director

Davidson Family to Work as Missionaries in Guyana

OWASSO » A young couple from the Three Angels SDA Church-Owasso are planning to start mission service this Fall. The Davidson family, Edwin, Laura and two-year-old Kathryn, will be going to Guyana, South America, to work with a branch of Gospel Ministries International, called Guyana Adventist Ministries and Services (GAMAS).

Edwin will be apprenticing under James Ash to be a mission pilot. Laura will be a stay-at-home Mom, focusing on friendship evangelism and being Edwin's support system.

Edwin will be helping with a lot of the ground work and purchasing. When there is space on a flight, Edwin will go on flights to take supplies to teachers and Bible workers, and to transport the sick to the hospital in



Georgetown. James Ash is extremely busy right now and needs the help.

Their plan is to move permanently to Guyana after their six-month trial period.

The members of the Three Angels are supportive of this young family, willing to be a blessing in God's cause. The church family recently had a dedication service for them to place them in God's hands—the very safest place to be.

Follow their blog and find ways to help them financially at www.davidsonleapoffaith.blogspot.com.

Nelita Martin

The Davidson family, members of the Three Angels Church, are now missionaries in Guyana.

Appreciating Our Uniqueness

OKLAHOMA CITY » I have had the special privilege of visiting many of the churches in Oklahoma with my husband as he preaches on Sabbath. We have enjoyed making new friends and getting better acquainted with our Oklahoma church members. Oklahoma has many different ethnic groups. There are Native Americans, Hispanics, Africans, African Americans, Burmese, English, German, French, Irish, Scandinavian, and many more. Oklahoma members contribute to the “melting pot” that makes up America.

We have been blessed by joining in and being a part of different traditions, styles, customs, and methods. Sometimes we

may need a translator if it is a language we do not understand, and sometimes the music may be a different style. But we all share the same God, and the same message from God’s Word. All a part of the Body of Christ, worshiping together.

When you make a salad, you add a variety of items—lettuce, spinach, carrots, celery, cucumbers, tomatoes, or other vegetables. They all get tossed in together in the bowl. There is no such thing as discrimination among the vegetables.

Everyone is welcome to contribute their unique flavor, color, and texture to create the delicious salad. Very much like Paul’s admonition in 1 Corinthians 12:12, “For as

the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ.”

Belonging to a church makes you family. We are all a part of the family of God. Isn’t that one of our greatest needs—wanting to belong? Doesn’t belonging to a group of people who have similar beliefs keep you from being lonely? Doesn’t belonging to a church give you purpose and a reason to get out of bed? Aren’t you thankful that God was thinking of you when He created families and churches?

Susan Castillo, communication secretary

Shawnee Hosts First “Taking Back the Streets” Effort in Oklahoma

SHAWNEE » In recent years it seems like Adventist Church members have lost their enthusiasm for visiting door-to-door. Other religions are still known to knock on doors, but recently **Ciro Castillo**, pastor and personal ministries leader for the Oklahoma Conference, decided to reinstitute this old practice. **Tammie Zuker**, personal ministries leader for the Shawnee Church decided to take Pastor Castillo up on his offer to bring other church members to encourage Shawnee members as they visited their neighbors door to door. One Sabbath afternoon, members from the Guthrie, Southern Hills, Oklahoma International, and Shawnee churches organized in groups of four with two people on each side of the street (so that no one was alone—just as Jesus instructed His disciples to visit).

It was a beautiful afternoon as all 20 individuals gathered together in the Shawnee sanctuary to obtain instructions, maps, and pray together. The goals of the visits were to offer Bible study lessons or copies of *Steps to Christ*, or to just have prayer with people. All of the participants felt God’s presence as they visited each door. Many families did not answer the

door, but there were some who did, and the group had pleasant interactions with them. We even had one group who had an antagonistic experience with a couple who were drunk, and the husband was belligerent and aggressive. Guardian angels kept watch over the group, and they knew that the Holy Spirit would continue to work with all who had been contacted.

The group met together afterward in the

Shawnee sanctuary to have prayer again, and to organize another visit to the streets of Shawnee at a later date. The members of the group all felt that it was time well spent. Jesus is coming soon, and there are people who are looking for someone to teach them. The providential appointments are the most rewarding.

Susan Castillo, communication secretary



Cave Quest VBS Inspires Choctaw Children

CHOCTAW » The Choctaw Church held its Cave Quest VBS this June, and it blessed each participant. The theme for the week was “Following Jesus, the Light of the World.”

Church members Cathy and Robin Terry created a wonderful cave for the sanctuary where 20 eager children met each day for the opening and closing programs.

After the opening program, everyone met for “spelunker sports and games,” and had a wonderful time participating in the games each day.

From there, the various crews went their separate ways to Deep Bible Quests, Kidvid Cinema, Cavern Café, or the Imagination

Station. Each of the stations reinforced the Bible point for that day, and all the Bible stories revolved around the life of Jesus.

One fun way of reminding the children of the Bible points and memory verses was the Bible Buddy. Each day, the children received new Bible Buddies which attached to carabiners which they had also received.



Each Bible Buddy featured a different cave-dwelling animal with the memory verse and Bible point printed on the back. The children could download a smartphone app and then watch their Bible Buddies come to life. In this digital age, it was a creative way to engage the children and help them remember the points made at VBS.

The children thoroughly enjoyed each aspect of the program, and many commented that they especially enjoyed the singing and the games. Many of the attendees were members of the church members, and others were grandchildren or friends of church members. The large and talented VBS staff also enjoyed the week. Many of them have helped with Choctaw's VBS programs for many years and look forward to doing so each year.

We will never know how much influence our special programs had on our children's lives until we reach heaven. What a joy it will be to see those children and to hear how they were impacted by the wonderful truths they learned at our church through the loving ministry of the many dedicated members!

Robin Sagel

The Choctaw church's VBS program in June had approximately 20 children in attendance each day. The children participated in and enjoyed many biblically-based activities.

T. Ron Weegar Installed as Pastor at Baton Rouge Berean

SOUTHWEST REGION CONFERENCE

BATON ROUGE, LA. » It was the week following Southwest Region's camp meeting that Berean was introduced to its 22nd pastor since the church was organized in 1936. Southwest Region Conference President Calvin L. Watkins conducted the installation of Theodore Rondolphus Weegar (better known as T. Ron Weegar) as pastor.

