

T Southern TIDINGS

JANUARY 2023

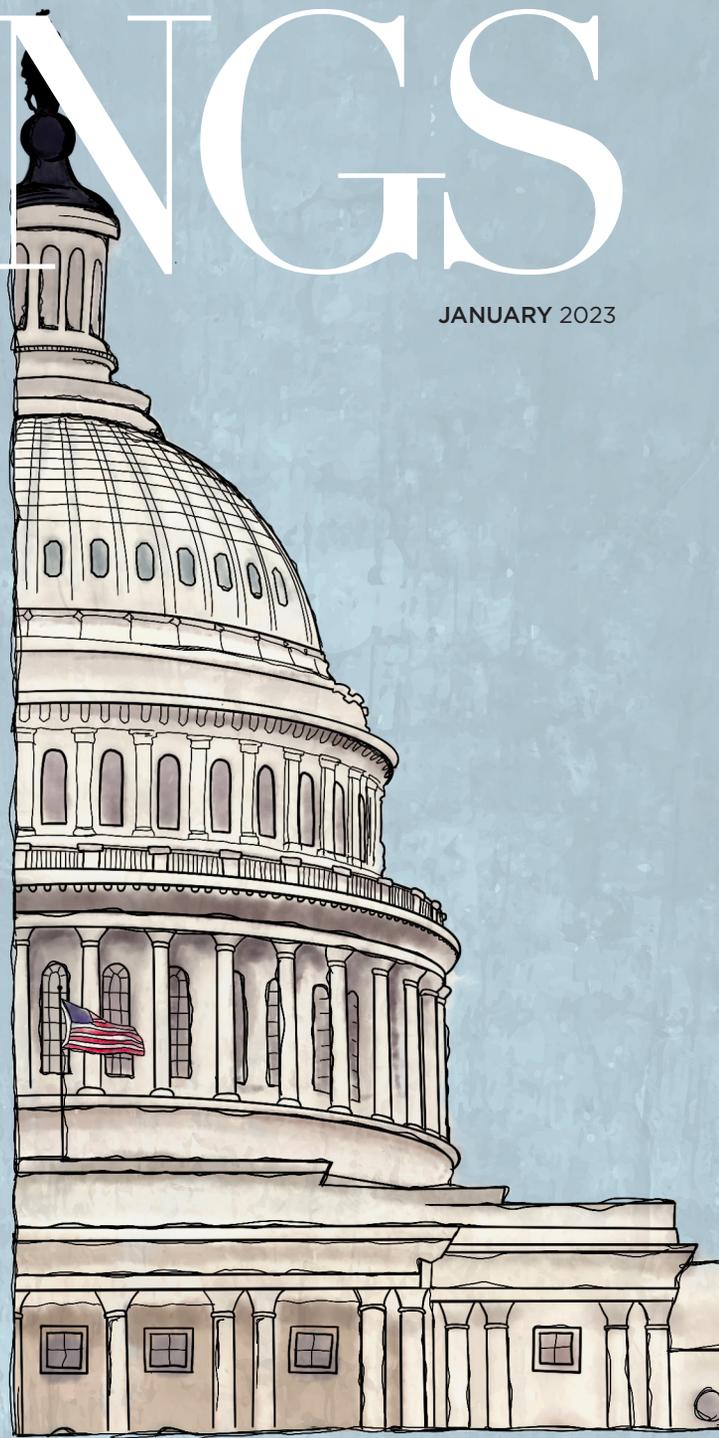
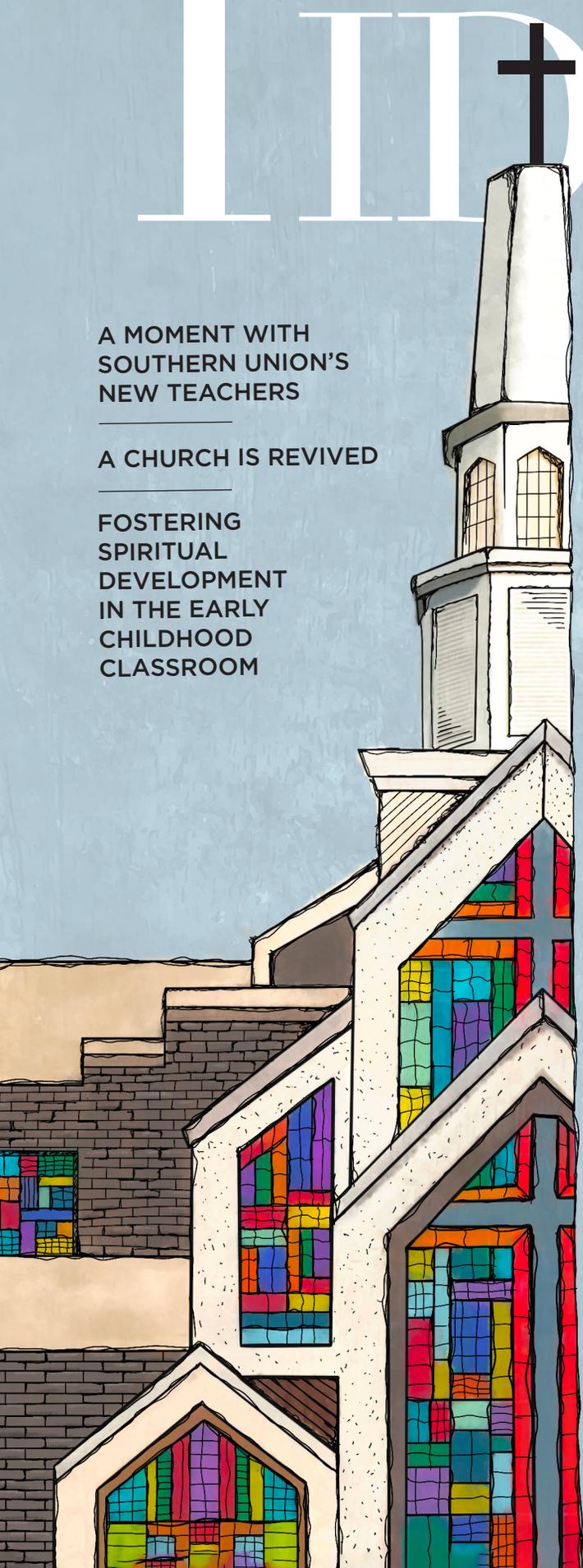
A MOMENT WITH
SOUTHERN UNION'S
NEW TEACHERS

A CHURCH IS REVIVED

FOSTERING
SPIRITUAL
DEVELOPMENT
IN THE EARLY
CHILDHOOD
CLASSROOM

RECONSTRUCTING LIBERTY

UNDERSTANDING
AND TAKING
HEED OF
PROPHETIC WARNINGS



Who's in Charge of Technology?



Ron C. Smith, D.Min., Ph.D.
*President of the Southern
Union Conference*

“Thy right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power: thy right hand, O Lord, hath dashed in pieces the enemy,” Exodus 15:6.

Consider the tyranny of technology. In his book *Future Shock*, Alvin Toffler regarded the technological revolution as the most taxing of all for the mind.

While grandparents watch bemused, their grandchildren manipulate computers and social media as easily as they themselves once rode scooters. But it's one thing to feel good about a child notching up records in an electronic game, quite another to know that your retirement check comes courtesy of Android or Apple.

The song of Exodus records God's scorn for the technology of the Egyptians. Israel quaked as they heard the rumbling of chariot wheels. How could they handle metal shaped for war when all they had were handcarts and a few donkeys? But, with the east wind and with walls of water, God tumbled the chariots to destruction. A touch of His power and terror turned on Pharaoh's armies.

Many have sought to lock technology at an acceptable level, but time swallowed them up and left only their handiwork. Closing the door may create a moment of calm, but the storm surely comes.

Three Mile Island and Chernobyl have taught us to dread nuclear technology. Politicians with their hotline communication devices and generals with their fail-safe switches offer cold comfort measured against past experience. Mankind has never invented a technology of terror that he has not unleashed beyond his control.

But what of God's people in the midst of burgeoning technology? Paul saw divine technology lifting the faithful from Planet Earth and transporting them to the Father's house. The tyrant's technology has no more authority over God's people today than it did in Pharaoh's day.

It may seem quaint to think simple thoughts like these. God made the laws that make it possible to produce the wizardry of inventive science. If He made those laws, He could turn aside any system, or accumulation of systems, and make it useless. Quaint or not, the Red Sea proved it true. What can a chariot do when God stretches out His right arm to save? What can a nuclear weapon do while God walls in His people as they wait for the second coming of Jesus.

Even in this new year of 2023, God has gifted us with successful weaponry for effective warfare in the great controversy between Christ and Satan. Christ did not tell His disciples that their work would be easy. They would have to fight “against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places,” Ephesians 6:12.

The great news is, we will not be left to fight alone in the 21st century. God, the ultimate Lord over all technology, is with us. If we will press forward in our quest to reconnect with missing members of our Church, One mightier than angels will accompany us.

“The path where God leads the way may lie through the desert or the sea, but it is a safe path,” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 290. -RCS 🕊



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january 2023

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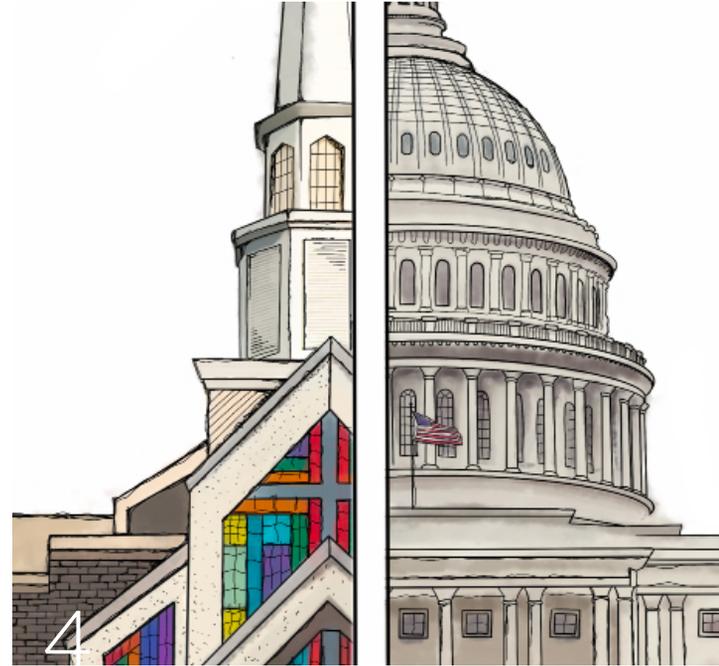
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RECONSTRUCTING LIBERTY

UNDERSTANDING AND TAKING HEED OF PROPHETIC WARNINGS

BY AMIREH AL-HADDAD

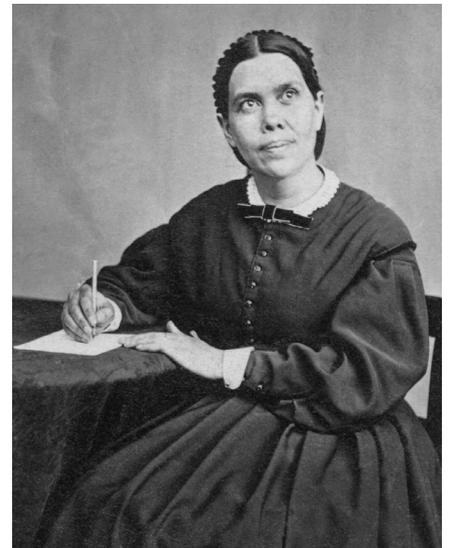
Over the last few years, I have written about Christian Nationalism (January 2020) before most people knew or had heard about such a thing. Last year, I warned members that we were heading for some major landscape changes in the way religious liberty and the separation of church and state are being handled in the courts (January 2021). This year, it seems appropriate to explain how these issues have come about and what this means for the future of religious freedom in America in light of some very specific prophetic understandings.

The changes that have been happening in the religious liberty world started more than 20 years ago, and we in the Department of Public Affairs and Religious Liberty have been watching and warning members about the changing social attitudes for two decades now. But, like most warning systems, it never really hits home until you can see the storm on the horizon. Anything before that is merely advice to be considered, but not necessarily acted upon.

We have seen a very big change in the attitudes towards the ideas of secularism of late. Secularism in the past was never a threat to religious liberty. It was a protection against the encroachment of the government into

religion. However, the issue of secularism suddenly went from being a friend of religious liberty to being the enemy of religious liberty. Growing up as Americans we all understood that our government was a secular government, and that secularism was an idea that government institutions and the governing of people be separated from religious institutions and religious idealism. Secularism in the past supported the right of freedom from imposition of religion upon the people just as it supported the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment.

Over the last 15 years secularism and its definition, within the confines



“In order for the United States to form an image of the beast, the religious power must so control the civil government that the authority of the State will also be employed by the Church to accomplish her own ends...”

Ellen G. White, Great Controversy, p. 443.

of American society, has been redefined in a way that is very dangerous towards religious liberty. Now, secularism has become an idea that ALL human decisions and activities that engage the public should be unhindered by religious belief or institutions. Conservatives in America see this definition of secularism, when taken to its extreme, as doing away with religion. I think we need to rethink this assessment, however. In the history of the world, we have never seen religion being done away with all together; even when independent religious thinking was outlawed and hunted down, as it was during the Protestant Reformation, religion still flourished because of the fortitude of the believer. It is more likely today's new definition of secularism could drive religion from the public square, but is unlikely to kill it.

So, from this changing definition of secularism, we come back to the idea that the original treatment of secularism was good for religious liberty because it supported the Establishment Clause: "*Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion ...*" Traditionally, this means that the government shall not establish a state church. It has also upheld the idea that the government would not take tax dollars and give it to religious institutions. After all, doesn't financial support help to establish or at the very least help maintain those institutions? These have long been ideals that American protestants have valued, even when American Catholics did not. But now, protestants and Catholics alike feel it a badge of honor to defend religious liberty by calling issues that separate the church from the state "discriminatory actions" for treating religion and religious organizations with less favor than secular organizations. One might wonder if that

actually *is* discriminatory to religion. But, calling this separation an act of discrimination misses the meaning of separation. It also points an accusatory finger at religion anytime you must go to the government to ask for financial support. Benjamin Franklin (in a letter to Richard Price, 1780) said the following, "When a religion is good, I conceive it will support itself; and when it does not support itself, and God does not take care to support it so that its professors are obliged to call for help of the civil power, 'tis a sign, I apprehend, of its being a bad one."