Weegar, a native of Liberia, West Africa, had served the New Orleans Ephesus Church for nine years prior to his appointment to the Baton Rouge Berean Church. Weegar is currently pursuing a doctorate in urban ministries at Andrews University.

"We looked all around—in and out of the conference, listened to everybody, but most of all, listened to God, and decided on this pastor whose lifeblood of his ministry is evangelism and soul-winning," announced an excited Watkins.

Watkins began the installation with an analogy between a husband and wife and that of the installation of a pastor, saying

"There has to be a learning period where one will learn to understand the other." From there, it was the challenge in the form of a pledge to the various entities, beginning with Weegar, who was reminded that conference committees can vote, but all things work according to God's will. Convinced that God has laid His hands on Weegar, Watkins' challenge to him was "Before God, these members and conference officials, will you be kind, loving, understanding, respectful, ministering to all regardless of age, gender, and ethnicity? Will you assure them that they have a

pastor that cares for them pledging cooperation and inspiration before God while preaching sermons that go the heart of the matter, sermons that will convict the sin-sick soul?" Weegar responded with a

resounding "I do" after each question.

The elders' pledge began with Watkins asking them, "As elders and leaders, will you be the kind of elders that you know pastors need to be successful? Will you be understanding, kind, and truthful? Will you help Berean become an evangelistic center where all will feel welcome?" In unison and emphatically, the elders answered "We will!"

Finally, the congregation was asked to stand to receive its challenge. "Will you be supportive of the pastor, with the understanding that there are no perfect pastors or sheep and because we're all trying to make it to heaven together? Will you hold up the pastor and his family, realizing their ultimate sacrifice and promise to nourish them, pray for them, and feed them?" And the congregation said, "Yes." Watkins then invited Weegar's

of Southwest Region Conference, that you are now pastor and first lady of this Berean congregation." Amens and applause filled the air. And to the congregation he said, "Let all of Baton Rouge know that there's a new man in town; come and see such a man!"

Weegar began by announcing two scriptures, a support scripture and a preaching scripture from Matthew 28:18 and John 3:16, respectively.

"Rather than a Father's Day message appropriate for tomorrow, I have chosen one in which God will give direction as to where the church should go. The commission is to go and tell the world that Jesus



Top: Southwest Region Conference President Calvin Watkins pronouncing T. Ron and Sharon Weegar as Berean's new pastoral family.

▲ Calvin Watkins, Southwest Region Conference president; Sharon Weegar; T. Ron Weegar, pastor; Henry Jones (back row), elder; Robert Landry, elder; Jerry Proshee, elder; Charles Wilson (back row), elder; and Margaret Lawrence, elder.

Above left: T. Ron Weegar delivering his first sermon as pastor of the Baton Rouge Berean Church.

wife, Sharon, to join her husband on the rostrum where he humbly but proudly announced to the congregation, "Before God and this host of witnesses, I hereby declare by the power invested in me as president

is Christ and Savior of mankind.” Weegar’s focus was the Apostle John’s emphasis on Jesus’ divinity and his mission to dispel the Jews’ perception of Jesus’ birth and upbringing. “Jesus was no ordinary human being.” What followed would be a dimension of John 3:16 that the average lay person had not realized.

“John begins by identifying four attributes that authenticate the divinity of Christ. First, Jesus’ eternal existence; second, His universal location; third, His divine identity; and fourth, His divine responsibility.” After expounding on each, he concluded, “If these four components don’t convince you that Jesus is God, then I don’t know if anything will. Because Jesus’ divine nature revealed that the mankind He created out of love would sin, Jesus included a warranty on His creation. And you don’t have to travel to Jerusalem or Mecca to claim that warranty of forgive-

ness.”

In closing, Weegar emphasized that his Sabbath debut at Berean had begun a journey, but that we should pray that the journey doesn’t end until every space in the auditorium is filled—until everybody in this city knows that Jesus is alive.

“Tell them that ‘The God that loves me is the same God that loves them.’”

Weegar said to the congregation, “Regardless of what has taken place or not taken place in the past, this is a new day!” Rephrasing Watkins’ earlier pronouncement, he said, “This is a new day at 4555 Fairfield’s. God is our Father, Jesus is our Savior, and the Holy Ghost is our power source.”

The altar call saw the congregation affirming and reaffirming its commitment to become excited again enough to tell family, neighbors, and colleagues the good news message. Watkins offered the closing

prayer, asking God to make us a loving, caring church willing to do what is necessary to save souls.

A Father’s Day luncheon and program followed the service at Martin Luther King Academy.

That evening Weegar, hosted a town hall meeting where members took advantage of the opportunity to pose poignant questions about him and his vision for Berean. It was a full day to say the least, but the church is grateful to the executive committee for having the mindset to send T. Ron Weegar and his family to us, and we pray our journey together will be a successful one.

Evelyn M. Edwards

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Evangelist Nicolle Brisé

SOUTHWEST REGION CONFERENCE

Women's Ministries

1st Annual Conference-wide



DAY OF SERVICE

Join your local Women's Ministries Department in a "Day of Service" at the Food Bank, Homeless Shelter or other Community based projects.

Men, Women, Pathfinders and Adventurers are encouraged to register with the Women's Ministries leader of your local church.

We can do it!



Compassion Through the Storm



What does it feel like to see everything you own sitting on the curb waiting for the city or county to pick them up and take them to the landfill after a natural disaster? It is easy to feel compassion for the moment whenever we see pictures of destruction and suffering on the news, but we often go on with our lives. For those who have been affected, it can take weeks, months, or years, if ever, to put their lives back together.

Following these events, we are given the opportunity to show compassion to those who are hurting. As we started this year, Adventist Community Service volunteers assisted those affected by the Christmas tornado in Garland, then responded to the flooding across much of Texas, and to the devastating flooding experienced in the Baton Rouge area. Adventist Community Service volunteers have been giving of themselves in unselfish ways.

What happens when the response is over? We need to collect and store some emergency supplies to be ready to quickly assist at the next disaster. Or, do we

breathe a sigh of relief and feel there is nothing to do?

I believe that every person, church ministry, and congregation needs some form of community outreach where we are intentionally assisting persons in need, showing God's love in a practical way.

Of course, we have the traditional responses like food pantries, clothes closets, and food baskets at Thanksgiving and Christmas. These are needed and welcomed assistance for families in our community. But we also need to think outside the box and allow the Holy Spirit to impress us with needs in the people around us.

There are unique ways your church can minister to your community. Some ideas might be to have a community garden, offer plant-based food classes, sponsor a health fair, organize a 5K run, sponsor a coat drive, or organize a sock drive for the homeless. These are a few ways that you can reach out and touch your community for Christ.

Try getting in touch with your local school to see if there are needs with which

you could assist. You will be amazed at the needs the teachers and school nurses see every day, and they would love to have help meeting those needs. There may be needs to fill, such as replacing ill-fitting shoes or clothing, thin jackets on cold days, or a lack of school supplies.

There are senior citizens in your community that might need help with basic chores like changing light bulbs, getting the trash to the curb, mowing the lawn, vacuuming, help with shopping for groceries, a ride to the doctor, or just someone with whom to visit.

Ask the Lord to impress you with a way to help others. Matthew 25:40 says, "And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.'"

If you'd like to follow the work of Texas Adventist Community Services or if you're interested in volunteering, visit and like our Facebook page: Texas Adventist Community Services.

Joe and Sherry Watts, ACS DR directors

TEXAS CONFERENCE

The Young Heart of Worship

ARLINGTON » Located in the heart of the DFW Metroplex, Younger Generation Church (YG) is the young adult ministry of the Arlington Seventh-day Adventist Church. In addition to young adults leading a weekly worship experience on their campus, YG has cast a vision to "overflow Jesus Christ beyond their four walls—blessing the community, transforming the world."

This summer, two of YG's worship leaders, Melody Mendez, a junior at Burton Adventist Academy, and Princess Demiar, a recent graduate from Southwestern Adventist University, were part of YG worship teams ministering for North American Division youth events, camp meetings, and summer camps. Allan Martin, Ph.D., teaching pastor at YG, recently interviewed them for Best Practices For Adventist Worship's blog. **Allan:** It seems like it would be really criti-

cal for young worship leaders to listen to God and to hear His heart. Just curious, if I may ask, what has God been impressing on your heart as of late?

Princess: Faith has been a big theme of my life lately. As a worship leader, leading a song gets difficult at times. No matter how high or low my spirit is during worship—I know and believe that God can move through us. There are times that I can't fully grasp the magnitude of what I'm singing, that's when my faith comes in.

Allan: When do you feel most in need of faith?

Melody: My friend Ian was recently talking about being ashamed of our weakness.



This shame makes us run to other things; to make up excuses. It keeps us away from God. I feel that those are the times that are faith is tested the most, but they are also the times when we are most vulnerable, and in those times we get the most real with God. And at the end of the day that's



It Prayer Conference in California, then touring a variety of camp meetings and summer camps in the Southwest, now back to North Texas ministering at Younger Generation Church. What would you say you've gleaned from your travels this summer?

Princess: God can move through young hearts and that's what I've been seeing at Camp

what God has been doing for me and for all these young people this summer.

Melody: I feel that God really revealed to me the reason that I do what I do as a worship leader. It's not only about giving young people an amazing worship experience, but it's also about talking with them, getting to know them—through relationships connecting them with God. We're here to help them desire a relationship with Him, and the Spirit will do the rest.

For more information about Younger Generation Church, go to ygchurch.com and/or like their page on Facebook, www.facebook.com/ygchurch.

Allan Martin

all He wants, for us to be real with Him.

Allan: You all have had a full summer. First, leading worship for the Just Claim

Yavapines everyday. I've been blessed with all these opportunities to minister to youth and young adults and I am just in awe of

Third Annual Lake Whitney Ranch Triathlon a Sunny Success

LAKE WHITNEY RANCH » Not a cloud hung in the sky as, one by one, athletes gathered for the Third Annual Lake Whitney Ranch Triathlon, this year held at Shady Lakes Ranch. The event took place on July 31, 2016 and had thirty-five athletes, ages ranging from 14 to 54, participating in the swim, bike, and run.

"We had an awesome time," said Wirmin Alcantara, undertreasurer for the Texas Conference and event organizer for the triathlon. "There was no rain. It was a beautiful day and all the athletes had a great spirit."

During the two previous triathlon events, rain poured as athletes participated. This year, only sunshine filled the sky. The race consisted of three consecutive events: a 150-yard swim, a 4.5-mile off-road bike race, and a 1.5-mile run. For many participants, this was their first time to participate in a triathlon.

In the male category, Di Marcos Pereira completed the triathlon first, in 35 minutes and seven seconds. In the female category, Ruth Rios completed first in 42 minutes

and 55 seconds. All proceeds from the triathlon benefited Lake Whitney Ranch summer camp. Twenty-four men and eleven women participated.

"Lake Whitney Ranch is committed to three things: safety, spirituality, and family, all in the name of Jesus Christ, our soon coming Savior," said Gary Blanchard, di-

Luis Dulack plan to operate the camp as a center for health. They will offer health-related retreats and events for all ages and groups of people, such as children, married couples, and coworkers.

"This is only the beginning," said Kelly Dulack in relation to Lake Whitney Ranch summer camp and triathlon.

Next year, the Texas Conference plans for summer camp and the annual triathlon to once again take place at Lake Whitney Ranch. The improved lodges will satisfy state and county regulations for public use. More importantly, they will provide a living space for children to attend a Christian-operated summer camp.

In the coming months, there will be more athletic events to benefit Texas Conference ministries. A Spartan Race will take place in October, and there are plans for

a "Muddy Runner Race." Visit the Texas Conference website, www.TexasAdventist.org, and the Youth and Young Adult website, www.YoungTexasAdventist.org, for more information on upcoming events.



Proceeds from the LWR triathlon benefit the summer camp. Other athletic events are planned to benefit other ministries.

rector of Youth and Young Adult Ministries at the Texas Conference.

This year, because of construction, summer camp was held at Shady Lakes Ranch, an Adventist-owned facility on the outskirts of Keene, Texas. Owners Kelly and

Journey Into the Amazon

PERU » We recently attended the Share-Him mission trip to Peru. No matter how much planning goes into an event, there is never a guarantee that everything will go exactly as you expect. Sometimes, as with this mission trip, it can seem like the devil is closing doors left and right. For example, our flight was cancelled due to a storm, we couldn't find viable airlines that could take all 32 of us, and we found problems in the simplest places. Our faith was tested time and time again, yet, given the chance, I

Every experience we had prior to arriving in Indiana, Peru was worthwhile as we had the opportunity to see the children eagerly listen to what we had to say, play every game with glowing faces, sing all the songs with enthusiasm, and be witnesses to the miracles that were happening all around us.