This past summer, in some of their final opinions for the term, the Supreme Court displayed great aptitude in reconstructing liberty as they made two very concerning decisions in cases regarding government aid to religious schools and prayer at public schools. In *Carson v. Makin*, the court majority opinion decided that Maine's prohibition of giving money from the state coffers to religious schools was unconstitutional and discriminatory towards religion. It sounds good when you read it, but thinking about what the decision actually does may make you change your mind about whether the decision was the best one. In essence, the decision takes your mandated tax money and gives it to religious schools to train up and educate the children of families who qualify for the money. If there has been one thing that most people have liked about the Establishment Clause, it was that the state would not take your tax dollars and give it to a religion you would not voluntarily support. Here is my shameless plug for Adventist Education: When you give an offering to Adventist Education, whether it be in the local church school setting or the academy or university setting, you are funding an evangelism program that operates nine months out the year.



RELIGIOUS LIBERTY OFFERING SABBATH, JANUARY 14, 2023

Should other people's tax dollars support those evangelism efforts?

In the case of *Kennedy v. Bremerton School District*, the court upheld the right of a public high school football coach to pray on the 50-yard line after games. This case involved not only free exercise claims, but also establishment and free speech clause claims from the First Amendment. The majority opinion considered one set of facts, but the

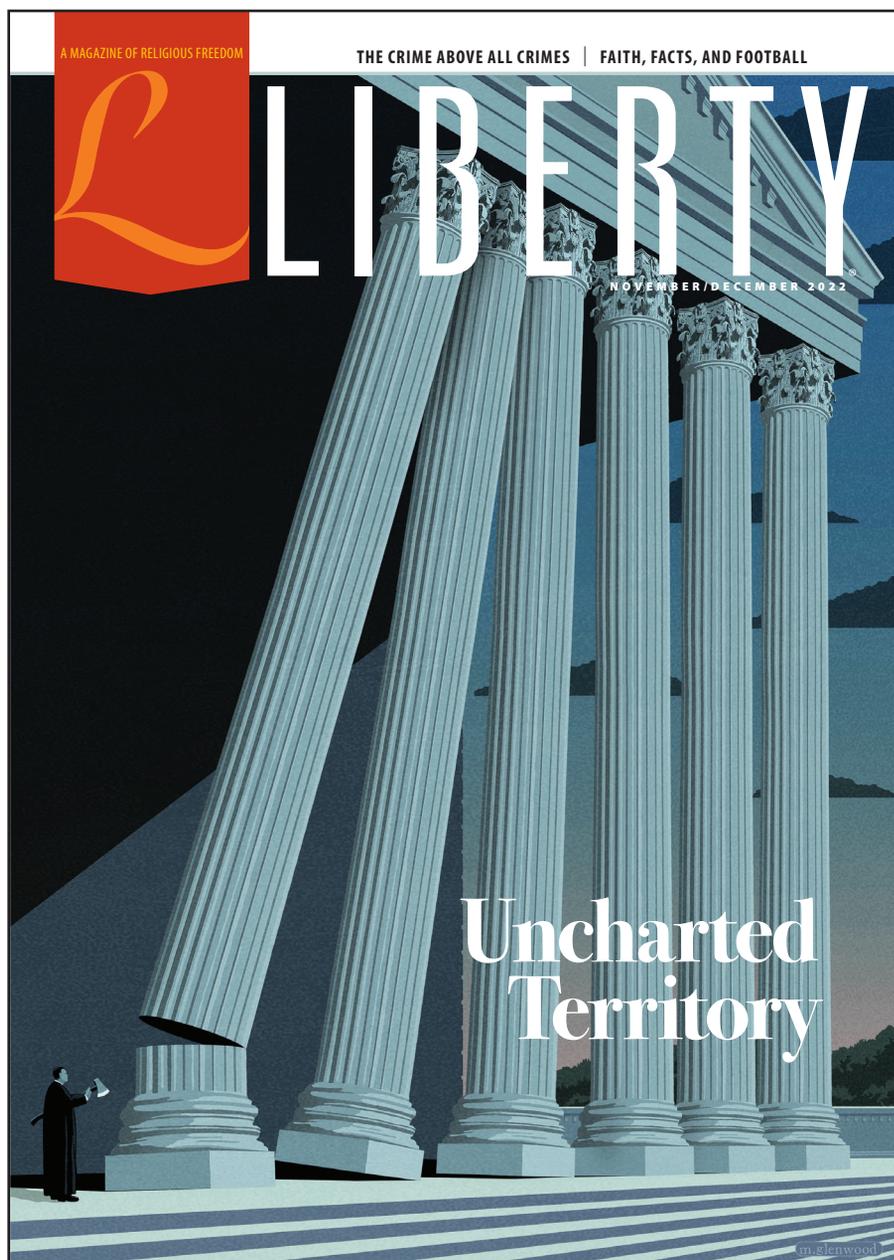
dissenting opinion considered another separate set of facts. The dissenting court opinion was in the interest of the separation of church and state, where the prayer could be seen as "the employee ministering religion to students as the public watched." The question that goes unanswered is, would the court have decided in favor of Coach Kennedy had he been leading prayer on a prayer rug turned towards Mec-

ca? While the coach definitely had a right to have his own personal prayer, the school system had a duty to make sure his actions were not proselytizing a captive audience, the students.

The case reminds me of a discussion over brunch with my former teen Sabbath school teacher from my hometown of Murfreesboro, Tennessee. In our discussion she related to me a story I had never heard her tell, although I have shared it with others since then. She grew up in a small town in Tennessee and attended the public high school. *She was called by name during prayer in assembly*, and prayed for in front of all her teachers and fellow students because she was not like the majority there and did not attend the Church of the Nazarene. She looked at me and said how much she loved the Seventh-day Adventist approach to religious liberty. She never wanted any other person to suffer such humiliation.

Our concern in these two decisions lies in the court's changing attitudes toward the Establishment Clause. Is this part of the reconstruction of liberty, when we slowly tear down the wall that has divided the garden of the church from the wilderness of the state, as Roger Williams so eloquently put it? When we favor a certain religion by granting government endorsement in a setting like a high school football game, do we ostracize students and families who will be seen as "not one of us" because they refuse to take part in the activity? Or, as in the Maine tuition case, do we help religious schools along when we take tax dollars and give them to the school?

In one of the very few places Ellen G. White writes about the United States Constitution, she discusses the issues of the Establishment Clause and why it is so important to our religious liberty that this clause is upheld. It is also why we should be concerned at any effort to reconstruct liberty in our nation. Taken from the *Great Controversy*, chapter 25, titled "God's Law Immutable," she writes, "The founders of the nation



SAVE THE DATE

“Reconstructing Religious Liberty in a Time of Religious and Secular Extremism”
Religious Liberty Conference

Location: Southern Adventist University, Collegedale, Tennessee

Date: October 20-21, 2023
More Details Coming Soon!

wisely sought to guard against the employment of secular power on the part of the church, with its inevitable result — intolerance and persecution. The Constitution provides that “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof,” and that “no religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office of public trust under the United States.” Only in flagrant violation of these safeguards to the nation’s liberty can any religious observance be enforced by civil authority. But, the inconsistency of such action is no greater than is presented in the symbol. It is the beast, with lamblike horns — in profession pure, gentle, and harmless — that speaks like a dragon,” *Great Controversy*, p. 442.

We have long cautioned ourselves to be vigilant when proposed changes are made to the Constitution. This is, in part, because a change to the Constitution could easily result in the loss of these precious liberties — all the more reason why we outright oppose doing away with the Constitution altogether. And, it is all the more reason to defend the separation of church and state from those who seek to reconstruct liberty so that the church has more say in gov-

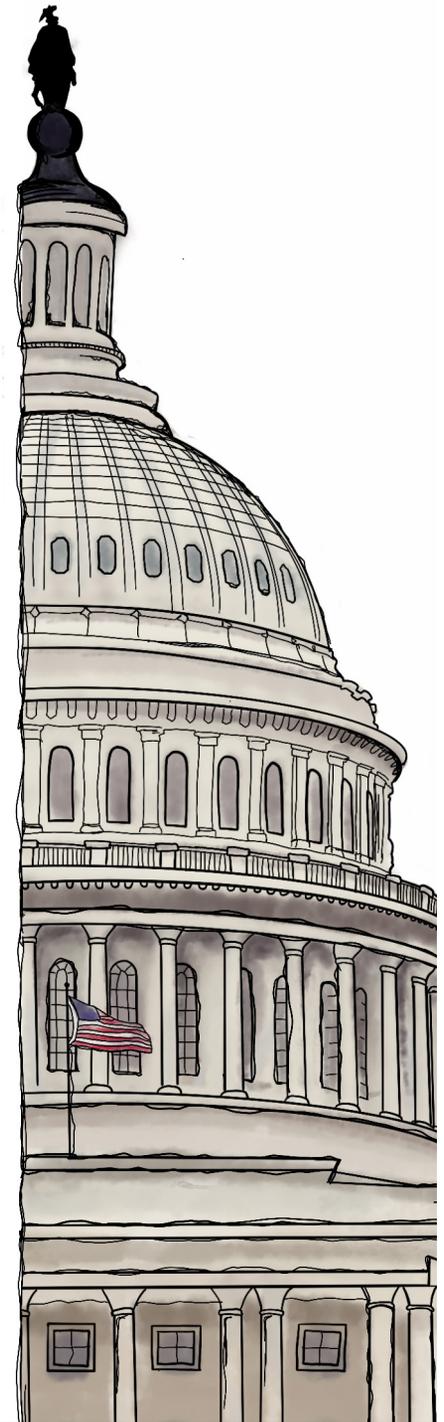
ernment. If you believe in prophecy as we have always understood it, supporting those who would do away with the Constitution or the separation of church and state is akin to helping the beast, with its lamblike horns, speak like a dragon.

There is great temptation for each of us to bias ourselves with our favorite political party. And, more worrisome is the new normal of demonizing the party with whom you do not affiliate. It is tempting for us as Christians to stay away from the secular in favor of the more religious. Some even warn that the more secular party will bring about our final persecution. However, this flies in the face of prophecy.

“In order for the United States to form an image of the beast, the religious power must so control the civil government that the authority of the State will also be employed by the church to accomplish her own ends Whenever the church has obtained secular power, she has employed it to punish dissent from her doctrines. Protestant churches that have followed in the steps of Rome by forming alliance with worldly powers, have manifested a similar desire to restrict liberty of conscience,” *Great Controversy*, p. 443.

Defending religious liberty is much more than working Sabbath accommodation problems. It is also much more than just defending the Free Exercise Clause, which gives us the right to freely believe and practice that belief. Defending religious liberty also means defending the Establishment Clause, and understanding that the separation of church and state is good for the country and good for religion. ●

Amireh Al-Haddad is the director of public affairs and religious liberty at the Southern Union Conference.



RELIGIOUS LIBERTY OFFERING SABBATH, JANUARY 14, 2023

A MOMENT WITH SOUTHERN UNION'S NEW TEACHERS

BY ROSE THOMAS, PH.D.

The Southern Union Conference Office of Education (SUCOE) is filled with gratitude and excitement at this new year, 2023. Surely, we can testify that God has been with us! Emmanuel has been our constant and faithful companion, and has ushered us through the 2020 worldwide pandemic, and has graced us even now with life to serve and love to worship in His vineyard.

Reflecting over the past year, we are amazed at what the Lord has accomplished through us in the Southern Union Office of Education. We have participated or led in countless training presentations, constituencies, special events, boards and councils, and writing and reviewing of policies. One event stands out above all because of its focus on a special group — our newest teachers across the Southern Union territory.

The field of education is currently experiencing a teacher shortage in both the public and private sectors. In Adventist schools, the shortage is more acute because of our commitment to employ ministers of education who are filled with the Spirit of Christ and equipped to lead our students, not only to become great thinkers and doers in the service of others, but to develop a personal and life-changing relationship with the Savior of the world. Our Adventist teachers are exceptional evangelists, for they minister and model Christ to congregations of students, from early childhood



PHOTO BY: OLIVIA WOODARD

HOT program participants and Southern Union Conference Office of Education team

education to the doctoral degree, daily.

During 2022, the SUCOE team planned and invited new teachers from across the Union who have been teaching for one to three years in grades pre-K to high school, to attend an especially designed event — aptly named “Honoring Our Teachers” (HOT). This occasion was one of the initiatives that our former director and visionary, Keith Hallam, dreamed of and prepared with us before he responded to a call to serve with the North Pacific Union in September of 2022.

The purpose of HOT was to celebrate and induct our new teachers into the Southern Union family, to show our care, and to share our love of learning with them. At the Union level, we seek to support our conferences in their valiant effort of retaining teachers through various means, including relationship development and professional and moral

support. In a very small way, we wanted to reach and touch the teachers to thank them for their sacrificial service on behalf of our students.

The HOT program welcomed its first group of about 30 educators on Thursday, September 22, 2022. From noon that day, to the end on Friday afternoon, many departments united with the Office of Education to envelope our most valuable guests into warm worship, friendly fellowship, and strategic scholarship.

Worship

Richie Halversen, pastor and Southern Union director for church growth, evangelism, and training, was in place to receive our teachers with the love of Jesus. With his great passion for evangelism, he lifted his voice of power and hope to remind the teachers of the noble role that they occupy as educators, and of the

great commission to raise up children for God's Kingdom as they fix their eyes on the Master Teacher. The educators shared their appreciation for the wise words and care from Halversen. For two days, God was elevated, and our teachers were gratified to see Jesus anew and to glimpse His purpose for their lives as they lead students to better learning and a greater encounter with Christ.

Fellowship

The HOT event gave the teachers the opportunity to learn more about the organization of the Adventist Church — from the General Conference to the North American Division, to the unions, conferences, and on to the individual schools. The teachers appreciated that while their respective conferences are a part of the Southern Union, we are thumbprints of a bigger picture. We are a family.

This was clear as other ministries joined the Office of Education to deliver a great program for our new teachers. Nearly every office at the Union participated in the success of the program. Additionally, Hilma Griffin-Watson, Ed.D., from Oakwood Adventist University, and Krystal Bishop, Ed.D., from Southern Adventist University, were present to greet and encourage our teachers.