One night, as we had finished the program for the kids, a small boy had a seizure. He was unresponsive and we were all frightened. Still, we trusted in the Lord and

we prayed for him. The little boy woke up almost as we finished the prayers.

We were told that short mission trips cannot be expected to make a major difference in the lives of the children, but instead it would change the hearts of those who went. That statement seems fitting. The lessons we all learned from the kids there will forever be with us as we carry on with our daily lives. We had to grasp the idea that we didn't get to choose where we were born, to whom, or to be born at all,

but we do get to choose what we do with the opportunities in front of us, the opportunities that God urges us to take. If you have that chance, then get up, pack your bags, and exclaim with a joyous heart, "Here am I. Send me!"

Kimberly Serratos



◀ A volunteer performs a checkup during the medical outreach portion of the mission trip.

▼ After a host of travel issues, volunteers prepare to impact Peru in a big way.

wouldn't have had it any other way. We had discouraging moments, but we managed to believe in hope during troublesome times. Paulo Tenorio, associate youth and young adult director for the Texas Conference, told us to keep Proverbs 3:5-6 close to our hearts, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight."

We needed to trust in God; we needed to give up trying to fix it on our own, and when we finally accepted that, God took control.



Reaching Our Communities Through Service



TEXICO CONFERENCE

Upon finishing academy and after a year of general classes at my local community college, a friend invited me to study at an Adventist college abroad. From a very early age, my mother had always called me her little pastor. Growing up, I resisted that idea, probably because I didn't want to be told what to do. Later, as I considered making a change, God spoke to my heart, "What about theology?"

So, I traveled to the city of Medellin, Colombia, where I began my studies in theology and in life. There I gained a greater understanding of what it means to be a part of a world-wide church. In addition, it was made clear to me that our church was busy doing its part in obeying Christ's mandate "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age"

(Matthew 28:18-20, HCSB).

Shortly after my arrival in Medellin, I was invited to join a street ministry. The ministry was called "Pro Amor" translated "Pro Love." We spent Sunday mornings with the homeless people of Medellin, offering different services, including handing out bags of food, performing health checks, giving vaccines, painting faces for the kids, and giving haircuts. I looked forward to serving because I knew that I was helping others who needed it. I remembered what Jesus said in the Bible when He was preaching about being ready for His coming "Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of Mine, you did for Me" (Matthew 25:40, HCSB).

In reflecting on this experience, I look back on my Adventist education from kindergarten through college, and remember all the opportunities that the students were given to be a part of the great commission in serving others. Now, as a pas-

tor in Santa Fe, the roles are reversed, and I can be a part of the planning of those service opportunities for our students.

In 2015, churches in the Texico Conference were involved in their communities in various ways. Food was handed out to more than 2,600 families, and more than 500 people were served at health fairs. In addition, church members sang at convalescent homes, performed free home repairs, hosted "Divorce Care" and financial seminars, just to name a few. Then, as the end of the year came around, there were the usual Thanksgiving and Christmas activities such as food boxes, dinners, parades, and toy drives in local communities.

It is people like you who make reaching our communities for Christ possible. As the Texico Conference Adventist Community Service director, I look forward to working with you.

Leonard Cummings, ACS director

Miracles in India

MYNSO, INDIA » As our team of 21 people prepared for the Texico/Rio Rancho Maranatha mission trip to Northeast India, we were excited, but also knew it might be a challenge to build a church during their rainy season. Prayers ascended for the project, including petitions for the Lord to help us to be able to build even though the rains were coming daily in that region.

When we arrived at the campus of Northeast Adventist College, near Jowai, in the state of Meghalaya, it was sprinkling. This would be our home for the next 10 days while we constructed a church and held an evangelistic meeting and Vacation Bible School in

the little village of Mynso, approximately one hour away.

The first day at the construction site, the sunshine gave way to light rain in the afternoon, but we were able to finish our day's work. Unbeknownst to us, God was about to show us that He is in charge of our proj-

ect and the weather.

During the evenings and all night long the rains would pour, but as we arrived in Mynso to work, it was not raining. I thought, "What a blessing!" This went on day after day, with our group not once being delayed by rain. Near the end of the construction project, I was talking with the Maranatha building coordinator, and I mentioned to him how wonderful it was that every evening and night it was raining, but during the day it wasn't. He said to me, "I don't think you understand. It is raining during the day in the areas all



A Vacation Bible school was conducted in the village of Mynso as a part of the mission project.

around us, just not in the village of Mynso. This is truly a miracle, because this just doesn't happen. And to top it off, it is raining here at night, which is a real blessing, because the bricks and mortar need to be watered at night to cure properly and we haven't had to come and water them." This amazing occurrence in nature did not go unnoticed by the people of the village.

What a mighty God we serve! This is only one of the miracles that has taken place for the Mynso congregation, who have been meeting in homes, praying, and sacrificing for a church building for more than 50 years.

Several of the local church members shared how much they appreciated us building a church for them. One woman took my hand in both of hers and, with tears in her eyes, said, "I can never repay you! Thank you! I will see you in heaven!" As we embraced and looked at each other (now both through teary eyes), a great bond of Christian love was exchanged.

To be a part of a miracle is amazing! Our team's lives were deeply touched as we worked, played, and talked with the people of the village. The meeting hall overflowed with visitors for both the nightly evangelistic campaign and Vacation Bible School programs. Through the generosity of many, Bibles for adults and children, as well as hymnals, were purchased to supply the new church building. Other donations were given to help furnish the inside of the new building with pews, a sound system, etc. In addition, clothing and other items were purchased and distributed to children in need, and money was given to support children in nearby Adventist schools.

Who received the greater blessing, our team or the locals at Mynso? I don't know, but our rewards were so great, that I can't

begin to share them all. One young team member said to me, "This trip has been a pivotal point in my life. I don't know what would have happened to me if I hadn't come."

for the 18 people who made decisions for baptism. Eight were baptized the last Sabbath in the village of Mynso.

Sue Hinkle



▲ The Texico Conference/Rio Rancho Church Maranatha mission team in Mynso, Meghalaya, India, in front of the church they helped construct.

◀ Texico pastor Manuel Rodriguez held evangelistic meetings in a local school building with standing room only and an overflow crowd outside the building.

Bottom: Even though the building was not completed, church members from around the district sat in the rain to worship at the new church.

A young man on the team said he's not sure what happened to him, but he can't stop talking about God. Since returning home, he has been sharing with many people about what God is doing in his life. The stories are many and the impressions made are deep.

We praise God for His abundant blessings and also

Delegates Overwhelmingly Approve Future Development of the Sandia View Campus

ALBUQUERQUE, N. MEX. » A special constituency session and association meeting took place Sunday, August 7, 2016, at the Albuquerque Heights Church for the purpose of voting on a recommendation from the Texico Conference Executive Committee to “sell approximately 16 acres of property on the Sandia View Campus to Civitas Senior Living for \$3,400,000 cash for the development of Independent Living, Assisted Living/Memory Care and Senior Cottage/Casitas.

“Apply the proceeds from this sale to the construction of a new facility for Sandia View Academy on the remaining property at the



Derral Reeve



Derral Reeve

▲ Delegates at the Albuquerque Heights Church during a special constituency session and association meeting.

◀ From left: Phil Robertson, Texico Conference executive secretary/treasurer, Lee-Roy Chacon, Texico president, and John Page, Southwestern Union Conference treasurer, closed the meeting with singing the doxology and a prayer of thanksgiving for God’s leading.

north end of the campus.

“To purchase the property due west of the proposed new academy site as a sports field. This purchase would also be funded by proceeds from the above sale.”

A total of 231 delegates, representing churches throughout the Texico Confer-

ence, constituted a quorum. After a discussion of the topic was led by Lee-Roy Chacon, president, and Phil Robertson, executive secretary/treasurer, delegates addressed the chairman with questions and comments regarding the motion as recommended from the executive committee.

The delegates gave overwhelming support with over 90 percent voting in favor of the motion for the redevelopment of property on the Sandia View Campus in Corrales, N. Mex. This project is subject to the developer obtaining the necessary permits and approvals from the Village of Corrales.

This vote demonstrated strong support for Adventist education in the Albuquerque area and throughout the Texico Conference. We solicit your prayers as steps are taken to develop a new facility for our students.

Sue Hinkle

Embracing Diversity, Growing in Spirit: Student Feature

For some people, being exposed to a new culture can be intimidating. However, one Southwestern student embraced diversity and learned to feel right at home.

Amanda Madigan, junior psychology and education major, was born in San Jose, California. When she was eight, she moved to Hawaii with her parents. Before attending a non-denominational Christian school in Hawaii, Madigan had always attended public schools in San Jose.

When she attended her first class in her new Christian school, she could feel the change. The teachers, students, and atmosphere were all different.

“Going to a Christian school in Hawaii made me understand the importance of God,” said Madigan. “I could feel the connection my teachers and fellow classmates had with God on a daily basis.”

The only aspect of Hawaii that Madigan did not like in particular was the lack of diversity. She wanted to explore something new. When the time came to choose a college, Madigan had an idea where she wanted to go. She wanted to return close to home and go to a Christian university in southern California.

However, when she toured the universities near her hometown, something was missing that she couldn't put her finger on. Then an email caught her attention.

The email talked about Southwestern Adventist University and why Madigan should consider it. At first, Madigan was skeptical. She'd never heard of Adventism. That made her curious and she told her parents she wanted to take a tour of the school. When she found out Southwestern Adventist University was in Texas,

she got even more excited about visiting, as she had never been to Texas before.

When she got to Southwestern, she immediately saw something unfamiliar. She witnessed different ethnicities on campus. She saw how people from different cultures and backgrounds were getting along so well and worshiping God together.

Madigan had found what she'd always been looking for: diversity. She knew that if she came to Southwestern, she would have the opportunity to interact with different kinds of people and have a deeper relationship with God. In addition, she found she could get just as strong an academic degree as she would have in California.

After talking to her parents and praying to God about it, Madigan decided to attend Southwestern. She knew that this was where God wanted her to be.

“The opportunity that Southwestern Adventist University gave me to meet new people from different parts of the world was something that I couldn't pass up,” said Madigan. “I wanted to interact with new people and learn about different cultures.”

Madigan has had the unique opportunity to be exposed to all the cultures and backgrounds Southwestern has to offer. She has even been able to travel with the University Singers to other countries, such as South Korea, and learn about other interesting cultures as well.

Diversity was the reason why Southwestern Adventist University was the right choice for Madigan. It allowed her to see how great God is to have been able to create so many different cultures and ethnicities. Madigan could've have stayed home for college. But by traveling a little farther from home, she's been able to experience with Southwestern's diversity, God's grace and an excellent education all wrapped up on one campus.

Glen Robinson, communication professor

Amanda (front row, second from right) practices with the University Singers, the elite traveling choir that tours the U.S. and the world. You can listen to Amanda sing with the group at free concerts and recitals (swau.edu/events) or by watching our videos on Youtube.



Southwestern Adventist University Ranked in Best Colleges By U.S. News

Southwestern Adventist University in Keene, Texas, has once again ranked in U.S. News Regional Colleges West rankings list. U.S. News puts out an annual comparison of colleges. The University is ranked at #21 out of 65 schools in our category, up from #22 on last year's rankings.

"It is nice to receive affirmation from a reputable organization of the quality we all experience on a daily basis," shares Ken Shaw, Southwestern Adventist University president.

The U.S. News rankings focus on academic excellence, with schools ranked on up to 15 measures of academic quality. Overall, the rankings emphasize student outcomes include graduation and retention rates. The college ranking categories are based on the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education, the most widely accepted classification system in U.S. higher education. U.S. News has used

the Carnegie classification system since the first Best Colleges rankings in 1983.

"I encourage parents and students to use the wealth of data and information in Best Colleges to identify schools that suit their specific needs," said Brian Kelly, editor and chief content officer of U.S. News. "In addition to considering factors like location and cost, families should pay close attention to graduation and retention rates. These are important indicators of how

well a school supports its students both academically and financially."

Darcy Force, marketing and public relations director

U.S. News has once again ranked Southwestern Adventist University as one of America's best colleges! This year we are ranked at #21 in our category, up from #22 last year. Read more at swau.edu/news.



Snapshots...



Alumni in New Mexico! We're coming to you in Albuquerque on Feb 12, 2017 so mark your calendars. You can find more information at swau.edu/alumni.