Most powerful was the opportunity for educators from different schools and various conferences to meet and mingle with each other. They rejoiced in learning about each other, sharing struggles and successes, and establishing friendships that may continue beyond this initial meeting. Some expressed gratitude for the fellowship, food, and friends that reminded them that they are not alone in this great work of educating students for Christ.

Scholarship

The Southern Union Office of Education is on a journey toward continuous improvement of learning for teachers and students alike. To that end, the teacher-scholars participated in learning that reflected our commitment to provid-



HOT participants listen to a presentation on evangelism by Richie Halversen, pastor and Southern Union director for church growth and evangelism.

PHOTO BY: O'LIVIA WOODARD



Murray Cooper (standing), SUCOE's director of education, and Krystal Bishop, Ed.D. (left), from Southern Adventist University, converse with teachers.

PHOTO BY: O'LIVIA WOODARD

ing **GREAT** education to all students. **GREAT** is the acronym for **God-centered, Result-oriented, Environment** that nurtures, **Aligned** with standards, with **Team** effort.

Through professional development presentations, the teachers gained more insight and understanding about the best ways to create cultures that are safe, supportive, collaborative, and equitable for all students. They discussed best teaching practices and effective instructional delivery and strategies that will impact learning and reach diverse students. They learned more about the library program, and how to connect students to technological resources. They also spent time with our registrar to become better acquainted with the process of certification, and the requirements to keep current their teaching credentials.

Thanks

Participants wish special thanks to the SUCOE directors for their presentations and the administrative team for working tirelessly to make HOT a success. SUCOE is grateful for our guest presenter, Ebony Holland, a superstar teacher, and a member of the gospel recording group, Virtue, for unleashing her passion for education and modeling the best ways for teachers to engage with students and to enrich their lives.

The Adventist school system is vast in breadth and depth. We are thankful that HOT closed the distance between us and allowed a small sample of scholars to worship, fellowship, and learn together — if only for a moment. 📍

Rose Thomas, Ph.D., is the director of elementary education at the Southern Union Conference.

DOCUMENTARY FILM “LET THE CHURCH SAY” ADDRESSES KEEPING THE BLACK CHURCH RELEVANT

BY NANCY B. HOWARD

As a marketing and communications professional, I learned to use the transformative power of storytelling to weave narratives and information into impactful content and messaging for a living. As a Christian filmmaker, I wanted my work to allow people to experience the power of visual media to not only inform, but also transform, heal, and inspire — making compelling stories come to life.

I talked with rising director Rafiq Jordan Nabali about his experience as an Adventist filmmaker and the making of his documentary, “Let the Church Say,” which I also had the honor of producing. The movie was filmed in 2020 during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. The film’s premise explores the question, “Is the Black Church dead?” and provides a unique voice and presentation to the discussion of modern-day social justice and the role the Black church has and continues to play.

Howard: What led you to filmmaking as a career?

Nabali: Growing up, I used to play with toys and action figures and would make complex, elaborate back stories for them. Storytelling was a core part of how I played and expressed myself. I also enjoyed creative writing, music, and other arts in school, and began to think about what I could do for a career that encompassed all the arts in which I was interested. And, filmmaking was the answer.

Howard: Did you study film production in college?

Nabali: Yes. I graduated from SCAD (Savannah College of Art & Design) in 2021. I had previously been rejected when I applied to Florida State University (FSU), which was my first-choice school and one of the top 15 film schools in the country. I did not get in on my first or second try. Though I was disappointed, I do not think it was an acci-

dent at all; God had a plan. Right after receiving that second rejection from FSU, I learned that SCAD had a highly regarded film program in Atlanta. I figured it might be important for me to go to a place where filmmaking is booming and graduate from there. I remember the first verse that came to mind when I got my acceptance letter to SCAD in 2017. I often repeated Psalms 37:4-5: “Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the Lord; trust in Him and He will do this.” God’s word came alive for me that day. Going to SCAD was something I really wanted after being denied going to FSU twice; it just meant so much to finally get a yes.

Howard: How did “Let the Church Say” come about?

Nabali: It started as my short student thesis film at SCAD. I had a strong interest in learning more about the Black

“LET THE CHURCH SAY” WAS WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY RAFIQ JORDAN NABALI, AND PRODUCED BY JOE HOWELL AND NANCY B. HOWARD, MEMBERS OF CHURCHES IN THE SOUTH ATLANTIC CONFERENCE. TO VIEW THE TRAILER AND FOLLOW PROGRESS OF THE FILM, VISIT LETTHECHURCH.COM. #KEEPCHURCHRELEVANT



Rafiq Jordan Nabali



Joe Howell



Nancy B. Howard

church of the past and comparing it with the institutions of the present. As a result, we created this film that takes the audience on a journey through the history of the Black church and uncovers answers to critical questions surrounding the church’s impact on social justice today. The purpose is to provide a unique exploration of the vital connections between race, religion, and activism.

Howard: Tell me more about your story in the film. I know your grandmother was an influence that you referred to.

Nabali: My grandmother was very important to me. I grew up in a really religious family. As the matriarch of our family, she was a traditional, praying grandmother and a great example for me of what a Christian is. Her significance

is interwoven within the story. I wanted to provide that connection between the loss of a spiritual head and the potential loss of a spiritual institution. The loss of that leadership is necessary for spiritual growth. This film can be seen as an opportunity to point out the need to rebuild that connection, but also to inspire church leadership to be more active in the lives of youth, in the lives of people in the community.

Howard: How has promotion of the film been going?

Nabali: We were prayerful every step of the way, and we saw the Lord work out miracles to get the film made, and raise funding and support we needed for early post-production. We submitted to a few film festivals and were honored that

the Lord saw fit to allow us to not only be accepted as an official selection for four festivals so far, but to win an Audience Choice Award in the Documentary category at the International Christian Film Festival in Orlando, Florida. People have been moved by this film. The feedback has been phenomenal.

Howard: How is this film different from other projects about the Black church?

Nabali: Filmmaking is a community effort, even when all the cameras are off. Early 2021, when we discovered Henry Louis Gates Jr. had released a docuseries focused on the Black church, it was a little discouraging for all of us. It felt like our film was somehow less important or would not make the impact we hoped it

would. But, a candid conversation with a filmmaker friend of mine helped put things back into perspective for me. He reminded me that my story was unique and that no one else could tell it. I believe God used my filmmaker community and that conversation with my friend to encourage me in that moment, and perhaps if he hadn't, this now award-winning film would have stayed on the shelf.

Howard: Share some of your challenges as an Adventist filmmaker.

Nabali: One of my biggest challenges is keeping the Sabbath while also being an active filmmaker. I've had conversations with industry professionals who told me it wouldn't work, that nobody is going to want to work with or hire someone who can't be available at all times. I refuse to believe that. I believe that God is in control and that even in this industry, which is primarily secular, He can open doors for me to still succeed. And He has. It's also challenging trying to find my boundaries around what projects I will and won't work on.

It's very difficult going to a film school like SCAD, which is not Christian by any means, although there were other Christians there. We even had Adventists that I connected with there. Sometimes you

build strong friendships with people that don't have the same world view as you, and you want to support them creatively in their endeavors. Unfortunately, there may come a time when their worldview conflicts with yours — and I never want to place my career above God.

There was also the difficulty of working with a six-day work week instead of seven. I think the industry definitely makes it seem like there's just so much to do that you need to be working all seven days. But I'm giving God praise because, throughout my career, I've tried my best to be consistent with keeping the Sabbath, and I have not lost anything. In fact, in a lot of ways, I have gained more than some people I know who have always worked all seven days.

Howard: Any last words?

Nabali: I think that filmmaking is an incredible way to spread the gospel. I'm very excited about the future of my career and the opportunities that God will open up for me. And, for filmmakers or creatives who feel like it would be too difficult to do what God is calling them to do, I would say trust God and move forward in faith. Your story is important. Who you are and the experiences that God has given you are important to share for the

benefit of other people and for the growth of the Kingdom. I know we're in a saturated market right now with social media; everybody's saying something. But, the gospel is always going to be relevant. It's always most impactful when we share it personally in our own creative way that God gives us to share. 📌

Nancy B. Howard is a marketing and communications professional in Atlanta, Georgia.

Film and television industry professionals such as Jennifer Hyde of Savannah College of Art & Design (SCAD) in Atlanta, Georgia, called it "Gorgeous, smart, and emotional, with terrific writing and an authentic and intimate presence." Author and speaker Lorna Blake said, "The showcase of academics alongside recording artists, pastors, spoken word artists, and activists sharing their stories makes for a truly powerful film..." Nichole R. Phillips, Ph.D., associate professor of black studies at Emory University, called it "Refreshing, unique, exquisite, and beautifully done."



A CHURCH IS REVIVED

BY FAITH-ANN MCGARRELL AND DION HENRY

Take me to the water to be baptized,” belted the vocalist as more than 50 individuals took part in a baptism. The candidates walked confidently, indicating a resolve to follow Jesus and bury their pain at what the evangelist called “a pain burying service.”

The three-week System for Survival Community Initiative by Ron C. Smith, D.Min., Ph.D., evangelist and president of Southern Union Conference, took place April 2-23, 2022, at Altamonte Springs Church. A team of Bible workers, musicians, food-service professionals, and members of the local church led and participated in the nightly sessions.

Public Evangelism Still Works!

“There is a need for evangelism in the church,” said Dion Henry, D.Min., senior pastor of Altamonte Springs Church. Through the System for Survival Community Initiative, Altamonte Springs Church partnered with a well-developed program that brought human resources to the local church and provided a powerful way to reach the community.

A Church Revived

Several follow-up initiatives now support and nurture all members:

- **Mentoring program** pairs new members with existing church members to foster and build relationships.
- **Partnerships with local agencies** such as SALT continue to help address homelessness and food insufficiency.
- **Active food distribution program**



PHOTO BY: DIMITRI DE CASTRO

Ron C. Smith, D.Min., Ph.D. (center), evangelist and president of the Southern Union Conference, talks with the candidates for baptism.

serves more than 400 people weekly.

- **Power to Empower**, a social service ministry, connects members with local agencies and other resources to meet their needs.

Making a Commitment to Public Evangelism

“Collaboration with local agencies and denominational leaders will provide human and financial resources,” said Henry. “Being intentional about public evangelism will yield results.”

Conclusion

Jesus said, “My Father is always

working, and so am I,” John 5:17 NLT. By the end of the three-week initiative, the local church and community witnessed concrete, remarkable evidence that God is still working through the church. There were two weddings and three baby dedications, and 110 individuals chose to make a public commitment to Jesus through baptism and profession of faith. Even more gained a renewed understanding of God’s vast, all-encompassing love that changes hearts, heals circumstances, and transforms lives. 🕊

FOSTERING SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE EARLY CHILDHOOD CLASSROOM

BY HEATHER HAUFFE

Heather Hauffe shares her testimony as an early childhood educator.

The most fantastic part of being an early childhood educator is watching children develop personal relationships with Jesus. So many students have come into our pre-K and kindergarten classrooms asking what prayer is, who Jesus is, or what a Bible is. What a privilege it is to respond to these questions! The answers are not simple definitions, discussions, or even whole units of study; instead, they are found in a personal relationship that develops only through the work of the Holy Spirit with each child.

As an early childhood educator, I provide a safe, engaging environment that supports students' spiritual development. Of course, what that looks like varies from day to day and classroom to classroom, but here are some of my favorite activities that help students' spiritual development:

First, we always begin and end our day with prayer. Students get excited about the concept that the Creator of the universe cares to listen to anything we want to bring to Him. During prayer re-

quest time, students share their concerns and praises with the class, and we bring them to God together. Students eagerly take turns being the prayer leader. We talk about how God always listens to our prayers. He loves us and always answers in the best way. Just like parents and caregivers, God doesn't always give us

what we ask for, but we can trust that He always does what is best for us. Students get into the habit of praying for each other and themselves, and thanking God for blessings they notice throughout the day.

At the beginning of the year, we set up a prayer station where students can have quiet time with God and pray about





anything they want. Students enjoy different activities at the prayer station, like making prayer chains, listening to music while they pray, or making books about prayers God has answered.

Throughout the year, we discuss how the Bible is not just another ordinary book of fiction. It is the true Word of God. It contains all of the important information Jesus wants us to know here on Earth so we can spend eternity with Him. Students learn to treat the Bible with reverence. They understand that we can trust the Bible because we can always trust its Author, God. We learn about Christ's nature through the stories, and discuss how He wants us to treat each other.

Each week, we study a new Bible story. We learn about the story's context, discuss the characters' feelings and choices, look for the lessons God has for us in each story, and participate in activities that help students better understand concepts. One of my favorite lessons is the story in Mark 2:1-12 of the four men who lowered their paralyzed friend through the roof so Jesus could heal him. For this lesson, we use cardboard, mud, leaves, and pine straw to make a house with a flat roof. This helps students better understand what houses looked like

in biblical times, and how the four men made a hole in the ceiling. When we study Jonah, students participate in an object-lesson activity where they try to run away from their shadows. Just like their shadows, God is always with them.

Bible stories are usually a springboard for deep student-led conversations and lessons. For example, after we study Mark 2:1-12, students almost always ask about the hole that was left in the roof. Did the homeowners forgive the four men? Did the man who was healed help fix the roof? Students share what they would have done. I ask what they think Jesus would have done. Similarly, students ponder what Jonah would have felt like and smelled like after spending three days in the belly of the fish. What would have happened to Jonah in the storm if the fish had not swallowed him? Would the story have ended differently if Jonah had obeyed God the first time He told him to go to Nineveh? What can we learn from this?

Students take home a simplified version of the Bible story or a Bible craft each Friday to tell their families the Bible story in their own words. We practice the story in class, and students leave eager to share the Word of God with their fami-

lies and friends. When they come back to school on Monday, I invite students to share their experiences. Students gain a sense of accomplishment, and find joy in spreading the Gospel message.

While my work focuses on bringing children to develop a personal relationship with Christ, children have much to teach us in this area. Matthew 18:2-4 NIV says, "He called a little child to Him, and placed the child among them. And He said: 'Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Therefore, whoever takes the lowly position of this child is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven.'" From birth, children have an innate expectation for caregivers to meet their needs. They begin life with faith and the ability to completely trust in their caregivers and what we present to them as true. Experience in this sin-laden world teaches us to doubt. Therefore, teaching children that they can trust in Jesus in these precious early years is extremely important. 🕊

Heather Hauffe is the principal of Pensacola Junior Academy and serves on the Early Childhood Advisory for the Southern Union.

Ministry Celebrating 20 Years of Impact

A Foundation in Mission

“I have come that they may have life and have it to the full.”

These words in John 10:10 depict Christ’s desire for everyone to enjoy a life of whole health — in body, mind, and spirit. This foundation, advanced through AdventHealth’s mission, inspired a group of 25 team members to start the organization’s Spiritual Ambassadors ministry 20 years ago.

Connie Hamilton, a ministry pioneer and former chief nursing officer for the AdventHealth Central Florida Division — South Region, said, “It seemed team members needed a pathway to serve more spiritually.” Today, more than 4,000 AdventHealth team members serve as spiritual ambassadors.

Terry Shaw, AdventHealth president and CEO, thanked team members for serving in this special way: “It’s a high calling to be an ambassador. To serve as an ambassador is more than filling a role — it’s fulfilling a trust.”

A Source of Inspiration

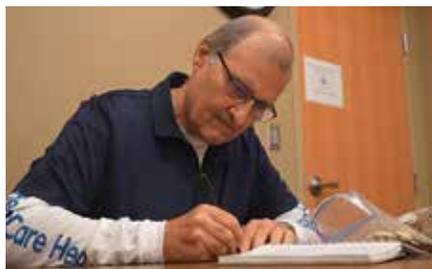
The ministry’s guiding principle is to inspire everyone with a heart of love, a contagious joy, and a restoring peace. It’s what Sergio Torres, senior manager of the Spiritual Ambassadors ministry and corporate campus pastor, calls “breathing a life of inspiration into others.”

“Our ministry takes inspiration from Genesis 2:7 when God breathed life into man,” Torres said. “By being spiritual, we’re being inspirational.”

Torres recalled a unique moment of inspiration a few years ago after he prayed for a patient and was heading out of an AdventHealth facility. “Are you okay?” The front desk receptionist asked Torres. “Take one of these,” she added. It was a wooden heart-shaped piece with a Psalm embossed on one side and an inscription of “Everything is going to be okay” on the other side.

Torres said that simple act of kindness lifted his spirits after learning that the patient’s health condition was similar to that of his sister-in-law. “I hadn’t realized that the patient encounter affected me,” Torres said. “The receptionist checked in with me — just like our spiritual ambassadors do with others.”

The wooden hearts ministry was started a few years ago by Jim Stella, a retired team member who served as a spiritual ambassador while working as a supervisor of guest services at AdventHealth Orlando for 10 years. Stella said his ministry has so far reached more than 176,000 people both locally and globally, including team members and patients at several AdventHealth locations. “I’m humbled my ministry inspires others,” Stella said. “I always say, ‘Do something for the Lord and He will do more for you.’”



Jim Stella is a retired team member who served as a spiritual ambassador while working as a supervisor of guest services at AdventHealth.

An Emphasis on Spiritual Care

Damita Wright, a senior analyst on the organizational readiness team at AdventHealth’s corporate campus in Altamonte Springs, Fla., who also serves as a spiritual ambassador, describes her calling as being a spiritual first responder.

Wright leads the music ministry at her campus and works with Clayton Alves, senior manager of change management on the organizational readiness team, to manage the systemwide devotion blog.

“There is something special about being present with people,” Wright said. “In that moment, we’re able to encourage and become responsive to their spiritual needs.” Alves added, “I love the spiritual emphasis AdventHealth places on its mission.”

At AdventHealth Kissimmee, Audrey Carty, senior nurse manager, inspired her entire endoscopy unit team to serve. She said, “I love that we are a 100% spiritual ambassadors team. We all feel empowered to spiritually support and be present in each other’s lives.”

The ministry has made an impact on our communities too. In 2019, Victoria Martinez, Ph.D., an ordained minister of the Catholic church in Florida, attended a chance meeting with spiritual ambassadors at an AdventHealth facility in Chicago where she met Torres and became a spiritual ambassador. Martinez is now enrolled in AdventHealth’s clinical pastoral education (CPE) program. “I felt God was calling me to be in that place,” she said. “I thought to myself: ‘What a wonderful way to be healed spiritually.’”

Shining Light

Steven Napier, information technology support specialist at AdventHealth Manchester in Kentucky, said his role as a spiritual ambassador helped during the devastating July 2022 floods there. “I remember praying for a team member who had lost his home. I like lifting others up and sharing the light of Jesus,” he said.

Following Hurricane Ian in west Florida, Cynthia Rowell, assistant vice president of nursing at AdventHealth Wesley Chapel, said, “As a leader and as a spiritual ambassador, the hurricane was a crucial time to check in and calm fears among my team.”

BY AMA AKOTO-BOATENG,
COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST AT
ADVENTHEALTH

New Technology Lab to Advance Health Care Through Virtual Reality Research, Creation

AdventHealth University (AHU) and Full Sail University recently opened the Full Sail University Healthcare Technology Lab powered by AdventHealth University.

Both universities, based in central Florida, will utilize the lab to develop and demonstrate joint health care research projects, conduct progress reviews, and expand learning opportunities for students. The facility will be housed within Full Sail University's Emerging Technologies wing on its Winter Park, Fla., campus.

The Full Sail University Healthcare Technology Lab will primarily engage Full Sail University students across the emerging technologies degree programs, including computer science, cybersecurity, game development, information technology, and other programs. Students from a variety of AHU degree programs, including occupational therapy assistant, and nursing, will also utilize the lab to find innovative technology solutions to enhance patient safety.

In addition, the Full Sail University and AHU teams will use the lab to help find innovative solutions for enhanced training of nurses and other health care team members, an important area of focus in addressing nursing retention and support.

"AdventHealth University is thrilled to collaborate with Full Sail University on this state-of-the-art classroom and lab," said Edwin I. Hernandez, Ph.D., president and CEO of AdventHealth University. "This partnership is a wonderful example of leading-edge technology providing solutions to how we train and support health care workers, particularly as they enter the workforce. We are excited to see



Healthcare Technology Lab



where this takes us, as the possibilities stretch as far as our imaginations."

This facility — fully equipped with industry-standard technology, including a large format 3D printer and more — is the latest extension of the partnership between Full Sail University and AHU. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the two universities developed the Rapid Deployable Video Simulation and the Automated Medicine Dispensing System, which are simulated training technologies created in a multi-player immersive virtual reality trainer for AHU nursing students as the school found new ways to

engage with remote learners within the nursing program.

Additionally, in 2020, Full Sail University and AHU partnered to win the Interservice/Industry Training, Simulation and Education Conference's annual Iron Dev competition. The winning prototype virtual reality solution serves as a proof of concept for a virtual command center to help health care facilities and systems, like AdventHealth, visualize hospital resources and COVID-19 data points.

"At Full Sail University, we encourage our students to not only make emerging technologies solutions for fun or class credit, but also to serve a purpose and make an impact within the community," said Shawn Stafford, Ph.D., director of research and course director at Full Sail University. "The medical expertise provided by AdventHealth University allows our students to create research-backed solutions to real-world problems, much like they will when they enter their professional careers. We look forward to seeing the great projects that will come to life in this new lab facility, and that continue to come from this partnership."

The partnership will continue to provide Full Sail University emerging technologies students and AHU students with access to health care industry experts, as new practices, procedures, and technologies are developed to support the health care industry. Students gain hands-on experience on how to bring emerging technologies and innovative mindsets into the health care industry. ●

BY JENNIFER AUDETTE

Hispanic Women’s Retreat is “Guide to Victory”

There were 375 women from the Carolina Conference and beyond who gathered at Nosoca Pines Ranch in South Carolina, October 7-9, 2022, for the annual Hispanic Women’s Retreat: “Guiadas en Victoria,” organized by Janet Paulino, assistant women’s ministries coordinator.

Liz Enid Polanco, pastor and pastor’s wife, and founder of Liz Enid Polanco Ministries, shared from the life of Mary Magdalene as a theme to help attendees name the traumas and tragedies that trap and keep many stuck, and then move forward with Jesus to a

life of hope and victory. Jenny Santana, nutritionist, presented practical tips and recipes for improving health and well-being. During the church service, almost \$3,000 in offering was collected to send Bibles to the Ukraine for church members to distribute.

Carolina members were encouraged to invite their friends, and there were 75 visitors in attendance. A member of the Spartanburg Church reported that, “Our members and visitors testified that it was truly a marvelous weekend. They felt that God used the organizers and speaker in a powerful way, so that many came to the con-



PHOTO BY: ALICIA PALACIOS

Praying during one of the prayer sessions



Some of the visitors who were invited by Spartanburg Church members to attend the retreat



Janet Paulino, assistant women’s ministries coordinator, with part of her team

viction that, if we put ourselves in God’s hands, we will be guided to victory.”

Each session began with a themed time of prayer led by women from the Spartanburg Church who also provided each attendee with a handmade prayer pillow to take home. Each theme addressed a specific need, one being special prayer for attendees with cancer. Other activities included time to relax under the pines and go on walks, hayrides, or boat rides. Attendees enjoyed a bonfire and games in the gym on Saturday night.

The retreat concluded with an early morning communion service by the lake. Attendees especially appreciated this time as a sacred moment of connection and encouragement where they could share in solidarity and encourage each other.

“We’re enthusiastically waiting for the next women’s ministry retreat!” said Carolina Esquivel of the Salisbury Church. “It was beautiful to see so many dear sisters from different churches in the Carolinas in one place, and to have the opportunity to get to know each other better and share together as we were spiritually fed by the Word of God.”

PHOTO BY: ALICIA PALACIOS

PHOTO BY: ALICIA PALACIOS

BY ALICIA PALACIOS

Rockingham Cornerstone Pays Off Mortgage Early

Sabbath, November 5, 2022, marked a long-awaited celebration by the members of the Rockingham Cornerstone Church in Rockingham, S.C. Organizing as a company on March 30, 2009, the small group has gone from worshipping in the living room of member’s homes to renting a facility to acquiring a church building. Diligently paying the mortgage off long before the note was due demonstrates the mission of their church: to reach the Rockingham community far and wide. One church member shared that if the church doors were to close tomorrow, that she wanted the community to notice their absence.

This church had a unique beginning as the first English-speaking church planted by the Rockingham Spanish Church. After worshipping for several years in a rented facility, the church received a \$50,000 donation toward purchasing a building. Around that same time they were made aware of an historic 1890s home that had been converted into a funeral home which was in foreclosure in the heart of downtown Rockingham. They were able to purchase their new property for \$100,000.



Former and current church members gathered for the mortgage-burning celebration. To say that this was a high Sabbath would be an understatement. Incorporated into the service was a 25-member church choir which performed several songs of celebration and praise. Rick Russell, Carolina Conference vice president for finance, presented the morning message. He admonished the members to be one like the godhead are one, his message taken from Jesus’ prayer to His Father about the 12 disciples.

After many murmurings of “Amen, Amen,” Russell was joined by Chad Grundy, Carolina Conference under-

treasurer; Bryan Arvelo, Cornerstone’s pastor; several elders; and key board members for the ceremonial burning of the mortgage. Surprisingly, the mortgage burned up faster than expected, and set off the smoke detector to the right of the platform. This just added to the joyous atmosphere and the many praises being sent heavenward.

This church has numerous plans for the future and are open to God leading them to continue to grow and spread His message to their surrounding neighbors. 📌

BY COURTNEY HEROD



Port Charlotte Praises God in the Eye of a Hurricane

Hurricane Ian, which ravaged Florida on September 28, devastated much of Charlotte County and significantly impacted Port Charlotte Church, school, and members' homes. The entire church campus was already badly in need of new roofs, which were slated to be installed prior to the hurricane but repeatedly delayed.

Most church members hunkered down bracing for Category 4 winds and flooding, while Diane Sedgwick, church board chair and head elder, stayed at the church to make it available to members who needed shelter. With roofs already in poor condition, the hurricane forced the reported 12 inches of rain to pour down into the sanctuary, as well as into most spaces of the church. In addition to the church, school, and community service buildings, nearly all members

suffered damage to homes, with some losing homes entirely.

Sedgwick knew it was God who led a ServPro manager to the church office the day after the storm to put the church first on a list for assistance. More than 60 workers began getting the church dried out — an undertaking that lasted a month.

The most important news was no loss of life within the church family. Members met outdoors for a Sabbath service 10 days after the disaster. Harry Selent shared how an adult daughter was providentially not at home when two-by-fours from the barn roof became projectile missiles, piercing house walls, and with one going right across the daughter's bed.

Two weeks later, Ben Shurtliff, the new senior pastor, was welcomed.

God's hand was evident in the timing of this relocation. Had the Shurtliffs already moved before Ian, the impact of the storm would have hindered the ability of the family to provide the help and support that benefitted the members and community.

The Lord turned external circumstances into blessings. Nothing is a total loss because of all the good that comes from a storm, including the shared experience which was unifying to the church and community. "And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose," Romans 8:28 NIRV. 🕊

BY LAURA DANCEK

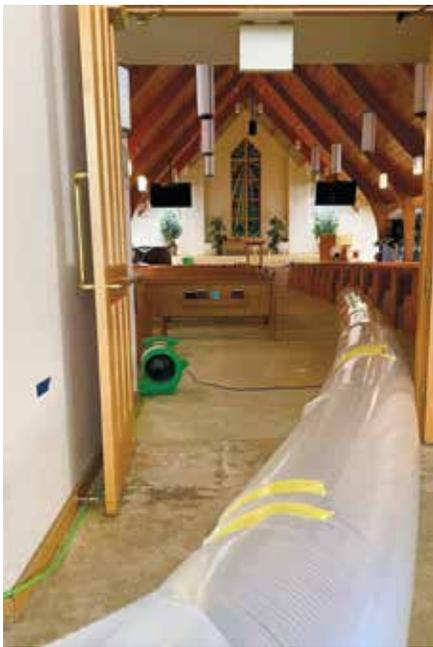


PHOTO BY: LAURA DANCEK

Port Charlotte's beautiful sanctuary is recovering from 12 inches of water.



PHOTO BY: LAURA DANCEK

Church members gathered for an outdoor Sabbath service to praise the Lord 10 days after Hurricane Ian brought devastation.

Adventist Education Guides Youth Through Choppy Waters

Josh Callwood started playing his parents' pots and pans when he was 3 years old.