Art Chadwick

The skull that put us on the map. The nanotyrannus skull, the second ever discovered in the world, gave Art Chadwick, Ph.D., and the Dinosaur Research Project team global attention. National Geographic and many other production companies, scientists, and publications have visited our campus to view the skull and the collection of more than 20,000 bones. Now, a new museum is being constructed in Scales Hall with a grand opening scheduled for November 2016! Look for more information at swau.edu/news.

KJRN Radio Station Breaks Ground For New Antenna

KJRN 88.3 The Journey, on the campus of Southwestern Adventist University, just broke ground for its new antenna. The new antenna tower will be 350 feet tall, nearly twice as tall as the current tower, and will add approximately 300,000 people to the station's coverage area.

"I've been waiting for almost four years to share this news," says KJRN general manager and Southwestern communication department chair Mike Agee. "The engineering study is finally complete and we have our FCC approval. I don't need to tell you how exciting it is to add that kind of coverage to our station. I'll say it anyway—I'm very excited."

Dr. Bob Mendenhall started the station in 1974 and the current tower was installed in 1988. Over time, MP3's replaced tapes and records. The station slowly grew its listener base. The University invited alumnus Mike Agee (Class of 1981) to manage and revitalize the station.

Since the re-launch date on November 1, 2010, the station has grown from about 11,000 listeners to over 85,000 weekly listeners. This year the station celebrated its new ranking by Nielsen Ratings in the top 20 Christian stations in the nation!

"The current tower has been affecting our growth for some time now," explains Agee. "As you can imagine, technology has changed a bit since 1988. Johnson County alone is projected to double in population in the next ten years. We're ready to grow with it."

The Journey raised over \$35,000 from listeners to build



the new antenna. Through the annual Sharathon fundraising event the station has become completely listener supported. The tower is being constructed by Estes Tower Company of Burleson, whose owners are listeners and supporters of 88.3 The Journey.

"A new antenna helps us stay true to the mission of the station as it was in 1974," says Ken Shaw, Southwestern Adventist University president. "We're still training students and sharing about Jesus Christ. Imagine that message going to hundreds of thousands more people."

Darcy Force, marketing and public relations director

◀ Mike Agee, General Manager, and friends pictured with the old antenna erected in 1988. The new tower will be nearly twice as tall.

▼ KJRN 88.3 The Journey staff, SWAU support staff, and Rick Estes break ground for the new tower. You can listen online and support the station at 883thejourney.org



Teachers Inspired at Union Education Convention

MONTGOMERY, TEX. » Celebrating their first union-wide convention in more than a quarter century, more than 300 Adventist educators from across the Southwestern Union gathered at beautiful LaTorretta Lake Resort in Montgomery, Texas, in early August. Southwestern Union Conference President Larry Moore's keynote address inspired the union education family with the narrative of God's leading in his life and ministry, giving special emphasis to God's last-minute provision again and again for church, school, and family financial needs. NAD Vice President for Education Larry Blackmer, Ed.D., shared new developments for education from across North America and spoke of the need to build a variety of bridges to broaden the reach of Adventist education.

Organized and produced by the Southwestern Union's vice president for education, Randy Gilliam, Ed.D.; Mike Furr, secondary director; and Marcella Bayless, registrant administrative secretary, the convention featured daily spiritual inspiration with Southwestern Adventist University's own Bill Kilgore, Ph.D., sharing his

inimitable blend of fascinating true tales and biblical guidance. The A'Men quartet, led by the Southwest Region Conference's education superintendent, Buford Griffith III, provided an excellent variety of harmonized inspirational music and guided lively group singing preceding morning devotionals, including the convention theme song, "Gentle Shepherd."

Convention educational leadership and guidance came from a variety of educational speakers, highlighted by the internationally-renowned team of Rosemary Wong, Ed.D., and Harry Wong, Ed.D., who proved once again to be most entertaining while sharing dozens of valuable tips for beginning and organizing a successful school year. Loma Linda University's Director of the Center for Spiritual Life and Wholeness, Carla Gober-Park, Ph.D., shared the need for balance in life and for capturing and developing an appropriate vision of life and profession. Specializing in the legal aspects of today's private educational landscape,



Jon Daggett, J.D., from California shared a variety of current and future challenges facing Adventist education. Southwestern Adventist University's Donna Berkner, Ed.D., longtime elementary teacher/mentor, presented the use of technology and innovative techniques to enhance differentiated education for all students. The North American Division's elementary associate education director, Carol Campbell, Ph.D., well known as a teacher/mentor to many of the educators, shared new developments and future plans for elementary curriculum across North America.

One of the highlights of the convention was the broad range of small or medium size breakout sessions dealing with specialized subject or administrative areas, providing opportunities for "shop talk," exchange of ideas, and networking. Guidance also came for the use of newly-adopted or introduced textbooks, materials, and technologies.

Built-in leisure times allowed for educa-

tors and their families to enjoy fun times at the resort's extensive water park, featuring the famous "Lazy River," a favorite spot for relaxing and visiting. Others spent time on the local golf course or shopping at the nearby mall or excellent educational supply center.

Still, many teachers expressed that the best part of the convention was getting to visit and share with old friends while developing new friendships during the breakout sessions or the delicious group meals. Colleagues, friends, mentors or even former students who have now become valued colleagues, all blended into a great educational family whose

shared vision is to lead Adventist children and youth to a successful and happy life of service on this earth while preparing for eternity with Jesus. Most seemed to see the convention as a resounding success!

Doug Walker, former Southwestern Union education director (1991-2010)



Talk to us!
Take our Record reader survey!

Survey and resources can be found at:

www.SouthwesternAdventist.org/communication

ASI Luncheon Report

Adventist-laymen's Services and Industries (ASI) held its annual international convention August 2-6 in Phoenix, Arizona. Each year supporting ministry leaders, lay people, business, and professional people come together for four days of inspiration, training, networking, and fellowship, and to learn new ways to "Share Christ in the Marketplace." During the convention, on Thursday, August 4, the Southwest Chapter of ASI hosted a luncheon for members, friends and prospective ASI members, which was attended by more than 82 people. Highlights of the program were a stirring testimony by Michael Charles, development director at Jefferson Christian Academy and former NFL player, who shared his conversion

experience and the events that led to his joining the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

A video report of the recent Jumpstart Free Health Clinic was also shown, and several people shared their experiences as volunteers with the clinic. Several South-

west Chapter ASI members also gave reports about their new business and ministry endeavors. A video about the history and ministry of ASI was shown, and prospective eligible members were encouraged to apply for membership in the organization and join forces with other ASI members to help finish the work.