"By the time I was 5, my dad said, 'That's it. We're getting you a drum set,'" remembers Callwood, member of Plantation Church in Fla.

By 13, he was playing professional gigs. When Callwood transferred from public school to Greater Miami Adventist Academy, he became the praise and worship leader. He was elected class pastor and loved participating in school sports since Sabbath scheduling conflicts were no longer an issue.

Triniti Evans, member of Tampa First Church, discovered her gift for public speaking during week of prayer at Forest Lake Academy. She also enjoyed playing soccer and singing with the school's praise teams and honor choir. Evans' parents divorced when she was in fifth grade, and her father passed away a few years later. As she struggled to process her emotions, she looked for validation in all the wrong places. Evans felt increasingly hopeless and attempted to take her own life. In the end, she found hope in Christ and decided to become a pastor to support others who are struggling.

Callwood and Evans both became part of a welcoming community on the campus of Southern Adventist University. Within days of Callwood's arrival on Southern's campus, he was recruited by the Merge Church Praise Team. "I believe services like Merge allow students to break out of their shells and see what God has in store for them," says Callwood, now the praise team leader. "Whatever your circumstances, God has the victory for you."

Evans sings with Callwood on the praise team. She deeply values Merge's emphasis on the importance of mental



Josh Callwood, new Merge Church praise team leader, leads music at Southern Adventist University, Collegedale, Tenn. Triniti Evans (standing behind Callwood) is also part of Merge praise team.



Triniti Evans (girl on right with glasses) is shown with her Life Group coaches on the campus of Southern Adventist University in Collegedale, Tenn.

health. They regularly check in on their members, offering therapy and Bible studies. Evans is also a co-director of Southern's LifeGroups program and helps manage the more than 80 student-led small groups.

"Small groups are one of the best places to talk to fellow students who

are struggling with mental health and address it with a Christian perspective," says Evans. "I love seeing others transformed at the thought of hope." 📌

BY ANGELA BAERG

“All New” Lives Follow Evangelism

Todo Nuevo, meaning All New, is what hundreds of people can say about their lives after the evangelistic series held October 1-8, 2022, all across the Hispanic churches in the Georgia-Cumberland Conference.

The Southern Union Hispanic Ministries Department, along with the Georgia-Cumberland Conference Latin-American Ministries, put their efforts together to host the evangelistic event in the first week of October from Albany, Ga., to Morristown, Tenn., at every Hispanic district simultaneously.

After almost three years of the pandemic, Todo Nuevo was the first in-person event for most of the Hispanic churches, so having this special evangelistic series back in their territories was a big affair, not only for the church leaders but for the members as well. Jorge Baez, Morristown Hispanic district pastor, still speaks about what a real blessing it was to see, once again, the church leaders and members actively involved with their visitors not only during the program but even now. Richard Urdaneta, Knoxville Hispanic district pastor, also mentioned how his churches rekindle their mission work during and after Todo Nuevo. But, God had much more in store for them, because not only were the churches being impacted, but the Holy Spirit was transforming many lives!

In Sevierville Hispanic, Todo Nuevo ended with the baptism of eight individuals at the local river. Among them were Angela Ardila and Jaime Celis, a Colombian couple. He was atheist and she was raised Adventist but rebelled and left the Church as a young woman. Still in the river waters, they were giving their testimony about how neither of them wanted to know about anything religious, but how God never gave up and the Holy Ghost kept chasing and reaching them in different ways through their lives' events, even jail time where



Kevin Vegas (left), joins Richard Urdaneta, Sevierville Hispanic pastor, Angela Ardila, and Jaime Celis in the river for baptism. Kevin made the decision while Angela and Jaime recounted their conversion story right before being baptized. These new members join more than 130 people baptized as a result of the Todo Nuevo evangelistic series.

Jaime started to hear about Jesus. And while they were talking about their conversion experience, a young man from the crowd, Kevin Y. Vegas, took off his shirt and got into the river asking for baptism. Vegas also attended the series every night, and later told Urdaneta that he couldn't resist anymore the impression he also felt during Todo Nuevo, and he wanted to start an all new life as the Colombian couple just did.

Maria*, a third-generation former Adventist woman who had left the Church more than 20 years ago, always felt that God was calling her back home. Her husband had recently died just a month after their newborn baby. Shattered, overstressed, and with compromised health, she finally decided to respond to God's call and came to the Todo Nuevo meetings at the Jonesboro Hispanic Church. Night after night, she felt like a little bit of her heavy load was lifted from her shoulders until finally she began to feel comfort. By the end of the week,

she asked to be baptized and was able to perform a beautiful, special song after her baptism. Almost two months later, Enrique de la Rosa, pastor, saw her again but this time there was something different. She wasn't overstressed anymore, and she looked whole, healthier, and happier. Maria said she had found peace; her life now is all new, todo nuevo, in Jesus. Death is not the end; she knows that soon she will be reunited with her baby and loved ones for eternity. Certainly, Jesus can make all things new.

More than 130 people were baptized during that week while many other started Bible studies and attended Sabbath services. This effort did not end on October 8; it is the beginning of todo nuevo, all new, in the life of many more.

**Maria is a fictitious name for privacy purposes.* 🕯

BY WALESKA GONZALEZ, SECRETARY TO LATIN-AMERICAN MINISTRIES, GCC

HHES Pays Off Mortgage in Under Three Years



The staff at Home Health Education Service (HHES) burned the mortgage on their building on December 5, 2022, less than three years after acquiring the property. The HHES staff, as well as Georgia-Cumberland Conference administration, staff, and special guests, gathered together for worship and a celebration of this milestone. The celebration also included honoring the HHES treasurer, Jim Wilson, who is retiring in February 2023 after 22 years of service.

HHES has served as an operational hub for literature evangelists (LE's) across the Southern Union since 1957. Originally operated by the Southern Union and based at the Union headquarters just outside Atlanta, Ga., it has been owned and operated by the Georgia-Cumberland Conference since 2014. In 2020, the Conference bought the new property in Dalton, Ga. The 15-year mortgage was paid off in just two years and seven months. While Georgia-Cumberland operates HHES, it also serves the Carolina, Gulf States, and Kentucky-Tennessee conferences.

"It's a more central, organized place to help LE's with their business," says Tim Leffew, Georgia-Cumberland Conference publishing director. "It allows all the conferences to work together to do the jobs that they'd otherwise have to do separately. And, it allows us to make

larger purchases of materials and keep our costs down."

The HHES building itself houses the inventory sold. The office personnel oversees the daily operation, which includes billing, shipping, treasury, and customer service. The warehouse is stacked high with inventory ready to be used for the Kingdom of God.

"It used to be that literature evangelists had to carry and deliver all their books and buy the inventory. Now that's all done for them, and they just send their orders in and everything is taken care of from there," says Leffew.

Ed Wright, former Conference president, shared a worship thought about the story of George King, who pioneered what is now known as literature evangelism. King struggled with preaching before finding his gift in sharing with people one-on-one in their homes. His work in literature evangelism has led to so many accepting the Seventh-day Adventist message.

"Praise God for a man who was convinced of God's calling," says Wright. "Praise God for every one of us who has heard God's voice and struggled to know what to do with that. And, praise God for dedicated literature evangelists down through the years that have been the vanguards of this message. This is a

ministry that is deeply embedded in our shared message."

"The Conference supports what we believe to be an important last-day ministry," says Leffew. "People today wonder, 'Do people even still read books?' or 'Why do we print books when we have satellite and radio and the internet?' and we believe there is a reason for it. In the end-times when we are no longer popular, they can shut down radio stations and close our hospitals, but it's impossible to repossess millions and millions of books. The books will still stand as a witness in the home when we have no other way of reaching people. I'm never discouraged when I go into a home and I see the book just sitting on the shelf, because I know its day will come."

Wright and Leffew both referred to Isaiah 55:11, which says, "So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it." Literature evangelism is a ministry whose impact is greater than we will ever know. HHES serves literature evangelists, who are on the front line of sharing the Seventh-day Adventist message in communities across the Southern Union. 📖

BY RACHEL BEAVER

Gulf States Holds First Adventist Digital Evangelism Training

Daniel Claudet, director of the Gulf States Conference Communication Department, organized the first Conference-wide Adventist Digital Evangelism Training (ADET) at the Conference headquarters in Montgomery, Ala. With more than 120 local church communication leaders and pastors, the event provided invaluable tools ranging from social media strategy to graphic design and video production. While training and education were core values, spiritual encouragement and lifelong connections were also made possible.

Claudet envisioned an event where

local communication leaders would receive the best resources while connecting personally and digitally. Local leaders can now network and share ideas, testimonies, and challenges. As a result of this gathering, a Facebook group called “Digital Community of the Gulf States Conference” was created. This group allows the local attendees to continue sharing how the local work is progressing within their contexts and fostering an online support community.

ADET 2022 speakers include Justin Baham, General Conference legal counsel; Art Brondo, North American

Division Communication Department; Pablo Hernandez, Southern Adventist University; Kevin Wilson, Andrews University; Robert Kooreny, Voice of Prophecy; and Jonathan Burt, Hope Channel. Training modules included graphic design by Joanna Toumma; video production and drone operation by Andy Montejo; worship essentials by Michelle Alonso; social media engagement by Mumi Valdes; and basic audio training by Chris Feldmann. 📍

BY MARCELO MANSUR, M.DIV.



PHOTO BY: EDWIN QUIJADA

Mission Trip to Cuba Results in 131 Baptisms

The Gulf States Hispanic Ministries Department organized a mission trip to Cuba from November 25 to December 5, 2022, where 11 pastors and 10 laymen were divided in 14 local churches in the country’s capital, La Havana, and one church in the Matanzas Province which is in the western territory of the Cuban Conference.

As a result of the mission trip, 131 people were baptized on Sabbath, December 3, 2022, and more than 500 people are now seeking Bible studies.

“I am moved to have witnessed the miracles that happened this week. It was evident that the Holy Spirit was among us here in Cuba,” stated Gerson Sánchez, Hispanic ministries coordinator.

The mission trip ended with a closing ceremony at the LaVibora Church, where guest singer Hugo Yin inspired the attendees with songs and his personal testimony. More than 300 people came from different churches in La Havana to the ceremony.

“Our gratitude to the pastors, laymen,

and the administration of the Gulf States Conference, who dedicated their time and efforts to come all the way to Cuba and make a difference in our church members’ and our lives,” said Roberto Hernandez, president of the West Cuban Conference. ●

BY DANIEL CLAUDET



Kentucky-Tennessee Appoints Edward Marton New Conference Youth Department Director

The Kentucky-Tennessee Conference administration is pleased to announce that, after a long search and lots of prayer, the Executive Committee has extended an invitation of employment to Edward Marton as the new youth director, effective January 1, 2023.

Marton is originally from Romania. He and his wife, Mariya, have been married for 23 years and have two children, Levi, 17, and Leyla, 15.

In 2004, Marton received his B.A. in pastoral ministry from the Mission College of Evangelism in South Dakota. He possesses a master of divinity (M.Div.), and in 2015 completed a doctor of ministry (D.Min.) degree from the United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio.

Marton was ordained to the Gospel ministry in 2006 by the Ohio Conference, where he has served for the past 21 years — 14 years as a senior pastor and then seven years as the youth director. During his time at the Ohio Conference, Marton helped organize mission trips, run summer camp at Camp Mohaven for eight years, and coach pastors in creating a strategic plan to reach younger audiences. “My passion is just bringing all generations together in fellowship, worship, and spiritual growth,” Marton said. “I love seeing churches grow, not only in numbers, but also by having a greater inter-generational experience.”

Marton will work alongside Nelson Silva, Conference associate youth director, to provide support for the Adventurer and Pathfinder clubs, public campus ministries, and the young adult ministries. Marton will also oversee the running of summer camp at Indian Creek Camp.



PHOTO COURTESY OF EDWARD MARTON

Edward Marton poses with his wife, Mariya, and their two children, Levi and Leyla. Effective January 1, 2023, Marton and Mariya will be joining the Kentucky-Tennessee Conference’s Youth Department.

In addition, Mariya Marton will be assisting the Conference Youth Department. She holds a doctor in ministry (D.Min.) degree from United Theological Seminary in Dayton, and has also served the Church for many years, as chaplain in the Kettering Health Network and, most recently, as the associate youth director at the Ohio Conference. Marton says his family is looking forward to the transition.

“We’re very excited to join the Kentucky-Tennessee Conference,” Marton said. “I’m looking forward to getting to

know the members, the churches, the schools; and providing as much support as I can. Our prayer is that all generations can grow together in Christ.”

The Conference family is happy to welcome Edward Marton and his family to Kentucky-Tennessee. 🙏

BY PAOLA MORA ZEPEDA

Adventurer Camporee Sees a 40% Attendance Increase



PHOTO BY: PAOLA MORA ZEPEDA

Attendees of the Kentucky-Tennessee Conference Adventurer Camporee (week one) pose for a group photo. This year, the Adventurer Camporee registration hit a record high attendance with 720 participants over the two weekends, marking a 40% increase from previous years.

In 2011, the Kentucky-Tennessee Conference began hosting its annual Adventurer Camporee. By 2016, weekend attendance had grown to the point where a second weekend was added to accommodate more clubs, with an average of 500 attendees per year. In November 2022, registration hit a record high attendance with 720 participants during the two weekends, marking a 40% increase.

Julie Bryant, Conference Adventurer event coordinator, credits this growth to more churches starting their own Adventurer club in the last months. This includes Madison Campus Church, who has the largest membership in the Conference, and whose club brought more than 60 new Adventurers.

“[This growth] is a blessing because it gives us the opportunity to minister to more children, and gives them an opportunity to experience Jesus with their families,” Bryant said.

The theme for this year’s Adventurer Camporee was “A Series of Calamitous Events,” which told the story of Job set

in the 1800s Canadian Rockies. The well-known Bible story was performed throughout the weekend in a three-act original play, which was written by Heath Bryant, Conference Adventurer coordinator.

Each year, there is a new animal mascot, and, following the Canadian theme, this year’s mascot was a moose. In ad-

dition to the play, programming consisted of five rotations where Adventurers learned about their mascot friend and earned an award written specifically for the event. Rotations included a learning station, crafts, games, a meet-and-greet with the mascot and cast, and an animal encounter with live reindeer. On Sabbath



PHOTO BY: PAOLA MORA ZEPEDA

Adventurers smile together before heading to the day’s activities, which include crafts, games, and an animal encounter with a live reindeer.



PHOTO BY: PAOLA MORA ZEPEDA

Actors from the weekend's play, "A Series of Calamitous Events," told the story of Job set in the 1800s Canadian Rockies, written by Heath Bryant, Adventurer coordinator.

afternoon, there was a virtual tour with Alaska Wildlife Conservation Center where Adventurers were able to meet the moose in their care.

To finish the weekend, families enjoyed the Maple Festival on Saturday night. Activities included inflatables, a

balloon artist, and other games and food for families to enjoy.

"The goal of the Adventurer Camporee, and of the Adventurer ministry as a whole, is to create opportunities for young people and their families to learn and worship together," Heath Bryant said. "It is a blessing and privilege to be a part of this ministry."

The next Adventurer event will be the Adventurer Family Fun Day held at Highland Elementary during the 2023 Camp Meeting. 📍

BY PAOLA MORA ZEPEDA



PHOTO BY: PAOLA MORA ZEPEDA

Greg Taylor, former Kentucky-Tennessee Conference youth director, salutes young Adventurers as part of the event's flag raising ceremony. The next Adventurer event will be the Adventurer Family Fun Day held at Highland Elementary during the 2023 Conference Camp Meeting.

God Blesses Centerville Christian School With Huge Growth

Toward the end of the 2019-2020 school year, the Centerville Christian School, Centerville, Tenn., was considering closing their doors when their enrollment decreased from nine to three students and their teacher relocated to a new school. Despite these obstacles, the school took a leap of faith. The following school year, Sheila Jones, the new school principal, started an outreach homeschool program to invite students from the community. Since then, school enrollment has grown to 26 full-time students and 70 homeschool students who

regularly attend their weekly events.

Jones, who had been a teacher for 23 years, was originally unsure if returning to the profession was the right thing to do. However, after lots of prayer, she felt called to take the position.

"I have never, ever regretted that move," said Jones, who is affectionately known by her students as "Mama J."

After taking on her new role as principal, Jones began making small changes like implementing a new agricultural program. In addition, Jones noticed the large number of families who chose to homes-

chool their children. Rather than placing stress on the parents to place their children in the school, she chose to start a program to help involve homeschool families.

"I think one thing that's really important is that our schools do not see homeschoolers as prospective students," Jones said. "Homeschooling is an art in itself ... we should never make our Adventist families feel guilty for homeschooling their children."

What began as a small endeavor has grown tremendously, linking the community with the church school.



PHOTO BY: PAOLA MORA ZEPEDA

Floyd Harmon, pastor, uses a lightbulb and a nightlight as an illustration to represent faith during his devotional at the Centerville Christian School's homeschool day. The homeschool day program is held every Wednesday, and sees an average of 70 students.



PHOTO BY: PAOLA MORA ZEPEDA

Homeschool students smile at the camera while cutting out a paper snowflake. During the Centerville Christian School homeschool day, students of various ages join together for an afternoon of activities such as baking, sewing, and crafts.



PHOTO BY: PAOLA MORA ZEPEDA

Students rehearse for their choir's Christmas performance. During the Centerville Christian School homeschool day, a hired music teacher conducts two sessions of choir practice.

Held every Wednesday at noon, the Homeschool Day Program starts with a picnic lunch, followed by recess and chapel. Jones leads out in singing, and Floyd Harmon, pastor, shares a biblical lesson.

"The lessons are always very inspiring, and we keep on thinking about them and discussing it during the week," said Maria Freeman, a mom of one of the home-school students.

Following chapel, a guest speaker enthusiastically educates the children about his or her career. In the past, the children have heard from a variety of professionals such as a nurse, military personnel, a mechanic, a truck driver, and a missionary.

In addition, the school hired a music teacher who conducts two sessions of choir practice to prepare for future performances. To finish the day, the children are divided into "tribes," led by volunteer parents and church members, to participate in science or art classes.

"After staying at home for the pandemic, our twins were very shy, and this has been the perfect opportunity for Christian socialization," parent Crystal Doren said. "It also lets us see how the school works and helps decide if the grade school will be a good fit for our family."



PHOTO BY: PAOLA MORA ZEPEDA

A parent teaches carpentry class. To end homeschool day, volunteer parents and church members lead various science or art classes.

If any school is interested in starting a homeschool day program, Jones recommends conducting a poll in their respective community to evaluate interest. Furthermore, she emphasized that support from the local church is crucial.

"If a church wants to do something like this, they're going to have to support the teachers," Jones said. "There's just no way they could do it otherwise."

Jones has not only experienced help from her church family, but all three

churches in her local district. For those trying to implement a similar program in their school, Jones recommends starting with small changes and recruiting several dedicated volunteers.

"It's amazing what God has done [for us], because now we have 26 students and 70 homeschool students. It's just unbelievable," Jones said. 🙏

BY CARLIE ALVAREZ

Local Officers Recognized During Shiloh Church’s “Faith & Blue” Event

Members of the Cobb County Sheriff’s Office Community Engagement Unit were recognized during a special service at the Shiloh Church in Smyrna, Ga., on October 8, 2022. The program was in honor of Law Enforcement Emphasis Day at the church, which coincided with the Faith & Blue weekend held nationwide October 7-10, 2022. Faith & Blue consists of four days of locally organized community-officer engagement as part of the nation’s largest annual collaborative policing initiative. The officers shared gifts and greetings and took photos with church members after the service.

“We believe communities are stronger and safer when residents and law enforcement professionals can relate as ordinary people with shared values, hopes, and dreams,” said Omar Newell, Cobb County deputy, who is also a member of Shiloh Church. “We believe we can find ways to work together around our many



Pictured are Omar Newell (at the podium), deputy; Sylvia Robinson (left), lieutenant; Keith Stevens, Sergeant; Tony Scipio, major; Carlos Garcia, Hispanic liaison; Steve Gaynor, major; and Ryan Garcia, deputy.

commonalities instead of being divided by our differences.”

The Cobb County Sheriff’s Office Community Engagement Unit works

with local organizations to bridge the gap between the community and law enforcement. One of the most effective ways to do this is for law enforcement to connect with local churches. Faith-based organizations are key to building these bonds because they are not only the largest community resource in the nation, with 65 million participants in weekly events, but because they are as diverse as our nation. Moreover, they speak to Americans’ shared conviction that we are our brothers’ and sisters’ keepers.*

“The faith-based community needs law enforcement, and law enforcement needs the faith-based community,” said Newell. “We are stronger when we work together.”



Cobb County officers pose with Shiloh Church members.

BY NANCY B. HOWARD

Ron C. Smith, D.Min., Ph.D., Honored in New School of Business Facility

For decades, the School of Business at Southern Adventist University has equipped students with the tools needed to succeed professionally while inspiring them with the eternal purpose of sharing Christ in their chosen field. Recently, the University launched a \$20 million campaign aimed at empowering the next generation of business leaders through a new state-of-the-art facility and an endowment. Ken Shaw, Ed.D., president of Southern Adventist University, also announced the first named space in the facility, the Ron C. Smith Executive Board Room.

The named space was provided by AdventHealth and was selected to honor Smith's service on the organizations' boards. Smith serves as chairman of the AdventHealth Board of Directors and also serves as chairman of Southern's Board of Trustees, helping to guide the



Ken Shaw, Ed.D. (left), president of Southern Adventist University, and Terry Shaw (right), president and CEO of AdventHealth, announced the first named space in the new School of Business facility in honor of Ron C. Smith, D.Min., Ph.D., the Ron C. Smith Executive Board Room.

direction of the University and impacting the lives of thousands of students. During the Southern Union constituency meetings, the presidents of the two orga-

nizations presented Smith with a plaque expressing appreciation for his service.

"For more than 40 years, Dr. Ron Smith has served the Seventh-day Adventist Church with integrity, character, and a deep love for people," said Terry Shaw, president and CEO of AdventHealth. "These core Christian leadership traits work together to inspire a new generation of emerging leaders, energized to create positive change wherever they serve. I want to congratulate Ron for this honor and extend my deep appreciation for his service and steady leadership as board chair at AdventHealth."

To learn more about Southern's School of Business campaign, visit southern.edu/gobusiness.

BY STAFF WRITER

Singing Group Serves Southern's Neighboring Communities

For the last 13 years, an assortment of Southern's music majors and voice students, plus other student volunteers, have ministered in a special way in the University's surrounding communities. It all began right before Christmas in 2009, when Julie Penner, Ph.D., professor in Southern's School of Music, invited one of her voice students to join her in singing Christmas carols for an elderly housebound woman.

"The Lord had laid on my heart that shut-in people who cannot come to concerts need music," Penner said.

What started as a spontaneous house call morphed into an outreach singing group called "Sacrament of Praise." Trinity Hayden, junior music and worship major, loves the reaction the group receives from nursing home residents. Describing one visit, she says, "They were all smiling and swaying. At the end, they all gave us hugs and encouraged us to continue doing music."

Penner and the students thoroughly enjoy the fun dynamic that results from a capella singing with friends. Isaac Fortunato, senior music education ma-

major who has been part of the group since 2019, said, "Key changes are hilarious during practice and performances when we're all relying on each other to get our notes right!"

Penner believes that the camaraderie that results from serving others through music is the best part of the singing group.

"It's priceless," she said. "There isn't any other way to say it; you just have to experience it."

BY VICTORIA MILLS

Health Expo Offers Hope, Wholeness

The Maranatha Church in Apopka, Fla., held an extraordinary Health Expo providing free health services and sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ on September 25, 2022. The event was well-organized and was attended by many individuals from the community. Entering the gym, the environment was welcoming and charged with enthusiasm of participants and vendors. It resembled a health and wellness center.

More than 25 vendors rendered health services and offered spiritual support to the community residents. Using the **NEWSTART** theme, there were health stations for **Nutrition, Exercise, Water, Sunshine, Temperance, Air, Rest, and Trust in God.** Each health station was attractively decorated, and provided information and an interactive activity to engage participants in taking charge of their health. There was something about health for everyone.

With the high cost of health services and the mental strain of life, attendees participated in the education classes, health checks for diabetes, blood pressure, spiritual conversations, screening for hereditary cancer, eye exams, massages, blood bank, fire department demonstrations, and much more, all at no cost. Leading by example, Dwight Gayle, senior pastor of Maranatha Church, was seen visiting the health stations. Gayle coined the health expo a “Bridging



Health Fair Maranatha sign



Health Fair nutrition poster



Finger testing at the Health Fair

Event” because, “You cannot separate the Gospel of Jesus Christ from the health message. This event is a doorway to meet individuals in our community whom we may not see in church.”

Joann Mould, Maranatha health leader, and her team were dressed in bright green shirts printed with “Maranatha Health” as they actively greeted and assisted people, ensuring that they had a personable and positive experience. Mould stated, “This health expo is important because it is an entering wedge to the hearts of people. By showing interest in them, it softens their hearts toward hearing about Jesus Christ and His soon return. Our goal is to treat not only conditions, but to restore the full body and person.”

The vendors were engaged too. Henry Pearson, N.D., herbalist and owner of Pearson’s Herbs, stated, “Herbs help to jump start your body, giving it a tune-up by cleansing the blood, liver, kidney, and colon.” Monica Spence, a representative for Natera, commented, “The health expo is a necessary outreach to the commu-

nity because it is easily accessible and efficient for individuals who do not have time to schedule appointments for health screenings at a clinic or office.” The high level of engagement of the organizers, participants, and vendors contributed to the success of the Health Expo.

The use of a variety of methods for evangelism are needed to win souls to Christ. Following Christ’s method to reach the people, the health expo allowed them to mingle with individuals, to show interest in their health, and minister to their needs in an unbiased and supportive way which provides a bridge for members to invite them to follow Christ. The volunteers were glad for the opportunity to attend this health evangelistic expo, to participate in the health checks, and witness first-hand the engagement of various ministries working together to share hope and restore wholeness to individuals in preparation for Jesus Christ’s imminent return. 🕊

BY JENNIFER RUTH SANKEY, PH.D.

Southeastern Incorporates “Wellness Wednesday”

Employee wellness is a priority at the Southeastern Conference in Mt. Dora, Fla. The Wellness Wednesday initiative was launched on October 5, 2022, with the theme, “Our wellness and fitness is our witness.” The initiative’s primary purpose is to share hope and restore wholeness through health information, inspiration, and motivation of employees to live the abundant life.

Recognizing the value of an employee’s well-being, the Executive Team — Michael Owusu, president; Pierre François, executive secretary; and Emmanuel Charles, chief financial officer — and Brent Waldon, pastor and vice president of ministerial, have endorsed incorporating Wellness Wednesday into the morning worship schedule. Using the CREATION Life model, the presenters are office employees who talk about each health principle (choice, rest, environment, activity, trust in God, interpersonal relationship, outlook, and nutrition). Monthly, one health principle is presented and reinforced by posting information on the bulletin at the office entrance.

Wellness Wednesdays are filled with meaningful health messages, fun activities, and joyful songs. The dynamic presentations on health have increased awareness of what people can do to protect and enhance their quality of life. They have motivated employees to make gradual lifestyle changes and live the abundant life that Jesus promises in John 10:10. Smiling broadly, Jany Ortega, receptionist, said, “Wellness Wednesday is a special day! I learn something new about how to take care of my health and stay well, especially how to control stress by taking a break and walking.” Keitha Hatcher engages the team to participate in stretches of the upper and

lower extremities, and practice proper breathing to relax and lower stress levels. The comments from employees and their active involvement indicates that the Wellness Wednesday workshops have add-

ed value to the office environment and the well-being of employees. 📍

BY JENNIFER RUTH SANKEY, PH.D.



Wellness activities

Southeastern Holds Breast Cancer Awareness Tea Event

The first Breast Cancer Awareness Tea was held at the Southeastern Conference in Mt. Dora, Fla., on October 12, 2022. This well-planned event made history, and the room was beautifully decorated with pink and white tablecloths with rose petals, along with dainty teacups that lined the table. The event opened with prayer by Olinto Groce, pastor, and an inspirational song by Georgette Valdespino. A variety of special teas and a nutritious lunch buffet were enjoyed by 22 office staff consisting of men and women who were dressed in different shades of pink. Wendy Perrot, M.D., obstetrics and gynecology physician, gave a dynamic and captivating presentation on breast health. She explained how cancer occurs through an imbalance of estrogen and progesterone, and expounded on how to prevent it using a wholistic approach, namely eating a plant-based diet, exercising enough to make you sweat, and weight management. Each attendee received a gift bag from unnamed donors, with information and memorable trinkets to remind them of ways to prevent and detect breast cancer. The tea concluded with a prayer of consecration and dedication by Alpha Footman, Southeastern prayer coordinator for women's ministries.