The Southwest Chapter luncheon is held annually on Thursday during the ASI convention, and members, friends, and prospective members who live in the Southwestern Union are invited to attend. Next year's convention will be held in Houston, Texas, August 2-5. Please e-mail asisouthwest@swuc.org if you plan to attend the chapter luncheon in 2017.



Dawn Lewis, ASI Southwest Chapter president, leads out at the chapter luncheon held during the 2016 ASI International Convention in Phoenix, Arizona.

Classified Ads

REAL ESTATE/HOUSING

Summit Ridge Retirement Village is an Adventist community in a rural setting but close to Oklahoma City medical facilities and shopping. Made up of mostly individual homes, the village has fellowship you'll enjoy. On-site church, independent living, nursing home, and transportation as needed. Website: <http://www.summitridgevillage.org>, or call Bill Norman at 405.208.1289.

Enjoy worry-free retirement at *Fletcher Park Inn* on the Fletcher Academy campus near Hendersonville, NC. Spacious villa homes and limited rental apartments available NOW. Enjoy a complimentary lunch at our vegetarian buffet on the day of your no-obligation tour. Contact Loretta for details at 1.800.249.2882 or www.fletcherparkinn.com.

EMPLOYMENT

The Department of Curriculum and Instruction at La Sierra University invites applications for a full-time, tenure-track faculty position. Applicants must hold a PhD degree with Curriculum and Instruction as the preferred specialization, must have taught for at least five years in a K-12 classroom setting, be a member of the Seventh-day Adventist church, and have demonstrated effectiveness as a teacher and scholar. Additional details and application instructions available at lasierra.edu/jobs.

Assistant Professor, Loma Linda University School of Religion is seeking a profes-

or to begin the winter 2017 quarter. This is a tenure-track position in which candidates should possess clinical ministry training and a completed PhD (preferred). Please e-mail a cover letter, curriculum vitae, and three professional references to: Dr. Erik Carter (eccarter@llu.edu)

MISCELLANEOUS

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Free Adventist TV on high quality StarGenesis satellite system, complete system with a self-install kit is only \$99 plus shipping or can be picked up at Sunnysdale. Many other free channels available also. Discounted shipping/delivery on multiple systems. \$9 donated to IA/MO refugee relief fund. Call Micky Burkett at 1.877.687.2203.

The Wildwood Lifestyle Center can help you naturally treat and reverse diseases such as diabetes, heart disease, hypertension, obesity, arthritis, osteoporosis, fibromyalgia, lupus, multiple sclerosis, chronic fatigue, cancer, substance abuse, stress, anxiety, depression and many more. Invest in your health and call 800.634.9355 for more information or visit www.wildwoodhealth.org/lifestyle.

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"Wellness Secrets" 5-day health retreat could be the most affordable ben-

eficial and spiritual vacation you ever experienced! Get help for hypertension, high cholesterol, arthritis, cancer, obesity, depression, stress, smoking, and other ailments in beautiful NW AR. Visit us at WellnessSecrets4u.com or call 479.752.8555."

Preachers Needed! Come and join the General Conference Total Member Involvement team (TMI) for one of the most thrilling experiences of your life. Next February we will take a team of volunteer preachers—young and old alike, with or without experience—to five countries of Eastern Europe to preach a full evangelistic series. Sermons will be provided. 4,000 preaching sites expected! For more information and to register, visit www.tmi.adventist.org.

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YOU Are Needed in Eastern Europe!

February 2017

YES! You can Preach!
Which country will you choose?

TMI
TOTAL MEMBER INVOLVEMENT

For details and online registration, visit:
TMI.Adventist.org

SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

Announcements

Sandia View Academy:

Spanish American Seminary Alumni Reunion is October 6-8. Honor classes: 10-year, 15-year, and 25-year. Golf Tournament on Friday morning. Contact Paul Chavez, President, Alumni Assoc. for details (505.899.4181), or Jerry Ruybalid '54 (505.304.3885).

November 11 Whitecoat

Celebration: A Veteran's Day luncheon honoring all veterans who have served as whitecoats will be held November 11 at the Senior Center in Keene, Texas. The luncheon is sponsored by the Keene Pioneer Heritage Foundation, who is developing a veteran's memorial for the Keene community. Prior to Nov. 11, please RSVP to 940.595.7364 or Chapphilpayne@gmail.com.

Obituaries

CHILDRESS, Daniel, born February 21, 1982 in Tahlequah, Okla., and died Tuesday, May 3, 2016. He graduated from Owasso High School in 2001, and from Oklahoma State University where he received his mechanical engineering degree in 2014. He was employed by Pryor Chemical Company in Pryor, Okla. Daniel was a member of the Adventist Fellowship Church and enjoyed reptiles, model cars, had owned a Ford Shelby Cobra Mustang, and was a nature lover. Survivors: parents, Robert and Debbie Childress, of Owasso, Okla.; children, Cole and Lilly Childress, of Collinsville, Okla.; sister, Rachel Robison and her husband, Clint, of Owasso; sister, Tashina Childress, of Bartlesville, Okla.; girlfriend, Rachael Truelock,

of Owasso; grandparents, Robert and Lou Childress, of Brownwood, Texas.

CURRENT, Meldon "Mel"

Lane, born November 27, 1932 in College Place, Wash., and died August 20, 2016 in Siloam Springs, Ark. He was a member of the Springtown SDA Church. Survivors: brother, Neilan Current, and wife, Jeanne, of Casper, Wyo.; daughter, Rose Miller, and husband, Billy, of Gentry, Ark.; daughter, Lois Warner, and husband, Gary, of Masonville, Colo.; son, Duane Current, and wife, Darla, of Davenport, Wash.; 11 grandchildren, 15 great-grandchildren, and several great-great-grandchildren.

DUGAN, Eugene Allen,

born July 30, 1937, and died August 15, 2016 in Gentry, Ark. He was a member of the

West Siloam Springs Spanish SDA Church. Survivor: wife, Rina Dugan.

GENETTI, Imogene, born March 2, 1926, in Rochester, Indiana, and died August 20, 2016 in Amarillo, Texas. She was a member of the Amarillo SDA Church. She was an artist and created branding irons for ranchers in LaBarge, Wyo. She was also a homemaker. She always carried copies of *Guide*, *Primary Treasure*, and *Little Friend* with her to give to children. She was preceded in death by her son, Roger; husband, Herman; and sister, Mary Jane Crawford. Survivors: son, George Genetti.