Southeastern is committed to breast cancer awareness and health and wellness 365 days a year. In conjunction with the tea, a breast cancer awareness fund was launched. Approximately \$1,200 has been donated. The tax-deductible funds will be used to promote breast cancer prevention, and to provide support and resources for individuals who are fighting the disease. Donations can be made via Adventist Giving.

Both the Breast Cancer Awareness Fund and tea initiatives align with the



Wendy Perrott, M.D. (left), obstetrics and gynecology physician; Jennifer Ruth Sankey, Ph.D., R.N., director of health and disabilities ministries and performance; and Esmeralda Guzman-Harris, Southeastern women's ministries director



Southeastern office staff

Conference's mission to share hope and restore wholeness at the office, in the churches, and throughout the community. The mission-driven activities were organized by Esmeralda Guzman-Harris, director of women's ministries, and Jennifer Ruth Sankey, Ph.D., director of health and possibilities ministries. To learn more about upcoming events for women and health, contact esmeralda.

guzman-harris@secsda.org or jennifer.sankey@secsda.org. They believe that together the journey to optimum health and wellness will make a difference in many lives. They are praying for you and your continued good work in your local church. 🙏

BY JENNIFER RUTH SANKEY, PH.D.

SHOW THEM THE WAY

LEAD PEOPLE TO JESUS

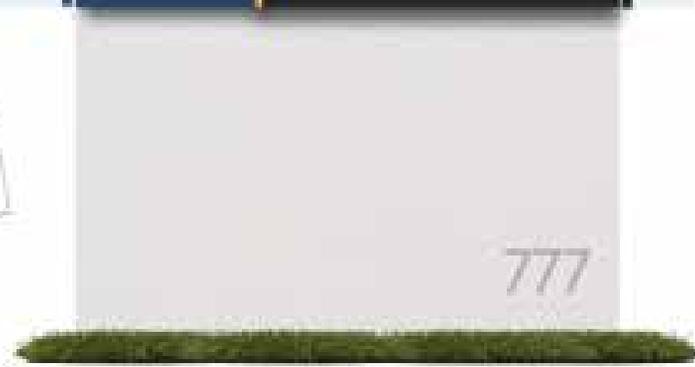
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DANIELSON, CONSTANCE (CONNIE) EUNICE, 81, of Calhoun, GA, born Aug. 20, 1940 to the late Milton Fowler Perkins and Eunice Evelyn McGowan Perkins of Providence, RI, died Aug. 17, 2022 surrounded by family and loved ones.

In 1957, she met and married Lon Brainerd Leach, and together, they moved to Ft. Lauderdale, FL, where they welcomed three daughters. In 1965, the family relocated to southern California, where Connie became a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA). She continued her work as a CNA at Fuller Memorial Sanitarium when the family returned to Providence in 1976. Following her divorce, Connie moved to Floyd, VA, in 1988 to live near her eldest daughter, Karen and her family, working as a receptionist at Christiansburg Family Medicine. In 1991, she made her last move, to Calhoun, GA, joining her middle daughter, Karey and her family. It was here that she met David E. Danielson, and the two were happily married in 2000. Over the remaining years of her life, Connie worked as a teacher's aide at Coble Elementary, as well as

providing childcare for many families in her local SDA community.

Connie was a woman whose creativity, dedication, and generosity shown in everything she did. Her many talents were evident in her home, from her tastefully chosen antique furniture and hand-sewn textiles, to the smells of homemade bread emanating from her kitchen, and plants that blossomed in every corner. Everyone who had the pleasure of knowing Connie knew what a joy she was to be around.

Connie is survived by her husband, David Danielson; four daughters: Karen Jane Leach (fiancé Edward Gilbert) of Adairsville, Karey (Donald) Taylor of Calhoun, Kathy (Daniel) Law of Baker, FL, and Minli Klopp of Pulaski, VA; two brothers: Milton "Brother" (Diane) Perkins and Robert "Robbie" (Sharon) Perkins; two sisters: Nancy (Roger) Berthiaume and Muriel (Richard) Bache; 17 grandchildren; 8 great-grandchildren; a host of nieces; nephews; and her sweet tabby cat, Daisey.

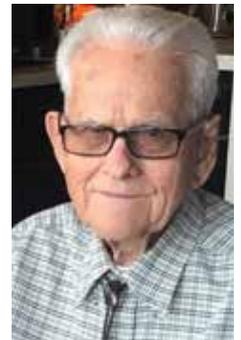
A Celebration of Life was held for Connie at the Adairsville Seventh-day Adventist Church on Oct. 22, 2022.

DENNIS, AARON LEE, 91, born June 12, 1931 in Anson County, NC, died Sept. 30, 2022 in Hendersonville, NC. Aaron was a member of the Brevard, NC, SDA Church.

He attended Madison College and graduated with a B.A. degree in education. He served the Seventh-day Adventist denomination in the USA, and North and East Africa. He retired from working for Adventist Health System Sunbelt (now known as AdventHealth Florida).

In retirement Aaron was an active team member of the Carpenter's Hands Wood Ministry - helping people who depended on wood for heating and cooking.

Aaron is survived by his wife of 66 years, Laura Mae Dennis; daughter, Beth (Jim) Zachary; son, David (Lora) Dennis; granddaughters: Bethany (Winston) Gallimore and Alexandra (Liam) La DiCicco; and one brother, Robert Dennis of Anson County. He is preceded in death by his sisters: Pauline Capella and Evelyn Beecham; one brother, Bill Dennis; and his parents.



EISELE, EDWIN, 80, born Oct. 27, 1941 in Williams, MN, died Oct. 12, 2022 in Felda, FL. He graduated from Maplewood Academy, Union College, and Andrews University.

Ed married his college sweetheart Evelyn (Lynn) Peck in 1965. He served as a pastor in Nebraska for six years before the family moved to Brazil to serve six years as missionaries. In 1978, the family moved to southwest Michigan where Ed began a beekeeping business to provide a livelihood and education for his family until 1992 when he and Lynn moved to Africa. They served as missionaries in Africa for four years, and in ministry in Arizona for 10 years until he retired in 2008.

Two of Ed's favorite ministries were Adventist World Radio and Gospel Outreach. He traveled extensively with Gospel Outreach during his retirement years. He was passionate about his Lord and always anxious to share Jesus with anyone willing to listen. Ed enjoyed sailing, hiking, traveling, and making memories with his family.

His positive attitude and sense of humor will be missed by all who knew and loved him. Ed is survived by his wife, Lynn; two children: Lisa Eisele and Steve Eisele; three grandchildren: Johanna (Brad) Poole Erhard, Isaac Poole, Grace Eisele; and three siblings: Melvin Eisele, Regi Eisele, and Allie Eisele Anderson. He was preceded in death by his parents: Byron and Dorothy Eisele; and siblings: Bob Eisele and Allan Eisele.

A memorial service is planned for Feb. 18, 2023, at Wauchula Church at 4 p.m.

ARTRESS, MARYZELINE LAGRONE (MARY), 89, born Dec. 28, 1932 to Mary Leona Jesse Pickney and Clyde Luther Lagrone in Amarillo, TX, died Sept. 6, 2022. Mary attended Southwest Adventist Academy in Keene, TX, and nursing school in Loma Linda, CA. While there she met George Eugene (Gene) Artress. They married in 1954 and that same year, she graduated with a degree in nursing. Soon after, Gene joined the Foreign Service, where he worked as a physician for more than 10 years in countries including Afghanistan, Pakistan, Thailand, and the Philippines. The family returned to the U.S. in 1968. Gene opened a medical practice. Mary worked with Gene at the office on Belmont Circle in Smyrna, GA, for nearly 35 years. While there, she raised her family and was active in the Marietta and Smyrna Seventh-day Adventist churches. Following Gene's death in 2010, Mary felt blessed to be able to spend time with her children and grandchildren. Next to her kindness and loving heart, Mary will be remembered for her strength, grace, and loving heart. She is survived by her four daughters: Mary Kay Artress, Brenna Harrington, Karen Orquia, and Diane Connelly; her adored grandchildren; great-grandchildren; beloved nieces; and nephews.

DE STEFANI, MAFALDA, 95, born in São Paulo, Brazil on Nov. 6, 1926, died on Oct. 21, 2022. She was a faithful child of God and an enthusiastic Seventh-day Adventist. She and her husband, Vincenzo De Stefani, and their daughter, Anna Maria, moved to Italy where they all volunteered for mission work. After her husband's death, Mafalda and her daughter returned to Brazil. In 2007, they moved to Tennessee. Mafalda was an avid reader and loved to study geography, his-

tory, and math. She worked as an accountant assistant in her youth. She also loved drawing, painting, and listening to music. She was happy to attend Madison Campus Church and enjoyed everyone's kindness

DUHANEY-KING, CAROL MAY, 59, born April 4, 1963 in St. Catherine, Jamaica, died Oct. 13, 2022. Carol was born to the late Eugenie Wheatle and Burchell Duhaney. She was an active member of the North Orlando Church, Orlando, FL, for many years, where she served as Sabbath School superintendent. In 1977, Carol migrated to Orlando, where she resided until her passing. On December 10, 2000, Carol and Archibald King were united in holy matrimony, and their union produced two children: Rhondine and Romano King. Carol was a devoted mother and wife, faithful Christian, loving sister, and an exemplary employee. She was a hard worker and took great pride in everything she did. Her passion was to her two children and her Seventh-day Adventist faith. Carol is survived by her husband, Archibald King; daughter, Rhondine King; son, Romano King; four sisters: Olive Duhaney-Williams, Andrea Francis, Alina Duhaney, and Andrea Duhaney; one brother, Mark Duhaney; two nieces: Samantha Thomas and Ayana Duhaney-Baylor; three nephews: Ricardo Schloss, Adrian Marriot, and Christopher Watson; favorite cousin, Fitzroy "P-son" Brown; brother-in-law, Dermoth Williams; god-daughter, Kayla Clifton; numerous other relatives; adored friends; and work colleagues. She also leaves behind her Bog Walk Seventh-day Adventist and the North Orlando Seventh-day Adventist Church communities where she was an active member. The funeral service was held October

30, 2022, at the North Orlando Seventh-day Adventist Church in Orlando and officiated by Pastor David Onatunde. Interment at the Woodlawn Memorial Park and Funeral Home in Gotha, FL.

HESS, EDNA RUTH (MISENKO), 92, born April 14, 1930 in Bainville, MT, died Aug. 5, 2022 in Beaverton, OR. She is survived by her spouse, Alfred Hess; two sons: John (Candace) and James (Corinna); three grandchildren: Adam, Aaron (Nichole), and Amanda (CJ); one great-grandchild, Sebastian; and one sister, Irene Canosa. Al and Edna were active members of the Mount Pisgah Academy Church for 12 years.

LEGASPI, ELZABETH DELENE-LA, 89, born March 2, 1933, Philippines, died May 16, 2022 in Avon Park, FL. She was a member of the Avon Park Church for 35 years. She worked as a secretary, periodical department, Philippine Publishing House, for five years and Thorak Hospital (run by SDA) in Chicago for 20 years. She is survived by two sons: Jerome of Sharpsburg, GA, and Frederick of Redlands, CA; two daughters: Rubeliza of Avon Park, and Deborah of Newnan, GA; two sisters: Consuelo and Rebecca both of the Philippines; and seven grandchildren. Service was conducted by Pastor George Brown at the Avon Park Church, and interment at Lakeview Memorial Gardens.

MCCOURTIE, LEONIE YVONNE NEE FORBES, 84, born July 26, 1938 in May Pen, Jamaica, died Aug. 17, 2022 in Orlando, FL. In 2005, she became a member of the North Orlando SDA Church. She was the only child of Ruby and Leopold Forbes. In 1956, while attending West Indies College, she took her stand for the Lord, and was bap-

tized in the Seventh-day Adventist Church by Pastor Nation. At West Indies College, she was actively involved in the choir and made many new friends, one of whom, William McCourtie, would become her forever friend. In 1958, Leonie migrated to the United States, and on July 1, 1962, Leonie Forbes and William McCourtie were united in holy matrimony at the Bethel SDA Church in Brooklyn, NY. She was a member of the Hanson Place SDA Church for more than 30 years. Her first job was at the Hayden Publishing Company in New York City, as a secretary. After a few years she moved on to the Ford Foundation, where she worked as an executive assistant for 31 years until her retirement. Leonie leaves to cherish her memory her loving husband, William; her only daughter, Simone; her brother, Dr. Milton Smith, and his wife, Tracy; their three children: Shelby, Sidney, and Bailey; brother-in-law, Neville Payne; niece, Joy "Honey" Allen; beloved family members: Hyacinth Higgins Daley, Cecily Daly, Hyacinth Reece-Headley, Dr. Albert Reece, his wife, Sharon, and their three children: Joy Scott Radcliffe, Dr. Ronald Scott, Merlene Blair Brown; several other dearly loved relatives; and friends. The funeral service was held at the North Orlando SDA Church in Orlando and was officiated by Pastor David Onatunde. Interment at Woodlawn Memorial Park & Funeral Home in Gotha, FL.

NELSON, ERWIN, L., 94, died Sept. 9, 2022 at his home in Chattanooga, TN. He was a member of the Standifer Gap Church. Erwin was born on his family farm near Shickley, NE, and was the third generation to work the farm owned by the Nelson family for 111 years. Erwin married Marjorie Brown in 1948, and after her untimely death, he married Marjorie

Brown. He is survived by his five children: Cliff, Elaine, Sheryl, Connie, and Kenny; 12 grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren; and one great-great-grandchild. Erwin is preceded in death by his parents: Lloyd and Vera Nelson; his wives: Evelyn and Marjorie; one sister; and three brothers.

ORTIZ, JAVIER AUGUSTO, 49, born Dec. 3, 1972 in Caguas, PR, died Sept. 19, 2022 in Kissimmee, FL. Navy Veteran, AMM (Adventist Motorcycle Ministry) Kissimmee Chapter vice president, Master Guide, Fort Lauderdale Astros Pathfinder Club director, and Celebration Church member. A hard worker, he strived every day to live his life for honor and glory of God. Javier will forever be remembered and loved by all who knew him. He is survived by his wife, Jennifer; his father, Roberto (Waleska) Ortiz; his mother, Carmen "Millie" (Luis) Nevares-Nunez; two brothers: Robert "Kiko" (Belinda), and Ahmed (Marien); one sister, Diana; three children: Michelle, Javier, and Isabella; and three stepchildren: Leena, Leilani, and Jakob.

PHILLIPS, BETTY JUNE, 89, of Hendersonville, TN, born on Aug. 3, 1933 to Amos and Texie Teague Hunter, died Oct. 23, 2022 at her home surrounded by her children. Betty married Elmer Phillips Aug. 24, 1951, and had four children. She worked as a phlebotomist in the laboratory at the Haywood County Hospital until her retirement. Betty was a member of the Gallatin, TN, Church. Aunt Betty, as she was known by her nieces and nephews, is remembered for her kind heart and gentle words. She had a genuine love for others and had a heart for God's smaller creatures, too. She rescued dogs, cats, and even a pot-bellied pig. Betty is survived by her three children: Kathy Tyler,

Terry Phillips, and Genella Hoover; her 13 grandchildren; and seven great-grandchildren; two siblings: Sarah Frances (Tiny) Phillips, and Larry Phil Hunter. She was preceded in death by her parents: Amos and Texie Hunter; her husband, Elmer Phillips; her son, Euel; her granddaughter, Valerie; and five siblings: Jack, Genella, Harold, Julius, and Marlene.

SHAW, WINSTON S., 92, born Aug. 1, 1930 in Avon Park, FL, died Aug. 12, 2022 in Florida. He is survived by his wife of 65 years, Emma Shaw; two sons: Errol Shaw of Florida and Mark Shaw of Ontario, Canada; two daughters: Carol Hayes of Ontario, Canada, and Marcia Mendoza of the United Kingdom; two brothers: William Shaw of Florida, and Syonky Shaw of Philadelphia, PA; 11 grandchildren; and 14 great-grandchildren. The service was conducted by Pastor Monte Robison at the Avon Park Church. Interment was at the Bougainvillea Cemetery.

STINVIL, SYBIL Y., 90, born Oct. 17, 1931 in Georgetown, Guyana, to Richard and Victorine Phillips and migrated to America, died Aug. 5, 2022, surrounded by family. She was a member of Celebration Church in Florida, and previously a deaconess for many years at Mount Olive Church, Apopka, FL. Sybil worked as a certified nursing assistant at Menorah Nursing Home for 20+ years. She was a prayer warrior petitioning on behalf of her children and those she loved, and an advocate for women in need. She is survived by three daughters: Venessa, Michelle, and Yvette; two sons-in-law: Daniel Gutierrez and Roy Van Brussel; eight grandchildren; and three great-grandchildren.



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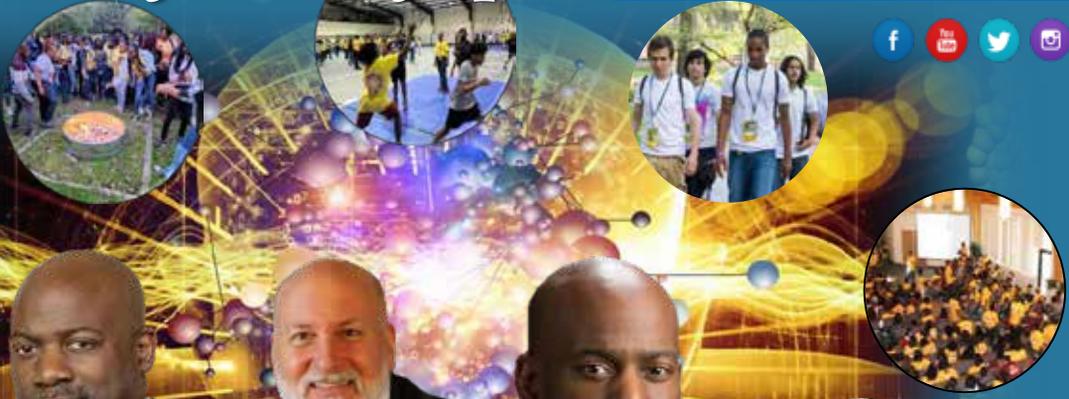


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SOUTHERN ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY is seeking qualified candidates for the following teaching positions: Faculty—School of Education and Psychology, School of Business, Biology/Allied Health Department, Engineering, English Department. Adjunct—German Instructor-Modern Languages Department, Applied Technology (Mechanics). For detailed descriptions and qualifications, see southern.edu/jobs. [1]

SOUTHERN ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY is seeking qualified candidates for the following staff positions: Salaried position— Marketing & University Relations Website Development Manager. Hourly positions—Cafeteria Floater (Cafeteria), Cafeteria Worker (Cafeteria), Cook Coordinator (Cafeteria), Deli Supper Cook (Village Market), Deli Lunch Cook/Supervisor (Village Market), Deli Floater (Village Market), Vitamin Associate (Village Market), Procurement & Merchandising Assistant (Village Market), The Garden Assistant Manager (Food Services), Painting Technician (Plant Services), HVAC Lead Master Technician (Plant Services), Financial Aid Coordinator (Enrollment Management), Gym-Kid Director (Health & Kinesiology), Customer Support Supervisor (Workstation Support). For a detailed description and qualifications, see southern.edu/jobs. [1]

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The **UNION COLLEGE COMMUNICATION PROGRAM** is searching for applicants for a Communication Professor. This is a full-time, faculty, exempt position starting June 1, 2023. Please see the full job description and instructions for application at ucollege.edu/employment and contact Bruce Forbes at bruce.forbes@ucollege.edu for more information. Benefit package includes tuition subsidy for eligible dependents and other generous benefits. [1]

CAMP KULAQUA, High Springs, Florida - We are currently looking for individuals for the following full-time positions: Year-Round Aquatics and Activity Director, Food Service Assistant Director, Building Technician, Housekeeping Manager, and Vehicle Maintenance Technician. For additional information, job descriptions, and application link go to <http://careers.floridaconference.com/camp.aspx> or contact Julia Willard at 386-454-1351 or juliaw@campkulaqua.com [1, 2]

ADVENTIST HERITAGE MINISTRIES is seeking to fill three positions in Battle Creek, MI. The Historic Adventist Village will have three open positions: site director, office manager and Heritage Shoppe manager. Go to the website www.adventistheritage.org for details, job descriptions and application forms. Positions will be open this Spring. [1, 2]

ADVENTIST HERITAGE MINISTRIES is seeking a full time Information Systems Department Director to oversee the daily operation of the IS Department. The IS department supports the IS functions of the seven ministries served by AMM Support Services. For more information you may email hr@sdamedia.com or apply at <https://www.adventistmediaministries.com/available-positions/> [1]

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SOUTHERN ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY offers master's degrees in business, computer science, counseling, education, nursing, religion and social work. Flexibility is provided through some online and many on campus programs. financial aid may be available. For more information, call 423-236-2585 or visit www.southern.edu/gradutestudies. [1-4]

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ADVENTIST TOURS 2023. Israel in Jesus' Steps April 16-25 & June 4-13 with Andy Nash, and June 18-27 with Clifford Goldstein; Egypt & Exodus April 6-14; Revelation's Seven Churches/Patmos/Greece March 22-April 2; Tanzanian Safari March 1-8; Germany Reformation/WWII June 16-28, 2024. Contact tabghatours@gmail.com or tabghatours.com or call 423-298-141. [1]

IN SEARCH OF Adventist operated group home for mentally challenged adult female. Call 299-588-0974 and leave a message. [1-3]

ACCEPTING PRESENTATION PROPOSALS. The 2023 Association for SDA Librarians Conference Committee invites presentation proposals for the 43rd annual conference, to be held June 27-29, 2023, at Adventist University of Africa. The theme is Library Research and Internationalization. For further information, please check out our website, <https://www.asdal.org/>.

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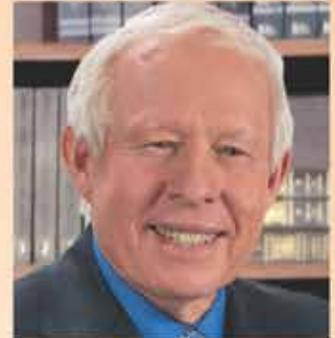


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GEORGIA-CUMBERLAND

- Adventurer/Pathfinder Director Council** - Jan. 8. Cohutta Springs Youth Camp, Crandall, GA.
 - Adventurer Bible Game Regional Event** - Jan. 14.
 - Pathfinder TLT Convention** - Jan. 20-22. Cohutta Springs Youth Camp, Crandall, GA.
 - Pathfinder Bible Experience Regional Event** - Jan. 28.
 - Retirement Money Blunders** - Jan. 31. Zoom.
 - Oasis High School Retreat** - Feb. 3-5. Cohutta Springs Youth Camp, Crandall, GA.
 - Children's Ministries Convention** - Feb 10-12. Cohutta Springs Youth Camp, Crandall, GA.
 - Pathfinder Bible Experience** - Feb. 18.
 - Pathfinder Teen Event** - Feb. 24-26. Cohutta Springs Youth Camp, Crandall, GA.
 - Regenerate Youth and Young Adult Festival** - March 4. Church at Liberty Square, Cartersville, GA.
 - Reach Your Neighbor Training** - March 17, 18. Cohutta Springs Conference Center, Crandall, GA.
 - Adventurer Family Fun Weekend** - March 24-26. Cohutta Springs Youth Camp, Crandall, GA.
- Please check our website for the latest information, www.gccsda.com.

SOUTHERN ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY

Photography Gallery Opening - Jan. 19. Southern Adventist University's School of Visual Art and Design invites the public to a photography gallery opening that features works by art professor Mindy Trott, titled "But Only So For An Hour." The opening will take place on Thursday, Jan. 19, at 6 p.m., in the John C. Williams Art Gallery in Brock Hall, and the display will stay up until Monday,

Feb. 16. For more information, please visit southern.edu/artgallery or call 423-236-2732.

Concerto Concert - Feb. 5. This event begins at 4 p.m. and showcases gifted young instrumentalists from across the region who auditioned and were chosen to present solos alongside the University's full Symphony Orchestra. Held in the Collegedale Church, the event is free and open to the public. It also will be broadcast live at southern.edu/streaming.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

BURLESON SDA CHURCH in Burleson, TX, will celebrate their 50th Anniversary - April 21-23. Activities include: **Friday** evening supper and church history presentation. **Sabbath** breakfast, lesson study by Pastor Keith

Gray, sermon by Pastor Mike Tucker, lunch at Burleson Adventist School, afternoon fellowship, and supper at the church with musical concert by Steve Darnody. **Sunday** morning golf. Call 817-295-7141 for more details.

SOUTHERN UNION CONFERENCE WOMEN'S CONVENTION - Aug. 24-27. Orlando, FL. SAVE THE DATE!!!

THE SOUTHEASTERN CONFERENCE PUBLISHING DEPARTMENT is seeking seven mini vans, late or new models, in full working condition for its student literature and community outreach programs. If you are seeking to give to the Lord's work and can donate a van that you are not utilizing, please contact Pastor Lucious Hall, publishing director, at 786-402-7074.

SUNSET

	JAN 6	JAN 13	JAN 20	JAN 27	FEB 3	FEB 10
ATLANTA, GA	5:45	5:51	5:58	6:04	6:11	6:18
CHARLESTON, SC	5:29	5:35	5:42	5:48	5:55	6:01
CHARLOTTE, NC	5:27	5:33	5:40	5:47	5:54	6:01
COLLEGE DALE, TN	5:44	5:50	5:57	6:04	6:11	6:18
HUNTSVILLE, AL	4:51	4:57	5:04	5:11	5:18	5:25
JACKSON, MS	5:11	5:17	5:24	5:30	5:37	5:43
LOUISVILLE, KY	5:39	5:45	5:53	6:01	6:09	6:16
MEMPHIS, TN	5:04	5:10	5:17	5:24	5:31	5:38
MIAMI, FL	5:45	5:51	5:56	6:01	6:06	6:11
MONTGOMERY, AL	4:56	5:02	5:08	5:14	5:21	5:27
NASHVILLE, TN	4:48	4:55	5:02	5:09	5:16	5:24
ORLANDO, FL	5:44	5:50	5:56	6:01	6:07	6:13
TAMPA, FL	5:50	5:55	6:01	6:07	6:12	6:18
WILMINGTON, NC	5:18	5:24	5:31	5:37	5:44	5:51



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Symphony Orchestra Concert, February 5

Under the direction of Laurie Redmer Cadwallader, Southern's Symphony Orchestra will be joined by the winning soloists from the School of Music's annual Concerto Competition for a performance in the Collegedale Church of Seventh-day Adventists beginning at 4 p.m. This event is free and open to all. For livestreaming information and other opportunities to enjoy the musical talents on our campus, visit southern.edu/musicevents.

Peace and War Exhibit

Southern's on-campus Lynn H. Wood Archaeological Museum features a new exhibit with more than 80 artifacts unearthed by the students and employees from Southern and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem during the Fourth Expedition to Lachish in Israel (2013-2017). The historical findings help bring to life the Assyrian conquest of Judah and Jerusalem's deliverance. For more information, visit southern.edu/archaeology.

Hiking and Mountain Biking Trails

Free and highly rated, Southern's nearly 40 miles of on-campus hiking and biking trails are open to everyone. The trails are suitable for everything from a peaceful Sabbath walk to a muscle-toning endurance workout. For more information and trail maps, visit southern.edu/trails.

JOIN US ONLINE

Southern's weekly vespers programs, held in the Collegedale Church sanctuary, are broadcast live each Friday evening at 7:30 p.m. To view online, visit southern.edu/streaming.

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We have abundant resources representing numerous areas of expertise. Let Southern help whenever you have a need for guest speakers, workshops, and music programs at your church or school; visit southern.edu/resourceguide.

Visit Us

Southern welcomes visitors all year long, and we invite you to come and experience our beautiful campus for yourself. If you know of someone looking to attend a Christian university, prospective students have several options for a scheduled visit to Southern. For more information, go online to southern.edu/visit.




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