MARTIN, Joan, born November 14, 1943 in Oklahoma, and died July 7, 2016. She graduated from academy in Madison, Tenn., in 1960

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and Southern Missionary College in 1965. In 1966, she moved to Sheridan, Wyo., where she taught for two years. She married Don Martin July 18, 1971. They were married 45 years.. Around 2002, Don and Joan were asked to be the Master Guide directors for the Texas Conference. This led to the involvement in planning and assisting with major Union and world-wide Camporees. Later, they became the Pathfinder Historians for Texas. They have been involved in numerous camporees, training courses, investitures, and planning sessions. All through Joan's life she was involved in teaching and assisting at several different schools.

MOORE, Gertrude "Trudel" Kuhnert Kowarsch, born in Sagan, Silesia, Germany (now Zagan, Poland), on August 18, 1916, and died August 16, 2016 in Cleveland, Tenn. She married Willi Kowarsch in 1935 and had five children in their farm house in eastern Germany. The family came to the U.S. on a troop ship, The General Blachford, arriving in New York harbor on April 21, 1952. They lived in Bluffton, S.C., Eutaw, Ala., and then Houston, Texas. While in Houston she worked as a nurse's aide. She later lived in Collegedale, Tenn.; Helen, Ga.; Cleveland, Tenn.; Manning, S.C.; Social Circle, Ga.; Keene, Texas; and Loma Linda, Calif. She loved sewing, farming and gardening. She was preceded in death by her daughter, Siegrid; sons, Heinz and Dieter; husband, Willi; and granddaughter, Malia. Survivors: daughter, Renate, and husband, Peter

Gray, of Manning; daughter, Heidi McFarland, of Cleveland; daughter, Esther, and husband, John Zwemer, of Brunson, S.C.; son, Willfried, and wife, Dian Kowarsch, of Burleson, Texas; daughter-in-law, Judy Kowarsch, of Keene; and 20 grandchildren.

ROGERS, Ruth Axt, born January 18, 1919, in Sheridan County, N.D., and died July 5, 2016, in Elizabeth, Colo. She was married to Leonard Rogers on June 3, 1940. They began a 36-year ministry in Boulder, Colo., which took them to Texas, Iowa, Oklahoma, and Missouri. Worship through song was important to her and she particularly loved working with young people. They continued to witness after retirement and moving back to Texas. Ruth was predeceased in death by her husband, Leonard; daughter, Sharon; and son-in-law, Jerry Mathis. Survivors: sister, Goldie Kreiter; daughter, Cindy Rogers Hopps and son-in-law, Frank; daughter, Deborah Rogers Chapman and son-in-law, Bob; two granddaughters, and two great-grandchildren.

SHAWVER, Lila Ellen, born March 22, 1927 in Kansas City, Kan., and died August 22, 2016 in Bartlesville, Okla.. Lila attended Union College, and graduated from the Glendale nursing program with her RN. Lila and her husband, Russ, spent their entire careers associated with Adventist hospitals. They retired in Arkansas, and finally Oklahoma. Lila was preceded in death by her husband, J. Russell Shawver. Survivors: Son, Jim Shawver; daughters, Debra and Robin;

and 6 great-grandchildren.

SIMPSON, Audrey Powell, born December 6, 1929, in Fosterville, Tenn., and died July 11, 2016. She married Lawson Simpson on August 21, 1947, after graduating from high school. Lawson's family were Seventh-day Adventists. Audrey, who was raised in another church, read and studied her Bible until she accepted the Sabbath and became a Seventh-day Adventist on April 8, 1950. Audrey went on to faithfully serve her God and church through the years as the family lived in Houston, Austin, Beaumont, Alice, Deer Park, and Lampasas. She and Lawson traveled throughout the United States. They lived in Granbury for the past 15 years. Audrey was preceded in death by her granddaughter, Devin Ruth Adams. Survivors: husband, Lawson; sister, Mary Powell Means; sister, Billie Powell Buzbee;

son, Mike and daughter-in-law, Cassie; daughter, Daina, and son-in-law Kenneth; daughter, Rhonda; and six grandchildren.

WALLACE, Marjorie Sue Miller, born August 14, 1933 in Okmulgee, Okla., and died July 24, 2016 in Jefferson, Texas. She was a member of the Jefferson Academy Church. Marjorie met Gaston Wallace in high school in Keene, Texas, and they were married on June 27, 1943. The family lived and worked in many places including Tennessee, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas. Marjorie was the registrar and librarian for Jefferson Academy for more than 20 years. Survivors: daughter, Karen Atwell and husband, Vernon; daughter, Linda Greene, and husband, Jim; and four grandchildren.

SABBATH SUNSET CALENDAR

	Oct 7	Oct 14	Oct 21	Oct 28	Nov 4	Nov 11
Abilene, TX	7:17	7:08	7:00	6:53	6:46	5:41
Albuquerque, NM	6:43	6:33	6:25	6:17	6:10	5:04
Amarillo, TX	7:23	7:14	7:05	6:57	6:50	5:44
Brownsville, TX	7:11	7:04	6:57	6:51	6:47	5:43
Dallas, TX	7:04	6:56	6:48	6:40	6:34	5:29
El Paso, TX	6:44	6:35	6:27	6:20	6:14	5:09
Fort Worth/Keene, TX	7:07	6:58	6:50	6:43	6:36	5:31
Gallup, NM	6:51	6:41	6:33	6:24	6:17	5:11
Galveston/Houston, TX	7:00	6:52	6:45	6:39	6:33	5:28
Gentry, AR	6:53	6:44	6:35	6:26	6:19	5:13
Little Rock, AR	6:46	6:37	6:28	6:20	6:13	5:07
Muskogee, OK	6:57	6:48	6:39	6:31	6:23	5:17
New Orleans, LA	6:39	6:31	6:24	6:17	6:11	5:07
Oklahoma City, OK	7:06	6:57	6:48	6:40	6:33	5:27
Roswell, NM	6:35	6:26	6:18	6:11	6:04	4:59
San Antonio, TX	7:13	7:05	6:58	6:51	6:46	5:41
Shreveport, LA	6:53	6:44	6:36	6:29	6:22	5:17
Tulsa, OK	6:59	6:50	6:41	6:32	6:25	5:19

Note: Daylight Savings Time ends at 2:00 a.m. on Nov 6.

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— John 10:10



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